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The Value of a Citizens' Curriculum

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Alex Stevenson
Head of English, Maths and ESOL, L&W

Helen Chicot
Skills and Employment Manager, Rochdale Borough Council

Tom Schuller
Senior Research Fellow, L&W

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 Scotland's Learning Partnership

Forum for Adult Learning  ECORYS 



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The basic skills challenge in England ...

- The **Skills for Life Survey** (2011): 1 in 4 adults have low levels of numeracy skills; 1 in 6 have low levels of literacy skills.
- **OECD Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC)** (2013): 16.4% scored at the lowest level for literacy; 24% for numeracy.
- **Census data** (2011) records around 850,000 adults 'non-proficient' in the English language.
- **Government data** shows that adult (19+) participation in English, maths and ESOL provision is falling.

So, Learning and Work Institute's response

More flexible, creative and innovative models are needed to engage and motivate learners and meet the challenge of poor basic language, literacy, numeracy and digital skills in the context of rapid social change.

“A citizens’ curriculum is learning which is locally-led, developed with the active participation of learners, and interlinks the life skills of language, literacy and numeracy with health, financial, digital and civic capabilities.”

Tom Schuller • David Watson

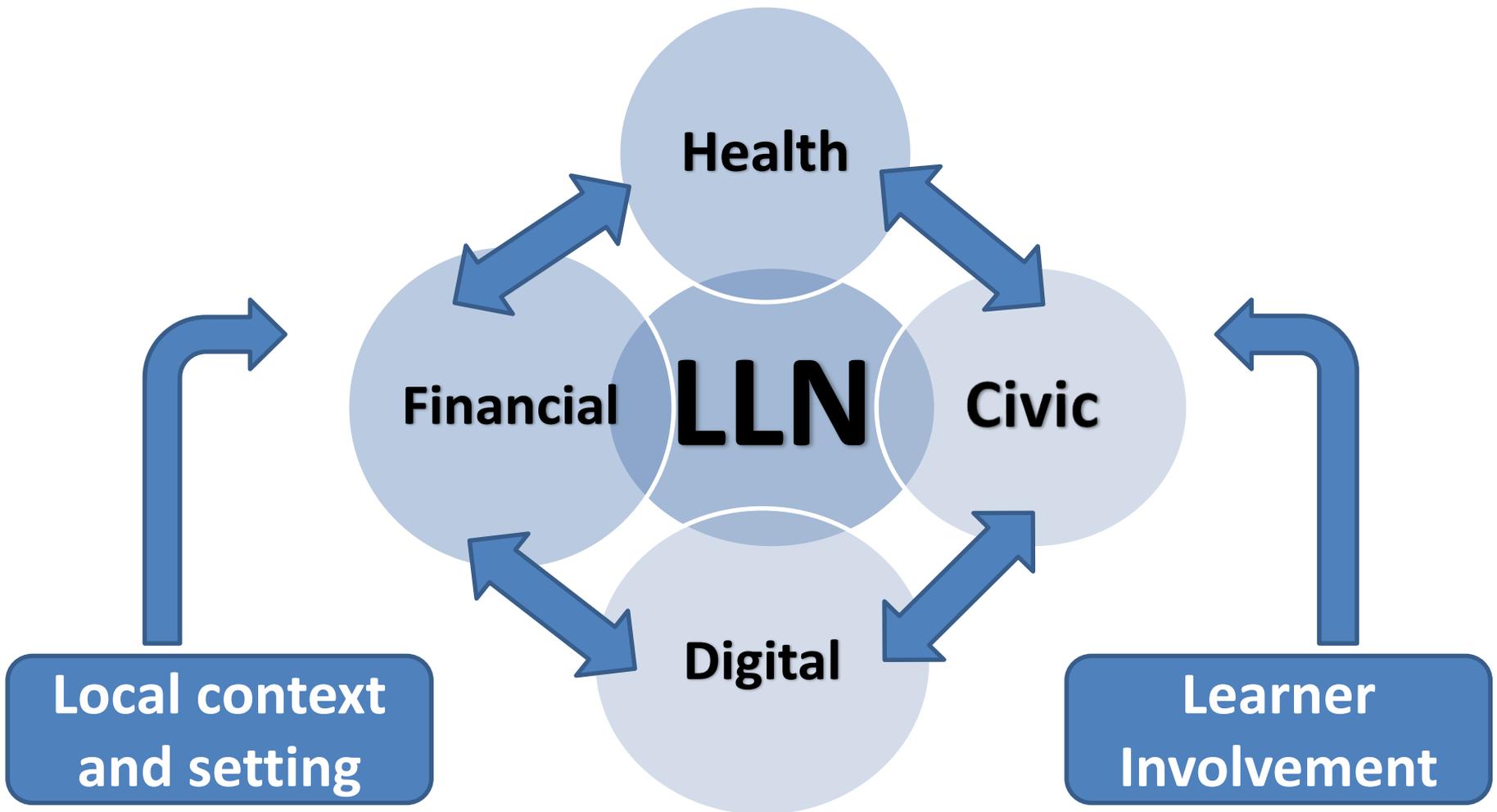
Learning Through Life

Inquiry into the Future for
Lifelong Learning

Summary



- Schuller and Watson (NIACE, 2009)
- NIACE / NRDC Evidence on impact of embedded basic skills – Eldred (2005); Casey (2006)
- Co-design of the curriculum - *A New Curriculum for Difficult Times* (Beer, 2013)



Piloting the Citizens' Curriculum

- Our **pilots** helped us to learn more about how a Citizens' Curriculum approach can work in **different contexts**.
- In 14/15 - **13 providers (ACL, FE, VCSE)** targeting disadvantaged groups – over **160 learners**.
- In 15/16 – **13 providers (incl. 5 returners)** with a focus on language, literacy and numeracy provision – **152 learners**.
- Supported with a '**health check**', **resources** and **community of practice**.

Key Overall Findings – Providers (15/16)

- Improved **understanding of their impact** on learners
