Listening to the Voices of Learners: intended and unintended policy outcomes

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Abstract

This paper analyses the voices of cohorts of learners and the relationship between their voices and the intended and unintended policy outcomes of the pilot FdD in Community Governance (2001-03). The first objective is to analyse policy texts that provide context for the development of the FdD in Community Governance and the contested debate on what community governance is. The second is to summarise the methodology and the methods used in the research: the theoretical influences on method, the process of data gathering, the method of data analysis used in the paper and data presentation. The third objective is to explore the stories told by one of the cohorts of adult learners who participated in the four sets of focus groups in the Autumn of 2002 and 2003. Finally, the paper will conclude with a reflection on the benefits of research on, not for, policy with particular reference to the voice of learners and their roles as agents within the complex process of policy development. The paper draws on the work of Bloomer and Hodkinson (2000), Merrill et al (2001) to explore the voices of learners, episodes within their learning careers and my role as a practitioner researcher (See, for example, Silverman, 1993; Mason, 1996 and May, 1993).

Introduction

My purpose is not to simply tell stories through the voices of adult learners. The main problematic highlighted in the paper is the tension between the emerging identities of the learners and their sense of the transitions and transformations within their learning and how their experiences contrasted with the intended policy outcomes of the pilot Fd in Community Governance (HEFCE, 2000). The work of Martin (1999) is used to investigate the relationship between the learners' stories and voices and the economistic and political discourses of citizenship. These discourses, in turn, relate to different dimensions of the underlying rationale for Foundation Degree pilots. The following section uses a critical analysis of policy texts to highlight meanings of Foundation Degrees, of community governance and the pilot Foundation Degree in Community Governance.

Policy Texts and the Context for the Development of the Fd in Community Governance

Foundation Degrees are of particular interest for a variety of reasons. They can be read as an example of tensions within lifelong learning policy and practice in the UK. An emphasis on employability is coupled with attempts to define and conceptualise the wider benefits of learning (Griffin, 2000; Preece and Houghton, 2000; and Schuller, 2000).

As a practitioner, I was responsible for the implementation and evaluation of an element of a Foundation Degree in Community Governance. As a practitioner researcher, I have asked the following research questions about these specific local practices for my Doctoral thesis:

1. What are the objectives of the activity and what is its policy context?
2. How are learners represented in specific policy texts?
3. How do their specific individual and collective experiences of formal, non- formal, and informal learning shape their conceptions of active citizenship?
4. What are the actual ways of conceptualising these contributions by learners, and the University, to the development of active citizenship through these specific practices?

The research questions relate to different dimensions of the policy process but are also designed to explore how these social relations structure knowledge. The role of adult learners was minimised in these specific policy texts for the pilot Foundation Degrees (HEFCE, 2000). The place of learners in these policy texts are either marginal, or they are represented as a homogenous group who are passive recipients of a given good, rather than as active agents who may shape that policy.

The research in this paper was informed by an approach that sees the learners as active agents in the processes of transition and transformations in their lives as learners. Their learning careers (Bloomer and Hodkinson, 2000) were actively constructed through the actions and interactions of their daily lives as employees, volunteers and learners and the research studies their learning over a period of time (2001-03).

The promotional language of the HEFCE prospectus on the Foundation Degree (2000) defined learners in terms of 'student supply' and as 'evidence of marketing opportunities'. In terms of the relationship between policy actors, learners themselves were not included as participants. In terms of the patterns of policy, and the forms of organisational development suggested by the text, the only policy actors that were explicitly defined were HEIs (Higher Education Institutions), Colleges, and employers. Therefore in the policy texts that I have analysed, the Foundation Degree in Community Governance was framed in terms of meeting employers needs in terms of organisational and political change. However, I would argue that there is a tension between the expectations of local authority employers and of the motivations of the learners who joined the first cohort of the Foundation Degree in September 2001.

Fd in Community Governance
Within the University in 2001-04, there were two academic Schools, from two different Faculties, and a central unit: the Education Development Unit, who co-ordinated different elements in the development of the pilot FdD in Community Governance. The specific pilot Foundation Degree (2001-04) was originally a partnership between the University, five local and sub regional FECs, and five local authorities in the North West.

