

Community University of the Valleys Partnership

**Partnership Facilitator Project
January 2001 - December 2002**

Final Evaluation Report

**People and Work Unit
November 2002**

**Community University of the Valleys Partnership
Partnership Facilitator Project Evaluation
People & Work Unit**

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Community University of the Valleys Partnership (CUVP) is a Partnership of 4 Universities, 9 community projects or organisations and the WEA (Workers Educational Association)¹. The aims of the CUVP are, in broad terms, to increase learning, including higher education, by and in local communities in the West Wales and Valleys region.
- 1.2 The Partnership Facilitator Project was funded under Objective One from January 2001 to December 2002 to provide the staff and resources to drive the CUV Partnership forward. It is a capacity building initiative aimed at developing the capacity of the Partnership and the individual Partners to widen participation in learning and in particular higher education.
- 1.3 The project activities and aims address:
- widening participation in higher education
 - the range of learning available at community venues
 - new learning programmes
 - curriculum gaps and progression routes
 - mentoring and guidance
 - training support for Partners
 - research into adult learning issues
 - good practice in community based HE
 - promotion and dissemination issues
 - ways of meeting identified needs.
- 1.4 The aim of this evaluation is to review the work of the Partnership Facilitator Project on the development of the Partnership and the provision of learning through the Partnership. The Partnership consists of 14 strategic Partners, although the level of their involvement varies radically. The University of Wales, Swansea is the lead body in the Partnership, responsible for project management. The Co-ordinator of the CUV Partnership is based at the University of Wales Swansea.
- 1.5 Widening participation in learning is a broad aim which encompasses both increasing the numbers of students going onto campus to study and taking more courses out into communities. The CUVP, although primarily concerned with taking learning out into communities, also views increasing student numbers on campus from under-represented groups as an important step in widening participation for all. Although the end result in terms of qualifications may be the same, the experience of being a student on campus will vary from the experience of being a student in the community. Widening participation involves allowing local people to opt for the system of learning they feel will be of most benefit to them, whilst guaranteeing equal quality of the learning experience.
- 1.6 Partnership working is being actively encouraged in almost all fields at present, with the National Assembly for Wales putting much emphasis on the benefits of Partnership working, particularly where work includes or impinges on local communities. There are

¹ For the purposes of this report, unless otherwise indicated, the WEA have been included under the broad umbrella of Community Partners when discussing the Partnership.

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obvious benefits to working in Partnership: shared experiences; shared skills; shared resources; more chance of finding solutions which are acceptable to all. However, Partnership working also has its negative aspects. Partnership working generally involves additional costs and takes more time in terms of meetings and discussions with and between Partners, amalgamating or allowing for a number of different working practices, timetables and regulatory procedures and finding common ground on which to come together. The evaluation considered to what extent Partnership working has added to or detracted from the Partners' work.

