



# Llechi, Glo a Chefn Gwlad

## Annual Report

2022

LLECHI | GLO | CEFN GWLAD



SLATE | COAL | COUNTRYSIDE

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## Llechi Glo a Chefn Gwlad Summary

Llechi, Glo a Chefn Gwlad was a three year programme that worked with nine partners across Wales. The programme focused on:

- work that developed and/or supported the foundational and very local economy; and
- testing a community leadership approach which involved partners employing a member of their community for 12 months to build community activity whilst also developing their own skills and experience – 27 community leaders were employed.

Llechi, Glo a Chefn Gwlad came out of discussions in Talwrn<sup>1</sup>, an informal group of people who work with Welsh communities that has been meeting regularly since 2015. The group had identified how much their work was shaped by delivering 'projects', to the extent that finding the time to just be part of the community and hear what people were saying and to take risks in supporting new ideas was really difficult. Projects are nearly always time limited, so taking a risk on recruiting local people who would need time to develop their confidence and knowledge was also really challenging. So, Llechi, Glo a Chefn Gwlad was designed to enable community and voluntary organisations to create twelve month paid employment for a local person who could help the partner develop their community networks,

The project also brought the nine organisations together to share their work over three years. The partners were very different and came together because of their openness to new ideas rather than their common structures or objectives. Six were place based, although the places varied from one small village to two long valleys. Two worked with communities of common interest: carers and the farming community. Two were primarily focused on offering training and learning. They were spread across Wales with three partners coming from the slate quarrying area of Gwynedd (Llechi); three from the historical coal fields of South Wales (Glo); and

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<sup>1</sup> <https://talwrn.org.uk>

three based in the agricultural heartland of Powys, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire (Cefn Gwlad).

The community leaders were all employed to help the partners build on their community connections and support a community based foundational economy. Their roles were funded through the Rank Foundation's Time to Shine programme and additional funding to develop partnership work came from The National Lottery Community Fund Supporting Great Ideas programme.

*We have tried lots of schemes, but this has been the best. It has demonstrated the value of networking and developed an important model for supporting local people to develop within the community. Ceri Cunnington, CBFF*

## **Key Findings**

Partnership work always makes sense in theory but in practice, amongst small organisations, it can be very difficult to prioritise the time needed. The partnership worked for Llechi, Glo a Chefn Gwlad because:

- managers were funded to commit time to the partnership so it was easier to justify dedicating time to it;
- partners were involved because they wanted to be (i.e. they had opted in) and approached the work with curiosity and openness (see <https://youtu.be/KiGUhyLICyA>);
- the project happened in a time of crisis (the pandemic) and change. All partners needed and valued the peer support and ideas that characterised the work;
- there were no rivalries or reasons to be protective about our work – the fact that partners did not work in the same area, either place or theme, provided a freedom to be entirely open and learn from each other; and
- the partners were all Welsh and so shared a common identity – an identity that emerged and grew stronger as the partnership developed.

Below is a summary of the key aspects and impacts of the work.

Issue	Action	outcome	impact
<p>A focus on delivering projects can get in the way of organisations being part of the community and understanding emerging needs.</p>	<p>9 partners – 3 from North Wales, 3 from South Wales and 3 from mid Wales</p> <p>Each partner employed a community member for 12 months, repeated over 3 years, to build new networks, create new understanding and develop local skills</p>	<p>27 people with training and experience of working with their community. Of these 21 are still working with their community in an employed or voluntary capacity.</p> <p>New areas of work developed by each partner with community involvement.</p>	<p>All partners have employed at least one of the community leaders as staff or sessional workers.</p> <p>All partners have changed how they work in the last 3 years and four aim to continue to recruit community members as trainees.</p>
<p>The pandemic disrupted and damaged communities and placed voluntary and community organisations under threats never faced before</p>	<p>Partners worked together, meeting weekly to share experiences, provide ideas and develop effective ways to support their communities.</p>	<p>shared ideas on resources and funding</p> <p>peer support and challenge</p> <p>shared learning about ‘tested’ approaches</p> <p>raised ambition and understanding of what is possible</p> <p>linking up of environmental, health, social and economic development</p>	<p>new models of working focused on tackling social isolation and fear of interaction</p> <p>managers gained in confidence and understanding</p> <p>all partners expanded their work; four invested in buildings and/or land; four invested in electric vehicles</p>

<p>Wales has a lack of community development training accessible to community members</p>	<p>Sylfaen Cymunedol Cyf. commissioned to develop and pilot, then run an online community development course.</p>	<p>Each partner supported staff to attend the course, accredited by Agored.</p> <p>Training also made available in mental health and working with vulnerable groups as communities saw needs rise</p>	<p>Fully accredited and developed course with plans to roll out its delivery across Wales.</p>
<p>Local people have the most to gain (and lose) from a strong local economy but rarely have any control or say over what happens locally.</p>	<p>Partners focused on supporting the local economy whether that be community or social enterprise, local small businesses and producers, skills development or community activism</p>	<p>Small businesses and social enterprises were able to access premises (high street and online); support was given to build sustainability (personal and business); help and access to training built new and enhanced existing skills leading to new social enterprise and people taking control (e.g. carers providing their own support infrastructure)</p>	<p>Partners changed the way they worked to focus more on supporting community activism.</p> <p>New enterprise ideas developed.</p> <p>Greater community confidence</p>

## What happened

### A community of partners

The partnership members were spread out across Wales but weekly project meetings online enabled the development of a community of partners. The online meetings took, on average, an hour and had a training function, as all community leaders needed to present their work to colleagues. The meetings also provided a 'real time' support and development process, allowing people to ask for help, test out ideas, air frustrations and celebrate successes. The pandemic helped this approach because for much of the first and some of the second year partners were limited in what work they could do in the community, enabling them to prioritise the programme meetings. It became harder to maintain the weekly meeting structure once more community work could be done.

The regular meetings and the Rank Foundation residential sessions (see below) enabled the community leaders to get to know each other and they formed their own support network each year. They met independently and set up social media groups and many continue to stay in contact.



*Project visit to Gwynedd*

Although effective because of their frequency, online meetings have limitations and so they were augmented by partnership visits

which enabled people to learn in more detail what others were doing and its impact. The visits were confined to the second half of the programme by the COVID-19 pandemic. Visits were made to the South Wales (Glo) partners in September 2021; the North Wales partners (Llechi) in May 2022; and the Powys and Ceredigion partners (Cefn Gwlad) in November 2022.

### A time of change

All nine partners approached the programme with an openness and curiosity that allowed it to evolve. There was a need to have a certain element of faith at the

beginning as it was not clear what the partnership would achieve and so having funding from the National Lottery Community Fund to support the time that partners needed to devote to building and sustaining the partnership was important. Partners cannot lose sight of the fact that their resources must be dedicated to supporting their community, that is what they are there for. So, to dedicate time and resource to anything additional to the core work requires a very clear rationale and outcome. In a programme such as Llechi, Glo a Chefn Gwlad, where its usefulness needs to evolve, having resources to cover time spent provided partners with the justification to take a risk.



