New Curriculum for Difficult Times

Toolkit

Simon Beer

June 2013

Contents

This Toolkit

This toolkit is designed as a companion output to the final report of the 'New Curriculum for Difficult Times' project. The project ran from November 2012 to April 2013.

The project funded six providers of Adult and Community learning to run action research projects to design curriculum responses to current difficult times experienced by the communities they serve.

The work focused on how provision might become more locally driven. The projects also explored diversifying funding sources; targeting money more effectively; and designing services with - and around the needs of communities. This toolkit will provide you with some tools to help make provision more locally driven and community led.

How to use this Toolkit

The best way to use the toolkit is to read about the six 'New Curriculum for Difficult Times' projects in the project report, select the projects or methods you are interested in, and download the particular tools relevant to your context.

Alternatively, go to the 'Projects and Tools' section that follows and click on the link relating to the project that interests you:

- If you are interested in how to use **focus groups** as part of an approach to engagement, then check out the section on Hull City Council's project.
- If you are interested in how to use **prototyping** methodology to develop new provision, check out the section on Birmingham Adult Education Service's project.
- If you are interested in how to use community development/ bottom up **neighbourhood approaches** to co-designing provision, turn to the Bristol City Council project.
- If you are interested in how to co-design **employability** provision with employers, check out the section on Redbridge Institute of Adult Education's project.
- If you are interested in opportunities to embed learning in **Community Asset Transfer** projects, turn to the section about Herefordshire Council's project.
- If you are interested in how to **recognise employability** skills individuals have gained through voluntary activity, turn to the Hexagon Housing Association project.

Projects and Tools

Hull City Council: *Creating a Local Curriculum with the Community*
This project aimed to utilise the market segmentation data gathered by Hull City Council to help design a curriculum to meet the needs of the people living in North Bransholme, the area of the city with the lowest level of engagement in community learning. Along with messages received through face-to-face engagement activity, the council used the customer insight information to maximise the impact of community learning, planning, marketing and delivery. The project deployed focus groups as a key part of this activity.
To download the project's focus group questions and a guide on when to/when not to use focus groups, click here.

Birmingham Adult Education Service: *Debt Advice Curriculum*
Birmingham Adult Education Service worked with third sector partners and community groups delivering advice and guidance to learners from vulnerable communities to develop a curriculum around debt advice. This included a focus on people in low-paid employment to help them develop the skills for sustainable employment. The project followed a prototyping methodology in developing the provision.
To download information about prototyping and a template planning tool, click here.

Bristol City Council: *Working with Young People to Solve Local Problems*
This project sought to customise and deliver a neighbourhood problem solving approach to developing a new curriculum. The target group were aged 19-25, unemployed and living in the Hillfields area of East Bristol; they included people from black and minority ethnic groups and disabled young people currently accessing a local community centre which needed to change to meet their needs. The course was based on an existing and successful 'My Life In…' community development course which has been designed to enable communities.
To download a guide to taking a 'bottom up' neighbourhood problem solving approach to learning, including formats and techniques for drawing out views from local communities, click here.

Redbridge Institute of Adult Education: *Co-designing with Employers to Help People Make the Transition to Employment*
Redbridge Institute of Adult Education reviewed its existing practice in designing and delivering courses, where the focus was on supporting local people to gain sustained employment. Findings from consultations with local employers and learners were used to ensure that provision matched the needs of local employers and that appropriate strategies, learning resources and approaches were in place to support learners to seek, gain and sustain employment.
To download the two survey forms that Redbridge used with employers, click here.

Herefordshire Council: *Tudorville Community Building*
This project engaged a rural local community with poor access to services and few local learning opportunities. The project embedded learning within a Community Asset Transfer process, focusing on the acquisition and development of the Tudorville Community Building as a centre, managed by and for the local community.

The project explored how learning might support the community's capacity to identify, articulate and develop solutions to meet local needs.
To download a case study explaining how learning was embedded in the Community Asset Transfer, along with some tips for embedding learning in a community asset transfer process, click [here](#).

Hexagon Housing Trust (London): *Moving Forward with Recognition*
This project set out to develop a new curriculum and means of recognising the attitudes, skills and knowledge individuals gain through active involvement in their communities. The work was undertaken in partnership with developers, ESB, residents and housing associations, through revision of existing learning materials and systems for Recognition. As a result, a new learning pathway called 'Made for You' was developed, through the revision of Recognition Scheme materials and systems.
To download information about 'Made for you', and some guiding principles for recognition of learning, click [here](#).

Focus Group Tool

The project in Hull used the following question sheet with project focus groups. Further information on when to use focus groups follows on the next page.

Focus Group Question Sheet

Introduction – who we are, why we are asking questions about learning in your community, gather demographic data (gender, age, address including postcode).