2. Methodology

- 2.1 The evaluation commenced in November 2001 with a baseline study of the CUVP. This baseline study involved interviews with at least one representative of each Partner organisation. The interviews took place during December 2001 at the interviewees' workplaces and asked for information on the aims of the CUVP, why Partners had become involved, how they would like to see the CUVP develop and what resources they bring to the CUVP. In addition, baseline data on course provision and students was collected by postal questionnaire from each Community Partner. The December 2001 meeting of the Planning and Co-ordination Group was observed. These findings informed the ongoing evaluation and the structure of the final interviews.
- 2.2 Following the baseline study, ongoing data collection used a number of methods:
- Attendance at all meetings of the Research and Evaluation sub group
 - Regular contact with the Partnership Co-ordinator
 - Observation of the Partnership Consultation meeting in April 2002
 - Attendance at the FACE Conference (Forum for the Advancement of Continuing Education) where CUV Partners were presenting CUVP research papers, held July 2002 at Glamorgan University
 - Collection of data on course provision and students from each Community Partner in July 2002.
- 2.3 The final stage of the evaluation consisted of face to face interviews with at least one representative from each Community Partner, 2 representatives, seen separately, from the 3 local Universities and from the WEA, and all 3 members of staff of the CUV Partnership facilitator project. Unfortunately, no one was available from the Open University due to staff shortages at the time of the final evaluation. These interviews were carried out at the interviewees' workplace in October 2002. A final set of data on course provision and students was collected by postal questionnaire from each Community Partner in November 2002.
- 2.4 In total 38 face-to-face interviews were held over the 12 month evaluation. Individuals interviewed were:
1. Janet McCallum, Glynneath Training Centre (twice)
 2. Graham Hathaway, Tredegar Development Trust
 3. Mikka James, Tredegar Development Trust
 4. Jeremy Gass, University of Wales College, Newport
 5. Jenny Turner, University of Wales College, Newport
 6. David Waddington, University of Wales College, Newport (twice)
 7. Tony Brown, Blaenllechau Community Regeneration Project (twice)
 8. Alan Williams, Ebbw Fach Development Trust (twice)
 9. Julie Bibby, Dove Workshop (twice)
 10. Paul Nagle, Porth Telecentre and Business School (twice)
 11. Eleri Chilcott, Amman Valley Enterprises (twice)
 12. Sharon James, Amman Valley Enterprises (twice)
 13. Heather Pudner, Penderry Project (twice)

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14. Lyz Jones, Bryncynon Community Revival Strategy
15. Lynne Jones, Bryncynon Community Revival Strategy
16. Lyn Hurley, Workers Educational Association
17. Graham Price, Workers Educational Association (twice)
18. Rob Payne, University of Glamorgan (twice)
19. Danny Saunders, University of Glamorgan
20. Clare Thomas, Open University
21. Hazel Hunter, University of Wales, Swansea
22. Judith James, University of Wales, Swansea
23. Colin Trotman, University of Wales, Swansea
24. Sue Carter, CUVP Administrator
25. Rhysian Jones, CUVP Project Co-ordinator (twice)
26. Rita Kopp, CUVP Curriculum Development Officer

3. Partnership activities

3.1 The main focus of the CUVP is on developing widening participation in learning and in particular in HE level learning, rather than on the direct support of courses with Community Partners. In addition to supporting the Partnership through the organisation of meetings of the main committees and various sub groups, the Partnership Facilitator Project provides support, advice and guidance in many other ways, including curriculum development support, staff training, practical support, advice on funding bids and representation at a number of other Partnerships and fora. Additionally the Partnership holds an annual CUVP lecture and has, this year, produced a Quality Handbook on good practice in community based learning and produced 4 small-scale research projects. This section sets out the activities and achievements of the Partnership over the period of evaluation.

Partnership meetings

3.2 The CUV Partnership has 3 full committees (the Policy & Strategy Group, the Planning & Co-ordination Group and the Project Steering Group). These 3 committees form the strategic management of the Partnership. Below them are 3 sub-committees (Research & Evaluation sub-group, Quality sub-group and the Curriculum Development sub-group). Over the period January 2001 to November 2002, the CUV Partnership held a total of 36 meetings between these 6 committees and sub-committees.

Curriculum Development Support

3.3 The Partnership has developed or helped to develop a number of specific courses or programmes including:

- a multi-media course which has been piloted and is now available for use by all community organisations involved in the CUVP. This is currently being delivered as an entry level course to multi-media studies at higher education level.
- a part time degree programme which is now being delivered in at least 4 community organisations with a number of different modules currently running successfully.
- an e-learning project which has piloted supported on-line courses in Sociology and Archaeology using the extensive multi-media equipment which has been provided through the CUVP sister project Connecting Communities Cymru.
- a pilot curriculum, which is currently undergoing development, aimed at attracting young people into learning.
- a student tracking system database which is being developed with 2 Community Partners working jointly.
- a community development studies introductory course, which has been piloted and developed for use as an entry to accredited higher education courses.
- a progression mural to assist learners to identify the next appropriate step for them to take.