The partners went through a period of massive change over the three years that they were part of Llechi, Glo a Chefn Gwlad. Some of these changes were

forced on them by the pandemic and/or changed funding priorities but others were more positive. All experienced the damage done by the pandemic to their community and the changes it brought, some of which are permanent. However, most partners were already developing in various ways when they joined the partnership and all have changed over the last three years. The Llechi, Glo a Chefn Gwlad partnership has witnessed the journeys each is taking, provided peer led support, shared challenges and ideas. This argues that there are, potentially, periods in the life of a group or organisation when such partnership work is particularly valuable.

## **Welsh language**

Three partners work primarily through the Welsh language, one has a mix and five work mostly or completely through the English language. This had significant implications for the Welsh medium partners as the programme language for meetings and communications needed to be primarily English. Events, reports and evaluation sessions were bi-lingual but the issue that, in a mixed group, the default language is English was not resolved and this was a disadvantage to Welsh medium partners.

Conversely, there was a massive benefit to the primarily English medium partners as they learned so much about Welsh language and culture and it has impacted on their approach. At least four people (managers and community leaders) started Welsh lessons as the programme developed, with another three progressing their skills as Welsh language learners. In addition, three community leaders who had been educated through the medium of Welsh but had not used the language since school found that the programme gave them the context to start to use their Welsh again.

Llechi, Glo a Chefn Gwlad offers a useful model for promoting the Welsh language to organisations working in English as evidenced by the number of people in the partnerships who are continue to develop their Welsh language skills. However, the programme was extremely lucky in having partners who were willing to communicate in English with partners but also whose commitment to Welsh language and culture meant they ensured the language was always present and valued.

## **Investing in community leadership**

The community leaders were offered a significant development programme whilst on the project. Depending on their background and the focus of their work, some took up everything on offer and others chose the things they felt relevant. The Rank Foundation (which funded their roles) provided three residential learning events during the year they were employed (although in years one and two these were disrupted by the pandemic so that some had to be online). The events enabled the leaders to meet people from other communities including, and beyond, the Llechi, Glo a Chefn Gwlad partnership. Trainers ran sessions on subjects like understanding learning styles, public speaking and presentations. The final event each year allowed the leaders to present their work to a large audience.

In addition, the Rank Foundation provided a structured Action Learning Set programme which gave the community leaders the opportunity to learn techniques for exploring issues in their community. The approach of the Action Learning set leader was found to be crucial to the success of these sessions and, when they worked, they were highly valued. The Rank Foundation also provided a bursary programme where community leaders could apply for up to £1500 funding to follow a course that could help them in future. Examples of the training accessed through this

included using social media, intensive Welsh language sessions, marketing, horticulture and music production.

The Llechi, Glo a Chefn Gwlad partnership commissioned Sylfaen Cymunedol Cyf. to develop a deliver an introduction to community development course for the programme. All partner community leaders and community workers were able to join the online course. The course is run over 21 weeks and is accredited by Agored Cymru with Young People's Participation Award Level 2 and Community Development Award Level 2. Twenty-nine community workers completed the course (a report on the course with feedback from participants is included in the appendix). The partnership also commissioned Sylfaen to look at how the programme could be rolled out across Wales and delivered by accredited trainers within community organisations.

In addition, and in response to the impact of the pandemic being witnessed by partners, the programme funded 21 community workers to do the Mental Health First Aid qualification delivered through DOVE Workshops and 32 community workers to do a 'Conversations with Vulnerable People' training course delivered by the Samaritans.

## **The partners and their work**

### **Tir Dewi**

Tir Dewi was set up in 2015 by the Archdeacon of Cardigan to support farming families facing difficult times. Tir Dewi offers support on the telephone or through farm visits from volunteers who can help farmers tackle crises and plan ahead.

Like many other partners Tir Dewi has grown over the three years. In 2020 the charity had two part-time staff and a turnover of £36,000. By the end of 2022 it had grown to two full-time and six part-time staff and a turnover of £300,000. The number of volunteers involved has grown from 20 to 70 and it has rapidly expanded the areas it can cover. Tir Dewi are now dealing with an average of 350 cases of support for farming families and most involve at least four people. As with most other partners, Tir Dewi was on a trajectory to develop when it joined Llechi, Glo a Chefn Gwlad. The role of the partnership was to help that development not create it but the community leader model has been a key enabling factor.

When the charity joined Llechi, Glo a Chefn Gwlad it wanted to expand its role beyond the Dyfed area to Powys and its first community leader, Elin (2020), was recruited to make contact with farming families in Powys and identify whether they saw a need for Tir Dewi and, if they did, what that need was. As the pandemic hit, her work had to go online but there was a good response from farming families to the surveys she sent out. During that year Tir Dewi started to work in Powys, then added Gower and North Wales. Elin is continuing to farm with her family.

The pandemic meant that organisations needed to develop new ways of working with people and improve their digital services. The second community leader, Megan (2021), helped to develop Tir Dewi's online and media presence and to improve digital communications within the staff and volunteer teams. She is now working for a children's charity.

The third community leader, Llinos (2022), brought a wide range of experience to the role, both professionally and as part of the farming community. Her work has enabled Tir Dewi to develop rapidly in North Wales and raised the profile of the work across Wales. Her work directly contributed to an increase in case referrals and self-referrals from North Wales and to Tir Dewi gaining two awards (Community Service

Award from the High Sheriff of Gwynedd and Services to Farming Award from the FUW) and established the basis of a potential partnership with Betsi Cadwallader Health Trust. Llinos was invited onto a Welsh Government group on agriculture and contributed to a session at the National Eisteddfod on mental health in agriculture. Llinos has accepted a permanent post with Tir Dewi.

## **DOVE**

As with other partners DOVE has gone through a period of significant change and some serious challenges over the last three years. DOVE has been an adult education centre for nearly 40 years, providing people around Banwen and the Dulais Valley with a local opportunity to learn new skills. Most of the provision in the centre is run by external providers but DOVE also run some of their own programmes, including one supporting people with mental health challenges, a project that grew in importance during the pandemic. The day nursery on site has provided local people with the opportunity to leave their children in a safe place while they learn or work and the second community leader, Lewis, was one of the first children who attended the nursery. By 2022 the nursery had recovered and had 35 children and, for the first time, all the staff, including an apprentice, were from the Dulais Valley. A café on site was leased by DOVE to a local business a few years ago when they found running it as a social enterprise was not viable and it now thrives.