Learning Goals
- What would you like to be able to do?
  (Identifying people's long term and short term ambitions in home, learning, work)

- What do you need in order to get there?
  (Identifying the support/practicalities/challenges that need to be in place to help them achieve these)

- What do you feel is stopping you?
  (Identifying the barriers and challenges they recognise they face)

Venue
- If you were to build a learning centre, what would you like it to feel like/be like?
  (In an ideal world what would a learning venue be like, look like, feel like?)

- What would the staff and volunteers be like?
  (What qualities are important for them to feel comfortable with tutors/support staff?)

- Where would you want it to be?
  (Preferences for it being very local/quite local/city centre etc?)

- Out of the following local places, which of them would you be happy to learn in? (Have you been there/heard of it/not heard of it? Tally on a flip chart)

  [list local learning venues here]

- Do you have anything you would like to share about any of these places?
  (Digging a bit deeper about these venues to find out more about what will/won't work)

- What other places would you be happy to learn in?
  (Identifying venues further afield, ie city centre, adult education centres etc. that people are/are not happy to go to)

When to Use Focus Group Interviews

Focus group interviews should <u>be</u> considered when**:**

- *Insights are needed in exploratory or preliminary studies.*
  This could occur at the beginning of a larger-scale research effort or when the study has a limited scope or limited resources. The goal might be to gain reactions to areas needing improvement or general guidelines on how an intervention might operate.

- *There is a communication or understanding gap between groups or categories of people.*
  This gap has a tendency to occur between groups who have power and others who do not. Professional groups (medical, educational, scientific, technical, business, legal) are facing a crisis due to communication gaps caused by language and logic. Professionals have developed unique ways of thinking that are substantially different from the very people they are trying to reach.

- *The purpose is to uncover factors relating to complex behaviour or motivation.*
  Focus groups can provide insight into complicated topics where opinions or attitudes are conditional or where the area of concern relates to multifaceted behaviour or motivation.

- *You desire ideas to emerge from the group.*
  Groups possess the capacity to become more than the sum of their parts, to exhibit a synergy that individuals alone cannot possess.

- *You need additional information to prepare for a large-scale study.*
  Focus groups have provided valuable insights into conducting complicated and often quantifiable investigations.

- *The clients or intended audience places high value on capturing the open ended comments of your target audience.*

Focus group interviews should <u>not be</u> considered when:

- *The environment is emotionally charged and more information of any type is likely to intensify the conflict.*
  This is likely to occur in situations where the issues are polarised, trust has deteriorated and the participants are in a confrontational mindset.

- *The researcher has lost control over critical aspects of the study.*
  When control is relinquished to other individuals or groups, the study is prone to manipulation and bias. The researcher should maintain control over such critical aspects including participant selection, question development and analysis protocol.

- *Statistical projections are needed.*
  Focus groups do not involve sufficient numbers of participants nor does the sampling strategy lend itself to statistical projections.

- *You cannot ensure the confidentiality of sensitive information.*

Prototyping Tool

The Birmingham project used prototyping stages to plan their curriculum. Read more about prototyping here and use the following Birmingham action plan template.