Training

3.4 The Partnership has delivered 15 one-day training events since January 2001, involving a total of 150 participants and nearly all Partners. The topics have included community development, front line guidance skills, monitoring & evaluation, supporting community learners and using the Internet for teaching & learning. In addition to this the Partnership has provided support for individuals from Partner organisations to undertake training in a

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number of areas aimed at allowing them to become more effective members of the Partnership.

Equal Opportunities

- 3.5 The Partnership is developing an equal opportunities strategy based on the needs of its Partners and their learners. A training programme is being developed in Partnership with specialist bodies such as the Royal National Institute for the Blind and the Royal National Institute for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, to raise awareness in specific areas of need. Training sessions delivered or programmed for delivery to date include supporting learners with dyslexia, supporting learners with visual impairments, mental health awareness and supporting deaf or hard of hearing learners.

Practical support

- 3.6 The Partnership has provided practical support to a number of individual Partners including:
- Help in purchasing software to support the quality and breadth of training provision
 - Help with the design and production of marketing materials
 - Support for web-site developments for 5 Partners
 - Practical support with the planning and running of events such as open days and enrolments.

In addition the Partnership has also developed its own Partnership web site.

Funding bids and other Partnership working

- 3.7 The Partnership has been consulted on or given advice on the development of at least 9 funding bids where it has an interest. The Partnership has also established links with a range of other Partnerships and advisory groups including Community Development Cymru, the New Learning Network covering Neath Port Talbot, the Rhondda Cynon Taff Learning Partnership, the Blaenau Gwent Learning Centre Strategy and the University of Glamorgan Dyslexia Advisory Group.

Annual lecture

- 3.8 The Partnership held its 2001 Annual Lecture in Ammanford in November which was attended by 140 people. The lecture was held in a community location and Amman Valley Enterprises played a significant role in its organisation. This year's lecture is due to be held in Cwmaman with a similar attendance number anticipated. Telecentre and Business School, Porth are playing a key role in its organisation This is perhaps the highest profile and most prestigious event held by the CUVVP and attracts people from a wide range of organisations.

Quality Handbook

- 3.9 A major achievement this summer was the production of the book '*Aiming High: Quality in Community Learning.*' The handbook, together with a large poster to be displayed in community learning venues, sets out what is needed to deliver quality learning in the community. It is hoped that this will form the basis of a 'kitemark' for community learning centres that meet its guidelines.

Research

- 3.10 The Partnership has this year, commissioned and managed 4 small-scale research projects with its Partners. This is the first time the Partnership has attempted to carry out its own research and valuable lessons were learned about the processes involved in commissioning

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and managing research in addition to a number of valuable research projects. In total these research projects involved all 3 local University Partners and at least 7 Community Partners.

The research projects were:

- Was IT Good For You?
- Voluntary Organisations As Training Providers
- Reaching the Non-Participant
- Encouraging Young Men in Learning

4. Main Findings

Introduction

- 4.1 These findings are drawn mainly from the final round of interviews undertaken with Partners in October 2002. They are also informed by the baseline study and ongoing evaluation over the past 12 months. The findings are divided into a number of sub-headings: a spirit of Partnership; the vision of the CUVP; development; the benefits of being a Partner; what Partners bring to the table; growth of the Partnership; external image; appropriate support; the future.

A spirit of Partnership

- 4.2 The Community University of the Valleys is a Partnership between Universities and community organisations. The Universities as organisations have far greater resources and greater influence on outside events than do the Community Partners. Despite this imbalance of resources, there is a genuine feeling of equality of Partnership amongst those individuals who make up the CUV Partnership. The view was expressed, both by the University representatives and the Community representatives that the meetings are a forum where anyone is free to express an opinion, make a suggestion or ask for assistance. When asked what the best thing about the CUVP was, over 50% of interviewees quoted the Partnership and attendance at meetings as being the most valuable thing they got out of it.

'With the CUV there isn't this big political agenda you sometimes get ... there seems to be less bureaucracy in the way it works.'

