



GLASGOW'S HEALTHIER FUTURE FORUM 3

Tuesday 25 April 2006

REPORT



This report is a summary of the presentations and discussions from the GHFF3 event and does not necessarily represent the views of the GCPH

OVERVIEW

The purpose of this third meeting of Glasgow's Healthier Future Forum was to explore innovation and change in relation to health. Following a welcome by Dr Carol Tannahill, Director of the Glasgow Centre for Population Health, the day began with a presentation from Mel Young of New Consumer magazine. Participants then took part in a question and answer session before breaking out into three groups to consider specific innovative methods more closely.

In the afternoon, participants heard feedback from each of these three groups prior to taking part in 'buzz groups' to discuss what they had learned.

This report briefly outlines each element of the day and concludes with a series of learning points.

MEL YOUNG – '2030: SCOTLAND WIN THE WORLD CUP'

In setting the context for his presentation about the Homeless World Cup, Mel stressed the importance of human traits in the making of successful social innovation. He emphasized the role of imagination, connectivity, community and focus. Division, he reminded us, gets in the way of achievement. He highlighted that in a world where a billion people have to live on one dollar a day, the Homeless World Cup is not just about sport. It is about the people involved and its meaning to them. The process provides participants with a way of understanding and expressing themselves and making positive connections with others.



Mel discussed his involvement with the International Network of Street Papers (INSP) since 1993. The network now has an annual circulation of 30 million. In addition to selling papers, more recently the network has been developing fair-trade activities and more generally trying to make real connections between the poor and wider markets. To this end the INSP holds a conference every year. In 2001 Mel was discussing with his colleague from Graz in Austria how they felt the conference had gone. While both agreed that that it had gone well, they wondered what they might do to encourage more homeless people to take part in the conference.

What is Glasgow's Healthier Future Forum (GHFF)?

GHFF was established by the Centre for Population Health to provide a space for debate and discussion amongst participants from a wide range of backgrounds. The first meeting of the Forum (April '05) focussed on testing the usefulness of a number of ideas generated by the Centre throughout its first twelve months in operation. It was found to be valued by participants as an opportunity for discussion and reflection and, on the basis of much positive feedback from participants and facilitators, a second Forum was held on 30 November '05.

The Forum is part of the Centre's communications arm, acting as a network linking the Centre with a wider group of professionals and encouraging discussion across disciplines and sectors. The Forum continues to be aimed at participants from a wide range of backgrounds and runs alongside the Centre's community engagement process.

For more information please visit <http://www.gcph.co.uk/ghff.htm>.

This conversation considered the difficulties of having many people of different language groups together and from there developed into an exchange about the possibility of football as a common language across cultures. As the conversation progressed, an idea developed that they should organise one football match between Graz and Edinburgh homeless teams. By 2003 this initial idea had grown into the first Homeless World Cup, held in Graz. Eighteen country teams took part in a five-a-side street soccer tournament involving two seven-minute-halves per game.

In 2004, 26 teams took part in the tournament in Gothenburg, Sweden. In 2005 the event, scheduled to take place in New York, actually happened in Edinburgh after US VISA difficulties were encountered. This almost caused the tournament to be cancelled just as it was reaching a critical mass. However, a number of Scottish organisations pitched in with practical and enthusiastic support to make the tournament possible even within the short time scale. Serendipitously, too, the tournament received a large award that year from the European Football Association (UEFA). The 2006 event is scheduled to take place in Johannesburg, South Africa in September, to coincide with Freedom Day there. Forty eight national teams will participate.

The social impact of the tournament has been significant and has outstripped the imagination of its initiators. In Gothenburg, players – homeless people – were applauded into the stadium by local residents. It is now commonplace for players to sign autographs for fans in the pre- and post-match periods. The creation of a different 'stage' allowed people to see the other differently. The circumstances made it possible for them to make positive connections rather than negative or indifferent connections. Sixty thousand spectators watched matches in Edinburgh in 2005.

Follow-up research with Homeless World Cup participants found that three quarters of the players (there are now 10,000) are taking action to improve their lives. Some players have now been signed by professional clubs. A key factor seems to be that participation in the tournament has enabled them to understand what they are capable of in supportive circumstances. Others interfacing with the process have also had their views changed by seeing different facets of those they thought of as primarily homeless people.

Mel drew out a further few general points. When the concept of an international homeless football competition was started the initiators did not know where it was going; they simply followed the moral imperative to make connections with others. He also highlighted that the quality of the UEFA money was "beautiful" as it not only was recycled from fines levied from misbehaving professional footballers, but it also had no strings attached and could be spent where it was most needed.

