



SURF
Scotland's Independent Regeneration Network

scotregen

issue 52 : winter 2010/11 sharing experience : shaping practice

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Community Resilience



Special feature – p8-11

A view from the chair



Stephen Maxwell
SURF Chair

Resilience is one of today's vogue words. No wonder. To get through the next five years or so of higher unemployment, declining real wages and reduced public spending will require more than the usual levels of stoicism from everyone who is not sitting securely in the top rank of income earners.

As a rallying cry to the nation, "Be resilient" may lack the recognition factor of "We're all in this together" – but it will be less offensive to those whose individual or family experience has taught them that they are among those who can expect to cope with the worst effects of the crisis.

Scotland's disadvantaged communities include many of those who are most vulnerable, but by no means all. While 34% of the population of the 15% most disadvantaged communities in Scotland live in income poverty, those 240,000 individuals represent less than a third of all Scots living in poverty.

It is one of the strengths of Scottish communities that they defy popular stereotypes. The most disadvantaged contain not just a spread of income but a diversity of talents, skills and ambitions across all income groups. Rather than any headline slogan it is that diversity that will nurture the resilience local communities will need to meet the challenges ahead.

How we can all work together to support diverse and resilient communities will be the theme of SURF's Annual Conference in Edinburgh on 17th March 2011. I hope that you can join us there and that you find the special feature articles on the same topic in this issue of Scotregen useful and informative.

Editorial



Andy Milne
SURF Chief
Executive

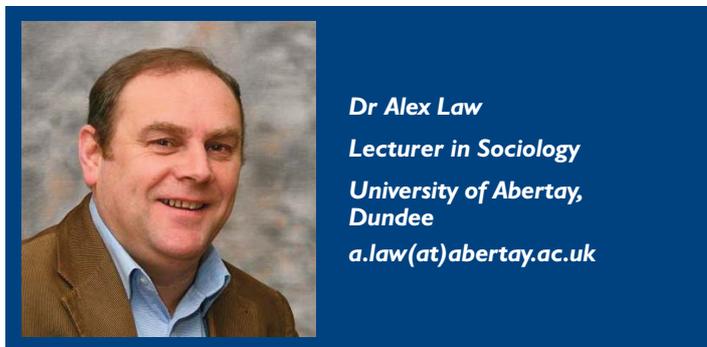
Welcome to the first Scotregen of 2011

It is clear that we are all going to need a lot of resilience to see us through the year (and beyond). It is a harsh environment for people and communities that are already struggling to regenerate a better future for themselves and their families. This issue of Scotregen has a special focus on how we can all support greater community resilience and that key challenge will also be the theme in the SURF Annual Conference on March 17th in Edinburgh. We already have some exciting speakers and participative debates lined up. JRF Chief Executive, Julia Unwin, is one of them and her exclusive article for Scotregen is part of our Community Resilience special feature starting on page 8.

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Urban Imaginings 10

In the tenth of his regular columns for Scotregen, Alex Law explores the history of the ghetto and the forces that create such 'relegated places' in Europe and the US.



Talkin' bout the ghetto: Wacquant in Edinburgh

Recently, a sizeable gathering assembled in Edinburgh to hear leading urban sociologist Loci Wacquant dissect the idea of the ghetto. At the heart of Wacquant's celebrated *Urban Outcasts* study lies the question: 'When is the ghetto not the ghetto?'

His main point is that the classical idea of the ghetto has given way lately to a more insidious conceptualisation.

The classical Jewish ghetto was a communal, ethnically homogenous enclave, spatially separate but functionally integrated into the economic and commercial life of the city. By the mid-twentieth century, the ghetto began to metamorphose into what Wacquant calls 'the anti-ghetto' on the European side and 'the hyper-ghetto' on the American side.

Hyper-ghetto in the US refers to the social implosion that followed welfare withdrawal and urban

abandonment in the wake of the 1960s black ghetto riots. Anti-ghettos in Europe stand at the opposite pole from the classical ghetto because they are not ethnically homogeneous, and so lack a unifying cultural identity.

