

# Country background paper: Scotland

## Nature and scale of problems facing countries in regard to adult basic skills

In Scotland, 800,000 adults (23% of the adult population) are estimated to have low literacy and numeracy skills (International Adult Literacy Survey [IALS], 1996). This figure places Scotland, along with England, Ireland and the U.S.A., behind European neighbours like Sweden, (7%), the Netherlands (10%) and Germany (12%).

In response to IALS, 7 research projects were commissioned to inform the development of a Scottish strategy to address what was seen as an unacceptable situation. This included:

An analysis of the Scottish cohort of IALS identified three factors associated with low literacy and numeracy skills:

- having left education at age 16 or earlier,
- being on a low income,
- being in a manual social class group

The Workforce Survey, (MORI, 2000) highlighted four factors:

- many of those in low skill jobs have limited opportunities to use their literacy and numeracy at work
- those with no qualifications were less likely to have taken part in education and training opportunities,
- those out of work are more likely to rate their skills as poor or moderate than those in work,
- over two-fifths of those out of work are unclear about the literacy and numeracy skills required for the job of their choice

The employers' survey highlights:

- nearly a third of employers reported that increasing demands have been made on employees' literacy and numeracy over the previous five years,
- nearly a third expect increasing demands to be made on employees' literacy and numeracy skills in the following five years,
- one fifth believe poor or moderate skills have been a barrier to productivity.

Subsequent research disclosed that approximately 500,000 of adults with low literacy and numeracy skills are in employment.

A third of adults who live in socially excluded areas have low literacy and numeracy skills and they are;

- six times more likely to be unemployed,
- more likely to suffer ill health,
- less likely to be able to support their children's learning,
- less likely to feel able to contribute to community life.

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It became clear that low literacy or numeracy skills have wide-reaching effects on the lives of individuals, that impact on their families, their communities, their working lives and their aspirations. In turn, there are consequences for employers and the economy as a whole, for health and support services, and for social cohesion.

### The Scottish Strategy:

In 2001 the Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland (ALNIS) report was published and contained 21 recommendations (Annex A) to develop a world class literacy and numeracy service.

The Scottish Executive Enterprise, Transport and Lifelong Learning Department (ETLLD) is responsible for policy on Adult Literacy and Numeracy and monitoring local progress of the strategy.

Funding is routed through local authorities to Community Learning Strategy Partnerships who decide and demonstrate collectively how the resources can be used most effectively to meet local need. The funding committed through the new strategy was intended for new work, additional to any existing literacies work. Most local authorities had maintained some provision for adult literacies, usually within their community based adult learning programmes and they were expected to continue funding such provision from existing resources. Local Authorities in Scotland receive a contribution to the cost of providing the services for which they are responsible through "Grant Aided expenditure" (GAE). Prior to the new strategy, spending on adult literacies was not identified in the GAE and it is difficult to make exact comparisons, however, the intention of the new strategy was to stimulate an increase in adult literacies learning, both in volume and quality. The new funding represented a significant increase and the growth in learner numbers is one indicator of its effectiveness. It took some time to organise the infrastructure needed to create growth and initial funding was in incremental steps. Total allocation of the new expenditure in the first 5 years is shown below.

|        | 2001-02<br>£ | 2002-03<br>£ | 2003-04<br>£ | 2004-05<br>£ | 2005-06<br>£ | TOTAL<br>£ |
|--------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------|
| Totals | 2 700 000    | 5 400 000    | 10 400 000   | 10 900 000   | 12 322 000   | 41 722 000 |

For 2006-8, strategic plans and outcomes have been agreed and funding allocations total:

|        | 2006-07<br>£ | 2007-08<br>£ | Totals<br>£ |
|--------|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| Totals | 12 386 000   | 12 484 000   | 24 870 000  |

Since 2001 over 100,000 adults have accessed learning programmes and by 2008, more than £65 million will have been invested at a local level.

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The new funding was the first significant investment in adult literacies provision in over 25 years and the establishment of Learning Connections in 2003 to support the development of provision created the first national support organisation since the mid-1980s.

A review of the strategy has begun and it is expected that targets and funding will be recommended for the years up to 2011.

