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# IN SEARCH OF A PROFESSION

## TRAINING NEEDS OF DEVELOPMENT WORKERS IN LOCAL AND COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The first UK research report of the Local and  
Community Economy (LACE) project

by Linda Ludwin

with

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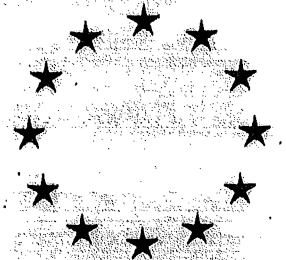
Edis Bevan

John Goodman

October 1993



Co-operatives Research Unit



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We would like to record our thanks to Julie Mortimer, LACE Secretary, for her work in helping the team make this research possible within a very short time.

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If you wish to be kept informed of the development of the project please contact the Co-operative Research Unit on 0908 653752.

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## THE FIRST UK RESEARCH REPORT OF THE LOCAL AND COMMUNITY ECONOMY (LACE) PROJECT

### SUMMARY

LACE research carried out in the U.K. during June and July 1993 indicates that professional people working in local and community economic development find that their existing training and education does not enable them to do their jobs as well as they would like to. Most practitioners have undertaken training within the last 12 months and they recognise that an appropriate training programme can dramatically improve their performance at work. A significant proportion of their organisations are already committed to training. The voluntary sector and universities are the largest current providers of training to these professionals.

Six important areas for training were identified:

- Strategic planning, including policy development and commissioning research;
- Management skills, including project management;
- Individual and group-based training and development skills and other 'sector' specific skills;
- Information management, including research design and analysis and also Information Technology (I.T.);
- Networking, negotiating and brokerage;
- Personal development.

Any educational approach which recognises the multi-skilled nature of work in this sector and offers a practical and varied learning experience will be welcomed.

However, there are important differences within the sector. Those most concerned with community economic development operate from a strong ideological and explicitly ethical base, whilst practitioners concerned with local economic development operate more as traditional small business advisers. Although all sub-sectors represented through the questionnaire and at the workshops identified the training needs listed above, learning materials may need to be presented in very different ways to be acceptable to the different constituencies within sub-sectors.

### Comment

Individuals and organisations in this sector value education and training. There are very few existing U.K. qualifications designed specifically for professional people working to support local and community economic development, and therefore there is a gap in the market. The question for LACE (and the Open University) must be whether there is a market in this gap - can a qualification be designed which is inexpensive enough, at an appropriate level? Is there a market at undergraduate/post-graduate level, and of common interest across the sector?

Linda Ludwin, October 1993

## FIRST UK RESEARCH REPORT OF THE LOCAL AND COMMUNITY ECONOMY (LACE) PROJECT

### 1.0 THE LACE PROJECT

The Local And Community Economic development (LACE) project was set up in early 1993 by the Co-operative Research Unit at the Open University supported by the European Social Fund under its Euroform programme. Its aim is to develop distance-learning materials and qualifications for development workers in the field of local and community economic development.

This is a new profession which combines the skills of business advice and economic development with those of community development. It covers a broad range of individuals, encompassing groups such as co-operative development workers, small business advisers working in a community setting, credit union development workers and voluntary organisation managers with a development brief. This workforce is seen as expanding with the growth of the contract culture in the voluntary sector and the pressure to incorporate enterprise dimensions into voluntary organisation activities.

As a Euroform project, LACE is also transnational, with partner organisations in France, Spain, Ireland, Italy, Belgium and Holland. These partner organisations are contributing in various ways to the project. They are identifying suitable existing training materials and conducting research similar to the work reported in this document. Much of the material produced by the project in the UK will be translated into other European languages. For the first time, there will be quality learning materials based on experiences of community economic development in other countries.

The project is being undertaken in two main phases:

1. Research - the subject of this report. The research was aimed at mapping the occupational field, in order to assess:
  - the range of activities engaged in at the workplace
  - the skills and knowledge required
  - the degree to which these were common across the range of job descriptions and settings
  - the relative importance of skill areas
  - the skill areas which had the greatest need for the provision of training.

2. Learning materials development. The findings of the research will be used to develop a structure within which the learning materials can be produced. A core skills module with a range of additional specialist modules to meet the needs of a wide range of practitioners is envisaged. Some of this material will draw on Open University courses, such as Managing Voluntary and Non-profit Enterprises and Personal and Career Development.

The materials will also enable flexible use in a variety of settings: individuals studying in their own time; group work; tutorial based training; in-house training; inclusion in the existing vocational and academic curriculum. They will therefore be accessible to a wide range of individuals including unemployed people and development workers operating from small agencies who might not have access to other, more expensive, modes of training.

An important aspect of this approach is that there should be a gradation of qualifications, in order to satisfy the needs of a range of practitioners, including those new to the occupation and those without existing qualifications as well as more experienced and highly qualified workers. In addition, ensuring that there are no artificial barriers to access and that equal opportunities issues are fully addressed is of particular concern.