He suggested that challenges which remained included how to take the tournament to a bigger scale without losing its ability to make crucial connections: between people, between cultures, to other issues like poverty and injustice and to the traits of human goodness which emerge when people are practically involved.

An important mechanism for success was the creation of networks which opened up new communications rather than depending on established institutions or infrastructure. This allowed people, other organisations and groupings to engage initially on their own terms. The value base of the tournament – community, fairness and discontent with injustice – resonated with the values of many who then became involved. The intention became not simply to have a football tournament but to express, in a practical and transforming way, a set of values and actions through the common language of football. People were able to latch on to the inspiring example of the players and become very enterprising, creative and ingenious in the ways they engaged with the tournament.

Following Mel's presentation, participants were offered the opportunity to ask questions.

One participant asked why football had been chosen as it was not a sport played by many women, resulting in an initiative where the main beneficiaries were men. In response Mel said that young men were a very hard group to reach and football was a way to do this. In addition they were now beginning to develop a strategy and were giving this issue some thought. Ideas discussed included having women in every team and stipulating that a woman should score first for every team.

A second question asked about the relationship with NIKE and its corporate social responsibility, especially in the light of the INSP's emphasis on fair-trade. Mel responded that the nature of their partnership and its associated discussions were honest. Each understands the other's role in the partnership and this focus on respective competencies works well. When they dislike or disagree with something which NIKE does, they discuss this openly in the hope of resolution. This leads to some discussion of deeper issues as deeper understanding develops between the partners.

With regard to long-term impact, in each instance the tournament now tries to leave a legacy project behind. For example, in South Africa this will be fairly traded hand-stitched leather footballs. This business will provide jobs for 23 local people.

A further question was about whether changes in material circumstances could be seen alongside changes in attitude and aspiration. Mel suggested that although the psychology of change may be similar in all players no matter where they come from, the contexts are different. In the northern hemisphere when players determine that they are never going back to their old life on the streets, there is support that can be given to help get people in to employment, training, etc. In the south this does not work so well, as economies and infrastructures are less well developed. In these instances, the tournament tries to create mini-economies (like football making) in which people can participate as a way of changing their lives for the better.

A further contribution from the floor highlighted the fact that it is when circumstances change and homeless people are able to express their virtues that positive change happens.

A penultimate question asked about the possibilities for performing arts to be used in this way. In reply Mel suggested that anything was possible if the stage was set to encourage and enable people to be open, expressive, and creative. The initiative is not about football only. Instead it is built around football which becomes a language through which people can learn about themselves, express their values practically and see that it is possible to make a difference.

A final questioner welcomed the extent to which Mel's presentation had debunked many stereotypes but suggested that two remained intact. The first was that Scots lacked confidence and the second that the media is a negative force in Scotland. Is it not also fair to say that in each case the opposite is also true and that these perceptions need to be challenged? In reply Mel suggested that he preferred to be optimistic and could accept the point about confidence. He asked what others in the room thought and there was a general agreement that the media was generally a negative force. Mel suggested that media representatives believe that good news does not sell newspapers, even though they currently have a declining circulation. This is an issue which could benefit from further discussion.

For more information on the Homeless World Cup visit <http://www.streetsoccer.org>.

BREAKOUT GROUPS

Following Mel's presentation, each participant joined one of three breakout groups.

1. 'The Power of the Creative Practice'

Jennifer Williams, Centre for Creative Communities, London

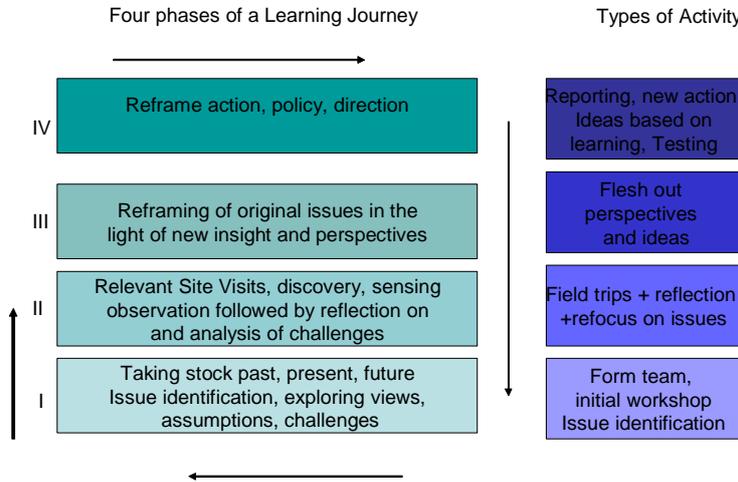


This session explored the power of the creative process as a way of understanding and promoting social change. Drawing upon the wide ranging experience of the Centre for Creative Communities in using the arts both as a powerful way of seeing the world and as a method for developing

wellbeing, this workshop highlighted some examples of useful practice in the field. Participants collaborated on the development of their own arts and wellbeing projects.