Dominant ideas about homogenous, mono-cultural ghettos fly in the face of the reality of ethnic mixing in the most deprived parts of European cities. Today, the word 'ghetto' is indiscriminately appended to those peripheral areas that have experienced decades of industrial restructuring, endemic unemployment, physical deterioration and criminality.



Containing outcasts

What Wacquant calls 'advanced marginality' is supplanting the classical ghetto. Urban poverty and stigmatisation have become permanent rather than transitional or cyclical conditions for the urban poor.

Where the classical ghetto was an economically productive space, as well as culturally and civically vibrant – think of the Harlem Renaissance or the dense web of self-servicing ghetto institutions – advanced marginality holds out a future of economic exclusion, a civic vacuum and political irrelevance. Containing the urban outcasts in a defined place is now the main function of the penal state allied to regulation by the welfare system.

Dispelling misconceptions

By studying stigmatised urban areas in a methodical and conceptually precise way, Wacquant hopes to dispel the unfounded misconceptions about the relegated places of America and Europe.

Ignorance about the specific relationship between class, race and space

“British cities have always had stigmatised areas and atrocious slum conditions”

allows the lumpy concept of 'the ghetto' to be mobilised in the most cavalier fashion by politicians, academics and journalists. Moral

crusades over the uncontrollable 'ghetto' are launched upon oceans of ignorance about the structural dynamics and lived realities of urban marginality.

British cities have always had stigmatised areas and atrocious slum conditions. These were typically places where the productive working poor were stored. But, more recently, politicians and academics who take responsibility for managing, or at least controlling, surplus populations have also imported into their lexicon the language of social exclusion, anti-social behaviour, and personalisation.

The current focus on 'the big society' as a remedy for ethnic and cultural segregation turns attention away from the structural realities of the emerging regime of urban marginality in the UK.

SURF Activities Update

SURF delivered a busy schedule of events in the final quarter of 2010. Here is a note of recent highlights, and some information on our plans for 2011.

2010 SURF Awards for Best Practice in Community Regeneration

Scotregen subscribers will have received a copy of the 2010 SURF Awards publication along with this issue. It highlights all of the 16 projects shortlisted this year – documenting an incredible range of activity, from initiatives serving remote, rural populations in Orkney, Shetland and Lewis to those addressing long-term post-industrial degeneration in the urban communities of Govan, Glasgow and Oxfgangs, Edinburgh.

The SURF Awards were presented at a celebratory dinner event in Glasgow in early December. Despite taking place in the middle of the severe weather conditions that caused disruptions throughout Scotland, SURF were delighted that so many guests – 200 out of 250 – were able to be there to join in the celebrations.



- People category: Uig Community Shop (Lewis)
- Place category: Rag Tag 'N' Textile (Wester Ross and Skye)
- Partnership category: Eday Partnership (Orkney – pictured below)
- Healthy & Employability Partnership category: Employability and Health – An Integrated Approach (Stirling)



2010 SURF Annual Lecture

Sir Peter Housden, Permanent Secretary to the Scottish Government, delivered a thought-provoking lecture to 100 SURF guests in Dundee City Chambers in November.



This was Sir Peter's first major public speech since taking office in July 2010. His wide-ranging lecture explored the moral case for regeneration, the importance of efficiently mainstreaming localised successes, and the challenges facing regeneration fields in the financial downturn. A transcript publication will be circulated to SURF members in January 2011.

Creative Approaches

SURF organised a special collaborative film-based event on the theme of creative approaches to regeneration in November, in the Pearce Institute in Govan, Glasgow.

Key speakers used archive film clips in place of PowerPoint presentations to present their arguments at the event, which also highlighted some practical examples of innovative projects that use creative, artistic process



The conference was a collaboration between SURF, Fablevision, the Scottish Wave of Change Initiative and the Heritage Lottery Fund (Scotland). SURF and Fablevision will produce edited videos and a summary conference report, which will be available from our website (www.scotregen.co.uk).