### Definition

Most importantly, ALNIS recognises that improving adult literacy and numeracy skills is crucial to social justice, community development, social cohesion and a competitive economy. This is demonstrated by the definition of literacy and numeracy adopted in ALNIS:

*"The ability to read and write and use numeracy, to handle information, to express ideas and opinions and solve problems, as family members, workers, citizens and lifelong learners" (ALNIS, P7).*

### Social Practice model

In Scotland, the strategy is based on a lifelong learning, learner centred approach where adults' learning needs and abilities are assessed and individual goals set. Achievement is outcome focused, measuring the progress learners make towards the learning goals they have identified. In practice, there is continuing review and updating of goals as the learner gains in knowledge, understanding and confidence. ALNIS (p2) makes specific reference to the use of the progress file and the core skills framework to recognise and accredit progress but there are no external criteria set in the form of tests or exams.

Success in learning is achieved when learners recognise their achievements and begin to make changes in their life or identify new learning goals.

Success in programmes may be recognised when learners continue to engage until they have reached their learning goals, or leave the programme to move on to other forms of learning or to engage in new social or economic activity.

### Learner Progress

"Literacy and numeracy skills are critical for adults to achieve the goals they set themselves at work, at home, in the community and as learners. The personal consequences of low literacy and numeracy skills can be serious. The national consequences for a modern, multicultural, competitive Scotland, and efforts to achieve social justice, are far reaching." (ALNIS, p 12)

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The research that led to the ALNIS report provided evidence of the scale of potential demand for adult literacies learning, and of the limited capacity to respond. It is also important to recognise the context in which the strategy evolved. ALNIS refers to the Scottish Executive's vision of a 'Smart Successful Scotland' and an inclusive and socially just society. In this light, national and international evidence regarding the difficulties of attracting and retaining learners from the priority groups points to the need for a 'lifelong learning approach' that focuses on the interplay between demands and opportunities that prompt and maintain participation. This approach is seen as contrasting with a 'deficit approach' where a learner is encouraged to take a test that may demonstrate failure to meet a standard set by someone else.

ALNIS recommends that learner progress should be measured by the changes achieved by literacies learners rather than by passing or failing tests that may have no direct relevance to them. Learning progress is therefore recognised in relation to their lives as family members, workers, citizens and lifelong learners. How this is measured is perhaps best illustrated by the Curriculum Framework document<sup>1</sup> (see below). The strategy does, however, commit to the use of the Scottish Qualifications Agency (SQA) Core Skills Framework to provide learners with formal recognition and an incentive to seek accreditation of learning.

The Individual Learning Plan (ILP) is at the heart of the teaching and learning process. Negotiated between tutor and learner, this seeks to identify learning goals, to record and recognise progress towards them, and to reflect on the learning to develop new goals. ILPs can be used in group learning settings and can enable shared learning experiences to be reflected upon for each individual.

### **Partnership Working**

Although the impact of low skills is recognised nationally and internationally, the individual requires an appropriate and locally accessible response. ALNIS therefore placed accountability for local development, funding, monitoring and targets with the 32 Scottish Local Authorities as coordinators of Community Learning Strategies. A fundamental principle is that all local providers of adult literacy and numeracy learning should have access to these new resources, although it will be for the Community Learning Strategy Partnerships to decide and demonstrate collectively how the new resources can be used most effectively.

Across the country, there are significant differences in the ways that partnerships have developed, reflecting the great variety of geography and demography. However, each local authority has developed a partnership for adult literacy and numeracy that embraces all providers across four sectors: local authority community based learning, the voluntary sector, further education and the workplace.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.lc.communitiesscotland.gov.uk](http://www.lc.communitiesscotland.gov.uk)

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## Priority groups

Partnerships are expected to focus on a number of priority groups.

- People with limited initial education, particularly young adults.
- Unemployed people and workers facing redundancy.
- People with English as a second or additional language.
- People who live in disadvantaged areas.
- Workers in low-skilled jobs.
- People on low incomes.
- People with health problems and disabilities.

## Monitoring and National Oversight

The partnerships develop Strategic Plans which are agreed with local partners. These plans outline detailed aims and objectives, along with associated costs. These plans are then assessed and approved by ETLLD and local outcome agreements are issued covering the period of the plans. Progress is monitored annually through yearly reports.

The quality of programmes financed by literacies partnership funding is monitored by Her Majesties Inspectorate for Education (HMIE).

## Support for Development

Support for the field is provided through Learning Connections Adult Literacies Team. Learning Connections is part of the Community Regeneration Division of Communities Scotland, a Scottish Executive Development Department agency with a wide range of responsibilities for housing and community regeneration. It is a location that suits the broad understanding of literacies espoused by ALNIS.