The case study of mentoring within the University is an example of peer mentoring. The stated purpose of Citizens And Learners As Mentors (CALAM, 2001-03) was to enhance the diversity and progression of learners into adult education, local FECs or the FdD in Community Governance. The 2001-03 Socrates/Grundtvig funded CALAM project also related to the stated aim of the pilot FdD in extending opportunities to adult learners who may not have participated in HE. The learners who participated in the focus groups (2001-03) were either students on the Foundation Degree in Community Governance at the University and one cohort also worked together on the CALAM peer mentoring project. In 2002-03 the mentors were in Year 2 of the FdD in Community Governance and were peer mentors to other adult learners prior to and during the mentees first year of either the FdD or other forms of adult learning. Therefore I draw on data from adult learners on one project and one pilot curriculum development in a Foundation Degree.

Methodology and Method: Introduction
In my overall research design, I have used the analysis of policy texts, my field notes and participant observation of the development of the FdD in Community Governance as elements of my 'insider' ethnography. My approach is based on 'work ethnography'. This involves investigating the general phenomena studied (of the processes of curriculum development), the rationale for the importance of the focus (on listening to the voices of learners in making sense of their learning careers), and why the conclusion could be of interest (the learners as active agents in the processes of transition and transformation in their lives as learners).

Silverman argues that for researchers working in the interactionist tradition
" the primary issue is to generate data which gives an authentic insight into people's experiences" (1993:91). However Mason, in turn, is critical of the idea that qualitative research is merely 'describing' or 'exploring' a dimension of the social world. She emphasises the importance of active reflexivity (1996: 6). As an 'insider', who participated in the Foundation Degree pilot, my purpose as a practitioner researcher was not to merely describe 'what works', nor ' how it works', but to make sense of ' what is going on'. I emphasise that it is <u>an</u> insight, not <u>the</u> insight. Mine is a partial and selective analysis that explores what Ball refers to as " The nature, limitations and possibilities of data" (1993:36) in the interactions between the researcher and the researched. I am not claiming that the validity of the research is assured by my proximity to the researched.

However given my role as an active participant within the Foundation Degree pilot, the research maps my interpretation of a recognisable reality of meanings and patterns (Wax, 1991:3).

My specific work ethnography (Jones, 2002) suggests 'what is going on' is a process of translation, adaptation and modification (and possibly this itself is generalisable?) and that local policy networks can be partially understood through a process of mediation. The work ethnography report enabled me to evaluate the forms of partnership within a specific programme. As such it was a specific example of what Ecclestone, in her analysis of reflective practice (1996), called 'practical enquiry'. Therefore individuals and groups may construct or recreate knowledge within the context or circumstances that they work in. Reflection on policy texts and minutes of meetings, could at one level, be about evidence used to monitor and inform performance within the boundaries set by the policy texts (HEFCE, 2000a; 2000b). By contrast, reflection on participant observation- supported by field notes- could, at another level, contribute to 'an' understanding (not 'the' understanding) of why 'processes of partnership' are complex and contested. As a participant in these specific events between January and April 2001, and not merely an observer, I have used primary documents, field notes, and my reflections on those notes, to not only observe the constructions that others have placed on their social world, but also to construct that social world, and find patterns, through my own interpretations of it. My purpose has not been to describe 'what works?' nor has it been to focus on the individual, but to ask ' what is going on?' within this particular setting.

Focus Groups, 'Voice' and Eeconomistic and Political Discourses of Citizenship.

The following section analyses the relationship between the use of focus groups as one of my methods, notions of 'voice' and competing notions of citizenship. Focus groups are not merely a tool of my research – they are one of the methods used because they enable me to explore methodological questions; how research on (not for) policy needs space for

> *the view that adults bring something, which derives both from their experience of adult life and from their status as citizens to the education process; that adult education is based on a dialogue rather than a mere transmission of knowledge and skill* (Thompson, 1983: 46).

Martin (1999) makes a similarly bold statement of intent as an adult educator and researcher. Specifically, Martin's analysis (1999) of three discourses of citizenship; two of which are economistic and the third political, provides a theoretical basis for the use of two of my methods of data gathering given my research purpose and stance: a critical analysis of policy texts and the use of focus groups.

Process of Data Gathering

Stories told and shared in the collective settings of focus groups

The overall research design conducted between 2000 and 2003 included conducting and analysing two sets of focus groups with four cohorts of learners in 2002 and 2003. The focus groups were based on three: five FECs /LA partnerships and another cohort that included learners from four of the FEC/LA partnerships who volunteered to participate in CALAM (2001-03).