'It's becoming a good Partnership where people are willing to share ideas.'

'I think the strength of the Partnership is that people respect the other people in the room.'

Vision of the CUV

- 4.3 Interviewees were asked to describe what the CUVP is. Although there was common agreement that it is a Partnership involving Universities and community organisations, there were some differences in what individual Partners saw as the CUVP's aims. Some saw it as specifically aimed at delivering higher education in local communities. Some saw it as having a wider agenda of increasing the delivery of all levels of education in community venues. Others saw it as a means of raising the agenda with disadvantaged groups but not necessarily using local delivery. All agreed that increasing the take-up of higher education by people in Valleys communities was one of the main aims but the degree of concentration on this focus differed.

'Hopefully the aim is that some people will end up doing HE in the community but not necessarily.'

'The aim is to provide learning opportunities for people in the community in its widest sense.'

'A Partnership that involves Universities and communities which enables us to look at the fuller picture and offer things in the community not already there and work together for the best of the communities and the Universities.'

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Development of the CUV

- 4.4 All Partners agreed that the CUV had developed greatly over the past 12 or 18 months, although all also recognised that it still had a long way to go. Interviewees quoted a number of specific areas where development had occurred: communication has improved; there is a growing sense of identity; more HE courses are being run in the community; staff development and other training has taken place. Many of the University interviewees told us that they felt that trust and co-operation between the Universities was improving. Interviewees were also all appreciative of the CUV staff and the support that they have provided to both the Partnership as a whole and to individual organisations.

'There's more focus – we still flounder but we used to flounder a lot more.'

'I feel more optimistic now than I did a year ago – it's become more real, tangible.'

'There is more respect for the Community Partners from the Universities than before.'

'The Co-ordinator has made things a lot more active than they were before – there is movement on all fronts.'

'We've seen things happen and benefitted from it – the booklet, the residential – things are moving quicker. There's more planning.'

Levels of activity

- 4.5 However, there are still a number of issues which need addressing. There are a small number of Community Partners who are not playing a full part in the Partnership and one which has failed to play any part in well over 12 months. Although it is recognised by all Partners that community organisations face particular difficulties due a lack of resources, there is growing concern that some Partners may be taking the place of other, potentially more active, new Partners who would like to come on board. It should be noted that currently no formal guidelines exist for bringing in new members or removing existing ones.

'The Community Partners need to represent something and bring something in ... There are 2 Partners who have never contributed and should be replaced.'

- 4.6 The Open University has also been unable to play a full part in recent months due to staff changes. However, their intention is to address this once new staff are in place although this could be up to 6 months ahead.

Learner data

- 4.7 Information on learner data was collected throughout the study in order to ascertain the type and scope of data currently available to track learners (see Appendix A). It was apparent that currently insufficient data is collected to enable the CUV to accurately assess its impact on the numbers or types of learners being encouraged through CUV activity. Accurate assessment of learner progression was also not possible. However, Community Partners were cautious as to how much detail they could collect from learners without it acting as a disincentive.

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The benefits of being in the Partnership

4.8 Nearly all Partners, Community and University, recognised a wide range of tangible benefits to being involved in the Partnership:

- staff development
- marketing support
- curriculum development
- student support
- research projects
- the quality handbook

Once again, though, it was the less tangible benefits that Partners found most important and most beneficial.

'The sense that you belong to a group who hopefully have the same aims of making things better for learners.'

'It's about working with other Higher Education organisations who are trying to do similar kinds of things and a solidarity to be able to say "we're part of this wider grouping" – it validates what we're doing.'

'Recognising that people have different ways of tackling stuff and learning from that.'

'You mention something at the CUV and someone says "I can help you with that".'

What Partners bring to the table

4.9 For the Community Partners this issue was very clear: they bring expertise and long term experience of working in deprived and isolated communities. They also offer the Universities access to potential learners and have a clear interest in widening participation.

'We're at the sharp end and can say what things are like here... Can bring a different perspective to issues and perhaps stop mistakes being made.'