<u>What is Prototyping?</u>

Prototyping is an approach to developing and testing ideas at an early stage before large-scale resources are committed to implementation. It is generally used at the early stages of the service development cycle where you have something that you want to find out more about or test relatively quickly, in practice, and with others. It therefore generates more upfront activity than traditional service development processes. In the commercial sector the idea of developing early mock-ups of potential products is a familiar one. It allows alternative ideas to be seen, felt, and experienced before choosing one (or more) for further development.
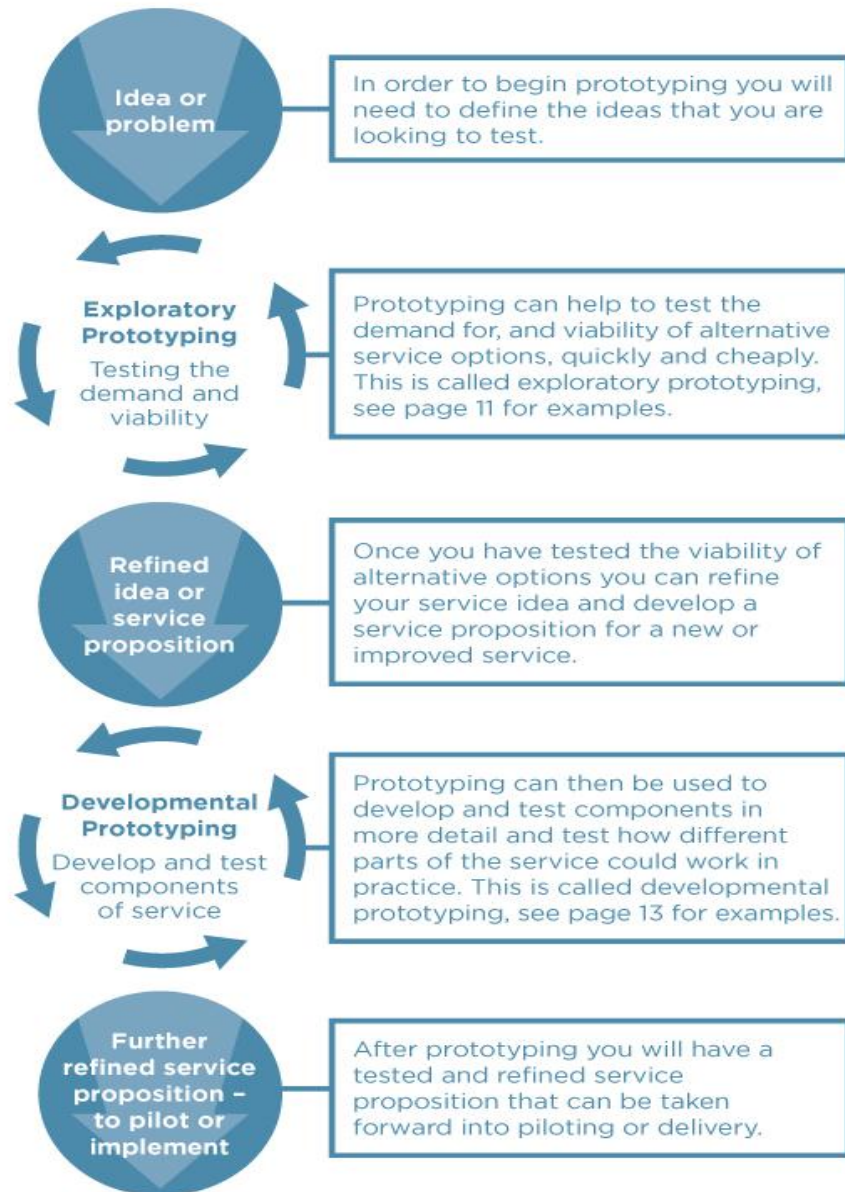
Prototyping and piloting are not synonymous. In general, prototyping tends to occur before, or in preparation for a pilot. So, whilst there may be an overlap between prototyping and piloting they are not the same thing. Prototyping in public services is about developing, rehearsing or testing parts of a service, or a whole service idea. Piloting should be more focused on the final testing stages of service development – smoothing out minor issues, and measuring outcomes of a relatively well-specified (although still new) service. So, prototyping helps with aspects of early service development and modelling while piloting builds the conditions for wider implementation, scale and rollout.

Prototyping can be used to test services as they are being developed. Service ideas can be brought to life and tested to give insights into usability, desirability and viability. Prototyping can be applied in the same way to public services.

Prototyping of public services might be a way of testing early-stage ideas with service users to help choose between alternatives. It can also be used to think through key aspects of how a service would run and test it with people. Prototyping is a flexible methodology, it can be used to develop new services or improve existing services.

Prototyping takes place as part of an innovation process to develop or improve a product or service. There are two main ways that prototyping can help with service development - it can help to test demand and viability of ideas or to develop and test components of a service.

The diagram on the following page shows the prototyping stages:

Idea or problem

In order to begin prototyping you will need to define the ideas that you are looking to test.

Exploratory Prototyping

Testing the demand and viability

Prototyping can help to test the demand for, and viability of alternative service options, quickly and cheaply. This is called exploratory prototyping, see page 11 for examples.

Refined idea or service proposition

Once you have tested the viability of alternative options you can refine your service idea and develop a service proposition for a new or improved service.

Developmental Prototyping

Develop and test components of service

Prototyping can then be used to develop and test components in more detail and test how different parts of the service could work in practice. This is called developmental prototyping, see page 13 for examples.

Further refined service proposition – to pilot or implement

After prototyping you will have a tested and refined service proposition that can be taken forward into piloting or delivery.

[Source: Prototyping Public Services, NESTA, 2011]

Prototyping Action Plan

You may have a template that you use as the basis for your current planning. If not, this form could be used for action planning.

Actions agreed by: Date:

Prototyping Stage	Key activity	By whom?	By when?	Review date
Defining the community and 'difficult times' to be addressed	e.g. Initial work with groups returning to work after a long period on benefits. Often this group experiencing cyclical employment because of the financial shocks.	BEST/BAES	Nov / Dec 2012	Jan 2013
Testing the validity/viability /demand for curriculum options				
Refining and developing the curriculum idea				

Testing components of the learning solutions in more detail			
Refined and tested curriculum proposition for use and 'mainstreaming'			

Taking a Neighbourhood Problem Solving Approach to Developing Curriculum

The Bristol project model involved working alongside neighbourhoods to identify local problems and embed learning within the activity undertaken to solve the local problem.

The Community Learning Service in Bristol is staffed and designed to develop curriculum in this way, but the following 3 step guide is one possible framework you could use to begin implementing such an approach.