2011 SURF Annual Conference - Supporting Community Resilience

Date: Thursday 17th March Location: Roxburghe Hotel, Edinburgh

The 2011 SURF Annual Conference is one of the must-attend events on the Scottish regeneration calendar. Key speakers include:

- Pat Ritchie, Chief Executive, Homes and Communities Agency
- Julia Unwin, Chief Executive, Joseph Rowntree Foundation
- Denys Candy, USA-based community regeneration expert

The event will also feature debate groups, panel sessions and participative electronic voting.

Scotregen subscribers will also have received an event flyer with this issue. Information is also available from our website: www.scotregen.co.uk.

The event is supported by NHS Health Scotland.

A Shared Manifesto for Community Regeneration

SURF Chair, Stephen Maxwell, is currently drafting a Shared Manifesto for Community Regeneration with key cross-sector SURF partners.



Once the consultation process is complete, SURF will be presenting the manifesto to the main political parties in advance of the May 2011 Scottish Parliament elections.

SURF will also be hosting a debate, based on the manifesto content, at the Scottish Parliament on 23rd March 2011 with leading MSPs from each party. For news on this event, please sign up to the SURF e-newsletter at the following link.

Are you on the SURF e-mailing list?

Make sure you are among the first to receive information on SURF events in 2011 by signing up to receive our e-newsletter.



SURF events, big and small, take place across Scotland and cover a wide range of topics of interest to all of those working in regeneration fields. The e-mailing list is open to all, and emails are distributed monthly.

Sign up at this link: <http://tinyurl.com/surfnewsletter>



For details on SURF activities, contact:

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SURF Networking Programme Update

SURF's Edward Harkins provides Scotregen readers with a regular update on SURF's Networking/Open Forum Programme.



Edward Harkins

Networking Initiatives
Manager

SURF

[edward\(at\)
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Earlier in 2010, there were highly successful SURF Open Forum and Food for Thought events on making more effective use of early intervention to deliver long-term regeneration. SURF has since had continued dialogue and exchanges around the theme with Scottish Government and other stakeholders.

The outcome papers from these events have been available for some time now on the SURF website (www.scotregen.co.uk > Knowledge Centre > Event Reports > Open Forums). SURF would welcome any further comments from members on policy or developments on early intervention.

The SURF Networking Manager also took part in:

- PHINS Annual Conference, Glasgow (08.10.2010)
- Member of Q&A panel, SFHA seminar on RSLs Addressing Poverty through Wider Role, Glasgow (14.10.2010)
- Urban Lab (Mackintosh School of Art) morning lecture & debate on 'Creative Placemaking', Glasgow (30.10.2010)
- Greater Glasgow etc. Health Board Annual Review and Address from Scottish Cabinet Secretary, Glasgow (07.11.2010)
- Presentation at JRF regional half-day 'Listening Event' on future priorities and challenges for the JRF in Scotland, Edinburgh (10.11.2010)
- Member of Q&A panel, Save the Children 'Us Vs Poverty'; highly interactive event for children and adults on addressing poverty in Scotland; part of the Save the Children's global programme, Glasgow (12.11.2010)
- Glasgow Caledonian conference on 'Equal Measure', re addressing equality and poverty in Scotland, Glasgow (15.11.2010)
- Scotland's Futures Forum on Social Impact Bonds at Holyrood (22.11.2010)

If SURF members wish to learn more about anything from these events, they can contact Edward directly on 0141 585 6850 or by email to [edward\(at\)scotregen.co.uk](mailto:edward(at)scotregen.co.uk).

The SURF Open Forum Programme is funded by the Scottish Government's Scottish Centre for Regeneration (SCR), with the aim of facilitating independent feedback and opinion to policy makers in Scottish Regeneration and Community Planning. For further details, contact Edward directly on 0141 585 6850 or by email to [edward\(at\)scotregen.co.uk](mailto:edward(at)scotregen.co.uk).

People, Place and Pride

At SURF's recent 'Creative Approaches' conference, Creative Scotland's Chief Executive, Andrew Dixon, presented his vision of the role of Culture in supporting better places. In this article he lists some outstanding examples of success and confirms the place-based focus that Creative Scotland will adopt in its work and investment.