Even before the pandemic DOVE was facing challenges, having seen its income halved from education provision. DOVE's main model had been as a venue for education providers to use for their courses but the pandemic and a post -pandemic move to keep many courses online has forced a change to that model. In addition, for the first time in over 30 years DOVE faced a change in leadership and a new manager was appointed in 2022 after a long search.

The community leaders have allowed them to explore ways of new ways working in the community. The first community leader, Leighton (2020) had made a start in setting up IT sessions for children and young people in a newly funded IT suite when the pandemic hit. His background in film enabled him to create local films and

interviews to provide people with positive news and images of the outdoors that they could easily access. He has recently start work with the media department of Neath Port Talbot council.

Lewis (2021) was able to undertake outdoor work to protect the local environment and, as restrictions eased, involve people in walking groups and environmental projects, including supporting the allotment group that had taken over land secured by DOVE for local growers and renovating a roundhouse for community activities. Lewis was employed at the end of his year by the community council as a countryside warden.

Angie was the last community leader (2022) and she took up the work that Lewis had been doing outdoors and further developed it using a Forest School model. She worked with children and their families. The Flower Pots gardening after school club is for 6-12 year olds has four volunteers who offer their skills. By June 2022 there were 40 children getting involved each week with Flower Post and another 15 on the waiting list. Angie invited the teachers from the local school to see what was happening and all 20 came, and then invited her back to school to talk about bees. Angie also started to work with a group of eight pupils with additional learning needs who were struggling in secondary school.

Angie also worked with older people locally providing free sessions for them to get online and set up whole family activities like Sunday walking groups with a cup of hot chocolate at the end in the roundhouse. DOVE are seeking funding to keep Angie working with them and in the meantime, she is doing some sessions with them and looking at self-employment options.

## **Tir Coed**

Tir Coed is a charity that works across Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire and Powys offering outdoor training, learning and wellbeing activities to connect people with the land and woods. In recent years it has moved from being a provider of woodwork and forestry training to develop a broader approach that includes land management, growing skills and urban gardening and it has been testing out new ways of working with people. During the last three years Tir Coed has faced some

major challenges and changes. The pandemic meant that its model of face to face work in the outdoors was suspended for a period and a consequent crisis in funding threatened its existence at one point. A change in leadership meant a reorganisation of the structure of the organisation. However, the charity has emerged strongly and with a new focus on its community role.

The plans for the first year of the project were overturned by the pandemic. Isabel (2020) had been planning to work with farmers and landowners to develop networks with Tir Coed and develop its role within land management. However, she also ran a village shop and when the pandemic hit that became a key resource for the local area and Tir Coed supported her to provide a necessary service to a rural community. She has gone on to develop her business and is a strong community activist.

The second community leader, Eleri (2021), focused on helping Tir Coed communicate effectively with people involved in their activities and understand the impact of their work. She worked with course participants to develop evaluation and monitoring tools that made sense to them and they were comfortable to use. These included tablet and paper based tools. Eleri is now pursuing a PhD.

The third community leader Vik (2022) worked on the Antir feasibility study that explored the local need for land workers and the skills they would require and the options for wider growing and regenerative land work. The work developed partnerships and local networks which gave Tir Coed new links into local communities and enabled them to recruit over 200 people to courses and programmes via these networks. Vik brought a passion for community to Tir Coed, making things happen within and outside the organisation. She was offered a post with Tir Coed but decided to develop her own horticulture business, although she will continue to work on a sessional basis with Tir Coed.

## **Credu Carers**

Credu Carers is a charity that supports carers in Powys. It also runs Carers Ceredigion and WCD, a young carers support programme in Wrexham, Conwy and Denbighshire. Over a number of years Credu has been developing a community led model, shifting its focus from offering a menu of services to carers to building a

supportive infrastructure that can adapt to the needs of individual carers and support caring communities. Credu has made use of the community leadership programme in Llechi, Glo a Chefn Gwlad to explore and trial innovative models of supporting carers to take this work forward.

In 2020 Mandy, a parent-carer whose child has complex needs, joined Credu as the first community leader with Llechi, Glo a Chefn Gwlad. Her role was to develop a community or place based approach to supporting carers in her own village. The pandemic disrupted the work after a great start and Mandy turned her attention to ways of supporting carers online as the lockdowns stripped away their support networks. She went on to become a key member of the Credu team whilst also developing her own ideas around supporting parents of children with multiple needs. At the end of 2022 she was also working for Contact a Family, giving her a wide network of influence to support carers.

In 2021 Aidan was employed as a community leader. Aidan had been a carer from childhood and he knew the importance for young carers of finding time for yourself and being with other young people who understood what caring was like. He proposed developing a games club for young carers that would enable them to create an online community that could be fitted into a caring role. Over 30 young carers joined the group in the year. Aidan went on to find employment managing a pub.

In 2022 Credu wanted to further explore the place based model of supporting carers and employed Bryony to develop their work in Welshpool. She created multiple ways for carers in the locality to engage with Credu in their own terms and at their own pace and this has resulted in many carers finding new friendships and circles of support for their caring role through group meetings. She has also developed strong partnerships with other locally based charities and organisations helping Credu to be more visible whilst building up a volunteer group, many of whom are also carers.

*The internship has allowed Credu to experiment with focussing on community development whilst the existing team could continue with their ever growing demands on casework. The result has been a huge increase in engagement by*

*Carers but done in such a way that it was very little additional cost to our organisation.*

The learning from this work is being used by Credu to reach out to other communities to develop carer support.

## **Partneriaeth Ogwen**

Partneriaeth Ogwen is a social enterprise set up to benefit the economy, environment and communities of Dyffryn Ogwen in Gwynedd. It acts as clerk to the three community councils in the valley, takes on and manages local assets and runs programmes to develop and sustain healthy and vibrant communities, including promoting local culture and the Welsh language.

Over the three years of the Llechi, Glo a Chefn Gwlad project community economic development in Ogwen has been significant. The pandemic saw the launch of Cadwyn Ogwen, an online marketing and sales site for local producers that doubled in turnover from 2020 to 2022. Similarly, turnover for Partneriaeth Ogwen has more than doubled in this time. Programmes like Dyffryn Gwyrdd have taken a practical approach to sustainability, including making electric vehicles and bikes available to the community and to tourists, developing community allotments and gardens and a befriending programme. The community leaders also took a strong role in promoting local cultural activities such as a mural, a community garden and a celebration of the Welsh princess Gwenllian.