Step 1: Identify a Team

In addition to curriculum leads who will develop course provision, you will need a neighbourhood working team or development workers who are responsible for:

- engaging the local community in a debate about the problems it wishes to solve
- continuing the process of gaining support from local residents and translating the neighbourhood working into an action plan
- ensuring that local people are consulted on learning design
- ensuring the project action plan is recognised supported or adopted by local agencies, services or partnerships.

In Bristol, the Learning Communities Service has development workers who are trained to carry out both the curriculum development and neighbourhood working.

Step 2: Consulting the Local Community

It is important not to rush this phase, but it is possible to carry out this activity through four meetings:

- First meeting - identifying problems
- Second meeting - generating ideas
- Third meeting - drafting an action plan
- Final meeting - finalising the plan and conducting a learning need analysis to inform learning

The First Meeting

There are two aims for the first meeting:

1. Members of the group getting to know each other. It may be the case that some individuals do not know each other even though they live in the same neighbourhood.

2. Identifying the problem(s) locally that need to be addressed. It is important that the meeting allows for everyone's experience of living in the area to be captured.

Practical Tip: Using Reverse Brainstorming

It is important that participants talk honestly about the problems in the local area, especially those related to service delivery. You may find that 'reverse brainstorming' helps; instead of discussing the problems directly, it helps participants to apply their knowledge and experience to a hypothetical scenario.

Example scenario:
2013: "By and large, it is a clean and pleasant neighbourhood to live in, where people get on with their neighbours"
2033: "The estate suffers from neglect from residents and services. Few people want to live there and neighbours keep themselves to themselves"

Group Question 1: What has happened in the 20 years to so drastically change the quality of life for local residents?

Group Question 2: How can we stop this happening?

The Second Meeting

The objective second meeting is to generate innovative and practical ideas on how to solve the problem the community has identified.

You may need to encourage the group members to think creatively and imagine new possibilities. This is achieved by ensuring the conversation is not bounded by the everyday constraints of service delivery, and second, injecting realism about how some of the ideas could be developed into practical local responses.

Practical tip:

1. Open space - could I use it?

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open-space_technology

Open Space is a highly participative planning method in which participants self organise around an agenda they create and manage. Participants generate issues and topics, which become the basis for discussion groups, around which participants self-select. Finally, action planning groups convene around the final grouping of issues. The process is particularly effective at uniting diverse groups around a complex and contentious issue that requires immediate attention.

The process usually begins with a question for the group to address, but no particular outcome or solution is assumed in advance. In fact, there is no agenda at the start of an Open Space event. Participants create their own agenda by choosing topics, related to the focus question, about which they feel some passion and responsibility. Passion and responsibility are the key fundamentals of Open Space. Without passion, no one feels motivated. Without responsibility, nothing gets done. For these reasons, and in keeping with self-management principles, participation in an Open Space event should always be voluntary.

2. Fishbowls – could I use it?

Fishbowls activity aims to increase involvement and understanding of the topic at hand. A fishbowl session begins with an inner group of participants sitting around a table having a discussion. This group is surrounded by a larger group that listens to the discussion and contributes. After a pre-arranged time, the groups swap over, and the new group leads the discussion.

Participants tend to leave the meetings with a better understanding of the different opinions that were discussed and opinions considered.

The Third Meeting

The group will need to prioritise the ideas from meetings 1+2 into a list of realistic actions. This can be a time-consuming task, but negotiation and brokering should not be allowed to slow down the process. If one action cannot be agreed on it should be 'parked' for later so other ideas can be developed.

The objective for the third meeting is to draft an action plan.
The group will need to agree on:

- the ideas going into the action plan
- who will lead on them
- who to approach to provide support for them
- how they will be resourced
- when they will be done by
- how progress will be monitored and communicated to residents.

Practical tip: Keep focused on the identified problem

You may find a tendency among residents to revert back to talking about symptomatic issues. If the strength of feeling regarding some of these issues is strong, find a way to touch upon them in the action plan. This helps ensure the process does not get bogged down and that everyone involved can concentrate most of their effort on the identified problem.

The Fourth Meeting

Now you have your action plan, discuss with local residents the learning needs arising from the plan. Rather than start with a blank slate, it is preferable to go in with a list of potential skills that will be needed to deliver the action plan.

You might like to use the following template, which helps you complete the analysis under 4 headings:

- The **skills** you need to deliver the action plan (the 10 suggested on the template are indicative only: you will need to complete your own list, ensuring it is comprehensive).

- The **role** relating to the skills (for example community champions who have agreed to lead the project).
- The **level** of skill required.
- **How** these skills might be delivered and recognised.