The national support for partnerships from Learning Connections includes:

- encouraging innovative approaches to the provision of adult literacies, for example, through pathfinder projects.<sup>2</sup> In total there have been 12 pathfinder projects to support innovative approaches to literacies learning;
- making the best use of electronic information and technology to support adult literacies learners<sup>3</sup>;
- identifying, developing and disseminating information and resources about adult literacies;
- engaging in and encouraging research into the provision of adult literacies;
- exploring and disseminating good practice;
- encouraging professional development through a national training framework and training programme (approaches are described below);

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<sup>2</sup>

[ibid.](#)

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[ibid.](#)

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- providing training in response to the priorities identified by colleagues in the field;
- liaising with practitioners and promoting the sharing of good practice.

Learning Connections has developed a library of literacies resources, text books and learning materials available to practitioners. This is complimented by a new web-based resource, *Adult Literacies Online* <sup>4</sup> that provides access to downloadable teaching and learning materials, professional development resources and to a bank of adult literacies research and other reports.

The Scottish approach consists of a number of elements, (see Appendix B) all of which are needed if we are to achieve our goal of developing world class literacies provision. It requires partnership working on many levels and a high priority is given to developing effective communication throughout the adult literacies field in Scotland. All of these contacts are seen as vital in maintaining an informed system that is capable of responding to and learning from developments in the field.

Learning Connections hosts regular meetings to discuss current issues with key contacts from the literacies partnerships and ETLLD staff. Members of the team maintain 'geographic links' with local partnerships, including regular visits to partnership meetings and provision and engagement in training and staff development events. The level of engagement with the geographic links varies across the country. There is a monthly e-newsletter <sup>5</sup> and a periodic print newsletter, "LC News" that covers Community Learning and Development and Community Engagement activities as well as Adult Literacies. . <sup>6</sup>

### Profiles of instructors

The term 'instructor' sits uncomfortably with the concept of a social practices approach to literacies. It implies a one-directional learning process in which the instructor is the source and arbiter of all knowledge. A social practices approach recognises the prior knowledge, experience and abilities that an adult bring to the learning situation. The term 'tutor' is therefore generally used. Tutors work in a variety of educational sectors and have similarly varied backgrounds: community based adult learning, further education colleges, training organisations and voluntary organisations. New funding has encouraged the establishment of more substantial posts in adult literacies but many of these are at manager and development worker level. A majority of hours of tuition are provided either by volunteer tutors or by paid

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<sup>4</sup> [http://213.128.231.67/stellent/groups/public/documents/webpages/ALO\\_home.hcsp](http://213.128.231.67/stellent/groups/public/documents/webpages/ALO_home.hcsp)

<sup>5</sup> see web page at

[http://www.lc.comunitiesscotland.gov.uk/stellent/groups/public/documents/webpages/lccs\\_006028.hcsp](http://www.lc.comunitiesscotland.gov.uk/stellent/groups/public/documents/webpages/lccs_006028.hcsp)  
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<sup>6</sup> (1) For details of the work of the adult literacies team in Scotland, including research reports and other publications, go to [www.lc.comunitiesscotland.gov.uk](http://www.lc.comunitiesscotland.gov.uk)

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staff working on temporary contracts for a few hours per week. This has implications for workforce stability and the growth of a body of expertise.

In 2003, a consultation to inform the development of tutor training offered some information on the make-up of the tutoring workforce, although the figures given below represent only part of the total workforce at the time.

|            | Number of individuals | Total Hours worked per week | Total hours worked weekly expressed as equivalent to Full Time Employment (FTE) |
|------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| Paid staff | 221                   | 3 080                       | 88  |
| Volunteers | 569                   | 980                         | 28  |

Responses came from 221 paid staff, whose weekly hours of employment totalled 3,080 hours, and 569 volunteers, whose weekly hours of employment totalled 980 hours.

Relating total hours worked by these individuals to a standard working week of 35 hours, the paid staff provided 88 full-time equivalent (FTE) hours of tuition each week, the volunteers, provided 28 FTE. To train 221 individuals to gain tutoring capacity equivalent to 88 full time tutors is obviously expensive and time consuming. To train a further 259 individuals to gain a capacity of 28 is questionable to say the least.

The most recent reports from the literacies partnerships are currently being assessed. In 2005, reports showed that there were 452 FTE paid tutors and 213 FTE voluntary tutors. Estimates would indicate that because of the very part time nature of many literacies teaching posts, 452 FTE is comprised of between 1200 and 1800 individuals. The volunteer workforce producing 213 FTE hours could be comprised of as many as 3700 individuals.