'It's about keeping the Universities in touch with the grass roots level.'

'We're a testbed and our ideas can influence things.'

'A way of working which has been successful, a particular style, working with people from where they are.'

The University Partners told us that what they bring is commitment to the process, a non-traditional University approach and resources.

Growth of the Partnership

4.10 At present the Partnership consists of 4 Universities, the WEA and 9 Community Partners. If the current Objective One bid is successful, a further 6 Community Partners will be brought into the Partnership. Although this issue was discussed at the Consultation meeting in April 2002 and has been raised at a number of other meetings, nearly all interviewees felt that there had been little consultation on whether the Partnership should expand or if these

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are the right organisations to bring in. Nevertheless, members in general appear happy with this proposed expansion and with the organic way in which the CUVP is currently developing.

- 4.11 Although members were happy with the system for recruiting Partners, or lack of it, currently, there was general agreement that if the Partnership is to expand beyond this level, then some clearer procedures need to be established. Many Partners suggested that the new Quality Handbook could be used to develop a set of criteria which new members should meet. There was also suggestion of advertising openly for members rather than the Partnership approaching specific groups.

'Members should agree to sign up to the Quality handbook.'

'How do other organisations know how to join?'

'I think the natural next step is to be more proactive about advertising recruitment. Could have full membership & associate membership with new members working towards quality standards.'

- 4.12 The evaluation also looked at the range of organisational types in the Partnership. Many Partners expressed the opinion that it would be beneficial to have Further Education involved in some way. However, it was also felt that bringing in all the FE colleges as full Partners might overload the Partnership and some less official form of representation might be preferential. This has already been agreed by the Partnership as an appropriate course of action and is being implemented.

'There is a niggle that FE colleges are not part of it ... It may be that we need something different to bring them in, not directly through CUV.'

'[FE colleges] could come in as advisors, for certain bits, otherwise it would get too big and we'd lose that closeness.'

'FE provision is too significant to be outside the Partnership, but how do you embrace it without damaging what's already there?'

External image

- 4.13 There were differences of opinion between Partners on how well known the CUVP is outside of its direct Partnership. Some organisations felt that it was relatively well known, others felt that organisations would know of the CUVP but not necessarily understand what it was. However, many felt that there was little outside knowledge of the CUVP at all, despite some attempts at raising the profile over the past months.

'They don't know about it ... it needs more publicity, needs branding... the CUV suffers from a lack of image.'

'There's very low awareness ... still haven't raised the profile enough.'

'There is minimal knowledge unless it touches them ... the CUV is trying to redress the balance with leaflets etc...'

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'There is still a definite need to raise the profile of what's being done ... but it's getting better with the web site and leaflets.'

Appropriate support

- 4.14 One particular issue that was raised at the start of the evaluation was the apparent lack of support for the CUVP from the higher levels of the Universities, particularly at Vice Chancellor level. All Partners agreed at that stage that this was a major issue. At the final stage of the evaluation we again investigated this issue with interviewees. There was consensus that some improvement appeared to have been made in that the Policy & Strategy Group, where Vice Chancellors are represented, had met twice in the past year. However, there was still a feeling that the CUVP lacked any concrete commitment from Vice Chancellors in this time of discussions around new University clusters. Partners felt that support at this level was important for the long term benefit of the Partnership.

'[Vice Chancellor Support] matters because them being involved gives it credibility and recognition at a higher level.'

'To me there is no perceptible change [in the level of support] ... it devalues it, makes it appear that we're dealing with just a department in the Universities rather than the Universities per se.'

'The VCs are not against it but they're backing a number of horses in the collaboration race.'

The future

- 4.15 The evaluation looked at the future of the CUV Partnership and asked interviewees how they saw the CUVP developing over the next few years. As would be expected there were mixed responses to this. One group of Partners predicted difficulties due to the impact of University clustering (which may lead to UWCN and Glamorgan looking more towards Cardiff and UWS towards the west coast Universities). Problems with funding were also anticipated once Objective One comes to end in 2007.