Learning Needs Analysis			
Skill	Role	Level	How
1. Interpersonal Communication (Being able to communicate ideas and information to others and work with a variety of people in multi-cultural environments, for example volunteers, clients, staff members)		1 2 3 4 Not relevant	
2. External Communication (Managing public relations; lobbying and advocacy; promotion of your work / organisation through presentations, media contact etc.)		1 2 3 4 Not relevant	
3. Written Communication (Being able to present information in written form, e.g. reports, articles, minutes of meetings)		1 2 3 4 Not relevant	
4. Administration (General office work e.g. filing, typing, organising meetings, purchasing supplies)		1 2 3 4 Not relevant	
5. Accounting (Preparing accounts and managing budgets; listing income / expenditure, preparing balance sheets etc.)		1 2 3 4 Not relevant	
6. Fundraising / Marketing (Raising money; writing funding applications; increasing membership; developing sponsorship; publicising / advertising)		1 2 3 4 Not relevant	

7. Event Organising (Organising events such as seminars, conferences, general assemblies, exhibitions, competitions, shows etc.)		1 2 3 4 Not relevant
8. Managing information (documentation) (Selecting and organising useful and appropriate information and data to better understand situations and identify needs and/or resources)		1 2 3 4 Not relevant
9. Research (analytic approach) (Looking for appropriate information / data; desk research or field research; using qualitative or quantitative approaches; presenting findings to different audiences)		1 2 3 4 Not relevant
10. IT (Using computer programmes, e.g. Word, Excel, Access; using internet and e-mail; using databases; designing websites; programming)		1 2 3 4 Not relevant

Employer Survey Tool

The Difficult Times project in Redbridge used two employer surveys. Survey one can be used with existing partners and survey two with new partner employers.

Employer Survey One

1. How would you rate the current course provision?

2. What benefit does it deliver?
   a. Has it made a difference to your recruitment process?
   b. Does it fit (integrate) with the company training programme?

3. How well do you know what it covers?

4. Is it "fit for purpose"?
   a. Does it deliver the skills that you are seeking?
   b. Where are the gaps?
   c. What specific skills would you like the course to deliver?
      i. Job specific
      ii. Personal

5. In relation to the learners that you subsequently recruited...
   a. Why?
   b. What qualities/ skills did they have?
   c. How are they getting on?
   d. Do you see them staying with you in the long term/short term?
   e. Should the course provision be more targeted to short/long term recruitment?

6. In relation to the learners that you did not recruit...
   a. Why not?
   b. Is there anything that the course could have done to improve their chances?
   c. Would a re-training course help their chances?

7. Are you satisfied with the co-ordination between the learning provider and yourself?
   a) Any improvements you'd like to see?

Employer Survey Two

1. What type of staff do you employ?

2. What is your current arrangement for employing new staff?

3. What exactly does the job involve?

4. Personally and vocationally, what are the most important skills to carry out the job?

5. If you were designing a training course, what would be the single most important thing for you, above all others?

6. What kind of staff retention rate do you have, does it pose a problem?

7. Is there a specific skill gap that you would like to see addressed?

8. What would you say is the thing which really makes a difference between your best employees and the rest?

9. What do you think are the challenges faced by prospective employees?

10. What would you like to see in a curriculum?

11. Any other comments?

Community Asset Transfer Tool

Read the following case study from Herefordshire, or go straight to the 'top tips' tool at the end.

Learning and Community Asset Transfer: the experience from Tudorville & District Community Centre, Herefordshire.

What is Community Asset Transfer?

Community Asset Transfer is an established mechanism used to enable the community ownership and management of publicly owned land and buildings. It allows a range of public bodies to transfer the ownership and management of land and buildings they own to local communities at 'less than best consideration' – at less than full market value.

Communities can enter into discussions with public bodies about Community Asset Transfer where it is their intention to promote social, economic and environmental well-being.

The ultimate aim of Community Asset Transfer is community empowerment – that is, to ensure that land and buildings are retained or transformed then operated for public benefit through community asset ownership and management.

Community Asset Transfer in Tudorville

The Tudorville Youth Centre building was previously owned by Herefordshire Council to deliver youth services in this area. However, no youth services were being delivered within this building and it was declared surplus to requirements in December 2009. There was a significant amount of work required to make the building a more user friendly community centre and to meet the needs of the local community.

After a public meeting in February 2010, 16 members of the local community formed a management committee, which showed there was a great deal of support for the idea of the community running its own centre. The management committee carried out an initial consultation with the local community; wrote a detailed business plan, drew up plans for improvements, formed a company limited by guarantee (number 07298037) and registered as a charity (number 1137965).

The building was transferred to Tudorville & District Community Centre (TDCC) under the Community Asset Transfer (CAT) scheme, the first CAT to complete in Herefordshire. TDCC secured s106 money from Herefordshire Council and a LEADER grant which enabled it to complete Phase 1 of refurbishment. This included a new floor and heating, which allowed the building to be opened for use by the whole community. Since then, both regular activities and classes, and one off bookings have steadily increased and TDCC are now seeking to raise funds to improve the building further.

Community Asset Transfer and skills in Tudorville

A frequent concern for councils when assessing a group's readiness for asset transfer is whether they have the skills to run the centre/building.