For the purposes of this paper I will analyse the stories that were told and re-told by one of these FEC cohorts when they were in the first and second years of part time study on Foundation Degree in Community Governance (2001-02 and 2002-03). I will also analyse the focus groups conducted with the FdD learners who volunteered as mentors on the CALAM project (2001-03). In each of these focus groups I have known and worked with these learners since September 2001. I explored with them specific learning episodes within their learning careers and " the development of dispositions to learning over time" (Bloomer and Hodkinson, 2000:590). However, my purpose is not to simply tell their stories.

Full details of the research questions and prompts used in the focus groups are in appendices 2. In summary, the following questions were asked

Question 1: Theme- Motivation?
What were your reasons and motivations for enrolling on the Foundation Degree?

Question 2: Personal Change 1?
What, if any, have been the changes in you as a person in terms of your role at home and/or you as a learner at College and/or you as an employee or volunteer in the workplace?

Question 3: Personal Change 2?
Can you think of and discuss any examples of where your values, attitudes, and beliefs have changed- since joining the pilot Foundation Degree in September 2001?

Question 4: Changing patterns of participation?

   a. *Has the Foundation Degree led you to greater participation in either the course, your workplace or your local neighbourhood?*

   b. *If so, how and in what ways and why?*

In this paper , I use two of the focus groups with those Foundation Degree students, (2001-04) some of whom also participated as volunteers within the Socrates/Grundtvig CALAM (Citizens And Learners As Mentors) project (2001-03), to illustrate the impact of developments in peer mentoring on the learning of the mentors and mentees, and of the organisation. There are distinct implications of learning through mentoring for the development of policy on widening participation. However, I want to suggest that whilst these specific examples may have 'worked' in their contributions towards the intended policy outcomes in relation to the FdD and Socrates/Grundtvig (for example in terms of the recruitment and retention of learners from communities with low levels of participation in further and higher education)- there is another no less interesting dimension of ' what works'- and that is the role of the mentors and mentees as policy actors.

In the final section of the paper, I will reflect on this and the extent to which the learners on the Foundation Degree in Community Governance, and those who were also engaged in the CALAM project, were policy actors helping to shape policy rather than the passive objects of that policy. I argue that by conceptualising adult learners as active agents, research can seek to understand the capacity of learners to shape policy compared with a more limited notion of them as empty vessels that are passive objects of a policy.

Ozga (2000:42) argues that

> *If policy is understood as the closed preserve of the formal government apparatus of policy making, then it follows that the social science project will make little impact. If, however, we understand policy as involving negotiation, contestation and a struggle between competing groups, as a process rather than output, then we can see that the social science project may indeed act as a resource.*

The challenge she poses is to ensure that if educational policy is a focus of research, practitioner researchers should engage with policy research and, in turn, develop or enhance their critical and reflexive approach (2000:8). The multiple meanings of policy inform the horizontal dimension with its emphasis on negotiation and ambiguity. In developing a critical and reflexive approach to policy analysis and evaluation, researchers, practitioners, and policy makers may wish to re-evaluate their conception of what constitutes ' informed opinion' and, in particular, of learners experiences within particular settings of time and place.

If I was analysing the outcomes of the CALAM mentoring project simply in terms of quantifiable measures of diversity, progression and achievement, of who is recruited or how many students are retained, or simplistic qualitative measures of satisfaction of mentors and mentees (important as these are from the point of view of evaluation) my research would only relate to institutional concerns and intended policy outcomes. However, I am also interested in placing it within a critical setting. I want to question the social and institutional power relationships that mentoring is developed within. An emphasis on research on policy as opposed to research for policy (Ozga, 2000) has enabled me to construct a larger policy picture and locate the specific policy development within a wider theoretical context grounded in learners specific experiences shared in focus groups. I am using focus groups with one cohort of FdD learners and peer mentors working on the CALAM project to interpret the relationships between these practices that were set within a particular time and place. However, I have also argued that research on policy, rather than research for policy, should explore why understanding learners experiences, and their reflections on them, are essential in being able to understand other dimensions of their roles as worker, learners and volunteers.

Objective and Subjective Dimensions of learning careers: Transitions and transformations in learning

The main emergent theme and problematic highlighted in the paper is the tension between the emerging identities of the learners, bound by time and place, and their sense of the transitions and transformations in their learning. The following analysis uses the notions of the learning career to explore the conflicts of expectation and experience for these adult learners and how the ambiguities and volatilities of these experiences (Merrill et al, 2001:4), at a particular point of time, have shaped their conceptions of their learning.