*Llechi, Glo a Chefn Gwlad enabled us to broaden our horizons. It gave us the mental space and time to discuss our work with like-minded partners. It raised my confidence as a manager and provided a peer group to share concerns and ideas with. It became tough, as work became more busy at the end of the pandemic, to protect the time for meetings. Mel Davies, Chief Officer*

The first community leader helped to develop Siop Ogwen, a book and crafts shop on the High Street owned by Partneriaeth Ogwen. During the first COVID-19 Lockdown the shop had to shut and Fflur (2020) developed a community role, shopping for people who could not go out and collecting prescriptions. As activity started up again she worked with local schools to promote World Book day and

involve young people in develop a mural in Bethesda. Fflur now works locally as a care worker and is also a leader in the local youthclub.

The pandemic developed the importance of online shopping and Partneriaeth Ogwen were anxious to ensure that local producers could access this way of selling their wares, especially when more traditional sales outlets disappeared. The second community leader, Lucinda (2021), worked to build a customer base for Cadwyn Ogwen and an online ordering system that makes local produce available to the community. Orders are delivered in an electric van. Over the summer, Lucinda was also able to promote the local produce to tourists visiting Ogwen. Lucinda has continued to be employed by Partneriaeth Ogwen working with local food producers and the food bank. In 2023 she started a new role of poverty alleviation worker.

The third community leader, Lowri (2022), worked on developing promotional materials for the area, including short films on local programmes and businesses and promoting cultural events. She went on to find her 'perfect' job working for Golwg 360 (magazine) writing articles and continues to volunteer for Partneriaeth Ogwen.

## **Cwmni Bro Ffestiniog**

Cwmni Bro Ffestiniog is an umbrella organisation working to support community based enterprises in Blaenau Ffestiniog and surrounding area. Its core aim is to see strong local enterprises that support community and the economic, environmental, cultural, social and educational development of the area. Over the last three years Cwmni Bro Ffestiniog's networks have grown and a lot of joint work has been planned with the other Llechi, Glo a Chefn Gwlad North Wales partners. The organisation has stayed small deliberately, keeping the focus for development on the community enterprises it supports. Over the last three years Cwmni Bro Ffestiniog has grown in confidence and understanding of its role.

In 2020, when Llechi, Glo a Chefn Gwlad started, Cwmni Bro Ffestiniog wanted to develop BroCast, a community based broadcasting model that would share local news and talent and provide very local information. Gwenlli (2020) was taken on as the community leader to develop Bro Cast . During the pandemic her work became a vital way of supporting the community, providing 'good news' films and even a filmed pantomime. She was also involved in organising volunteers to support vulnerable

members of the community and arranging to film interviews and information sessions, such as when the local doctor talked about the myths around COVID-19 vaccinations. Gwenlli has continued to work with Cwmni Bro Ffestiniog, developing Bro Cast as well as facilitating a network of community enterprises. She was also the line manager for the next two community leaders.

Branwen (2021) was the second community leader. She worked to develop the network of community enterprises, setting up a regular bi-lingual newsletter. She also worked to help develop young people's voice locally, supporting them to meet to discuss ideas and facilitating a hustings for 16-18 year olds who were able to vote for the first time so that they could meet local candidates for the Senedd and ask them about the issues they cared about. After her year Branwen went to teach in South Korea.

The third community leader, Rebecca (2022), focused on developing cultural and creative activities working with young people and the wider community. This has included working with people to think about how local buildings could be best used to support the community including the church in Llanffestiniog, bought by a benefactor to the area, and the old Urdd building in Blaenau Ffestiniog which has been bought by Cwmni Bro Ffestiniog for the community. Rebecca set up Theatr Gybolfa as a social enterprise with its own board of directors and is continuing to develop this initiative.

## **Siop Griffiths**

Siop Griffiths grew from a long running youth programme in Penygroes and each of the community leaders employed had been involved since they were very young. The group took over an empty shop (Siop Griffiths) and formed a new community enterprise which, over the last three years has developed into a significant community asset, with the conversion of the shop into a café and meeting space with an Air BandB room above and the development of the outbuildings as a technology, gaming and makers' space. The building next door has been bought with plans for a youth enterprise centre.

The centre was renamed Yr Orsaf, as it was originally where the trams would stop, and has grown in the three years of the Llechi, Glo a Chefn Gwlad partnership from

one part-time worker (the community leader was their first full time employee) to employing a staff of nine. Yr Orsaf has developed its community role to include making an electric mini-bus and car and electric bikes available for local residents and tourists to hire. It has developed allotments and a community wild garden and set up community events and activities such as film clubs, community walks and the youthclub is still running. Siop Griffiths has seen its turnover rise from £20,000 to £200,000 these years, excluding the capital grants raised to buy and develop resources.

Ben Gregory says that the partnership developed by Llechi, Glo a Chefn Gwlad, especially with Partneriaeth Ogwen and Cwmni Bro Ffestiniog, has been transformational for Siop Griffiths. The trip in the car down to the first exploratory meeting for the project was the first time that the three organisations had met. At that point Siop Griffiths employed no one and Ben is clear that the developments they have achieved over the last three years would not have happened without engagement with the Llechi, Glo a Chefn Gwlad partnership. The project has also enabled them to develop a relationship with the Rank Foundation.

The Llechi, Glo a Chefn Gwlad model of employing local people and giving them support to become confident community leaders is a challenging one for such a new organisation with so few staff and each of the community leaders employed by Yr Orsaf had come straight from school or university, so they have needed a lot of support. The pandemic also impacted on what the community leaders could do and how they could be supported. The organisation reports that it has learned a lot about supporting trainees.

The first community leader, Daniel (2020), helped develop an IT suite and communications within the organisation – work that became essential when the pandemic hit. He has recently started work as a technician for Theatr Fran Wen. Gwion (2021) developed resources on local history for tourists and locals and developed and led a series of walks in the area, exploring local sites of interest. He wrote a bilingual booklet 'Cerdded – walk the footpaths of Dyffryn Nantlle and learn about local history' and set up a programme of online lectures about local history. He subsequently returned to university to study for a Masters degree.

The third community leader, Osian (2022), ran music workshops in the community bringing together young people and older groups to create music and learn about producing. He also worked with schools and other community organisations to promote creativity and music. He has been accepted for a university place in music management and creative enterprise and, in the meantime, continues to work with Yr Orsaf to run sessions.

## **Ynysybwl Regeneration Partnership**

Ynysybwl is in the Cynon Valley and has a very active community of volunteers who are dedicated to improving the local economy and environment and the wellbeing of local people. The Regeneration Partnership's role is to support local groups and enterprises to make sustainable change, including securing community owned assets.

The first community leader, Lowri (2020), worked with young people to develop enterprise and built networks with local businesses and social enterprises. The pandemic diverted her work to supporting people at home, including developing activity packs for young people and setting up online youthwork sessions. Lowri went on to work as an employment adviser.

One of the enterprise ideas that developed in 2020, linked to the work Ynysybwl Regeneration Strategy was doing in developing woodland trails and outdoor activities, was around bicycle maintenance and refurbishment. Andrew (2021) set up a bicycle repair shop on the main road in Ynysybwl and worked with young people from the local school to share his skills. Andrew continued working on bicycles after his year on the project.