In Herefordshire, the Community Learning element of the Community Asset Transfer project included a skills component relating to the infrastructure improvements needed at the centre. The community had identified the following issues:

- insufficient IT equipment to service the demand
- the open plan nature of the centre meant that the environment was noisy and cold and not conducive to the learning process.

Through a survey and discussions between the local community and the council's delivery partner HVOSS, several solutions were considered and a plan presented for consideration. A small number of local individuals came forward to lead/manage the centre and were trained as 'Community Champions'. These individuals received OCN qualifications in community leadership.

The solutions needed to be appropriate for the local users, achievable within a limited budget, and meet project timescales for the asset transfer. The plan adopted involved the purchase of re-furbished laptops through "Get online at home", an initiative backed by Microsoft, which provides re-furbished equipment. This meant that more laptops could be purchased for the same outlay.

Two members of the local community with sufficient IT skills were identified and accepted the role of Digital Champions. This involved volunteering to help those community members with no, or low IT skills, to complete introductory IT courses, enabling them to access the internet (as a learning tool) for the first time. The Digital Champions were funded to take PTTLLs courses so that they are now qualified to teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector.

Converting the learner 'unfriendly' room into an IT space which was to the standard the community had agreed was a challenge and potentially 'budget breaker'. But with their links in the community, the Community Champions recruited a small group of people who were 'handy' and encouraged them to help convert the space. This included building a partition wall making 2 rooms out of one, securing a quiet, comfortable and learner friendly environment, and providing a second room suitable for hire (therefore increasing future revenue and sustainability for the centre).

The conversion project was run as a course and volunteers were provided with materials and a tutor. Volunteer participants (7 learners in total) gained low level qualifications through the conversion and learner support was provided to assist with the workbook completion that was required to achieve the qualifications. This meant that these learners benefitted from valuable work experience, new skills and for some of them, their first accredited qualification (OCN Level 1 Using and Maintaining Woodworking Tools, or Level 1 Carpentry Hand skills, or both). This in itself represented a significant step towards employment for the people concerned.

The work that the project has undertaken has transformed the centre into a true activity hub within Tudorville, improving footfall, range of provision (including, crucially, employment support) and infrastructure. The new approach from the TDCC Board led by Community Champions is bringing fresh energy and commitment. At present they are working on a £50k Reaching Communities funding bid that will positively take forward the work begun through the Community Asset Transfer.

Q: What engagement methodology was used with the Tudorville Community?

Initially, to engage the Tudorville community, the partners deployed an experienced community development worker who had built relationships over time with community organisations in the area, including the main organisation active in the Tudorville District Community centre. From this, the Community Asset Transfer project engaged key local individuals who were able to link further to the community, spreading the word about the project and courses.

Often quite simple and traditional methods seemed appropriate. For example, the project also used hand delivered leaflets, an open day with a volunteers fair, and advertisements in the [very] local press and radio. A presentation was also delivered to the local job centre job advisors and all local voluntary organisations were also contacted, some personally. Relevant staff at the local secondary school were also contacted via email and the job club was visited to encourage people to attend the courses at the centre or to in some way get involved.

All respondents to the survey or these approaches were individually spoken to by the project coordinator and encouraged to become involved with the project. This received a positive response and alleviated fears on attending voluntary activity or courses as participants felt they had already made contact with someone who was friendly.

Q: The project used Community Champions to drive the project aims through their community. How did this work?

Two Tudorville TDCC board members were identified as the very people with the skills, local knowledge and respect within the community that would fit the role of Community Champions. As a result of the project, two members of the Tudorville District Community Centre Committee have taken the Community Champion challenge; with a real commitment to vocalising and moving forwards the needs and aspirations of the Tudorville community, particularly those who are unemployed.

As further learning needs were identified as the Community Asset Transfer project progressed, more structured learning took place for the champions and more training is due to take place in the future; enabling, empowering and enriching the lives of community members. The project will fund further training for the Community Champions to further define and improve their skills, by way of a NOCN Community Development Award and the Community Learning Champion award through WEA.

Learning and Community Asset Transfer: Eight Top Tips

1. There is a clear need to ensure your asset/building is user friendly. User Panels can help to identify the concerns and priorities of users/potential users of the community asset and can lead to the early identification of problems or ideas for improvements.

In running a User Panel it is important to outline a clear purpose and the time required for participants' involvement right from the beginning. There also needs to be very clear lines of feedback between the Panel members and the decision-makers.

You can use User Panels to:

• establish a two-way dialogue between the CAT and potential users
• set up a sounding board for new approaches or proposals relating to CAT
• identify emerging problems.

2. A capacity and skills audit of your core group is recommended to ensure you have the time, energy and range of skills called for – both, in relation to the process of taking ownership and in proceeding to manage an asset on a sustainable basis. The project might well need different people when you move beyond the initial acquisition phase, so consider carefully when to invite participation from those people you identified during your initial mapping phase.