The 2003 consultation also revealed that 48% of the tutors responding held a qualification at degree level or above.

Most partnerships are making efforts to move towards more substantial posts for instructors and less reliance on volunteers as the mainstay of provision. However it is inevitable that volunteers will continue to make up a substantial part of the workforce for some time to come, especially in rural areas.

There is an increased sense of professionalism among some practitioners, although it is difficult to generalise across the country. Understanding the complexities of teaching adult literacies is growing and the discourse at meetings, such as the key contacts meetings hosted by Learning Connections, training events and conferences is becoming more sophisticated and more confident. Learning Connections provides a wide range of opportunities and events but the partnerships have also created innovative in-house staff development opportunities.

There are complex relationships between

- security of employment and staff preparedness to commit to training,
- hours of employment and the cost of providing staff development, training and opportunities for networking and practice exchange,

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- limited working hours and the rate of growth of experience, which influence the development of professionalism in a relatively new and expanding field of work.

### Training, Professional Development

The Scottish Executive commissioned "Literacies in the Community: resources for practitioners and managers" (2000), known as the LiC pack<sup>7</sup>. The pack provides principles for designing the learning programme:

- promoting self-determination;
- developing an understanding of literacies;
- valuing difference and diversity;

and for developing the organisation:

- promoting participation;
- developing equitable, inclusive and antidiscriminatory practice;
- developing informed practice;
- drawing on partnerships.

Emphasis is placed on the importance of integrated guidance to ensure that learners make the most appropriate choices, and that providers use the capacity of other partners to create the most effective response. LiC also provides an assisted self-evaluation model which the literacies partnerships use to support continuing improvement. It additionally provides training guidelines articulating the skills, knowledge and understanding required by staff in the variety of roles demanded of adult literacies workers: tutoring, either in groups or in one-to-one pairings, advising, supervising and supporting tutors working in one-to-one pairings, volunteering, guidance with learners, programme management, development work and a range of related roles.

### Accredited training

Accredited training is available for tutors new to adult literacies teaching - the Scottish Qualifications Agency (SQA) Professional Development Award (PDA): "Introduction to Adult Literacies Learning" - a qualification at level 6 of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF)<sup>8</sup> - intended to establish a Scotland-wide 'foundation' level adult literacies qualification.

A further SQA PDA has been developed, in "ESOL Literacies: Teaching Adults Reading, Writing and Numeracy" - a 10 session course for qualified teachers of ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) to enable experienced teachers to work with learners whose English is rudimentary, and who may have few or no literacy skills in their mother-tongue.<sup>9</sup> A training pack, which was developed by the Glasgow ESOL Forum, is available from Learning Connections.

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<sup>7</sup> [http://www.lc.comunitiesscotland.gov.uk/stellent/groups/public/documents/webpages/cs\\_007136.pdf](http://www.lc.comunitiesscotland.gov.uk/stellent/groups/public/documents/webpages/cs_007136.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.scqf.org.uk/table.htm>

<sup>9</sup> For more information about the PDA in ESOL Literacies contact the SQA's [Customer Contact Centre](#), telephone +44 (0845) 279 1000

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In addition, Learning Connections is addressing the need for ESOL support for local adult literacies partnerships with the provision of training for literacies tutors who do not have an ESOL qualification but who are working with ESOL learners. Copies of the training pack *An Introduction to teaching ESOL* were sent to each literacies partnership in July 2006 and local training is now being planned.

Benchmark Statements for the 'Teaching Qualification: Adult Literacies' were produced in 2005<sup>10</sup> and these will be the basis of a course that has now been commissioned for a consortium of Higher and Further Education institutions. A pilot of the course will be run from January 2007. Parallel to this, a cohort of experienced practitioners will be trained as 'practice tutors' to ensure that effective support is available to participants throughout the substantial practice-based elements of the course. It is intended that this course will be a major contributor to raising the professionalism of those responsible for delivery of literacies learners in Scotland. Further information is available at

<http://www.strath.ac.uk/Departments/CommunEdu/tgal/index.html>

### Other staff development

A number of non-accredited professional development support resources have also been published:

"Working in Groups with Adult Literacies Learners", 2003, a resources pack to support a move towards more group and shared learning options for learners. An explanatory leaflet for managers is available in pdf format from

[http://www.lc.communitiesscotland.gov.uk/stellent/groups/public/documents/webpages/cs\\_007078.pdf](http://www.lc.communitiesscotland.gov.uk/stellent/groups/public/documents/webpages/cs_007078.pdf)

The pack was created in response to changes in learning delivery arising from the new impetus to expand and improve provision which had been reliant on a volunteer workforce working with individual learners on a one to one basis. There are still many areas - especially the more rural areas - where this is the predominant mode of tuition, but there is now a growing trend to provide more shared and group learning opportunities. The pack is not a training course but contains a wide range of materials that will inform the local development of group learning. It can be, and has been, used locally to support continuing staff development.