'I don't think it will exist. In 5 years time there will be a consolidation of merged Universities and they will cement their boundaries... The CUV will be subsumed within that framework ... it could survive within that cluster with a priority interest of working in the Valleys.'

'I think it would struggle without EU funding... whether or not a loose framework could keep meeting from time to time around the Annual Lecture perhaps?'

- 4.16 Other Partners took a more optimistic view, seeing the Partnership continuing to develop although slowly and gradually over time. All Partners responded positively when asked if they would still be involved in 5 years' time.

'I'm sure we will be [involved] if it's still going. We're very committed to the group of people who are currently involved in it.'

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'If it remains relevant to what we're doing [we will still be involved]... It looks very positive at the moment.'

'A realistic view is that we're still hammering on doors, trying to get the Universities to talk to each other. A more romantic view is that the CUV will be offering a full progression route through accessible, flexible, community linked education, up to and beyond degree level.'

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

Introduction

- 5.1 The Community University of the Valleys Partnership is a network of Universities and community organisations which come together to develop better ways of engaging with non-participants and to make learning more accessible to all learners. The CUVP's role is to find better and more appropriate ways of involving individuals from Valleys communities in higher education both in the community and on campus. The CUVP is viewed by its members as a fertile, enthusiastic, supportive and valuable network. The Partnership Facilitator Project has been a linchpin in the development of the Partnership over the past 2 years and the staff and resources it has provided have been used to aid the widening participation agenda.
- 5.2 In terms of the aims of the project as outlined in section 1.1, progress has been made, to a lesser or greater extent, on all these points. In particular, the new part-time degree in the community has allowed individuals, who would not have been able to access HE before, to study and has increased the range of learning available in community venues. New learning programmes have been developed, for example the piloted multi-media course and the new introductory level community development course. Curriculum gaps and progression routes are being addressed through the development of the progression mural (described as a version of the underground map) to visually display possible routes of learning. All Partners have been offered training and development opportunities through the Partnership Facilitator Project. The small-scale research projects have been viewed as particularly useful, both in increasing the understanding of the impact of learning and as a training and development tool for Partners themselves. The following paragraphs highlight a number of areas which require further comment.

Partnership working

- 5.3 The CUV Partnership has developed greatly during the project though it still has a long way to go. As one Partner described it: *'It's the best Partnership we're part of – but as yet it hasn't really done much.'* As stated in the introduction, Partnership working, whilst bringing undoubted benefits, can also be extremely difficult. The CUVP is a Partnership of 4 Universities, 9 community organisations and the WEA. Getting a group of this kind, with the diversity and range of organisations represented, to sit around a table and agree actions, is inevitably a difficult and protracted process. The evaluation found evidence that the Partnership provides its individual members with a valued opportunity to look at the broader picture and think 'outside the box'. The enthusiasm and commitment shown by the majority of its members is evidence that this process, and the outcomes it produces, are worthwhile and should be persevered with.

Student tracking

- 5.4 As stated in Section 3, the data that was collected on learners was restricted to what the Community Partners currently collect from individual learners. This has meant that it is not possible to accurately track learners in terms of progression, or to assess the social background of learners. Both these elements are essential if the CUVP is to measure its impact in terms of individual students rather than organisations.

Recommendation 1

The CUV Partnership should work with individual Community Partners to develop full student identification and tracking systems which give sufficient information to assess whether individual Partners and the CUV Partnership as a whole are reaching their targets in terms of disadvantaged groups and whether progression to HE is being facilitated.

Appropriate support

- 5.5 Although some progress has been made, the Partnership still lacks adequate support from the higher levels of Universities in the Partnership. The Vice Chancellors unofficially act as the 'Board' of the CUV, with all major or cross-University decisions going through this group. For instance, the publication of the Quality Handbook was delayed for several weeks waiting for approval from the Vice Chancellors thereby missing an opportunity to launch the publication at the FACE Conference. Issues of joint curricula and joint accreditation are also governed by this group and it is unlikely that any progress will be made towards either of these issues without greater support. It is accepted that difficulties with obtaining support from the Vice Chancellors may be due in part to the number of emerging agendas the Universities are currently facing, most particularly the issue of clustering. However, this lack of support is hampering the progress of the CUV and needs to be addressed.

