



rural
action
east

Developing Skills in Rural Communities

David Wood

Regional Development Officer

Contact: 01473 242546 or
david.wood@RuralActionEast.org.uk

Contents

- Introduction to Rural Action East and Rural Community Councils
- Rural Communities
- Volunteering & Community development
- Barriers to training provision
- Community based solutions & examples
- Conclusions

Rural Action East & Rural Community Councils

- Improved quality of life
 - Development of individuals & communities
- Network of independent charities
- Rural Action East regional umbrella organization
- RCCs
 - Whole county coverage
 - Specialised rural focus
 - Extensive network of out-reach workers
 - Social Inclusion / Hard-to-reach
- Infrastructure support to VCS

Rural Settlements

- ~80% East of England is *rural*
- ~50% people live in rural areas & growing
- Geographic isolation
 - Small, dispersed, insular communities
 - Remote from political influence
- Lack of services & facilities
 - Rural premium for local provision
 - Lack of transport for remote access

Rural Communities

- In-migration of older affluent professionals
 - Quality of life
- Out-migration of young individuals families
 - Employment
- Low unemployment but low value, low skill jobs
- Lack of affordable housing
- Dispersed, hidden social exclusion
 - Facilities for children & youth
 - Isolation of elderly
- High reliance on voluntary & community activity

Rural Community Councils

Aim to achieve rural regeneration through:

- Whole community approach
- Development of social capital
 - Support & training of individuals & communities
 - To take advantage of empowerment & opportunities
 - Build on output from community planning
- Rural renewal and regeneration
 - Support for community social enterprises
 - Support for rural businesses

Political Context

- Active citizenship
- Community *activists* (volunteers)
- Community engaged policy
 - LSP community strategies
- Community involved delivery
 - Market town regeneration partnerships
 - Social enterprises
- Partnership Delivery
 - Local Area Agreements (LAAs)
 - Voluntary & Community Sector (VCS)

Social Context

- Regeneration more than jobs & services
- Creation of sustainable communities
 - Places where people wish to live & work
 - Inclusive & equitable
 - Access to services & facilities
- Volunteering
 - Creates sense of self worth
 - Develops individual's skills
 - Establishes routine of activity
 - Effective route into employment

Economic Context (VCS)

➤ Employment

- Workforce
 - Nationally ~600,000 / Regionally >50,000
- Volunteers
 - Nationally ~6 million / Regionally >600,000

➤ Economic Value

- Approx 2% GDP
 - Nationally >£27 billion
 - Greater than agriculture, textile and car industries
 - Regionally ~ £1 billion
 - Greater than agriculture and mineral extraction

Community Activist

- Personal skills
 - Communication
 - Leadership
 - Project management
 - Planning
 - Negotiation
 - ICT
- Community development
 - Consultation / Engagement
 - Public sector understanding
 - Fund raising
 - Organization management

Barriers to Skill Development

➤ Communities

- Access to objective course information
 - competitive nature of learning providers
- Embarrassment in admitting learning needs
- Practical barriers
 - Availability & costs of childcare, transport
- Micro-businesses unable to release workers

Barriers to Training Delivery

➤ Training Organisations

- Assumptions in make-up and learning needs of community
- Insensitivity to requirements of learners
- Time of year for course delivery
 - clash with busy agricultural period
- Expensive delivery costs – smaller concentration of potential learners

Community Transport



Kick-Start / Wheels2Work



ICT Training #1



ICT Training #2



Social Enterprises

- Business planning & marketing
- Financial management: cash-flow & funding
- Employment contracts, PAYE/NIC, pensions
- Accessing training
- Legal structure

Coffee Caravan



Conclusions

To enable & encourage training for rural communities, need to:

- Enable access to remote training
- Bring training to rural community
- Provide Information / Raise awareness
- Make training relevant to individual
- Recognise the total cost of training
- Training for unpaid work valuable

To create a higher skilled workforce

- *Promote and support involvement in local volunteering & community action*
 - Develops self confidence & feeling of self-worth
 - Gives new skills and experiences relevant to business
 - Establishes work routine & attitude
 - Encourages desire for self improvement
 - Contributes directly to local economy
 - Contributes directly to rural community regeneration