The field of vocational qualifications is undergoing something of a revolutionary change at the moment, with the development of competency-based qualifications and training, national occupational standards and Scottish/National Vocational Qualifications (S/NVQs). It was decided that, wherever possible, the outcomes of the project would be compatible with this new approach. A continuous watch on the available recognised units of competence is being kept and materials will be matched to them where they are relevant. The expectation is that prior learning and experience will be accredited and participants will be required to provide evidence in portfolio form, which will be added to as they go through the training programme.

As the project progresses, there will be a thorough programme of testing both new and existing material. This will be done in more than one partner country. An overall report, bringing together research results from all the partner countries and presenting strategies for future work, will be produced in March 1994 and an open seminar will be held at about the same time to disseminate the results of the project.

Current funding for the project runs out in March 1994. The development of a full qualification structure backed up by training materials is clearly an objective for the longer term and the project team will endeavour to seek further funding to support its continuing work.

## 2.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Objectives of the research

Research undertaken up to the end of July 1993 included a postal questionnaire and a series of workshops. Both the workshops and the questionnaire were undertaken in order to:

- Define the professional populations in the U.K. currently engaged in supporting local and community economic development in order to build up a picture of this sector of the economy;
- Identify any shared training needs of such professional workers;
- Gather information about the ways those working in this sector believe it will change during the forthcoming decade.

### 2.2 Practitioner Workshops

The research methodology for the LACE project included a series of 6 practitioner workshops designed to identify training and development needs across 10 specific professional populations, being:

Development/Community Trust workers  
 Co-operative development workers  
 Economic development workers  
 Small business advisers  
 Community enterprise advisers  
 Voluntary organisation managers with a development brief  
 Housing association/co-operative workers  
 Credit union development workers  
 Local authority officers with responsibility for contracting out work  
 Social services/NHS managers with direct responsibility for advising independent providers (This has been identified as an emergent group which may not yet have developed a sense of professional identity.)

By the end of July 1993, the six participant workshops were completed. They were held in Belfast, Swansea, London, Nottingham, Durham and Glasgow.

Practitioner workshops were organised by regional hosts recruited by LACE project team members. Each host assisted the project to find a venue and make all of the practical arrangements for the day. In addition, they helped to compile the invitation list for the day. So, participants were either suggested by professional contacts or umbrella bodies or they were known to team members through their own work. The aim was to have a dozen participants for each workshop, so roughly 25 people were actually invited to each one. LACE sent out the invitations for the day. When invitees accepted, they were posted further details about the project and 2 time logs to complete before the event.



Each workshop was facilitated by 2 members of the LACE project team.

Although the workshops were reasonably well attended, with 51 participants in total, there were important instances of unrepresentativeness. Firstly, the professional populations were by no means evenly represented. The breakdown was as follows:

19	Community enterprise advisers
11	Co-operative development workers
8	Economic development workers
7	Other
2	Credit union development workers
2	Development/community trust workers
1	Small business adviser
1	Voluntary organisation manager
0	Housing association/co-operative workers
0	Local authority officers with responsibility for contracting out work
0	Social services/NHS managers

Major concern about poor representation arose around equal opportunities issues, with particularly low representation of the Black and Asian communities (4 participants in all) and disabled people. Women accounted for 41% of all attendances. There were no monitoring policies in place, so it is impossible to know how many individuals from these groups were invited to attend in the first place.

Lack of representation in these areas is of particular concern because as socially and economically disadvantaged populations, Black, Asian and disabled people and women are likely to represent a very high proportion of all users of services in this sector. In the light of this the project team have decided to circulate the research findings to relevant umbrella bodies and key individuals for comment. Further, the project will develop and operate a monitoring system for equal opportunities for any further research or training.

### 2.3 The overview workshop

A further workshop was proposed to consult with people identified as possessing a strong overview of the field.

This workshop was held in July 1993 at the Open University in Milton Keynes.

The invitation list for this workshop was based on the personal recommendations of LACE project team members, who had sufficient knowledge of the field to make this possible. In all, 5 men and 4 women attended with the following populations being represented: 2 co-operative developments workers; 3 economic development workers and 4 consultants from the social economy field.

## 2.4 The questionnaire

328 questionnaires were sent out at the beginning of June 1993, with the intention of covering the same 10 populations described in the section on workshop methodology above. There was a 36% return rate. Of those who returned the questionnaire, respondents described themselves as:

- 26% Economic development officers
- 14% Miscellaneous 'other'
- 12% Development Trust workers
- 10% Co-operative development workers
- 9% Credit Union development workers
- 9% Voluntary organisations
- 7% Small business advisers

All other categories counted for less than 5%. This indicates that the project's original mailing list was uneven or that individuals defined themselves in different ways than the project team did when compiling the mailing list. The sample cannot therefore be taken as fully representative of the 10 populations identified.

Again, no equal opportunities monitoring mechanisms were in place, and it is not possible to say how many questionnaires were sent to Black; Asian, and disabled people or women, nor how many were returned by such individuals. Any future postal research will include a separate equal opportunities monitoring form for the reasons stated in 2.2 above.