See www.creativecommunities.org.uk for more information.

2. 'Learning Journeys'
 Andrew Lyon, International Futures Forum



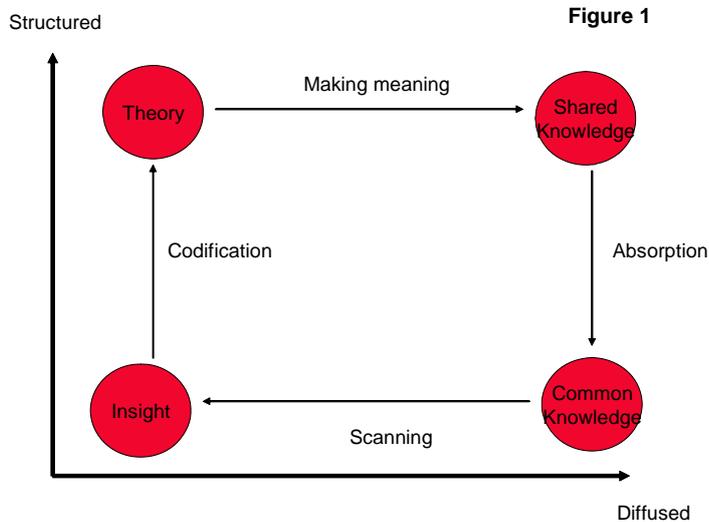
This group discussed the usefulness of learning journeys as a tool for change, using the journey organised recently by the Glasgow Centre for Population Health as an example to work from.

Learning journeys are effective in a variety of situations where a difficulty is proving intractable to already known approaches. The journeys usually begin with the

exploration of an important issue or challenge. They usually involve site visits which help illuminate aspects of this challenge. Following the visits, time is spent reflecting upon what has usefully been learned about the issues at hand. This is summarised in the diagram above as four phases of a learning journey. Participants then spent some time discussing the recent GCPH learning journey and what had been learned from it. A draft copy of the report on this journey was circulated.

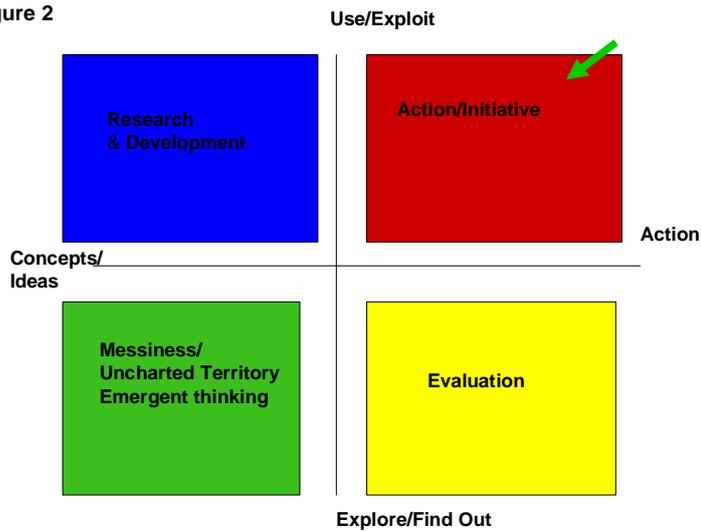
3. Complexity, Change and Uncertainty
 Graham Leicester, International Futures Forum (IFF)

Rapid change and increasing uncertainty, wrapped up in boundless complexity create contexts for everyday life, policy and practice which are difficult enough to understand, let alone act effectively in. In this session, participants explored some of the methods used by the IFF to address complexity. These included examples of visual thinking in relation to suicide prevention in Fife and UK energy security. They also discussed an IFF learning cycle model, developed by Max Boisot (Figure 1, right) and different ways in which one might travel around it.