The Partnership managed to acquire an old building and some land around it. The building was derelict and very overgrown and in the final year Beth (2022) was employed as community leader to work with the community to develop the site and plan the use of the building. Beth worked with local youthworkers and schools to involve young people in environmental, creative and planning work and with older people using digital technology. Over the summer Beth worked with over 250 people

and many of her activities during the year involved whole families. Beth continues to work with Ynysybwl Regeneration Partnership.

## **People and Work: Cenedlaeth Rhondda**

People and Work focused their involvement with Llechi, Glo a Chefn Gwlad on Rhondda and work to support community led action in the two Rhondda valleys. Using the approach of recruiting and supporting community leaders became embedded during the last three years and developed into the Cenedlaeth Rhondda programme. The focus on the local economy in Llechi, Glo a Chefn Gwlad provided a context for the work and over the last three years community leaders have been employed to develop digital technology literacy and inclusion and to capture and understand the impact of the pandemic on business and education.

Ethan (2020) focused on developing code clubs and when the pandemic stopped people being able to come together, he developed online resources for children, young people and schools, including 9 instruction videos. He is still employed by People and Work and runs a digital inclusion programme in Rhondda. Over the years the two code clubs he runs have increased to six and he has worked with over 500 people in Rhondda including digi festivals with the local college to draw schools in to see the careers that IT can provide.

Rhian (2021) set out to capture the stories of the pandemic, to explore how local businesses were surviving it and its impact on people's lives. She developed a series of short films with community responses and developed a proposal for a programme to support families to help their children catch up on the reading practice they had missed because of COVID-19. This was subsequently funded and has proved a very successful programme and has worked with over 80 families in its first six months. Rhian is now working in Rhondda on content marketing for an app system for businesses in South Wales.

Justin (2022) started with People and Work through the Kickstart scheme where he showed a considerable talent for IT. He joined Llechi, Glo a Chefn Gwlad to develop a social enterprise collecting in old and unwanted IT equipment which is then wiped and refurbished and lent or given to local people who needed them. So far around 40 devices have been collected and 30 have been repurposed in the community. Justin

has applied to go to university and is working in IT for a London company remotely and continues in contact with the People and Work Rhondda team while working in hospitality.

The Llechi, Glo a Chefn Gwlad model has re-shaped People and Work's approach to working with communities. Of the six staff in the Cenhedlaeth Rhondda team employed by People and Work, five came through traineeship placements and all projects now include an element of local trainee involvement. Across the three years of the Llechi, Glo a Chefn Gwlad project 14 young people from Rhondda were employed through Cenhedlaeth Rhondda.

## **Key learning**

This section draws together the key learning from the Llechi, Glo a Chefn Gwlad project with some examples from partners' work. The key areas are:

- Working in partnership through a time of crisis and of significant change provided partners with peer support, new ideas and a stimulus to grow
- Partners were well placed to support people through the pandemic but also to help people return to community life and cope with the anxiety of being with other people again
- Culture and creativity are vital to community life and wellbeing
- Supporting community members to develop skills and knowledge is an investment that has a long term impact
- Communities across Wales have much more in common than they have differences and working together has given them time to discover those shared experiences and values

Working through a pandemic shaped the work of all partners and the partnership as a whole and one of the key values of the programme was the chance for partners to share experiences and ideas and provide peer support as they worked through some of the most difficult times their community has ever faced.

### **Bringing people together again**

As the worst limitations of the pandemic receded partners all experienced the fears that people felt about being in public spaces again. Much of the work in 2022 has been about getting people together, organising events and activities that have allowed people to feel safe being with others. Partners started organising outdoor activities in 2021 and this grew in 2022, with three partners setting up running clubs and others developing walking groups, walking rugby and football and gardening activities.

In Blaenau Ffestiniog a programme called Dewch Allan was launched offering 16 events that mixed social, creative and consultation activities and tested out the kinds of things that people wanted to get involved with. In Penygroes, Siop Griffiths started

its Digi Centre in January 2022 with a code club, a Fuse Maker space and a Repair Café. A cinema night for older people was run, along with a 1930s jazz night and a programme of public sessions aimed at bringing people together was launched. Tir Coed, DOVE and People and Work ran successful Summer of Fun programmes.

Credu's community leader, Bryony, undertook a year of community development in Welshpool. Credu had recently employed their first volunteer coordinator and the number of volunteers rose quickly from 30 people to over 200. Many of these volunteers are themselves carers and challenged the 'rescue' model of supporting carers. The year started with a mix of face to face and online sessions and gradually grew the face to face work. People were still very anxious about coming out in the beginning of the year but the first family open day brought in 60 people and using picnics and other outdoor activities allowed people who were nervous to join in. Bryony has focused on both supporting carers to create their own community and connecting them into the local community. She worked with local businesses and charities and supported carers to run regular weekly sessions and their own events such as a Pride picnic attended by 100 people and completely set up and resourced by carers themselves. She also supported carers to join in with community activities like the Welshpool carnival. Working with a local pub, young carers were able to have early evening pub sessions as a group, helping them to socialise and raising their confidence in a social setting. Ten young carers had a weekend trip to London, for most their first experience of being in a city.

In Banwen a mental health programme worked to combat isolation and get people back to a normality through anxiety management sessions. DOVE developed a weekly tea and a chat session for older people and developed a programme to help people gain confidence in being with others. The centre introduced yoga sessions, a family history course led by a volunteer, a maths 'return to learn' course and craft sessions. By the end of February the centre in Banwen was full for the first time since the pandemic. Over time a singing for fun session was added and a Welsh taster course was taken up by 14 people. A volunteer offered to run a free photography taster and a luncheon club was developed targeted at getting people out of the house and mixing again. On the first Sunday in September 65 people came for tea and a Welsh cake and 50 people came for the Jubilee street party DOVE ran with Action for the Elderly.

The DOVE community leader, Angie, created new groups involving 'non-typical' group members. She worked with groups of children and their parents to develop growing clubs, walking groups and outdoor events. Activities included a Summer 'growing programme'; Forest School; Summer of Fun activities over six weeks; a Winter Wonderland walk and craft fair. The Flower Pots group, after school gardening club for 6-12 year olds, was so popular that two sessions a week were run involving 40 children, with 15 more on the waiting list and involved four volunteers who offer their skills. All 20 teachers from the local school visited the sessions and subsequently asked Angie to come into school to do a talk on bees.

## **Culture and creativity**

The importance of culture and creativity in human wellbeing was highlighted during the pandemic. Bro Cast Ffestiniog showcased local film making, poetry, music and photography and in 2022 Rebecca, community leader with Cwmni Bro Ffestiniog, helped Theatr Gybolfa, a local theatre group develop as a social enterprise, with the support of Cwmpas, running art and drama workshops in local villages. They have been able to offer a job opportunity for a young person on how to facilitate and lead the group and aim to make the group sustainable.