Andrew Dixon
Chief Executive
Creative Scotland
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In my first months in my new job, I wanted to get a feel for the unique contribution that different places make to a creative Scotland. From Dumfries to Ullapool, Dundee to Lochaber, places all unfolded their unique cultural strengths.

NewcastleGateshead brand is all about the creative, passionate, welcoming nature of the people who live and work there.

Andrew Dixon participated in SURF's collaborative 'Creative Approaches to Real Regeneration' conference in Govan, Glasgow (10th November 2010)



Sense of Place

Understanding 'sense of place' lies at the heart of Creative Scotland's work. Our relationships with places are multi-layered: artists and other creatives, funding organisations and events, local authorities and other partners such as enterprise agencies, the NHS, broadcasters and universities.

“Understanding ‘sense of place’ lies at the heart of Creative Scotland’s work”

We want to have a series of 'single conversations' with partners representing local authority areas. Creative Scotland 'place' investment will be about repositioning and promoting the role of that place and the creativity of its communities.

Illustrating Success

There are so many examples in Scotland of where culture has

Building on Local Passion

I have just moved from 'NewcastleGateshead', where we set out to promote the place through culture and programming as a leading European destination for leisure and business.

Many know about the regeneration landmark projects – the Angel of the North (one of the most talked about pieces of public art ever produced), the Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art (developed from a former flour mill) and The Sage Gateshead – a live music venue and a centre for music education which has been listed as one of the ten best buildings in England of the last hundred years.

But perhaps less well known is that our regeneration vision was centred firmly on people and community and the

been at the heart of community or physical regeneration. The Fèis movement (community-based Gaelic arts tuition festivals) and the Pittenweem Festival in Fife are two contrasting examples exhibiting the 'three Ps' of people, place and pride.

The Pier Arts Centre in Stromness is a gem – a brilliant example of culture-led regeneration. As soon as you walk in the door, you understand why the outstanding paintings and sculpture in the Pier's care, and the special charm of the gallery itself, have long made the centre a compelling reason for visiting the islands as well as much valued cultural centre for the community. The £4.5 million redevelopment (including Scottish Arts Council Lottery funding) has enhanced the Pier Arts Centre's reputation as a Scottish gallery of international standing

and saw the building win the RIBA National Awards in 2008.

'Inspire Creetown' is a 12-month project inspired by the past and present of the place and people of Creetown, a former quarry town in Dumfries and Galloway. The project is one of our smaller Inspiring Communities projects, but one which has the potential to have a big, and lasting, impact on the local community.

Platform is a new arts venue in Easterhouse which sits at the heart of SURF Award winning project The Bridge – the overarching name for 4 facilities: John Wheatley College, Platform and Glasgow Life's library and swimming pool.

The Bridge is one of the most exciting community leisure, arts and learning projects created in Scotland and is a fine example of what can happen as a result of significant strategic partnerships. Through Platform, the Glasgow East Arts Company delivers world class cultural activities.

Further information

Fèisean nan Gàidheal <http://www.feisean.org/welcome.html>
Pittenweem Arts Festival <http://www.pittenweemartsfestival.co.uk>
The Pier Arts Centre <http://www.pierartscentre.com>
Keekin' in Creetown
http://news.bbc.co.uk/local/southscotland/hi/people_and_places/arts_and_culture/newsid_9073000/9073473.stm
Platform at the Bridge <http://www.platform-online.co.uk>
Starcatchers <http://www.starcatchers.org.uk>
IETM (International Network for Contemporary Performing Arts)
www.ietm.org

SURF will be working with Creative Scotland to promote creative approaches to community regeneration.

Tax Increment Financing - a “scam”?

Andy Wightman, the author of “Who Owns Scotland?”, questions the current appetite for Tax Increment Financing, and proposes his alternative for a fairer form of funding future regeneration.



Andy Wightman
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In October, the City of Edinburgh Council obtained approval for a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) scheme in Leith Docks. This is a mechanism whereby the Council is allowed to borrow money to finance capital works (in this case a new road, public esplanade and port facilities). The uplift in non-domestic rates revenue arising as a consequence of these capital works is then used to meet debt repayments on the initial investment.