## 3.0 THE WORKSHOP PROGRAMME

### 3.1 Practitioner workshops: Belfast, Swansea, London, Nottingham, Durham, Glasgow

These workshops were structured so that most participants were involved in 6 distinct activities during the day.

Participants were asked to list their hopes and fears concerning the day.

Participants compiled composite lists from time logs previously prepared by every individual (in reality not everyone did come prepared with completed time logs, but most people did). The composite lists were categorised under headings as each group thought appropriate.

Participants were invited to tell their group about professional situations they had encountered where training could have made a positive difference, and a list of training needs was compiled.

Participants were asked what someone else would need to know and do in order to take over the participant's job.

After a relaxation and visualisation exercise each participant drew a picture of their view of the year 2003 (1998 for Belfast participants) and presented these to the group for discussion.

Headings were drawn up for the job description of a professional person supporting local and community economic development in 2003.

In one or two cases time pressures meant that not every exercise was completed by certain workshops - this is indicated in the relevant appendices.

### 3.2 The overview workshop

This workshop was constructed in a slightly different way, to take advantage of the specialist knowledge of participants. There was a general discussion of issues of concern to the profession, followed by the same know/do, visualisation, job description 2003 exercises used in the practitioner workshops.

### 3.3 Hopes and fears

Although participants were asked to list their hopes and fears about the workshop day itself, the exercise produced many expectations and reservations about a possible National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) - linked qualification.

On the one hand, practitioners welcomed the opportunity to be recognised as professionals, and believed that a new qualification would help in gaining such recognition. They believed that this kind of competency-based qualification might lead to widening of access, with people working in this area at various levels (including volunteers) being able to gain accreditation for their skills and experience at a variety of levels.

The idea of an educational approach which would recognise the multi-skilled nature of work in this sector and which would offer a practical and varied learning experience was also pleasing.

It was recognised that this is a very diverse area, with learners having a variety of remits and a variety of training needs. There was a plea for a market-led qualification which would meet the real needs of practitioners.

On the other hand, it was felt that professionalisation could exclude a wide variety of people (including the unemployed) or that the qualification could be used as a barrier, filter or control to create an elitist group of professionals.

There were concerns about a lack of common language in this sector, and fears that there were too many divergent interests to be represented in one qualification. Some felt that a qualification which focused on any one area (for example, service delivery) would be irrelevant to others working in different ways.

There was also the feeling that it might be hard to create a qualification which was relevant to the jobs that people actually do. For some, there was a question mark over the long term value of NVQ's.

There was concern that a new qualification should be affordable, especially as the shift towards contract culture could mean that there would be little

chance of employer contributions towards meeting education/training costs.

It was hoped that the LACE project would co-ordinate its approach with other educational developments in the U.K. and continental Europe to the benefit of the sector as a whole. There was some hope that discussion might produce agreement on core skills and objectives for this type of work.

However, there were fears that the current lack of harmony between existing European qualifications (including U.K. qualifications) would not be easy to address, and that this could lead to duplication of qualifications.

Participants were pleased to have the opportunity to contribute to a new qualification, and wished for some kind of continuing involvement with the process.

There were strong fears that the LACE project might be a 'talking shop', with no positive outcome after completion of the research phase. There were also concerns that the qualification might not be relevant or produced quickly enough - there was a feeling that it may be difficult to get qualifications on the shelf fast enough to be relevant, given the very rapid pace of change in this field.

### 3.4 Facilitators' impressions of the workshops

These workshops were quite intense: the commitment of the participants to working with their clients was unquestionable. There was a high level of awareness of political, cultural and economic issues. Overall, two distinct groups were represented: the larger being explicitly based on community and social values with a minority from the more traditional economic development and small business advice end of the spectrum. However, there was a good sense of collaboration during the workshops, with differences being expressed constructively, although, at times, discussion was uncomfortable.

There was a strong sense that professionals working in this area feel isolated. Almost without exception, participants commented that they attended the workshop in order to talk to others doing similar work locally. There was no forum in any of the cities where workshops were held where professionals supporting local and community economic development could meet on a regular basis.

## 4.0 RESEARCH RESULTS

### 4.1 Organisational characteristics

Most questionnaire respondents are relatively new to their present job, 59% having started their current job during or since 1990. They tend to work for small organisations with 10 or fewer full-time employees (59%) and 10 or fewer part-time employees (54%).

Almost all respondents have a job description (86%) which has been updated since 1990 (81%). Most (67%) agree that it accurately reflects what they actually do.

Most respondents feel that their job is clearly defined, and agree that their responsibilities and level of authority are in synchronicity. They feel that there are objective ways to measure their effectiveness.

#### 4.2 Current training

Less than half the respondents (43%) had a training officer in their organisation and a quarter (26%) had a written training policy. In spite of this, 62% said their organisation's training budget for the current year (1993) was over £1,000.