Recommendation 2

The CUV Partnership should agree with the Vice Chancellors a more effective process for decision making and action.

Marketing and publicity

- 5.6 Although the CUV, through the staff and resources provided under the Partnership Facilitator Project, has done much to attempt to increase the levels of awareness of the CUV to outside organisations, there is still a significant problem. Many organisations are either totally unaware of the CUV or have little or no understanding of its aims and activities. The evaluators frequently come across organisations, particularly community organisations, which have little awareness of the CUV. Given the role of the CUV in widening participation this lack of awareness is hindering the ability of other organisations to become involved in or take advantage of the activities of the CUV. The Partnership may therefore be missing out on skills and resources within organisations which are unaware of their potential to be a part of this process.

Recommendation 3

The CUV Partnership should develop its marketing strategy to try and ensure greater awareness of the CUV by all relevant bodies.

Membership

- 5.7 Presently, the CUV has no official procedures for recruiting new members or expelling current ones. The Partnership relies on potential new Partners either putting themselves forward or being identified by existing members. Given that many organisations are unaware of the CUV's activities, it is reasonable to assume that they are also unaware that it is possible to join the Partnership.
- 5.8 The CUV relies on its Partners' commitment of time and resources to make the Partnership function. Some current members give considerable time and commitment to the Partnership.

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The Partnership would be looking for similar dedication from potential new Partners: a strong commitment to the broader widening participation agenda, a willingness to give time and effort to the Partnership, an interest in progression routes into higher education.

Recommendation 4

The CUV Partnership should draw up guidelines for the recruitment of new members and the conduct of current members as soon as possible.

Further Education Institutions

- 5.9 There has been much debate within the Partnership as to whether FE colleges should be invited into the Partnership, and if so, on what basis. The Community University of the Valleys Partnership is primarily focussed on higher education and it is that focus which makes the CUV Partnership a valuable Partnership to its members. FE Colleges could have much to contribute to certain aspects of the CUVPs work, particularly around issues of progression routes into HE. However, there is a danger that this focus on HE would be lost if FE colleges were to join the Partnership as full members. At present the CUV Partnership has agreed to invite FE Colleges to become involved in the process on an informal basis.

Recommendation 5

FE colleges should not be invited to join the CUV Partnership as full members but the current agreed system of bringing in FE colleges as advisors where appropriate should be continued and encouraged.

The Future

- 5.10 There is realistic concern from some Partners that once the Objective One programme comes to an end in around 5 years' time, then accessing resources for the CUV Partnership will become much more difficult. Due to this probable time limitation on the CUV Partnership, it would be appropriate for the Partnership to develop a strategy around this timescale and set out targets for achievements by 2007.

Recommendation 6

The CUV Partnership should establish an agenda for work for the next 5 years which ensures that it can meet its key priorities within this timespan. This would involve the Partnership reaching an agreement on what those priorities should be.

Conclusion

- 5.11 The Partnership Facilitator Project has contributed greatly to the development of the CUV Partnership. The Partners feel optimistic about the immediate future of the Partnership and its ability to start making a real impact on widening participation. However, there is still a long way to go in terms of practical actions based on agreed targets on any meaningful scale. The CUV Partnership needs to continue to build upon the progress it has achieved and persevere with its challenging but admirable agenda.

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**Appendix A –
Learning with the Community Partners**

Introduction

This appendix to the evaluation concentrates on the level and type of learning opportunities provided by and through Community Partners in the CUV Partnership. It does not include any CUV Partnership activities with or support for community organisations which are not members of the CUV Strategic Partnership. It is included as evidence of the type and scope of learner data currently collected by the Community Partners.