At the heart of this (although the promoters will not admit this) is the principle that land values belong by right to the community since it is the community which generates demand for land which leads to higher values for some locations than for others. In the Edinburgh scheme this is acknowledged by the fact that the boundaries of the TIF areas extend well beyond the area where the planned capital works are proposed. If this all works out, businesses right across Leith and Granton will pay more in business rates as a consequence of the uplift in land values.

Big Question

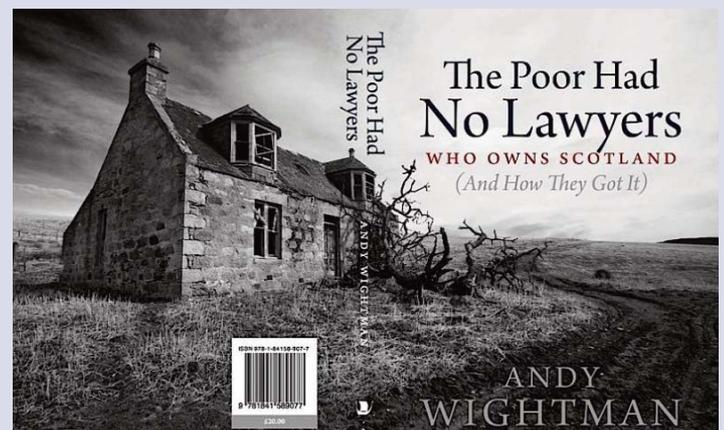
However, this proposal poses a big question. Why should business pay? Or rather, why should only business pay? Investment in infrastructure will lead to an uplift in land values across a wide area. But it is only the incremental value (that over and above what would have occurred in the absence of the TIF scheme) of land and property liable to business rates that will contribute to the repayment of the initial public investment. This does not seem fair when the value of private homes, derelict land and other land

will also rise and be captured by the landowners. Business is thus paying disproportionately for the public benefits being delivered through this form of regeneration when it is the uplift in land values right across the TIF area that should be used to finance the project.

And this has consequences which have perhaps not been properly appreciated. The Scottish Government owns Victoria Quay with a rateable value of £3.92 million on which it pays rates of £1,622,880 to the City of Edinburgh Council. Following the TIF scheme, the rental value of Victoria Quay will rise (that's the logic of TIF) and so the Scottish Government will need to find additional funds to pay the now higher business rates at a time of declining income. Meanwhile, the property developers sitting on all that vacant land will form part of the undeserving rich who do nothing but see the value of their property portfolios rising while they sleep.

Land Value Tax

In October I wrote a report on land value taxation for the Scottish Green Party MSPs in which I proposed exacting a levy on all landowners. Our proposals leave 75% of households in Scotland paying less than they do under the Council tax and will provide businesses with a cut of 75% in what they pay in business rates. Sounds good to me. I hope business agrees and has nothing to do with this Tax Increment Financing scam.
<http://twodoctors.org/lvtwightman.pdf>



Andy Wightman's new book, “The Poor Had No Lawyers – Who Owns Scotland (And How They Got It)” is available now; ISBN 978-1-84158-907-7.

A bright light on recession policy impacts

The JRF Chief Executive, Julia Unwin will be a key speaker at the upcoming SURF Annual Conference on Community Resilience. Here, she outlines some of the work that the JRF is doing to monitor the impact of recession based policy and to highlight some successful responses.

The recession and cuts in public spending will place a profound strain on social and economic resilience. While the draft Scottish budget sets out a reduction of £1.2 billion next year, Scotland will also face its share of cuts from UK welfare reforms. All of this, at a time when unemployment has carried on rising against the trend in England.

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation's work seeks to shine a very bright light on the impact of these changes for people and places experiencing poverty. The findings of our latest *Monitoring Poverty and Social Exclusion report** show that fully 40% of jobs lost were among the under-25s last year, whom we know are at most risk of long-term 'scarring' to future job and earning prospects.