Although 51% hold first degrees, more than half the respondents (56%) agree that their current skills do not enable them to fulfil their responsibilities as well as they would like to. Therefore, it is not surprising that 81% have undertaken training within the last 12 months.

The kinds of training most frequently undertaken were in the areas of management, economics/community development, computers, finance and education/training (all more than 10 respondents). More than a third (36%) say that their most recent training has directly improved their ability to do their jobs by 20% or more.

The most important providers of the training which was undertaken were the voluntary sector (20%), universities and polytechnics (19%), the private sector (17%), other colleges (14%), local authority in-house (10%) and other public sector sources (10%).

#### 4.3 Major themes

Six major themes emerged from the research data. Listed in order of importance, they are:

- The need for strategic planning to be contextualised;
- Recognition of the importance of a wide variety of management skills;
- The necessity of possessing strong specialist skills, including skills for working with clients;
- The importance of strong information management skills;
- Networking, negotiating and brokerage: communications, in a wide variety of forms, including some with I.T. implications;
- Personal development/self awareness.

#### 4.4 Strategic planning

It was considered important that workers had a broad knowledge base from which to plan and to act. Problem solving skills, the ability to generate new ideas and to think in creative ways were valued, as were strong planning skills.

Systems thinking was identified as being essential, as was a good understanding of the values and ethos of community economic development. An appreciation of the wider environment (i.e. regional, national, European and global issues) and awareness of the relationship of the LACE sector to this environment was vital to the strategic planning process.

Being grounded in one's own specific community context, and knowing who's who and what's what both locally and nationally were identified as important preconditions for planning and implementation. There was a recognition of the need for individuals and organisations operating in this sector to create and maintain a power base, and an appreciation of the value of having political skills in this context. The ability to create institutional structures which would "enable people's voices to be heard" was considered an important way of furthering the sector's democratic ethos.

Influencing policy in their own organisation or sector was seen as vital or very important by 75% of questionnaire respondents. 65% said that policy making was an essential aspect of their current job. 58% indicated that they were unfamiliar with this area of work or that their knowledge needed development in this area.

#### 4.5 Managing

A wide variety of management skills and expertise were identified as being of value, including:

- Equal opportunities practices and issues
- Personnel management
- Human resources management
- Management of volunteers
- Project management
- Management of one's own organisation
- Self management
- Administrative skills
- Understanding the variety of possible legal structures (i.e. co-ops, ltd. company, etc.)
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Assessment skills

Team based activity was reckoned to be an essential activity by 74% of questionnaire respondents, with 34% feeling that they were unfamiliar with this area of work or that their knowledge needed development. 50% highlighted poor internal communications as a cause of many of their organisation's problems.

Routine administration was identified as an essential aspect of their current work by 53% of respondents, with 39% indicating that they were unfamiliar with this area of work or that their knowledge needed development.

#### 4.6 Sector skills

Working directly with clients was identified as the highest priority for workers in the LACE sector. Strong groupwork skills, the ability to work within a community context, the ability to guide and counsel clients, and strong training/education skills were considered vital for workers. Working with clients (86%) and working with potential clients (76%) were rated 2nd and 3rd in importance when questionnaire respondents considered the areas of work which are essential to their job performance. 40% said that they were unfamiliar with working with potential clients or that their knowledge needed development, whilst 29% said the same thing about working with clients.

A variety of additional skills which can be grouped together as being of particular relevance to this sector were mentioned at workshops as being of importance.

Financial skills, including writing of funding applications, were particularly mentioned. However, questionnaire respondents rated fundraising as one of their weakest areas (80%).

Marketing and public relations skills were also identified as important, although for questionnaire respondents this was the weakest area of all, with 81% indicating that they had no knowledge of the area or that their knowledge needed development.

However, it is worth noting that although 80% rated their fundraising skills as weak, only 37% of respondents considered fundraising essential to their jobs. 43% said the same thing about marketing, although 81% rated their marketing skills as weak.

Other areas considered important included having entrepreneurial skills; knowledge of small businesses; development skills; multilingualism; legal knowledge, e.g. welfare rights knowledge; and sector related knowledge, e.g. about credit unions.

#### 4.7 Information management

Questionnaire respondents indicated that 97% of their organisations use computers.

Workshop participants recognised that information management skills are important to LACE workers. The ability to conduct research; to identify sources of resources and information; and to know how to access information were identified as vital. A basic knowledge of computer systems and I.T. was considered fundamental.

The percentage of questionnaire respondents describing themselves as complete beginners or as needing more training in relation to specific types of software is as follows:

- 51% Spreadsheets
- 50% Databases
- 46% Desk top publishing (with 15% don't know)
- 41% Graphics (with 15% don't know)
- 31% E-mail/Greenet (with 27% don't know)
- 28% Word processing

Most people are using their computers mainly as word processors, and clearly feel comfortable doing so.

Only 38% felt that their role in gathering data was very important or vital to their organisation or sector.