3. The Herefordshire project used surveys to ensure a level of consensus around the development of the community asset. You may wish to use Delphi Survey methodology. Delphi Surveys can be carried out face to face, online or by post. The technique aims to derive the benefit of the opinions of a group, while avoiding the disadvantages of 'group-think' and group dynamics where certain individuals dominate the discussion. The process takes place in a number of stages:

- The first questionnaire either asks the participants to individually identify issues and generate as many ideas as possible or to answer more close ended questions such as the likely dates for specific developments.

- The second questionnaire anonymously feeds back all the ideas and forecasts sent in the first round to all participants. This questionnaire also provides space for participants to refine each idea, comment on their strengths or weaknesses and to suggest new ideas.

- An additional questionnaire then summarises the input from the second questionnaire and asks for further clarification, strengths, weaknesses, and new ideas. This stage can be repeated as many times as necessary until a consensus on key points is reached.

- The end product is either a consensus amongst the participants on likely and possible future developments, or a wide range of possible developments and their relative strengths and weaknesses.

4. Where possible, use someone as an intermediary who is already trusted by the local community. In the Herefordshire case, this was a community development worker from the local voluntary sector support service, HVOSS.

5. 'Look for the learning' in any infrastructure or building work that forms part of the CAT project.

6. Remember the potential value of learning and the digital or community champions in taking the project forward. The following site may help:

http://www.communitylearningchampions.org.uk/.
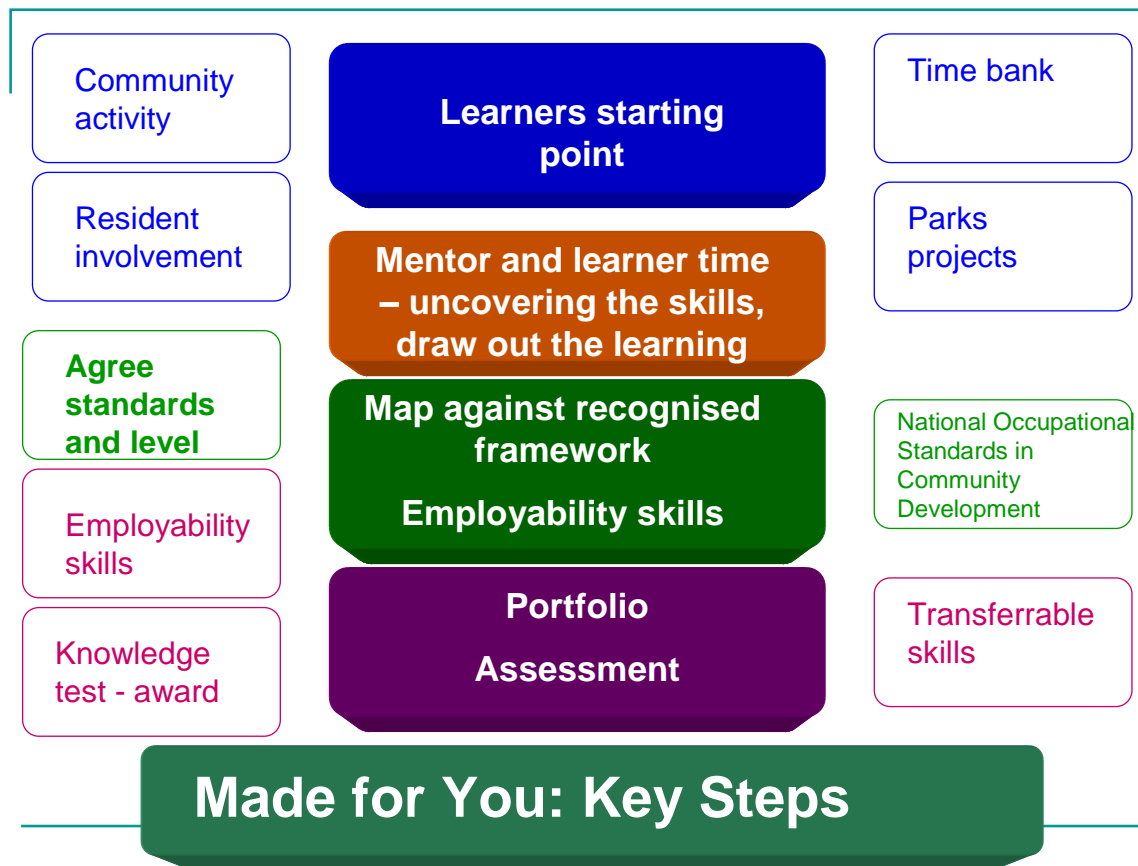
7. Don't forget to use a range of engagement activities, including 'old' tried and tested methods. The Herefordshire project used hand delivered leaflets, door to door calls, open days and ads in the local press.

