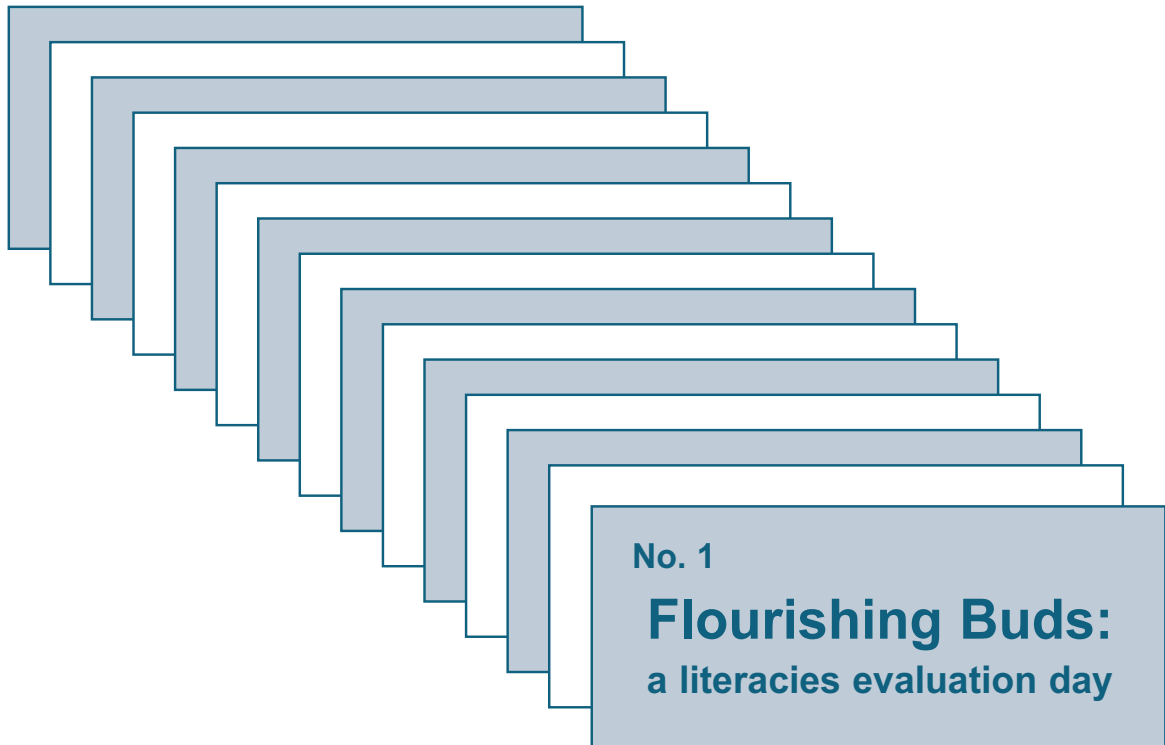


Effective practice in

Literacies

a series of guides for practitioners



The Literacies sector in Glasgow includes a wide range of voluntary organisations that have built on their experience to establish effective ways of working in project development and service delivery.

As part of our work to promote and share understanding, knowledge and information across the Literacies sector, Glasgow Council for the Voluntary Sector is producing a series of short guides that put the spotlight on just some of the good work that is being done by the voluntary sector in the city.

Each guide will focus on a specific piece of work and will be written from the practitioners view-point.

Our aim is to record the voice of those working in Literacies – the story is theirs, the role of GCVS in producing this publication is to ensure that their experiences and ideas are shared with others working to raise literacies levels in Glasgow and across Scotland.





the **issue**

In looking at how best to involve learners in evaluating their Literacies project, two of the Bulb partners, Flourish House and BUDS (Glasgow Simon Community), decided to work together to hold an evaluation day involving learners and staff from both projects.

The day was entitled “Flourishing Buds Day” and the aim was to produce extensive information on how the literacies provision has helped participants in the four main life areas of personal, working, social and community.

This is the story of the day.

Flourishing Buds Day

by Astrid Wilson (Flourish House)

Organising an event which involves learners and workers on an equal basis, and which can be considered truly participative and non-tokenistic takes time, concentration and above all a commitment to the principles and values of partnership working and inclusion.

Monitoring and evaluation can be a very dry process, and a difficult one in which to involve learners, so we hope this will give you some ideas about how to involve everyone in this process in an interesting and accessible way.



**Tutors and learners
from Flourish House**

When we first thought about holding the Flourishing Buds day we really wanted to ensure that learners and workers were truly involved on an equal basis in all aspects of the event - from planning the content of sessions and organising resources - to booking the premises and ordering the lunch.

This was the first time our two organisations had come together to organise an event like this and there were valuable lessons to be learned. We hope to be able to apply them in future events.