#### **4.8 Networking, negotiating and brokerage**

In such a people-orientated profession, skills such as networking, negotiating, lobbying, lunching and liaison were prized. Techniques of bridge building and brokerage were also valued. Questionnaire respondents rated consulting/influencing/networking as the skill most essential to their job performance (87%).

The ability to be effective in meetings was noted as important. The ability to produce excellent written reports was mentioned, and this has direct I.T. implications involving (possibly) word-processing, data-base, and desk top publishing applications.

Special forms of communications skills, such as counselling, were also considered relevant for workers in this sector.

#### **4.9 Personal development/self awareness**

It was considered important that professionals working in this sector know themselves, their strengths and weaknesses, well. There was an emphasis on what could be described as self development. Certain personal qualities were mentioned as being important, particularly flexibility and integrity.



## FIRST UK RESEARCH REPORT OF THE LOCAL AND COMMUNITY ECONOMY (LACE) PROJECT

### APPENDIX 1: DETAILED SUMMARY OF U.K. RESEARCH FINDINGS TO END JULY 1993

#### 1. THE PRACTITIONER WORKSHOPS

##### Time Log Analysis

All of the tasks which participants identified on their time logs can be classified under the following headings, which are listed in no particular order, except that the first 6 might be considered core disciplines:

- Marketing: media, P.R., promotion
- Finance and fundraising (including application writing)
- Networking/lobbying/lunching/liaison
- Communications, including report writing
- Problem solving, idea generation, creativity
- Research and information handling
- Project management and co-ordination
- Administration
- Training and education
- Monitoring and evaluation (including equal opportunities) of self and others
- Receiving and/or assessing applications
- Meetings
- Internal management
- Strategic planning, policy development, implementation
- Human resources management and personnel management, including the management of volunteers
- Negotiation
- Direct work with clients, including advice and counselling

These headings give a broad brush stroke impression of the tremendous variety of activities which a U.K. professional worker supporting local and community economic development is involved with.

##### Perceived training needs

Interestingly, all of these time log headings (with the exception of communications, problem solving, administration and meetings) also appeared on the composite list arising from the discussions of critical incidents at the London, Nottingham, Durham and Glasgow workshops. 5 major areas where additional training and education would be particularly helpful were identified:

- Managing myself and others
- Creating and maintaining a power base
- Increasing access to information and experiences
- Specialist skills
- Working with clients

(See Appendix 2 for the complete list.)

## Knowing and doing

In analysing the response to this section of the workshop, the category of 'know' was expanded to 'know and understand'. The 'do' responses were identical to the time log headings given above. An additional category emerged: skills.

Topics which emerged as being important to know and understand included:

- The specific community context
- Who's who and what's what locally and nationally
- Your own organisation
- Law (e.g. employment law)
- Specialist areas (e.g. money advice)
- Sources of resources and information
- Equal opportunities issues
- Values and ethos of community economic development
- About small businesses and the variety of (management) structures possible.
- Computer systems

The skills list was very broad ranging, and is included as Appendix 3.

## Job Description 2003

The composite job description/candidate specification for LACE workers ten years hence includes 20 main areas:

- Pre-conditions/conditions of employment
- Accountability/autonomy issues
- Output related assessment
- Essential personal qualities
- Flexibility
- Entrepreneurial skills
- Groupwork skills
- Understanding economics
- Financial literacy
- Training ability
- Information management skills
- Counselling skills
- Planning skills
- Marketing expertise
- Development skills
- Ability to work with communities
- Multilingualism
- Management abilities
- Welfare rights knowledge
- Political skills

The detailed list is included as appendix 4. The Swansea Workshop did not include this exercise.

## 2003 Compendium

The topics arising from the discussion of pictures produced as part of the visualisation exercises were organised under the following eight headings:

- Regionalism, nationalism, Europe and beyond
- Information technology
- Equal opportunities
- Socio-economic factors
- Relationship of sector to environment
- Education and training
- Psychological and personal considerations
- Systems thinking

Some of these headings contain contradictory comments, the product of the very different world views and vision of the future held by participants (see Appendix 5 for the full list).

Broadly speaking, the view of 2003 was bleak - a world continuing to pursue increased GDP; fortress Europe; increasing Balkanisation; the U.K. fragmenting on geographical (North versus South) and economic issues (the creation of an underclass); restricted access for the privileged to very sophisticated I.T.; increasing unemployment; community enterprise as a social palliative; increasingly uncertain and stressful conditions for professionals working in this field.

However, there were some brighter moments, notably the belief that systems thinking would become more important; a vision of I.T. being used as a support for home-working, particularly for those in isolated communities; an increasingly equal role for women; a shorter working day and week; more concentration on environmental issues; exemplary community businesses; renewed interest in the concept of community; more commitment to training and education.

## 2. THE OVERVIEW WORKSHOP: MILTON KEYNES

There was a feeling in the group that current state-led approaches to poverty, unemployment and exclusion need to be challenged, and a suggestion that fundamental social change only arises within civil society. It was felt that LACE workers need support and investment in order to become people who can intervene effectively: practitioners must be involved in designing the qualification. The importance of starting from the current situation as it is was noted, and it was suggested that solution needs to address the long term: an escape route for a small number of individuals is not the answer.