The extended IFF policy cycle was also discussed (Figure 2, below). This highlights

Figure 2



the tendency of policy development to focus upon a cycle which usually includes action (the exploitation of ideas), evaluation (the exploration of action), and research and development (the exploitation of ideas), but seldom includes time to spend on unknowns, emergent ideas or uncharted territory (the exploration of ideas). Including attention to these areas leads to an extended

cycle with greater chance of effective action later in the cycle coming from better understanding of the complexity in which the policy must operate. Participants also experimented with IFF thinking prompts, designed as a pack of cards to stimulate



new approaches to difficult situations. The group discussed the impact of deeply embedded ways of seeing problems through the use of "Did you spot the Gorilla"¹, which highlights that our view of a challenge is restricted by the lenses through which we view it.

See www.internationalfuturesforum.com for more information.

Workshops were also summarised visually in work by Jennifer Williams, 'artist in residence' for the event.

¹ The gorilla relates to the idea that people often do not see obvious things because they are not looking for them, focus too narrowly or are looking for other things. Using a video clip, people can be asked to count the number of children playing football in front of a garage door. They often get the number correct but fail to see the gorilla that is walking around in the background all the time the children are playing football in the foreground.

BUZZ GROUPS

After hearing briefly what each group had done, participants formed small buzz groups to discuss what had surprised them about the day's proceedings. Surprises included:

- Hearing the word "beautiful" used by Mel Young as a description of the money from UEFA to support the Homeless World Cup. As discussed previously, its beauty came from its qualities, having had no strings attached in the way that money often can. There were no targets or stipulations and no specific donor expectations to be met allowing it to be used where it was most needed. A further quality was that it came from fines levied upon misbehaving professional players and so represented a redistribution of resources from rich to poor.
- Lack of involvement of women in the Homeless World Cup.
- Small projects can have an impact even when they take a long time to develop. This is not so much a question of scale but rather of the quality of engagement with ideas, values, passions and the making of community with others who can share similar aspirations in these fields.
- Wildfire ideas can take off. The example of the Homeless World Cup and 'The Power of Creative Practice' group highlighted how it was possible to achieve results by imaginative thinking and action which seems impossible at the start.
- Glasgow's Healthier Future Forum participants tuned into complex ideas quickly. This 'surprise' was introduced by a younger participant who suggested that his experience of trying to discuss different perspectives and approaches to intractable challenges was not always productive. The Forum's approach of experimenting with a number of different ways of introducing new methods may have played a part in this.

Following the buzz groups, there was a short discussion about how to achieve change.

- Be ambitious – the direction provided by powerful aspirations based on strong values is a key to success.
- Create networks rather than institutions, as they more able people to absorb information and act upon commonly shared interests. Networks are also more likely to be effective for innovation in uncertain circumstances than institutions.
- Connect with the right/strategic partners who have distinctive competencies for what you are trying to change and who also can share a value base.
- Deal with how things are rather than how we'd like them to be.
- Create a space which allows self expression. New characteristics and dimensions will emerge and become drivers of change and innovation.

Finally In small groups, participants discussed what they felt were the important learning points of the day. These were then shared in plenary and form the basis of the main learning points below.

LEARNING POINTS

- 1 Different sorts of evidence, and other/new ways of looking and measuring, can help to 'un-stick' what appear to be intractable challenges.
- 2 Valuing the learning culture takes you further than focusing only on outcomes and excellence.
- 3 A shift in attitudes from 'real-fast' to something slower and more people-centred would allow time to be made for primary relationships and for increasing numbers of primary relationships to be made.
- 4 The action we take to improve health and the results of our evaluations are all affected by the prevalent view of health and so we replicate and recycle the problems we are trying to solve. Is there an alternative way of perceiving and measuring health?
- 5 Thinking of progress as a cyclical phenomenon rather than a linear one can be helpful. Cycles permit learning from previous views and actions and provide natural starting points for new approaches and directions. This also applies to recycling. For example we hear about rich footballer's fines being recycled to fund an activity by the homeless.
- 6 The idea of corporate social responsibility can be used successfully to maximise opportunities for fair-trade; it is also possible for partnerships to challenge and be challenged.
- 7 A sense of purpose and drive encourages the taking of necessary risks to achieve desired outcomes. Organisations could be less risk averse and find ways to support risk taking more frequently in order to learn what works.
- 8 Roles for both men and women should be recognised and valued.
- 9 The role, purpose and demeanour of leaders for complexity are important and needs further investigation. We should not expect our leaders to know all the answers, but rather be able to provide direction in difficult times.
- 10 Great value has been seen in the creation of a sense of community and a meaningful role for volunteers.
- 11 It is important to recognise the messy nature of change and that we cannot control it. Process and relationships are particularly important.
- 12 We are well connected and should take advantage of that.