Llinos, the community leader with Tir Dewi, ran a photographic competition to build awareness of the charity's work and the winning entries are now displayed at the Senedd, Royal Welsh Showground. Senedd, Ifor Williams Trailers, Sioe Môn and Carmarthen Mart.

A new Fuze Maker space was set up in Blaenau Ffestiniog, Bethesda and Penygroes and young people involved in learnings skills such as mending clothes and in maker's space sessions. Local young people were also involved with arts and film projects from across Wales, such as Cwmni Bro Ffestiniog's involvement with Galwad<sup>2</sup>.

Osian, the community leader with Siop Griffiths, has been involved with the music scene in Nantlle most of his life, he joined first film club run in Penygroes when he was 11. He succeeded in securing money to develop a pop-up studio and worked to get mentors from the Welsh music scene. He established a booking system for the

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<sup>2</sup> [GALWAD | 26 Sep - 2 Oct 2022 | HOME](#)

studio and ran taster sessions for music production and composing then started an 18+ social club for people jamming and having fun together. Osian brought music into other areas of Siop Griffith's work including making pianos out of bananas in code club and running a project for staff around music skills. He ran music workshops with groups of 8-13 year olds and 14-16 year olds and set up an adults' jamming group. Over the Easter holidays he ran a three day workshop taking a song from scratch to being fully produced. Osian also delivered music sessions in schools and ran music and DJ production workshops during school holidays.

## **Investing in community knowledge and skills**

Partners provided local people with the opportunity to develop skills and experience. In Llan Ffestiniog young people formed a committee to plan activities and are looking at enterprise ideas. They had a Q&A session with local small businesses and invited schools and small businesses to help their thinking around setting up a business. Rebecca went into schools to talk about social enterprise for the Welsh Baccalaureate.

In March Cwmni Bro Ffestiniog held a conference on research they had done with the University of Manchester on the local community and its future. Attended by over 150 people the conference included all the Llechi, Glo and Chefn Gwlad North Wales partners.

Llinos from Tir Dewi worked with first responders on farm accidents and developed a pilot in North Wales called Farm Friends with farmers supporting each other.

Tir Coed developed their carpentry courses across four counties and Vik, the community leader, developed Agored accredited learning units for wildlife gardening, organic gardening and other courses with the aim of accrediting volunteers working on community wildlife gardens. The first wildlife gardening course filled immediately. Vik also wrote a workbook for Agored Cymru based on the fact that lots of people will never have gardened at all and will face challenges in helping them find their 'inner gardener'. She worked with volunteers on a community garden in Aberystwyth and developing green spaces in the town. Three partners accessed Keep Wales Tidy community garden packages.

Credu did a lot of training over the year on collaborative communication with staff, volunteers and community members. The process, which involves a lot of reflective listening, has made a massive difference to the way Credu works and to carers in their personal lives and contact with professionals. They have supported carers on campaigns, such as on public changing facilities in toilets for sustainable tourism, supporting a carer who is fighting to get changing facilities.

As well as her work outdoors Angie, from DOVE, has run free sessions for older people on getting online and did a shopping online session to help people use their phones. She ran a programme for eight pupils who were struggling with attending school to do art therapy, cooking and outdoor activities. She herself completed a forest schools course, outdoor first aid, walk leaders and the Mental Health First Aid course and ran Forest Schools sessions in two local schools. She worked with a school Eco Club and with the community council to recruit 'eco warriors' and run a 'stop burning my woods' campaign.

Justin, People and Work's community leader, refurbished IT equipment that people no longer wanted and provided support to people to use them. He also helped with coding and Games clubs promoting digital inclusion for all generations. He worked on a Digi Fest that brought together three universities and groups from schools, the college, employers and the third sector in a celebration of all things digital – the whole eco-system – from leisure to employment, education and culture.

## **Connecting communities**

All the partners agree that the partnership has been very effective in helping them as their work has developed. Partners are keen to sustain links and will use the Talwrn structure to continue to meet and share ideas and challenge.

The community leaders connected up their communities and the partner visits were powerful in raising awareness of how much partners had in common. For example, Osian from Siop Griffiths worked with young carers at the Credu Summer festival and with Llinos from Tir Dewi on making a film.

The project visits helped to inspire partners and gave them ideas on ways of working as well as activities. Cath from Tir Coed identified the value of partnership working after the visit to North Wales and set about developing more partnership work as a

result, making a significant impact on how Tir Coed now works. People and Work supported its whole project team of young workers from Rhondda to make their own visit to the North Wales partners to help them understand how a coherent place based approach could work. They came back inspired and are now developing an 'anchor organisation' approach to their work in Rhondda.

Inspired by visits, a number of partners developed community gardens and Vik from Tir Coed, provided a lot of support to help Bryony from Credu and Angie from DOVE as they developed theirs.

## **Cost of Living**

As concern about the dangers presented by the pandemic began to recede, they were replaced by the mounting pressures of the cost of living crisis. Temporary infrastructure developed to cope with the pandemic, such as Pantri Pesda the first food bank in Bethesda, became permanent as needs grew.

Environmental programmes such as Repair Café (set up by four partners) and Benthylg/Library of Things (set up by three partners) gained added importance as ways for people to save money. Some partners also convened sessions with local community and public sector groups to share how they could help. Cenhedlaeth Rhondda set up two cost of living events for organisations to promote the support they can provide, sharing the information on a Facebook site.

The Dref Werdd project set up a 'one stop shop' in Blaenau Ffestiniog where people could go for everything from free food to help to claim benefits and the three North Wales partners are working together on a Sero Net project that employs energy efficiency wardens to advise people at home about how to cut their energy costs. Bws Ogwen offers cheap travel for shopping trips. Ynysybwl Regeneration Strategy provided sandwiches and fruit during their summer programme.

## **Environment**

The last year of the project has seen a strong focus on the environment and how communities can work together the support it. Four of the partners have now got electric vehicles for community use and three are managing allotments. Community gardens offer important volunteering opportunities. For examples, volunteers with Tir

Coed have been setting up community gardens in Ceredigion and renovated a park in Aberystwyth. The community leader, Vik, worked with a volunteer who is a graphic artist to develop a pictorial map of groundwork in Aberystwyth and map all the growing spaces. People and Work is developing sustainability hubs in Rhondda and supporting a local social enterprise that is developing a zero waste shop. The three North Wales partners are collaborating on the GwyrddNi programme<sup>3</sup> - a community based climate action movement.