Looking across the map of Scotland, the biggest rise in out-of-work benefit claims occurred where economic resilience is ranked lowest. These tend to be authorities made up of large towns in the west of Scotland (North Ayrshire, West Dunbartonshire and North Lanarkshire), while the most resilient economies experienced the smallest rise in claimants (notably Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and a number of rural areas).

“Resilience will reflect a fundamentally different approach to how the housing market is shaped”



Julian Unwin

Chief Executive

Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF)

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But we know that the picture is more complicated. Many of those who managed to move off benefits into work during the years of growth found themselves only a little better off. Others have cycled in and out of low-paid work, finding that debt, rent or childcare costs make the climb out of poverty a losing battle. JRF's work on a *Minimum Income Standard* for the UK shows what different households need to bring home if they are to have a modest but adequate standard of living. It highlights a clear gap both for people living on benefits and those earning

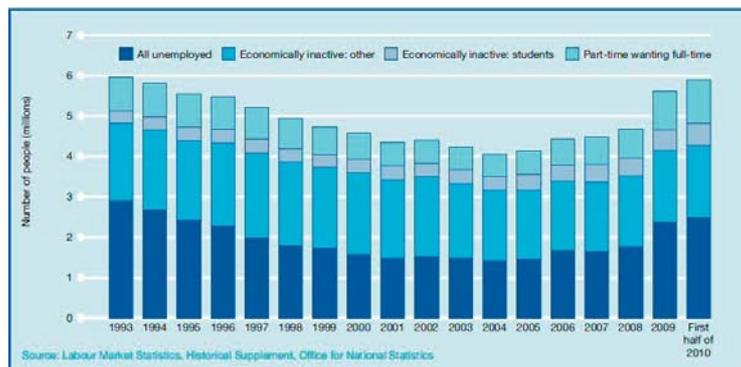
below £7 an hour. The gap is even greater in rural areas.

Resilience in the face of austerity will reflect the availability of decent, affordable housing and a fundamentally different approach to how the housing market is shaped.

A decade of regeneration policy has shown us the value of taking action on all fronts: physical improvements to housing and environment needs to be

combined with action to connect people into networks of learning, training, work and care. And resilient communities need to include isolated older people – those who feel 'independent living' is a lonely experience more akin to abandonment. JRF's *Reshaping Care for Older People* programme provides a rare opportunity to address the issue of wellbeing for an ageing population.

Boosting resilience is partly about the funding choices made by Governments at Holyrood and Westminster, and by local authorities. These can help or hinder the chances of disadvantaged people keeping their heads above water. They will rarely be neutral. But it will also be about how the responsibility is shared between government, citizens, employers and the community – the kind of social contract Scotland wants to establish in the years ahead.



Unemployment and under-employment 1993-2010

**Monitoring Poverty and Social Exclusion in Scotland 2010* by Anushree Parekh, Peter Kenway and Tom MacInnes is available from www.jrf.org.uk

Regeneration Rights

In this article, Carole Ewart highlights the value of existing human rights legislation as an effective tool for supporting services towards more resilient individuals and communities.



Carole Ewart

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In Sci-Fi movies, we are used to the regeneration of 'beings' - but in the real public policy world, the focus has been on physical structures and public places.

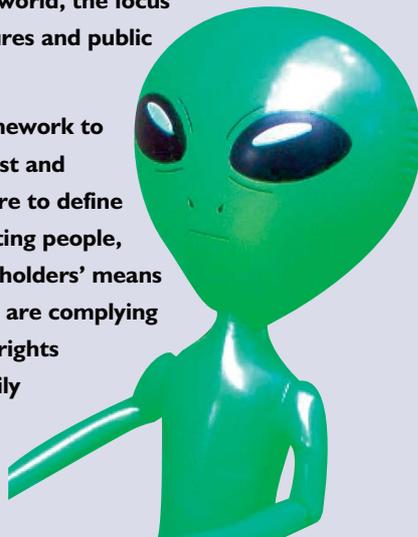
Applying a human rights framework to regeneration puts people first and enables a rights-based culture to define public policy decisions. Treating people, and communities, as 'rights holders' means our elected decision makers are complying with their statutory human rights obligations when making daily decisions on priorities and services.