"Using ICT in Adult Literacies Learning" - a training pack, is one of a number of ICT resources produced to support more effective tutoring. Details of others can be found at: [www.lc.communitiesscotland.gov.uk](http://www.lc.communitiesscotland.gov.uk)

The "Dyslexia Handbook", was commissioned by Learning Connections from Dyslexia Scotland and published in 2005. Print copies are available from Learning Connections

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<sup>10</sup> [benchmark statements](#)

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Possibly the most significant single support for the development of more professional practice is "An Adult Literacy and Numeracy Curriculum Framework for Scotland"<sup>11</sup> that sets out principles and practice guidelines for building a curriculum with learners, with the learner at the centre of the programme, and aims to promote learners' independence and critical awareness.

The curriculum framework promotes the Scottish approach of a 'social practice model' to adult literacy and numeracy learning in whatever context it is delivered and aims to show how this can be done with the learner at the centre of the process.

The framework has been constructed in two parts. The first part summarises some of the main findings from research in order to identify the key principles of learning, teaching and assessment that should underpin the adult literacy and numeracy curriculum.

The reason for this is that practitioners who understand what they are doing, and why, can be more effective.

The key Principles of Learning and Teaching are:

1. Learning is a purposeful, goal-directed activity. Ongoing goal setting and self assessment are central to effective learning.
2. Purposeful learning builds on learners' prior knowledge and experience to shape and construct new knowledge. It should always be remembered that those who have faced prejudice and discrimination based on gender, race, age, sexuality or disability may have internalised some of these negative ideas about their capacity to learn.
3. Learning is a social activity embedded in a particular culture and context. Learning occurs through engaged participation in the activities of knowledge communities such as workplace colleagues or family members.
4. Effective transfer of learning from one context to another requires that the learner understands not only the facts but the 'big picture' - underlying principles, patterns and relationships - that is acquired through the application of knowledge.
5. Knowing when and how to apply what has been learned (procedural knowledge) is central to expertise, and can be acquired only through practice.
6. Teaching involves informed interpretations of, and responses to, learners' approaches to learning. Tutors should always be aware of the effect of prejudice and discrimination based on gender, race, age, sexuality or disability.
7. Metacognitive strategies (knowledge about one's own thinking processes) can be taught. Through monitoring and assessing their own progress, learners can develop metacognitive awareness and strategies.
8. Scaffolding instruction helps learners to develop their fluency, independence and range as they move from being a new learner to becoming an expert learner.

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<sup>11</sup> [http://www.lc.communitiesscotland.gov.uk/stellent/groups/public/documents/webpages/cs\\_008875.pdf](http://www.lc.communitiesscotland.gov.uk/stellent/groups/public/documents/webpages/cs_008875.pdf)

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The second part represents a very practical toolkit that will support practitioners in developing learning programmes that implement the key principles. It makes it very clear from the outset that the learner's uses for literacy and numeracy are the focus for building the learning programme, even in group learning situations. Case studies of current adult literacies practice provide practical examples for guidance.

Together, these parts explain the processes undertaken by learners and tutors to identify, plan, carry out and review learning programmes for individual learners.

A programme to roll-out adoption of the curriculum framework by literacies providers is under way and it is intended that, over time, the framework should become embedded into the daily practice of literacies tutors.

Learning Connections has also offered a range of opportunities for staff development:

- an irregular programme of seminars - opportunities for practitioners and managers to discuss issues and topics with contributions from leading academics and experienced practitioners from the field of adult literacies,
- consultation with key stakeholders as an important feature of new developments, in order to ensure that new developments are as appropriate as possible,
- support for of a number of networks focused around themes such as youth literacies, ESOL, disabilities, or based on geographic links.

There are limits to the extent that professionalism can develop without the field taking responsibility for its own professional development. The structure of the field, its small size and history of uncertainty may have discouraged such development in the past.