The results of the Know/Do exercise were broadly in line with the practitioner workshops, but the following additional and interesting headings emerged:

- The ability to build institutional structures which enable people's voices to be heard;
- Techniques of bridge building and brokerage;
- The ability to have a holistic view of issues around poverty and exclusion.

Major new points (i.e. not arising in practitioner workshops) arising from the visualisation exercise about 2003 included:

The possibility of new alliances, if the current class system breaks down;  
An emphasis on integrity - practice what you preach or preach what you practice;

The idea that things must get worse before they can improve - maybe in 20 years there will be positive outcomes;

Local economic development workers may be relatively powerless in the face of systemic problems;

It is important to believe in some kind of positive future - otherwise it is difficult to inspire others.

Job holders in 2003 will be driven by market forces both inside and outside of the sector. Jobs may combine commercial operations with funded work. Staff will be retained on a contractual basis, with greater competition for fewer jobs (and therefore a greater emphasis on qualifications). There will be two kinds of training: on the job training, with a rolling programme of general and contextual skills; and specific management development programmes - both will help to create a national network of skills in this sector.

### 3. The Postal Survey

#### 3.A. Quantitative results

This survey was sent to 328 people with a return rate of 36%. All the percentages quoted below are based on relative frequencies and decimal points have been rounded off.

Of those who responded, 59% started their job during or after 1990.

Of all respondents, 26% describe themselves as economic development officers, with 14% describing their job category as "other", 12% development trust workers, 9% credit union development workers and 10% co-operative development workers, 9% voluntary organisation workers and 7% work with small business. All other categories were under 5%.

33% of respondents held certificates, with 29% having diplomas and 56% holding first degrees. 15% hold Master's degrees, with 3% having an M.B.A. (all figures relative frequencies). 35% described their most recent qualification as being either vital or very relevant to their current job.

86% of respondents have a job description, with 81% saying that their job description has been updated during or since 1990. 67% consider these descriptions completely or very relevant to what they actually do.

81% of respondents have undertaken training within the past 12 months. 36% say that this training has improved their ability to do their job by 20% or more.

In relation to I.T., the percentage of those describing themselves as complete beginners or as needing more training in relation to specific types of software applications are :

- 51% - spread-sheets
- 50% - data-bases
- 46% - desk-top-publishing
- 41% - graphics packages
- 31% - e-mail/greennet
- 28% - word-processing

Computers are used by 97% of others in the same organisation. For detailed comments on these I.T. results, see appendix 5, specially prepared by Edis Bevan.

Areas described as essential to job performance are:

- 87% Consulting/influencing/networking
- 86% Working with clients
- 76% Working with potential clients
- 74% Team based activities
- 65% Policy making
- 53% Routine administration
- 43% Marketing
- 37% Fundraising
- 15% Indicated additional areas  
(these figures are relative frequencies)

Of these areas, the following percentages of respondents said that they were unfamiliar with this area of work, or that their knowledge needed development:

- 81% Marketing
- 80% Fundraising
- 58% Policy making
- 49% Consulting/influencing/networking
- 40% Working with potential clients
- 39% Routine administration
- 34% Team based activities
- 29% Working with clients
- 13% Cited other areas  
(these figures are relative frequencies)

The following percentage of respondents indicated that their roles in the following areas were very important or vital to their organisation or sector:

- 75% Influencing policy
- 38% Gathering data  
(these figures are relative frequencies)

34% of respondents feel that they invent their jobs as they go along, while 20% believe that their responsibilities exceed their authority. 24% agree that there is no objective way to measure their effectiveness, whilst 32% spend at least a third of their time dealing with emergencies which cause scheduled work to be

postponed. 50% feel many of their organisations problems are caused by poor internal communication. 59% regularly use experts' advice on specialist queries.

20% say that their education and training is now obsolete, with 56% agreeing that their current skills do not enable them to fulfil their responsibilities as well as they would like to. 64% feel that they have no career path within their sector of employment, while 40% agree that their organisation has been reorganised almost annually.

The following future trends were recognised as being vital or very important:

86%	Eroding public sector funding base
68%	Need to behave more as a business
54%	Need to find better ways of working within our organisation
50%	New legislation
50%	Need to operate in more structured way
46%	Clients demand higher quality services
45%	Deregulation
43%	Different range of organisations
40%	Changing client base
38%	Competition from other agencies
34%	Impact of demographic changes
33%	Increased involvement with computers
31%	EC/international considerations
21%	Increased involvement with technology

46% of respondents allocated up to 20% of their resources to business advice; 48% allocated up to 20% of their resources to guidance and counselling activities; 57% the same proportion to information services; 57% similarly to promotion and marketing; 42% similarly to start-ups; 38% similarly to servicing their establishments.