8. 'Look for the learning' in any leadership role taken on by members of the project. In Herefordshire, this involved accreditation in areas such as Community Leadership.
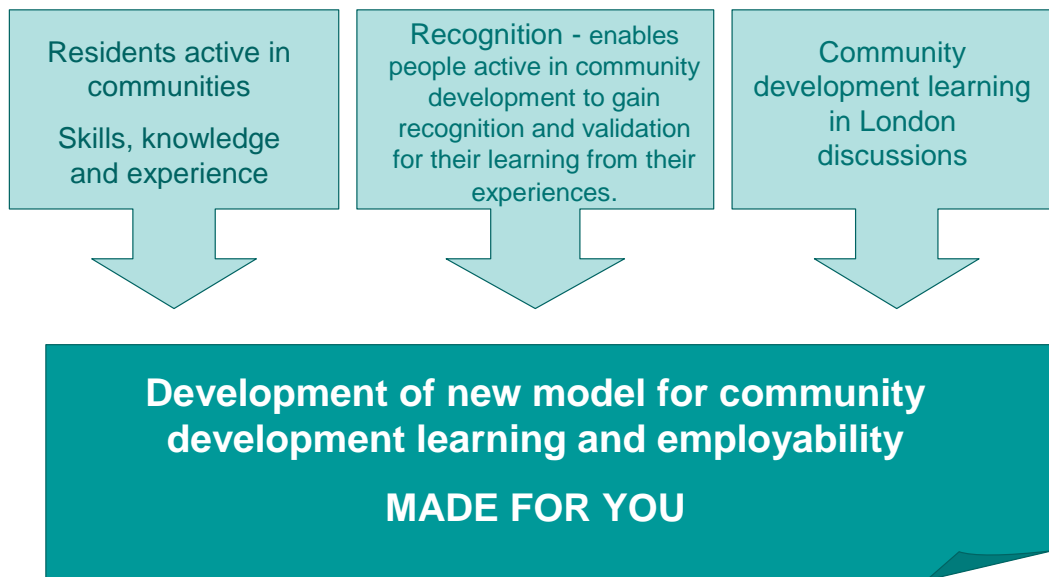
Working With Residents to Recognise Learning Tool

The Difficult Times project with Hexagon Housing Association, titled *'Made for You'* worked with residents to identify employability skills they had developed through community volunteering activity. Read the following materials from the Hexagon project and use the final 'guiding principles' section to help you devise your approach.

The 'Made For You' Model

Community activity	**Learners starting point**	Time bank
Resident involvement	**Mentor and learner time – uncovering the skills, draw out the learning**	Parks projects
Agree standards and level	**Map against recognised framework** **Employability skills**	National Occupational Standards in Community Development
Employability skills		
Knowledge test - award	**Portfolio** **Assessment**	Transferrable skills

Made for You: Key Steps

The Idea Behind Made For You

| Residents active in communities

Skills, knowledge and experience | Recognition - enables people active in community development to gain recognition and validation for their learning from their experiences. | Community development learning in London discussions |

Development of new model for community development learning and employability

MADE FOR YOU

Hexagon

Key features of the Hexagon 'Made for You' model

- A model for learning and employability
- People active in their community
- Turns existing models on their head
- Starting point is the learner, their experiences, knowledge and skills
- Uncover the skills that already exist
- Draw out employability skills
- Recognition of 'what is in the cupboard'
- Plotting next steps

Recognition of Learning: Guiding Principles

1. It is not a one-off activity, but a process or a journey, taking the learner through multiple stages. You will be able to define the stages of your model. Most systems for recognising learning will follow these seven broad stages in some way or other:

    I. Initial guidance
    II. Reflection and the recognising and identifying of skills
    III. Relating these skills to an agreed set of outcomes or criteria
    IV. Gathering evidence of these skills
    V. Documentation of evidence
    VI. Assessment of the evidence
    VII. Accreditation / Documentation

2. The result of the procedure is owned by the learner. It is the individual's property and it should be voluntary for the individual to participate.

3. Confidence and trust are vital; only the individual should have the power to change anything in his/hers documentation.

4. The objective is an end result with credibility and legitimacy; the end document is a result of a process and is therefore credible to the individual who owns it. It is the end-receiver of the document (ie potential employers) who will give it legitimacy.

5. A wide range of types of evidence of learning should be used. These can include:

   - Reflective Accounts
   - Blogs
   - Structured Interviews, video and audio recordings
   - 'Assessment on demand', such as exam or assignment
   - Simulation/observation of practice
   - Mapping of learning outcomes
   - Testimony/work records from voluntary organisations
   - Photographs
   - Record of Volunteer Learning and Experience
   - Portfolios and E-portfolios

6. Further information on recognition of learning:

- http://www.niace.org.uk/current-work/rarpa
- http://www.ialsupport.org.uk/
- http://archive.excellencegateway.org.uk/page.aspx?o=326041
- http://www.niacedc.org.uk/sites/default/files/images/Rarpa/Measuring%20Soft%20Outcomes%20a%20WEFO%20Research%20Report%20-%20June%202006.doc
- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0pwhjWWe740