Poverty is a human rights issue. The United Nations has articulated its pernicious impact but asserts that, "While the common theme underlying poor peoples' experiences is one of powerlessness, human rights can empower individuals & communities. The challenge is to connect the powerless with the empowering potential of human rights."

Opening a door on human rights

So why are human rights so low in the public policy agenda that affects people's daily lives?

Perhaps an examination of public sector duties on issues such as poverty, provides some clarity as it is not a door that some key decision makers seem keen to open.



Generally, people in Scotland do not know about, or exercise, their human rights. For example, the UN Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights states families should enjoy

'the right to an adequate standard of living, including adequate food, clothing and housing' (Article 11).

Governments are obliged to take appropriate steps for the realization of this right ... progressively and to the maximum extent of available resources (Article 2) even in a period of economic downturn.

The UK has assured the UN that all our laws and policies comply with such obligations. A UN hearing on UK progress in May 2009 resulted in a number of recommendations including that the Government should:

"intensify its efforts to combat poverty, fuel poverty, and social exclusion, in particular with regard to the most disadvantaged and marginalized individuals and groups and in the most affected regions and city areas..."

Public misunderstanding

In respect of civil and political rights, there is more awareness of the power of the European Convention on Human Rights. After all, section 6 of the Human Rights Act 1998 requires the public sector to comply with ECHR and section 57 of the Scotland Act 1998 places a positive obligation on Scottish Government Ministers to comply.



The public sector covers at least 10,000 bodies including housing associations. The huge publicity given to prisoners asserting their human rights, such as Mr Napier on 'slopping out' and Mr Cadder on accessing a solicitor upon detention, contributed to public misunderstanding.

When people have used the ECHR, it makes a huge difference. For example Mrs Lopez Ostra complained about a breach of Article 8 of the ECHR the 'right to respect for private and family life, home and correspondence' due to the terrible smell from a waste treatment facility, a few metres from the family home. The European Court agreed. The problems were not, however, considered to be so serious to have violated her health.

So, human rights and regeneration do go together, both in terms of empowering individuals and local communities as well as enabling people's lives to be improved from housing to the environment. The puzzle is why there is so little activity on using a human rights framework to deliver regeneration.

Low Pay Undermines Community Resilience

Low pay, particularly in the current context of welfare reform, weakens the resilience of individuals and communities. In this article, Eddie Follan argues that paying a living wage is a crucial element in ensuring that this situation is reversed.



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The Demos publication 'Resilient Nation' defined resilience as:

"The capacity of an individual, community or system to adapt in order to sustain an acceptable level of function, structure, and identity."

Get connected join SURF

SURF's cross-sector membership is the backbone of its work. Become a SURF member and get:

- A guaranteed 33% discount on SURF seminars conferences, and study visits.
- Advance notice of all of our events.
- A complimentary invitation to SURF's Annual Lecture and a free copy of the speech.
- Priority access to our programme of Open Forums
- Information on SURF's annual Regeneration Awards for best practice and reduced rates for the Awards presentation dinner.
- Copies of our quarterly Scotregen journal sent directly to you and your key colleagues.
- Access to our members' library of SURF publications and reports on our Website.

Get connected to a truly independent and informed network of regeneration organisations and individuals. Your support will help SURF to continue to be an effective catalyst for improving all our efforts to create successful and sustainable communities across Scotland.

To find out more and for a form to join SURF, visit our web site at www.scotregen.co.uk or contact Andy Milne directly by calling 0141 585 6848 or email him at [andymilne\(at\)scotregen.co.uk](mailto:andymilne(at)scotregen.co.uk).

As the UK coalition Government continues to unveil its plans on welfare and the full force of cuts in public spending loom large, its not hard to see the many different ways in which the capacity of individuals and communities to 'adapt in order to sustain acceptable levels of function, structure and identity' come under increasing strain.