Question 1:
What were your reasons and motivations for enrolling on the Foundation Degree?

In the first focus group with the Foundation Degree students, the learners reflected on their reasons for enrolling on the FdD and their expectations of it at the beginning of the course.

Learner A

> *I wanted to start using my brain. I was pleased to have the opportunity… I went with it…. I deliberately did not have too many expectations…too many expectations can be limiting. I wanted a little more confidence…. achievements for myself .I wanted to be stimulated and challenged…. my job was not giving me that*

Learner B

> *I could see so much was changing within the Council… (I thought that the course would) put my job in background context…would cover topics in the "Local Government Chronicle" (a national magazine for local authority employees) and different sets of issues.*

When the same group reflected on their experiences of the Foundation Degree, after a year of their course, and considered their response to

> *Question 2:*
> *What, if any, have been the changes in you as a person in terms of your role at home and/or you as a learner at College and/or you as an employee or volunteer in the workplace?*

> *Question 3: Personal Change 2?*
> *Can you think of and discuss any examples of where your values, attitudes, and beliefs have changed-since joining the pilot Foundation Degree in September 2001?*

three sets of issues emerged around personal and collective experiences of learning and the changes that had taken place between the first and second set of focus groups. Their experiences reflected the concept of the learning career as used in the symbolic interactionist theory of the Chicago School of sociology (Merrill et al, 2001:2) in that learners identified objective and subjective dimensions of episodes within their learning careers (2001-02). Objective dimensions are identified by the adoption of new positions and statuses whilst subjective dimensions were reflected by the meanings that they ascribed to their experiences and emerging and changing identities. Following Bloomer and Hodkinson (2000) these changes were located in " the development of dispositions to learning over time (2000:590).

Learner A identified the first issue. She reflected on the process of learning itself.

> *It's like coming up against a huge hurdle at the beginning of each semester. How are we going to tackle this assignment and then getting over the hurdle? Learning can be painful…my daughter said this when I have been struggling…painful for me and everyone who knew me. It becomes an obsession… challenge…relief. I cannot do this and then a sense of achievement*

However, despite this response to the process of learning, learner A was also able to identify the following changes in her role at work and attitudes towards learning at work that she directly attributed to the Foundation Degree

> *It is because of the Foundation Degree that I have got a secondment…would not have got it without the course (6 month secondment investigating the opportunities and barriers into work for adults with disabilities). The course may be a deciding factor in keeping me with the Council.*

> *It makes you more critical. It gives you more ammunition to make judgements… concrete reasons. It gives me lot more credence… more confidence…challenging people. I have learnt more in the last 6-9 months than in the last 10 years at work…. it has made me think differently about work and myself. There have been changes in my negotiating, listening, and management.*

Learner C was studying within same College cohort as A and B and worked within the same Local Authority. Although learner A had a supportive line manager learner C did not. Learner C contrasted the response of her line managers within her local authority

> *No one has asked about the course. no one wanted to read any of the work I have done at College.. but it has encouraged me to do things I would not have done… I sent my analysis to other Councils*

However, although learner C's disposition to learning, over the same period of time as learner A had not led to changes in the objective dimension of her learning career (she didn't have a new job) she was also able to identify, in particular, what she had learnt from the cross College sessions that took place at the University twice a semester and her learning from other College FdD groups at University sessions

> *You learn how other organisations do things and build up relationships with other local authorities. You look at problems at your local authority and realise they are shared with other local authorities. You would loose a lot if you didn't have these sessions.*

Learner C's disposition to learning had changed and she identified changes in the subjective dimension of her learning career.

The learners as mentors engaged in each stage of the development of the CALAM project (2001-03): recruitment, training, mentoring activity, and sharing their learning through national and trans national meetings. They worked to support and signpost the next cohort of learners who progressed onto the Foundation Degree. The notes at the end of the paper provide a case study summarising the CALAM project. However, in the following section I want to raise questions

about the impact of developments in peer mentoring on the learning of the mentors and the stories they told of their experiences bound by time and place in 2001-03.