Of those organisations responding to the survey, 59% employed 10 or fewer full-time, while 54% had 10 or less part-time employees. 26% had a written training policy, whilst 43% had training officers. 21% had training budgets under £1,000; 34% under £5,000; 28% greater than £5,000.

### 3.B. Qualitative implications

Question 6.A. asked respondents to describe the type of training they had undertaken in the past 12 months and to identify the provider with the following results:

Type of training:	Number who attended
Management	22
Other	17
Economics/Comm Dev	15
Computer	13
Financial	12
Education/training	11
Legal	4
Contracting	3
	<b>Total: 97</b>

Type of trainer	Number who attended	
Voluntary sector	20	
University/Polytechnic	19	
Private sector	17	
Other college	14	
Local authority - in house	10	
Other public sector	10	
Professional association	5	
Unknown	2	Total: 97

In question 12, respondents were asked to identify which client/user group they spent the most time with:

25	Businesses, including small and start-up
15	Community groups (unspecified)
11	No one group - the 'network'
10	Credit Union members
8	Co-op workers and potential members
7	Voluntary organisation staff
4	Unemployed people
4	Groups with special needs
4	Local authority
3	Architects, quantity surveyors, surveyors
2	Trainers
2	Women's groups
2	Young people
2	Ethnic minorities
2	NHS
2	TEC clients
2	Tourism industry

Question 13 asked respondents to identify situations which could have been avoided given appropriate training on their part. Their replies fell into 12 categories:

18	Finance
17	Management
11	Miscellaneous
10	Personal/communications
7	Business skills
4	Community development skills
3	IT
3	Politics
2	Equal opportunities
2	Legal
2	Lobbying, networking
2	P.R.

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APPENDIX 2: LACE CRITICAL INCIDENTS/TRAINING NEEDS (not  
Belfast, Swansea)

A. Managing myself and others:

1. How to avoid groupthink
2. How to be angry politely
3. How to take appropriate risks
4. How to cope with issues of confidentiality
5. How to accept failure
6. How to be open, honest, trusting
7. How to play to my own strengths and work around my weaknesses
8. Assertiveness training
9. Knowing when and how to say no
10. Knowing when to bail out
11. Knowing when to walk away
12. Knowing when to follow my instincts
13. How to deal with conflict
14. How to manage within an unfamiliar structure
15. How to "cover your back"
16. How to build relationships
17. Better supervision skills
18. How to get colleagues to listen

B. Creating and maintaining a power base

1. How to deal with public issues, particularly bad news PR
2. How to impose your own reality - structures - boundaries
3. How to create and present your own agendas
4. How to shift the initiative away from funders' agendas
5. How to influence the rules
6. How to research and analyse power structures
7. How to deal with power structures by lobbying, politicking and negotiating
8. How to turn local politics to advantage
9. Be aware of local political complexities, agendas
10. How to influence changes to the rules

C. Increasing access to information and experiences

1. Secondment to other business backgrounds
2. Knowledge of systems/structures/formalities
3. How to access information
4. How to undertake research in order to understand structures, regulations, laws, concepts before plunging in
5. How to network on technical issues, connecting with others who have directly relevant previous experience



6. Better knowledge of employment law and knowing where to access such information

D. Specialist skills

1. Techniques, guidance, tips, insider knowledge on how to make funding applications tailored to our organisation
2. How to create time to prepare proposals for use when there is an opportunity
3. How to design a project/organisation

E. Working with clients

1. How to take risks, go with intuition, especially when what you risk is not your own
2. How to help others take appropriate risks.
3. Learning what would have helped
4. Project management skills
5. How to cope with failure - dealing with clients whose project has failed
6. Knowing the attributes of people we are working with/for
7. How to train clients
8. How to assist clients to listen
9. How to maximise sustainability
10. How to evaluate client capacity and motivation
11. How to choose the right approach and pace for particular circumstances
12. How to help/intervene as a trainer

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**APPENDIX 3: WHAT WOULD SOMEONE ELSE NEED TO KNOW/DO  
IN ORDER TO DO YOUR JOB?**

In analysing the responses to this question, an additional category was developed: skills, and 'know' was expanded to 'know and understand'. Listed below are the 'know and understand' and 'skills' responses. The 'do' responses were all encompassed within the time log headings above.