Centrally organised support sponsored by the Scottish Executive can create a policy framework and provide finance so that development of practice is possible. It can offer support through Learning Connections and through the negotiation of outcome agreements. But the learner's experience of learning is dependent on the skills, knowledge, understanding and commitment of tutors and those who manage provision. How they use the opportunities created by policy is the greatest factor determining the quality of the learning experience. For this reason, the Scottish approach has been pursued in partnership with the field.

### **Gaps in Provision and take-up**

Scotland's geography results in a variety of approaches to tutoring. Half the population live in the central belt. Outwith this area there are many rural and remote areas. Access to transport, and its high cost where it does exist, are frequently major issues. In an extreme example, one literacies partnership has paid the ferry fare to enable a learner to access two hours weekly tuition and provided a crèche. This is expensive provision and can aim for no more than 40 to 50 hours of direct tutor contact per year. The remote and rural areas have difficulty organising group or shared learning opportunities simply because of the logistics of getting reasonable numbers of learners

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together at the same times. Individual tuition remains the norm in many areas, with its associated difficulties of providing adequate tutor-support, sufficient hours of tuition, quality assurance and opportunities for progression. The difficulties of providing group learning also exist in some of the smaller towns, although alternatives such as drop-ins and open learning are being developed.

The quality of facilities is a contributory factor to these difficulties, and affects urban as well as rural areas. The success of the current strategy in attracting new learners has increased the strain on limited facilities. The step to providing learning in accommodation that respects the learner and reflects the importance and potential of the learning is huge and beyond the resources of many partnerships. The standard of facilities is important but so too is the degree of control over the programming of the building - the ability to be flexible and to operate at times that suit the learners. However, partnership approaches are enabling the development of branded learning centres that meet agreed quality criteria, and joint use of libraries and college outreach facilities.

Comings J et al, in "Persistence Among Adult Basic Education Students in Pre-GED Classes,"<sup>12</sup>(1999) refer to evidence that more than 100 hours of study are needed to make significant learning progress. Much provision in Scotland offers only two or three hours of learning per learner per week, perhaps 40 to 60 hours per year, so that progress can be slow. Again, some partnerships are trying to offer a variety of modes of learning, including drop-in and open learning offering short themed or focused courses but there is scope for development.

In many partnerships, staff in management roles carry a range of responsibilities. The larger partnerships are able to dedicate staff to vital roles such as 'staff development', 'training', 'action plan coordinator', and 'tutor support'. Staff in the smaller authorities are often responsible for a number of these roles plus others such as 'adult learning', and even 'tutor'. There are situations where staff will recognise that the support they are able to give to instructors is less than that required for good practice.

The adult literacies partnerships are as varied in size and character as the landscape. Funding is distributed on a needs-based distribution methodology which takes account of population, level of deprivation, factors associated with adult literacy and numeracy, (e.g. social class and qualifications), worst 20% post code areas, and rurality. It is understandable that partnerships that have a population of 20 to 30,000 should struggle to provide appropriate learning options for all their varied learners: similar variety of need can be present in small populations as in large ones. In larger towns and cities, where deprivation is more readily recognised, the scale of need presents real organisational challenges.

ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages)

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<sup>12</sup> <http://www.ncsall.net/fileadmin/resources/research/report12.pdf>

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Throughout Scotland, we are experiencing an influx of migrant workers, asylum seekers and refugees, which has led to an increase in demand for ESOL provision including literacies provision. Funding for this initiative is not centralised and can come from a number of sources including local authority, colleges and adult literacies monies, the latter being linked to a funding criteria. An ESOL strategy is being developed by the Scottish Executive to address this need and is expected to be ready for publication in the autumn of 2006.

### **Assessment policies/structures • Formative assessment**

One of the principles which underpins the Scottish approach to literacies learning is 'promoting self-determination' - learners will develop confidence by reflecting on and assessing their own progress. Not only is the learning curriculum built on the learners uses and contexts for literacy and numeracy, assessment of progress is recognised in negotiation with the learners rather than measured against external criteria. This presents a challenge to literacies tutors in Scotland regarding evidencing progress, as there is no pre-set curriculum to follow and local partnerships are free to tailor educational responses to suit local need, demand and circumstances.

ALNIS proposes the development of the Progress File and use of the core skills framework to recognise and accredit progress. In practice, most learning is recorded in individual learning plans which are built and maintained with the ideal of maximum learner control. Many providers can offer access to accredited learning options through their literacies partnership but progression to accreditation is not a necessary measure of success. There should be no barriers to taking qualifications or examinations other than learner choice. Many learners will gain confidence through the literacies programme and consider taking a qualification which they would not have considered when starting out. Some instructors will admit to a lack of confidence in their ability to relate learners' work to levels of qualification, suggesting a need for training.