Not all learners are on courses provided by CUV Partnership University Partners, indeed the majority of those learners undertaking non-HE level courses are learning with other institutions. However, all HE learning is provided by one of the CUV Partnership Universities. The data collected was based on discussions with the Community Partners around the type and detail of data they currently collect.

Analysis of data on all learners and courses through Community Partners

Of the nine Community Partners, one is currently not offering any adult education of any kind and one is offering informal learning in a number of ways, but not running any specific courses. Both these organisations are, however, interested and involved in the strategic development of community learning as part of the regeneration agenda. The remaining 7 Community Partners are all offering a wide range of learning opportunities.

Overall learner numbers

The 7 Community Partners offering courses were able to supply information on numbers of learners over the 3 periods requested. Total numbers of learners with any one organisation ranged from 51 to 552. Similarly the type of learners varied greatly from organisation to organisation. For example, the learners in the 16-25 age group ranged from just 2% of learners with one organisation to 46% in the same age range with another.

Age distribution of learners						
Age	November 01		June 02		November 02	
16-25	170	16%	270	16%	176	14%
26-30	106	10%	137	8%	125	10%
31-49	354	32%	564	34%	355	29%
50-64	207	19%	432	26%	356	29%
65+	252	23%	275	16%	202	17%
Total learners	1245		1676		1214	

Occupation of learners

Partners were asked to state whether learners were unemployed and looking for work; retired; not working and not seeking work (other than retired or unemployed); or working. 5 Partners were able to supply the information as required. Based on the data supplied, across all 3 periods, the largest group of learners fell into the category of unemployed and seeking work, averaging at around 40% of learners. The second highest category was those working, averaging at about 28% of all learners.

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Gender of learners

All 7 respondents provided information on the gender of learners. Across all 3 time periods female learners outnumbered male learners by at least 2 to 1 overall. However, there were some significant differences between individual Partners. 5 of the 7 Partners followed this pattern but 2 organisations had a near 50/50 split across all 3 time periods. These 2 Partners also had the greatest proportion of learners in the 16-25 age group.

Gender of learners						
Gender	November 01		June 02		November 02	
male	352	28%	536	32%	377	31%
female	892	72%	1140	68%	843	69%

Analysis of data on HE level learners & courses through Community Partners

This section refers to a sub set of the learners described in the paragraphs above rather than a separate group. Specific data on HE learners was not collected in November 2001. Therefore this analysis covers June 2002 and November 2002 only. 5 Community Partners offered HE level provision for the term commencing September 2002, an increase of 1 over the previous term. All 5 were also planning to continue running courses at HE level.

Number of learners

In total, HE learners accounted for 5% of learners (85) with 5 HE learning provider Partners in June 2002, rising to 7% (168) in November 2002. Although these percentages may appear small, it must be remembered that the CUVVP project is only one of a large number of initiatives to support their local community that each of these Partners are involved in.

Gender

The overall gender split for HE learners was similar to that for learners overall. In June 2002 the split was 25% male and 75% female, and in November 2002 33% of learners were male and 67% female. This split was generally reflected across all Partners, although certain individual courses attracted more men than women.

Age

The age pattern of HE learners tended to be slightly older than that for learners overall, with 78% of learners being over 30 in both datasets. The corresponding group for all learners accounted for c75%. In addition the largest single group (48% in June 2002) is the 31-49 age group, a hard to reach group and significantly higher than the same age range for all learners (c30%)

Age of HE learners		
Age bracket	June 02	November 02
16-25	8%	5%
26-30	13%	17%
31-49	48%	40%
50-64	19%	27%
65+	11%	11%

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Occupation

The 2 time frames show a very different occupation split as shown in the table below. No conclusions can be drawn from this data due to the small number of learners involved.

Occupation of HE learners				
Occupation	June 02		November 02	
Employed	9	12%	48	32%
retired	6	8%	30	20%
unemployed, seeking work	38	49%	26	18%
not seeking work	25	32%	44	30%