- **Improved organisational ways of working**, including the sharing and adoption of good practice and expertise across curriculum teams;
- **More effective planning** and interlinking of provision through adoption of a recognised and evidence-based framework; and
- Increased number of **learners returning as volunteers**.

Key Overall Findings – Practitioners (15/16)

- Increased confidence in **adopting a learner-led approach**
- Enhanced capability to adopt interlinked and **contextualised approaches** to teaching Citizens' Curriculum capabilities
- Improved **practitioner morale** through greater autonomy and involvement in curriculum design and development

Key Overall Findings – Learners (15/16)

- Increased **social and civic engagement**, with
 - 73% making new friends
 - 59% reporting an improved social life
 - 28% improving their relationships with their family
 - 16% joining a community group
- Improved **self-efficacy**, with
 - 67% improving their self-confidence
 - 65% reporting a greater satisfaction with their life
 - 31% reporting improved physical health.

Key Overall Findings – Learners (15/16)

- Changes in their **employability**, with
 - 8% finding a new job
 - 20% starting to apply for jobs
 - 33% starting to look for work
 - 49% improving their work-related skills
 - 14% starting to volunteer on a regular basis.
- Improvements in their **attitudes towards learning**, with
 - 94% feeling more motivated to learn
 - 42% signing up for another course.

Social Value

- Phase 2 Citizens' Curriculum pilots created **a public value of at least £1,443,390**
- Actual value of the pilots will be far greater – not all outcomes achieved by the pilots have been allocated a monetary value
- Data on the costs of the pilots were not collected, but ...
- Rochdale Borough Council's cost-benefit analysis suggests that **for every £1 the council spent, they achieved a £3.68 financial return** and generated a public value of £19.65

Next Steps for the Citizens' Curriculum

- **More piloting** – developing models **for the workplace and the secure estate**, including a partnership with the Bell Foundation to look at ESOL needs in prisons
- **Longitudinal follow-up of pilots** – delivered through our work as **UK Co-ordinator for the European Agenda on Adult Learning**, to establish further evidence of the impacts over time.
- Developing an offer to **support practitioners, providers and new commissioners** of adult learning to implement a Citizens' Curriculum approach.



**THANK YOU
QUESTIONS**