The quality of guidance available to learners in making such choices is crucial. Guidance and progression referral take place as part of the learning process and regular reviews should be part of the development of every learning plan. Achievements can be hard to quantify other than in terms of progress that may be good, significant, slow, etc., but are enriched by anecdotes that illustrate changes that have been made possible as a result of the literacies learning.

Anecdotes emerge in many forms: as entries in records of lessons, in reviews of individual learning plans, in learners' writing or in conversation. They also are used in many ways: as evidence of learners progress, or of tutor or programme effectiveness. And they can inform a variety of audiences: programme managers, other learners, potential learners, HMIE, the wider public.

The skill and confidence of the tutor is crucial in this process and can be supplemented by participation of the local co-ordinator (tutor-support). This is most likely to take

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place at regular review meetings that form part of the learning programme. The exact form of such meetings varies from programme to programme but the principle is to create an opportunity for learner, tutor and programme managers to summarise learning progress and explore future learning options.

Recently published research, an "Evaluation of the Scottish Adult Literacy and Numeracy (ALN) Strategy", 2006<sup>13</sup> has provided valuable information from both learners and tutors that illustrates some of the achievements of the strategy and raises a number of important issues for the future. In terms of learner achievement, it provides a perspective from learners that shows

*"that learning brings about transformation in people's lives through the growth in ability to mobilise positive social capital, changes in learners' identity, and the consequential growth in confidence to act."*(p81)

The report also includes these recommendations:

- Better exit guidance from tutors and more opportunities for moving learners on to other provision: Tutors need more training in providing guidance and ALN Partnerships need to provide a greater range of learning opportunities.
- More resources, which would enable programmes to be more flexible in terms of their timing, location and content.
- Greater access to good quality and appropriate staff development and support for part-time staff and volunteer tutors
- Better guidance and support for learners: tutors need to have more training on using the ILP with learners.

Preparation of the report coincided with the publication of the Adult Literacy and Numeracy Curriculum Framework for Scotland<sup>14</sup> which provides support tools for instructors to build a record of learner progress that provides a platform for future learning/progress.

There is no doubt that enabling provision to respond to learners' places heavy demands on instructors. They need to be able to call on a wide range of skills, knowledge and understanding: teaching skills sufficiently robust to enable them to tailor learning programmes to individual needs and preferences, the skills of engagement associated with Community Learning and Development work, as well as those of Guidance.

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<sup>13</sup> [www.scotland.gov.uk/socialresearch](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/socialresearch) - ISBN 0 7559 2987 X, Tett L., et al, 2006

<sup>14</sup> [http://www.lc.communitiesscotland.gov.uk/stellent/groups/public/documents/webpages/cs\\_008875.pdf](http://www.lc.communitiesscotland.gov.uk/stellent/groups/public/documents/webpages/cs_008875.pdf)

## Country background paper: Scotland

### Concluding thoughts

The variety of provision that is developing throughout Scotland reflects the freedom of each adult literacy partnership to define and respond to the situation in its own area. The strategy in Scotland recognises the approaches and value-base of the adult literacy provision that existed before 2000. It values the skills and dedication of the workforce and seeks to build on best practice. Essentially, it is an evolutionary strategy - and evolution needs time.

However, there has been real progress over the past five years and the Scottish model has been favourably compared to the other strategies in the U.K.

*"A grand experiment is going on in Scotland, one of the most dynamic and exciting places in the world right now to be an adult literacy or numeracy practitioner. The rest of us can only watch (with envy perhaps) as the story unfolds. So far, there is much to encourage us that a social practices approach can be operationalised not just within the classroom but at a national policy level. Of course, it is easy to idealise the situation from the opposite end of the country. I'm sure there are still frustration, confusion, dissatisfaction and resistance. But the idea is what inspires us. We all have much to learn and Scotland is helping move the whole field forward." (Merrifield p22)<sup>15</sup>*

Further documents not referenced in this report are available from the Learning Connections web-site: <http://www.lc.communitiesscotland.gov.uk>

The case study developed in connection with this report by AnneSliwka. and Lynn Tett in Annex 2(<http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/172212187274>). OECD (2008), *Teaching, Learning and Assessment for Adults: Improving Foundation Skills*, OECD, Paris

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<sup>15</sup> Reflect magazine, Issue 4, October 2005, NRDC

# Country background paper: Scotland

Annex A

## Ault Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland Report, 2000

List of recommendations:

Recommendation 1:

that the national strategy should be actively overseen by Ministers and co-ordinated and monitored within the Scottish Executive.