## **Community assets**

Across the three years the partners secured significant investment for their community securing funding to, for example, purchase of an old doctor's surgery in Ynysybwl, to develop a community garden outside the DOVE centre and buy and renovate prominent local buildings in Gwynedd.

Most of the community leaders gained experience in securing funding to take forward their work in the community. For example, Osian secured funding for music workshops, Bryony secured funding for the Hive, a local community facility, Angie has helped to secure funding for future work and Llinos from Tir Dewi has used her role in raising awareness of the charity's work to support community fundraising.

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<sup>3</sup> [GwyrddNi](#)

## Appendix

### The Community Development course 2020-2022

#### Cwrs Cyflwyniad i Arweinwyr Cymunedol - *Introductory Course to Community Leadership*

Accredited by **Agored Cymru**

- Young People's Participation Award Level 2
- Community Development Award Level 2

Developed and delivered by Val Williams, Community Development lead and trainer, Sylfaen Cymunedol Cyf., and Selwyn Williams, community volunteer and University of Bangor Lecturer in Lifelong Learning and MA Community Development course (retired).

The course was initially developed for face to face delivery but due to the pandemic was adapted to be delivered via online platforms, opening it out to people from across Wales to follow the course together. Twenty-nine people have completed the course. These were all people in employment – most were young community leaders who were recruited to a 12 month contract to work in their community as part of the Llechi, Glo a Chefn Gwlad project.

## Trosolwg o'r Sesiynau Digidol/Overview of Digital Sessions for 2022

1	Cychwyn yn y gwaith Starting Up	8/2/22	Val
2	Adnabod Asedau Identifying Assets	15/2/22	Val
3	Sgiliau cyfathrebu Communication Skills	22/2/22	Val
4	Sgiliau gwaith grŵp Group work skills	<b>2/3/22</b>	Val
5	Cynnwys pawb Including everyone	8/3/22	Val
6	Cefnogaeth Achrediad Accreditation Support	15/3/22	Val
7	Deall Cymuned Understanding Dyffryn Peris	22/3/22	Sel
8	Datblygiad Cymuned The relationship between capital, state and community (including the foundation economy)	29/3/22	Sel
9	Datblygiad Cymuned Philosophy & Politics of Community Development	5/4/22	Sel
10	Ymarfer Datblygu Cymuned Community Development Practice	12/4/22	Val
11	Adnabod Asedau Cymunedol Identifying Community Assets	26/4/22	Val
12	Ymgynghoriad Cymunedol Community Consultation	3/5/22	Val
13	Ymarfer Datblygu Cymuned	10/5/22	Val

	Community Development Practice		
14	Cefnogaeth Achrediad Accreditation Support	17/5/22	Val
15	Cefnogaeth Achrediad Accreditation Support	24/5/22	Val
16	Sefydlu grŵp Establishing groups	7/6/22	Val
17	Cynllunio Cymunedol Community Design	14/6/22	Gordon Gibson
18	Amlinelliad cynllun Project Outline	21/6/22	Val
19	Grantiau a rheoli arian Grants and managing Finance	28/6/22	Val
20	Be arall all fynd o'i le? What else can go wrong?	5/7/22	Val
21	Gwerthuso Evaluation	12/7/22	Val

**Feedback from people who have done the course provided for this application:**

The community development course was of great benefit to me at a time when I was starting a new job as a community leader. As well as learning more about the process of community development, it allowed insight into the common themes and challenges we all face within our communities and helped me realise what skills and personal experience I could harness to make a difference. At times it challenged me to think outside the box of what community work really is, other times I felt buoyed by validation in how I approached some aspects of my work. Most beneficial to me was regularly meeting with a group of like minded people where we were able to share our collective experience and talk about the challenges facing us as we take on leading roles in our communities. Val was a knowledgeable, encouraging and inspiring course leader.

**Rebecca Phasey, did the course in 2022, Cwmni Bro Ffestiniog – community leader now developing an arts group**

with the support from Val I was able to complete and get my certificate, every one was included and supported in our group.

I looked forward to our weekly group Val made engaging inclusive and fun. I am dyslexic and I was supported with this and offered extra support to help complete it.

Val was so excellent Credu supported me with extra coaching from Val after course finished. Any one that goes through her training is in for a treat. best course I have done yet she has an incredible teaching way.

**Mandy Hughes, a carer who was employed by Credu Carers as a community leader in 2020.**

Llynedd mi ges i'r cyfle i ddilyn Cwrs Datblygu Cymunedol efo Val o Sylfaen.

Cwrs gwych sy'n bendant yn hanfodol i bawb sy'n gweithio o fewn ein cymunedau yn fy marn i.

Beth yw cymuned? Sut fath o gymunedau gwahanol sy'n bodoli? Hanes cymuned (ers yr oes iâ i rwan!) ac yna astudio gwahanol grwpiau cymunedol a sut ma pobol yn mynd ati i greu prosiect sydd o fudd i'w cymunedau.

Beth yw amcanion datblygu cymunedol ac astudio enghreifftiau o sut y mae gwerthoedd datblygu cymunedol yn cael eu defnyddio wrth ddatblygu gweithgareddau cymunedol. Y broses, a'r ymddigiad sy'n ofynnol gan ymarferwyr datblygu cymunedol.

Dysgu am yr anghydraddoldeb sy'n bodoli o fewn cymunedau a sut i ddatrys hyn tra'n trefnu a gweithio ar brosiect. Dysgu am y gwahanol rym sydd gan unigolion a mudiadau a sud mae hyn yn effeithio ar ein cymunedau ac ar unigolion a theuluoedd o fewn ein cymunedau.

Roedd yn ffrainc cael dilyn y cwrs yma a chymeryd rhan mewn trafodaethau wedi arwain gan Val am ein gwaith ni.

Yn aml, buasai mater yn codi oedd yn trwbli un ohonom yn ein prosiectau, felly ymlaen i ddysgu datrys pethau ar ffurf 'action learning'.

Roedd hyn yn wych o brofiad ac yn helpu ni i weithio yn well fel tîm ac fel unigolion yn ein cymunedau.

Roedd cael canllawiau cadarn fel hyn yn rhoi hyder i ni wrth fod yn arweinwyr datblygu cymunedol, ac yn werthfawr iawn at y dyfodol.

Rwy'n ddiolchgar iawn am gael y cyfle i ddysgu am hyn i gyd ac mi fuaswn yn hoffi cario mlaen i ddysgu mwy!

**Lucinda Enston. Community leader with Partneriaeth Ogwen. Did course in 2021.**

I have grown and learned so much in the Community Development course with Val. Joining Ynysybwl Vision (and the third sector in general) after a five-year period of unemployment (and formerly corporate employment) I feel I was well suited to dive deeper into what a community worker and leader should be doing.

