

Regional research hub report CL 12.9.17

| | SW | NW | SE | Scotland |
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| Met | June 17 | April 17 | July 17 | April 17 & Sept 17 |
| Next meet | | | Sept 17? | |
| Present (apologies) | | 24 | 4 (3) | |
| Notes: | | | | |
| Practitioners (front line) | | <p>The importance of paying attention to the groundwork of a research informed and research active practitioner was seen as a priority. It was suggested that this would provide the base from which research could emerge and in which research would make a difference.</p> <p>Combining many suggestions, this was described as an evidence-based profession grounded on a strong foundation of reflective practitioners who can do some or all of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. access existing research to inform their practice | <p>London Environmental Education Forum (LEEF) provides a unique opportunity to explore practitioners' network of communications within the field of OL</p> <p>How and in what way practitioners work in rural environments (East Kent), the forum Connecting Children with Nature Kent and practitioners in HE, for example, CCCU provide comparison.</p> | |

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| | | <p>2. use theories of change or appropriate theoretical frameworks to articulate their practice</p> <p>3. develop small scale research studies</p> <p>4. apply their findings to practice</p> <p>5. share their results with colleagues</p> <p>6. find support (CPD, research partner, etc) for their research activity.</p> <p>It was felt that these skills could be a key element of professional development, influence the quality of practice, support the development of stronger arguments for practice at professional, organisational, sector and national levels. Enabling factors discussed included:</p> <p>1. adaptable tools to support data gathering (and also to enhance consistency for combining data with other research activity)</p> <p>2. workshops and other CPD to develop skills and share emerging knowledge</p> <p>3. clearly communicated and accessible summaries of existing research findings</p> <p>4. partnerships with researchers for advice, support, funding and joint projects.</p> | | |
| Practitioners (managers) | | <p>An evidence based profession should be informed by research and evaluation at organisational level, through organisations that can:</p> <p>1. inform and advocate for practice within the organisation (staff, parents, participants, trustees, inspectors, etc)</p> | <p>Many small organisations and practitioners do not have expertise or data to articulate the outcomes of their work and so are not able to advocate for themselves effectively. The SE OL Hub could investigate the mechanisms, strategies and</p> | |

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| | | <p>2. compare outdoor learning with other educational interventions</p> <p>3. use research outcomes to support marketing and fundraising</p> <p>4. contribute findings to the outdoor field for aggregation (where appropriate) and sharing</p> <p>5. identify needs and priorities and share these with the outdoor field.</p> <p>Enabling factors discussed included:</p> <p>1. standardised tools to support data gathering and to enhance consistency for combining data with other research activity</p> <p>2. workshops and other CPD to develop skills and share emerging knowledge</p> <p>3. clearly communicated summaries of existing research findings</p> <p>4. partnerships with researchers for advice, support, funding and joint projects</p> <p>5. channels for sharing findings with the field.</p> | <p>approaches used by practitioners to inform what methodological tools are practical (on the ground) yet complement the growing body of evidence nationally (research/policy).</p> <p>Engage with LEEF members to explore; why they meet, what are the outcomes (individual/collective), what resources are/aren't shared, does research or data collection play a significant role in their work (if yes, in what way – if not, why not). What research questions do they consider important/priority?</p> | |
| <i>The field/ national hub</i> | | <p>The value of strong local research findings informing national strategy and policy was recognised.</p> <p>The hub centre was thought to be an excellent step to support the development of this stronger, joined up evidence base.</p> <p>The research hub centre was seen to have two functions;</p> <p>It was agreed that there was a good deal of research already undertaken that could inform practice, strategy and policy.</p> | | |

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| | | <p>It was felt that the centre could also:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. develop and share research tools 2. support local hubs in networking and the provision of support, advice and workshops 3. support the development of approaches that can be more readily aggregated into larger scale findings 4. collate and share research priorities from the field to national bodies and vice versa 5. manage the communications of findings to the field and to national bodies (via user friendly online reports, regional and national events) 6. support the comparison of Outdoor Learning with other interventions and practice in other countries 7. track developments in relation to education meeting the needs of society. <p>It was felt these activities would support practitioners and local provision as well as national organisations in developing strategy and lobbying for policy development. At the same time, it was felt that the centre could also support national organisations in 'changing the debate' concerning what outdoor education is for and how it should be evaluated.</p> | | |
| Proposed Goals: | | | | |
| <i>Framework for finding and collating</i> | | Create a template to collect existing research findings and pilot the aggregation of, and | Audit M and PhD research | Collation framework Current research search |

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| <i>existing research</i> | | reporting on, a selection of research findings | Examine EVOLVE, impact studies data | |
| <i>Communications</i> | | <p>Communicate initial findings</p> <p>Develop communication strategies and pilot them (pilot in Scotland/LA)</p> <p>Develop training workshops, and dissemination Conferences</p> <p>Support the planning for the first national OL research conference.</p> | <p>Supporting advocacy</p> <p>Promote existing reading group</p> | Dissemination |
| <i>Research priorities</i> | | <p>Report on research priorities</p> <p>OL and attainment</p> | | Links between physical activity and attainment |
| | | Develop relationships with national bodies | | |

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| <i>Identify researcher practitioners</i> | | | Identify 'researchers in residence' amongst practitioners. | |
| <i>Categorise OL</i> | | develop a framework with which to categorise Outdoor Learning approaches and outcomes | | |

Notes

Westminster Forum

1. Impact of action research highest when practitioners are researchers
2. Small scale comparative studies are valid
3. Mixed methods essential to support understanding of findings
4. The value of qualitative findings needs to be heightened

Actions

National

1. Categorise OL – funding priority. National hub

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2. Template – develop and pilot
3. Tools – National hub (e.g. LA & RS/FSC comparative design)
4. Communicate national priorities – Steering group/ regional hubs
5. Aggregation of data – National hub
6. Comms strategy - National hub/ steering group
7. Communicate existing knowledge
 - a. IOL research page
 - b. Scottish infographics for stakeholders
 - c. Conference (IOL Nov 18)
8. Develop CPD – regional/ national hub
9. Funding – all
 - a. National hub guidance for providers
 - b. Links with local university departments

Regional

1. Identify local priorities

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2. Identify local research findings, pilot template and report
3. Identify and use local dissemination networks (e.g. LEEF; SW research network; Scottish stakeholder infographics, reading group)
4. Encourage research
5. Workshops, etc
6. 'Researchers in residence'
7. Links with local research communities / universities e.g.
 - a. Millom/UoC (NW);
 - b. LA (UoC (NW);
 - c. Brathay Research Hub/UoC (NW)
 - d. Ayrshire/UoC (Scotland);
 - e. FSC/Edinburgh (Scotland);
 - f. PhD students and action research (SE).....

Issues

1. Research priorities
 - a. Resilience and complexity (see Williams & Centre for Youth Impact)
 - b. Best practice in comparative study (Scrutton/FSC)
 - c. Valuing qualitative findings
 - d. From NE/CLOtC/IOL/Centre for Youth Impact

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2. Funding after year 1
3. Researching our research project