In the focus groups with the mentors who worked on the CALAM project learners collectively traced the inter relationships between their learning on the Foundation Degree in Community Governance, learning in their workplaces, and learning through mentoring. When the mentors reflected on their experiences of CALAM they referred to the contrast between their work role within the local authority and of being a mentor. In the second focus group, learner C reflected on another dimension of her learning; her role as a mentor and what she was learning from others within the mentoring project in the CALAM review meetings

> *I think that by being a mentor and being on even something like this where you meet as a group I think that we pick up a lot of skills…. we share skills and exchange.*

Learner D emphasised the contrast between her role at work and her role as a CALAM mentor

> *I might go to a lot of meetings, but I tend to be there minuting meetings and not actually making a contribution so from that point of view, you know, it's developing my skills, and my confidence, as well as coming here (mentor review meeting).*

Learner D was articulating changes to the objective and subjective dimensions of her learning career. She had a different role in the CALAM project compared with her work role within the local authority (objective) but she was also articulating the subjective dimension of her learning career when she summarised the meanings that she gave to her learning through her role as a CALAM mentor.

Learner E contrasted three dimensions of her learning career: her work role, her learning through the operational issues that she and other mentors identified at their CALAM mentor review meetings and her reflection on the additional personal skills that she was learning through her participation in the CALAM project.

> *At work I listen to people and I'm working on the surface level of what they are telling me, but I think that with this (CALAM) you will find people are telling you something deeper of their own.*

When learner E and the other CALAM mentors reflected on their participation in the project, they identified operational issues that in turn led them to understanding the complexities of implementing the stated aims of the FdD in Community Governance: understanding the expectations and needs of Year 1 FdD learners including helping students to know what was expected in their assignments, the levels of support that Year 1 students expected and needed and as CALAM mentors the processes of referring on to other sources of information, advice and guidance .However through the project they identified that they also developed their active listening skills that enabled them to understand the surface and deeper issues in relation to what the other learners who they were mentoring were saying to them.

Discussion
The two sets of focus groups (2001-03) that I have analysed suggest tensions between the learners' experiences that they reflected on in focus groups and the economistic discourse of learners as workers and consumers and the political discourse of the learners as social actors (Martin, 1999). Whereas the five partner local authorities in the pilot FdD in Community Governance, which the majority of the students were employed by, sought to exert their power over the initial design of the curriculum for the Foundation Degree (in 2000-01), the focus groups suggest that the outcomes in 2001-03 were complex and contradictory in relation the stated aims of the FdD in Community Governance but also the learners personal experiences of change in the objective and subjective dimensions of their learning careers.

The learners contrasting experiences reflect different attitudes to episodes in their learning careers. The experiences of the Foundation Degree (2001-03) and of the peer mentoring project (CALAM 2001-03) suggest different objective and subjective dimensions of their learning careers. Learner A was able to identify her original reasons for enrolling on the FD in terms of an intrinsic personal motivation. She then identified several dimensions of how the FD had changed her: in terms of the objective dimension and her new work role but also her sense of the subjective dimension of her learning career in terms of the symbolic significance for others of her being a student on the FdD, her developing skills in the workplace but also her changing sense of self understanding and identity. She also identified the extrinsic benefit of how the FD led to a secondment. By contrast, although learner C did not have a supportive line manager within her local authority she was able to identify two dimensions of the intrinsic benefits of the FD through her learning across College cohorts, at joint University sessions, and from her participation in the CALAM project. Learner D was also able to identify how her skills, knowledge and sense of self-identity changed, not through her work role, but through her work as a mentor on the CALAM project. Finally, learner E identified the different levels of listening skills that she had developed. She contrasted the demands of her work role within her local authority and her emerging skills through CALAM.

Conclusion

As social actors the learners were moving from 'useful knowledge'; their understanding of 'what' their local authorities are wanting to do and 'how' they are seeking to achieve those reforms in community governance, to ' really useful knowledge'; their understanding of 'why' those reforms have been introduced and their understanding of why the meanings of citizenship itself, in terms of the economistic and political discourses, is contested and dynamic.