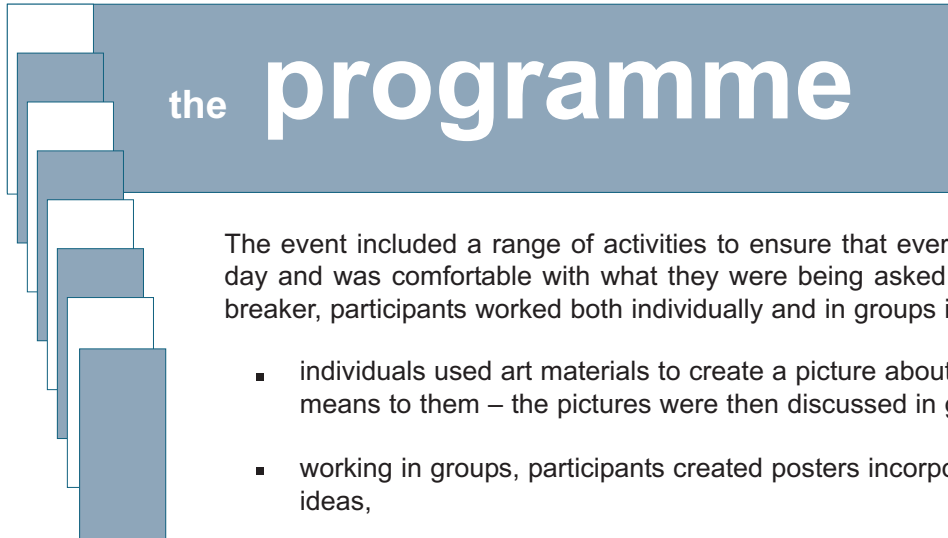


the **process**

The day

The two projects took responsibility for preparing different aspects of the day, BUDS organised the venue, refreshments and icebreakers, and Flourish House were responsible for the content of the workshop and resources. Each partner publicised the event to their own learners.

It was decided that the day should be as accessible as possible to all learners regardless of what point they had reached in their learning. The content would therefore consist of as little reading or writing as possible, and learners from both projects would be supported to work as a team.



The event included a range of activities to ensure that everyone could contribute to the day and was comfortable with what they were being asked to do. Starting with an ice-breaker, participants worked both individually and in groups in the following sessions,

- individuals used art materials to create a picture about what the literacies tuition means to them – the pictures were then discussed in groups,
- working in groups, participants created posters incorporating each individual's ideas,
- the groups then produced a number of statements about their posters, ensuring that the person that was doing the writing was comfortable with this task,
- all the posters were displayed, and a spokesperson for each group explained their ideas etc. Participants were then asked to place a sticker next to the statements on the posters that were most relevant to them.

useful tips when planning an event

- Try not to treat the content of the day as a literacies lesson, the purpose is to include everyone on an equal basis and not create a divide between learners and practitioners.
- Ice-breakers should be short, snappy, fun and energetic. It is a good idea to do ones that get people moving and working together in groups. e.g. split into 3 groups, each group forms a circle closes eyes, everyone reaches into the centre of the circle and links hands with other people. The group then has to work together to unravel themselves without letting go hands.
- Make sure you consult with your learners and include them in the whole process. Work together on jobs, don't just delegate the more menial tasks to learners.
- Break tasks down into manageable chunks to make involvement accessible for as many people as possible, regardless of literacies levels.

Remember that on the day your learners are working together to produce the information. The practitioners should be acting as facilitators and support for working groups.

For our event we had an ex-learner involved on the day who helped support existing learners and aided with facilitation – we felt this showed a positive working example of progression from involvement in a literacies programme.



task suggestions

NB: all of these can include learners

- **Organising date and time of event**
- **Designing and producing invites**
- **Discussing venue requirements**
- **Discussing lunch and break refreshments**
- **Booking and paying for venue**
- **Ordering/buying refreshments**
- **Planning content of the day**
- **Planning resources**
- **Ordering/gathering resources**
- **Organising transport**
- **Setting up on the day**
- **Taking photos**
- **Budgeting for event**
- **Collating information gathered at event**
- **Typing up findings**

This is not an exhaustive list and you will find you generate lots of tasks not included in the above.

the result

We felt that the event was very successful - we had great participation and feedback from learners and we gathered lots of qualitative information for the monitoring report - but on reflection there were ways in which learners could have been even more involved.

We could also have undertaken better consultation with learners about some aspects prior to the event – for example, on the day some learners expressed frustration about the timing and the fact that they were missing out on their literacies provision.

This showed we had not involved them effectively in the initial planning process, a basic error and one that we would not repeat in future.

Produced and published by the Glasgow Council for the Voluntary Sector Literacies team.

tel: 0141 332 244

roberta.downes@gcvs.org.uk



If you would like further information on Flourishing Buds or would like to contact the organisations concerned, then contact either:

Astrid Wilson, Flourish House, 23-25 Ashley Street, Glasgow G3 6DR.

tel.: 0141 333 0099 email: astrid.wilson@flourishhouse.org.uk or

Diane Gardner, Glasgow Simon Community, BUDS Project,

Room 29, The Adelphi Centre, 12 Commercial Road, Glasgow G5 0PQ.

tel.:0141 420 3492 email: dianegardner@glasgowssimon.org