Recommendation 2:

that the location of the 'development engine' to drive the creation of quality adult literacy and numeracy provision should be identified by International Literacy Day (8th September) 2001

Recommendation 3:

that the Scottish Executive should develop guidance on literacy and numeracy for other national organisations that have a stake in the development of adult literacy and numeracy.

Recommendation 4:

that accountability for local development, funding, monitoring and targets across three sectors (community and the voluntary sector, further education and the workplace) be given to local authorities as co-ordinators of Community Learning Strategies.

Recommendation 5:

that all services and courses should be provided free to learners.

Recommendation 6:

that awareness training and screening processes should be developed to improve the identification of need within communities, workplaces and post school education.

Recommendation 7:

that common approaches should be developed to specialised guidance and assessment and producing individual learning plans.

Recommendation 8:

that the quality of programmes should be improved through a new curriculum framework, a national on-line databank and resource system and by establishing four pathfinder projects on courses and programmes.

Recommendation 9:

that the 'development engine' should lead the development of e-learning in support of literacy and numeracy.

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### Recommendation 10:

that the measurement of progress should be based around learner goals and distance travelled, building on the core skills framework and Progress File.

### Recommendation 11:

that all education and training providers should nominate an accessible key person who will co-ordinate the guidance and support required to recruit and sustain learners.

### Recommendation 12:

that specialist information and advice should be provided to support inclusive and effective provision for all learners.

### Recommendation 13:

that local authorities, colleges, voluntary organisations and workplace providers should all integrate the quality framework in 'Literacies in the Community: Resources for Practitioners and Managers' within their existing arrangements for reviewing progress and quality.

### Recommendation 14:

that a national training strategy should provide national training standards for all staff and volunteers whose roles relate to literacy and numeracy tuition and a new qualification for specialist literacy and numeracy practitioners.

### Recommendation 15:

that staff and volunteers in organisations providing literacy and numeracy tuition should meet the national standards by 2005.

### Recommendation 16:

that the national strategy, as it develops, be informed by and responsive to research and consultation with learners.

### Recommendation 17:

that four pathfinder projects should be established to raise awareness and stimulate demand for literacy and numeracy.

### Recommendation 18:

that the Scottish Executive and other major public and private sector employers should take the lead in helping individuals retain and develop their skills.

### Recommendation 19:

that capacity should be more than doubled within three years, with the funding provided through local authorities, ensuring the expansion of capacity across all sectors and the targeting of priority groups.

## Country background paper: Scotland

### Recommendation 20:

that £18.5m should be allocated through local authorities to Community Learning Strategy partnerships to complement existing capacity and assist around 80,000 learners over the next 3 years.

### Recommendation 21:

that priority is given in the allocation of funding to the establishment of a strong national development engine, a national training strategy and 8 pathfinder projects.

# Country background paper: Scotland

## The Scottish Approach

**A system that learns**  
Sharing innovation;  
Supporting research;  
Evaluating and improving practice.

**The wider role**  
Recognition of literacies in lifelong learning, community learning and development, community regeneration and community planning.

**Priority Groups**  
People with limited initial education, particularly young adults;  
Unemployed and workers facing redundancy;  
Those with English as a second language;  
Those living in disadvantaged areas;  
Workers in low skilled jobs;  
People on low incomes and  
Those with health problems and disabilities.

**Social Practice Model**  
A model of learning where goals and learning content come from the contexts of the learner's life and aspirations.

**Learner-centred**  
Programmes designed around learners' needs. Individual learning plans identify learner's goals and recognise distance travelled. All

**Partnership working**  
32 ALN Partnerships co-ordinate provision across the community and voluntary sectors, colleges and

**Raising awareness and reducing stigma**  
The Big Plus TV, radio and promotional materials highlight literacies issues both nationally and locally.

**National Leadership and effective local action**  
Policy lead ETLCD;  
Quality improvement and development supported by Learning Connections;  
Local policy implementation

**A quality learning experience**  
Training, qualifications and professional development;  
LIC, HGIOCLD and Curriculum Framework raise the quality of literacies work.

**Scottish definition of literacies:**  
The ability to read, write and use numeracy, to handle information, to express ideas and opinions and solve problems, as family members, workers, citizens and lifelong learners.

## **Country background paper: Scotland**