**Know and understand:**

- Community context, including:
  - Geographical boundary
  - Government
  - Local authority policies
  - Local barriers to employment and training
- Who's who and what's what locally and nationally, incl:
  - Economy
  - Facts and figures
  - Government structures and procedures
  - Training providers
- Your own organisation:
  - Current condition
  - Structure
  - Finances
  - Development plans, strategy
  - Targets
  - Premises
  - Culture
  - Information systems
  - Colleagues
  - Management committee
- Law:
  - Employment
  - Company
  - Constitutions
  - Community Care
  - As affects small businesses
- Specialist areas:
  - Credit unions
  - Community enterprise
  - Co-ops
  - Food co-ops
  - Money advice
- Sources of finance and other resources
- Sources of information including business information
- Equal opportunities including racism and gender issues
- Values and ethos of community economic development
- Community participation theory

Identities and needs of Black communities  
 What makes people tick  
 Community development process  
 Sister organisations  
 Opposition  
 Clients and their needs  
 Own role and goals  
 Computer systems  
 PAYE  
 Variety of management structures  
 About small businesses

**Skills:**

Personal attributes:

Patience  
 Resilience  
 How to cope with pressure  
 Assertiveness  
 Anger  
 Realism  
 Manipulativeness  
 Detachment  
 Commitment to values and ethos

Ability to motivate, inspire and empower others - to help create and sustain a vision  
 Groupwork  
 Conflict resolution  
 Advocacy  
 Community leadership development  
 Offer and receive criticism  
 Walk away  
 Awareness of self-interest in others  
 Assessing and working with fears and negativity  
 Build and maintain relationships  
 Capable of being both proactive and reactive  
 Entrepreneurship and ability to rise to opportunities  
 Ability to play the system  
 Ability to liaise with funders  
 Listening  
 Management of self and boss  
 Pattern recognition  
 Develop and implement systems  
 Work in unstructured situation  
 Improvise  
 Delegate  
 Work with management committee  
 Write business plans  
 De-mystify business plans  
 Nose for bullshit  
 Business acumen

Analytical/strategic thinking

Financial: Book-keeping

Accounts

Cash flow

Writing and spelling

Design and Desk Top Publishing

Languages

Information technology

Critical path analysis

Conference and seminar organising

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## APPENDIX 4: JOB DESCRIPTION 2003 (not Swansea)

- A. Pre-conditions of employment
  - 1. MBA
  - 2. Unemployed for at least one year
  - 3. Committed to the practice of equal opportunities
- B. Accountability/autonomy
  - 1. Accountable to client
  - 2. Not accountable to manager
  - 3. Accountable to democratic structure
  - 4. Self defined job
  - 5. Collectively defined job
- C. Output related assessment
  - 1. Be able to define five sustainable measurements by which own performance is judged
  - 2. Self-financing post
  - 3. Output related performance indicators
  - 4. Performance related pay
- D. Personal qualities
  - 1. Creativity: tools and techniques
  - 2. Imaginative/visionary
  - 3. Commitment and optimism
  - 4. Verbal self-restraint
  - 5. Tough/tenacious
- E. Flexibility
  - 1. Learning organisation/learning person
  - 2. Open to learning
  - 3. Managing change/coping with change
  - 4. Yet to be necessary technical abilities
  - 5. Pattern recognition - transferable analytical skills
  - 6. Ability to capitalise on existing skills
- F. Entrepreneurial skills
  - 1. Ability to barter
  - 2. Ability to bring income into the area
  - 3. Ability to work with the informal economy
  - 4. Ability to be proactive
  - 5. Economic interventionist
  - 6. Ability to make the most of the funding available

## G. Groupwork

1. Listening ability
2. Networking and negotiating
3. People skills: groupwork, negotiation, communication
4. Communication skills
5. Good communications skills
6. Groupwork skills

## H. Understanding economics

1. Understanding economics
2. Knowledge of the environment and ethos of community economic development
3. Understanding the causes/effects/systems leading to social and economic decline
4. In-depth understanding of community economic development in Europe
5. In-depth understanding of increasing social division within the context of community economic development

## I. Financial literacy

1. Fundraising ability
2. Financial ability
3. Financial management skills
4. Investment appraisal skills
5. Knowledge of finance

## J. Training

1. Experience as a trainer
2. Training for trainers skills
3. Ability to access training and funding for training
4. Support/training for scattered communities (IT)

## K. Information systems

1. The ability to combine hard information with soft training
2. Familiarity with I.T.
3. Information handling, both I.T. and manual
4. Handling I.T.
5. I.T. skills: updating

## L. Counselling

1. Counselling skills
2. Empowering skills
3. Enabling clients to make choices

## M. Planning

1. Business planning
2. Ability to plan strategically

- N. Marketing
  - 1. Marketing
  - 2. Marketing of networks
- O. Development skills
  - 1. Business start-up skills
  - 2. Development skills
- P. Working with communities
  - 1. Working with local communities to strengthen the local economic base
  - 2. Commitment to a community development idea
  - 3. Ability to motivate and develop a sense of self-worth in communities
- Q. Multilingualism
- R. Managing
  - 1. Contract management experience
  - 2. Contract negotiation
  - 3. Resource management: human, financial, buildings
  - 4. Management, administration, personnel
- S. Welfare rights knowledge
- T. Political skills
- U. The post is part-time

This is an account of research carried out by the LACE team of the Co-operatives Research Unit into the training needs of development workers involved in community economic development, in preparation for a transnational project that is bringing together training materials for developing community enterprises, co-op businesses and non-profit organisations. The results reveal the demands and complexities of the field, and show clearly the need for comprehensive training materials.

**Price £3.00**

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