Martin is explicit about his purpose and stance

> *in order to make the connections between lifelong learning, democracy*
> *and citizenship we must begin to understand, once again, that people*
> *<u>learn to be</u> (original emphasis) active citizens in a democratic society, and, moreover, to recognise that*
> *their capacity for learning and changing has always been the key resource for making democracy a way of*
> *life….This, then, is a continuous –indeed, lifelong process*
> (1999:9)

Giving voice to the learners' experiences has, in turn, enabled me to adopt a critical stance towards the normative assumptions of policy makers in relation to adult learning and active citizenship (one is necessarily good for the other). The benefit for the learners (see Dominice, 2000) is that they have developed an understanding of the complexities of the policy process. They have traced the inter relationships between their learning on the Foundation Degree in Community Governance, in the workplace, and through community action. Their reflection on this learning within the focus groups have formed part of their processes of using these experiences, and the understandings of their biographies as learners, as a means of engaging differently in social and political action (Merrill, 2002:11).

Learning is framed and shaped by forms of social and political change and by specific settings of time and place. Participation in socio- institutional and cultural processes is complex and the attributes of these adult learners have been developed through their experiences at a specific point of time and place within their learning careers. By reflecting on their own shared experiences of learning within the focus groups they engaged in their

> *own <u>conscious identification</u> of the activity as significant learning or training (and) the <u>retrospective</u>*
> *<u>recognition</u> of both (1) a new significant form of knowledge, understanding or skill and (2) the process of*
> *acquisition (Livingstone, 2001: 4, my emphasis).*

Bron (2001) argues that individuals create self consciousness through their reflection on life experiences but as Merrill notes (2002:12) learning is " understood not only in terms of individual experiences but also as a group activity within the locality of a community". Bron (2001:5) cites Alheit (1995) and his theory of biographicity and two inter related phenomena of the structural perspective and intentional action scheme. Learning and our lives are shaped by social and structural factors- including current educational experiences, informed by work, learning and volunteering and intentional action – the sense of lives being in our hands.

I would argue that the focus groups with the FdD students, including the CALAM mentors, suggest an understanding of the complexities of the policy process and of their roles within it. If their reflection on their knowledge of this social world started with what Schutz (1932) called a 'stream of experience' then through processes of ' typification' they have built up meaning. Through the focus groups a series of individual experiences have been shared and participants have collectively constructed " classes of experience through similarity" (Craib, 1984:85). They have begun the process of building up what Schutz called 'meaning contexts' and these form part of their ' stocks of knowledge'.

My research findings reflect Merrifield's work (2001) that summarised several assumptions about the nature of learning. Firstly, that 'Learning is social even though it occurs within an individual. It takes place in specific social contexts that shape what is learned, by whom and in what ways' (2001:8). Secondly, learning is shaped by external factors but also by factors that are intrinsic to a particular group- what Lave and Wenger (1991) referred to as engagement with and in communities of practice. Thirdly, the notion of 'apprenticeship' emphasises for Lave and Wenger the process of developing participation through communities of practice. Merrifield concludes that

> *research on socially situated learning suggests we must view learning as a developmental process, a process not just of proficiency at a skill but of engagement in a community' (2001:12).*

Case Study 1: Citizens and Learners As Mentors: CALAM
2001-03 European Commission
Socrates Grundtvig European Co-operation project

1. Aims and objectives

a.   To develop , implement and evaluate an innovative programme of information,advice and guidance for adult learners through a partnership between four Universities (UK, Czech Republic, Lithuania and Sweden) and networks with informal education and voluntary and community sectors within these respective countries

b.   To build on the experience of adult learners who acted as mentors and role models to other adult learners returning to learning and evaluate the impact of mentoring on the academic achievement and personal development of the mentor and mentee.

c.   To compare and contrast partnerships between formal and informal education providers and the value of mentoring in working with adult learners in different European settings.

2. Target Groups

The project was designed to benefit economically or socially disadvantaged groups of unemployed adults within specific locations in each partner country. Although the target groups varied between partner countries the outputs were intended to be transferable between the different target groups. In Sweden, the general target group were adults aged 25+ with little formal education; in Lithuania, the target group were adult learners in rural areas, but also women returning to learning, specifically unemployed adults who lived in distant regions of Lithuania and finally, in the UK and the Czech Republic, the project addressed the needs of women and men, over 25, who were returning to education, training, and work.

3. Processes of mentoring

The mentors in the UK were 2nd year students on the Foundation Degree in Community Governance. They were mentoring 1st year students on the same Foundation Degree. All students are part time and they work for either local authorities or the voluntary and community sector in the North West of England.

An initial mentoring training programme and a training pack were developed, implemented and evaluated. Mentors planned and delivered combinations of individual and group mentoring sessions supported by paper and web based learning materials, and further training and support sessions by a Development Officer in each respective country.

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