Straight away I could tell that Val was passionate, knowledgeable, caring, and supportive. She wanted to understand more about me and my journey. Once we moved into the course several topics discussed stuck with me and helped me move in a new direction with my projects. I thought through inclusion, social justice, self-determination, empowerment, participation, collective action, and sustainability in greater depth. Questioning our work and its long-term impacts on the environment, economy, and the social/village impact.

I've become more mindful of supporting others in a holistic way – sharing resources, networking, encouraging critical thinking. I've gained more practical understanding on obtaining statistics to help create an accurate picture when seeking funding or before starting a new initiative. I have a greater appreciation for consultation and feel the face to face and 'sleeves up' approach work well in our organisation. Also, helpful to have templates for a constitution, business plan outline, etc.

One of the most helpful things I've learned is to stand firm in my assertiveness – be direct, state what I feel openly, when saying no give truthful reasons - this has been powerful as a person trained to hold in my thoughts. It has been useful as a leader and whilst seeking understanding with the individuals/groups I collaborate with too.

I would highly recommend the course to anyone given the opportunity to participate. Very inspirational and practically eye-opening. I certainly seek a deeper understanding of the lived experience of everyone I meet along the way now.

**Beth Maier, Ynysybwl Regeneration Strategy community leader. Course done in 2022**

I found this course very beneficial, especially for someone who wants to work within the community. The information that was provided by the Community Development course has left me a great understanding of how to develop and work with a community.

Although the course was delivered via Zoom (something that I tend to struggle with), Val did a fantastic job delivering the course and keeping us all engaged. She would always make sure that she answered any questions and always made sure that all learners had a full understanding of the sessions content. She was also very understanding that our schedules sometimes clashed with the sessions, and she was incredibly helpful and supportive in helping us catch up on any sessions we missed.

Each session focused on individual aspects of Community Development, such as understanding what's required to develop a community group, how to facilitate said groups, providing affective feedback, and more. We were also provided with Case Studies during each session to ensure that we all had the best possible understanding of what each session was about and how they are implemented. Throughout the course we also had two guest speakers who ran a session each, which were nice additions to break up the sessions, and although one was having difficulties with their mic, these sessions were very interesting and were very helpful in understanding why it's important that some communities change and develop, and the benefits that changing can have.

By the end of the course, I felt much more confident in my work. I feel that the course has now provided me with the tools and information needed to deliver much more effectively in my community. I also feel that I have a much better understanding of how to set up and establish groups and clubs in the community. I would definitely recommend this to anyone wanting to work in communities and or have an interest in Community Development.

**Tomos Jenkins. Young community leader. Did course in 2021**

Val's course was really good, I think at the time I shared that I thought the whole course would be helpful to our workers, especially around facilitating groups. The instructions to join were clear. She agreed the dates and times of each session with us so we knew what was happening. I think she wasn't used to delivering the course online, but then who was in 2020/21?! She adapted really well, the tech went smoothly and it made it easier for people all over Wales to take part.

Val herself was really nice & approachable. I felt she had a great mix of the theory, but also have doing it herself. She welcomed and gave time for sharing our own experiences. I have thought about how to work with her again and would recommend working with Val again.

**Marie Davies, did the course in 2020. Was a project manager for Credu Carers, now CEO of Brecon Mind.**

Roedd cwrs Datblygu Gymunedol yn hynod o gwerthfawr I mi fel arweinydd dan hyfforddiant. Roeddodd gyfle i mi ddysgu sgiliau newydd am cydweithio gyda'r gymuned yn y ffordd fwyaf effeithiol ac yn rhywbeth fyddaf yn cyfeirio nol ato yn gyson yn fy ngwaith.

**Gwenlli Evans, Cwmni Bro Ffestiniog. Did course in 2020**

*When I began doing the Community Development course, I had assumed that I hadn't been doing any community development within my role, or in my own time, and I thought that the course would help me to understand what community development was, and give me ideas about how to go about doing it. In fact, the course showed me that I WAS doing community development, and had been for a few years! The course gave me such a rounded and broad understanding of community development and gave me a perspective which has been beneficial in both my paid work, my work as a volunteer and also in relation to benefitting the community in which I live and work.*

*Gaining a greater understanding of the context and evolution of communities, and applying it to my own, has helped me enormously, and has been a learning that I have been able to pass on to those that I spend time with. It has improved the impact that we have within our community and also given us the skills and knowledge to attempt to be more sustainable in the long term, by gaining buy-in and engagement from those we spend time with.*

*So often, as a volunteer in the community, you just try your best and hope that what you are doing is right – doing this course has given me direction in how to approach community development, and also confidence in my role and that what I do for the organisations I spend time with (both paid and unpaid) is having the best impact it can.*

**Natasha Burnell. Community volunteer and social enterprise worker. Did course in 2021**

“The community development course was very beneficial for my development and understanding of community work. It's helped me appreciate my community even more and I've spent more time thinking about things I wouldn't have before.

I really enjoyed looking into other communities and seeing how they've developed over time and it was really interesting to look into the history of communities in Wales

and having guest speakers in meant that we could get a more personal and direct understanding, even though it was done through Zoom.

We spent a lot of time looking into the roles of employees in a work place and recognising the importance of different perspectives and how it can be useful to have multiple contributors to a group project.

I've found myself using lots of the things I've learned about in my work and I feel that it's definitely helped me to become a better worker in the community work that I do."

**Justin George, community leader. Did course in 2022**

Mae'r cwrs Datblygu Cymunedol wedi bod yn wych. Mae wedi fy helpu llawer ar ddechrau fy ngyrfa fel datblygwr cymunedol. Roedd yn berthnasol iawn i fy swydd oherwydd fy mod yn gweithio fel datblygwr cymunedol. Dysgais llawer iawn am ddatblygiad cymunedol. Rhai o'r pethau ddysgais yw pam bod unigolion yn gwneud gwaith cymunedol. Dysgais sut i gynnwys pobl mewn gwaith cymunedol. Dysgais sut i ffurfio grŵp cymunedol a sut maent yn gweithio. Dysgais am y rholiau sydd gan bobl mewn grŵp cymunedol. Dysgais y manteision ac anfanteision o wneud gwaith cymunedol.

Teimlaf fod y cwrs wedi rhoi dealltwriaeth dda i mi o unigolion o fewn y gymuned. Mae hefyd wedi dysgu'r ochr ymarferol o waith cymunedol i mi. Dysgais bethau fel sut i greu menter gymdeithasol a sut i agor cyfri banc i fenter gymdeithasol. Ar y cwrs roedd pobl eraill sydd hefyd ar ddechrau gyrfa. Roedd yn braf cael rhannu profiadau a theimlais y dysgais lawer gan y bobl eraill ar y cwrs yn ogystal â Val. Roedd llawer o drafod yn y wers ymysg y mynychwyr.

**Lowri Larsen, Partneriaeth Ogwen. Course 2022**