Changes to the welfare system have dominated debate in the last few months with the Coalition insisting that reliance on benefits traps people in a cycle of poverty and unemployment. Their solution is to ensure that work pays and that there is no incentive to remain on benefits for long periods of time. Unfortunately, the Coalition's approach has been to propose cuts to benefits rather than tackling the issue of low pay.

Around 400,000 workers in Scotland are paid less than the Scottish living wage of £7.15 per hour. It is low paid work that traps people and communities in poverty. Sustaining 'acceptable levels of functioning' for individuals or communities is hugely reliant on economic circumstance. In many cases people – mainly women - will need two or even three jobs to make ends meet. The subsequent impact on their health, the ability to look after children, provide a stable family life and contribute to the well being of the community is drastically affected.

The Scottish Living Wage Campaign (SLWC), a coalition of trade unions, NGO'S and faith based organisations have been successful in persuading national

politicians in Scotland of the need for paying a living wage – currently £7.15 – in the public sector. Both main political parties have made public commitments to ensuring that

this happens in one way or another.

Whilst establishing the living wage, not only as a principle, but as an economic reality for thousands of low paid Scottish workers is a huge step forward, the challenges in ensuring that fair pay is a reality for all workers remains significant.

The private sector, touted as a solution to job losses in the public sector, continues to have the highest rates of low pay in Scotland. At the moment there can be no requirement on private sector companies to pay a living wage although the prospects of public sector contracts containing a living wage clause are increasing as political support grows.

People and communities living in poverty are under increasing pressure and their 'resilience' is being severely tested. Locking these same people into low paid work will only add to that pressure.

Progress is being made, but private sector employers need to contribute to building community resilience by ensuring that all workers are paid a living wage.



Community Resilience

Friction at the Hub

Regular Scotregen readers will recall that SURF has maintained an active interest in the Scottish Government's Hub initiative since the balmy summer of 2006 (see issues 34 and 45 of Scotregen). The Scottish Futures Trust now carries responsibility for its delivery.

Hub supporters argue that it will offer better value for scarce public resources in the current financial climate. Critics voice concern about the impact of massive scaling-up of regeneration procurement processes on local firms and community diversity.



In this article, award-winning architect Malcolm Fraser voices his concerns about design quality and the longer-term impact on community regeneration outcomes.



Malcolm Fraser,
Architect
architecture(at)
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Will a Hub solve the procurement issue?

Construction procurement sounds like the driest of subjects. It comes alive when it goes wrong: fills newspapers and courtrooms, damages jobs and local money. Scotland is world class at getting it wrong, with the humiliation of the Parliament's procurement in danger of being surpassed by that of the Edinburgh Trams.

High-profile failures give people the impression that construction is, inevitably, a financial and procedural disaster. But freed from government dogma and European legislation the private sector often does it well. The success of any project is based on the care taken to understand its purpose, design and detail it well properly manage its risk. The best procurement is individually tailored, adaptable and flexible. Yet successive British governments have bundled the procurement of public buildings away from such responsibility measures and into the hands of mega corporations.

In Scotland we had the chance to do things better, and the incoming SNP administration criticised such huge and wasteful public-private initiatives. The Scottish construction industry is, therefore, looking askance at the Government's plans for the unfolding "Hub" initiative, which will establish five huge corporates, each with ten or 20-year monopolies over public building.

The Scottish Futures Trust (SFT) which runs The Hub, divided the country into five super-regions. Of the two contracts awarded so far, one has gone to the Miller Group. But the south-east super-region contract – for Edinburgh, Lothians, Fife and Borders – has gone to a consortium headquartered in England. The SFT emphasises that there will be work further down the "supply chain" for local builder, architects and engineers. But does this still not represent a loss of leadership, and money, down south?

My second concern is the relegation of the architecture of a building to

an item in a contractor's supply chain. It seems to me, when I look at the quality of most of today's architecture, that it suffers from a lack of care and attention. Do we really want to drive down costs here, even further?

My final issues are with the concept of a monopoly. It's not possible to establish the lower limit for the Hub's projects - £750,000 has been mentioned, as has £5 million. But the skills needed to deliver a new-build city hospital are very different from those to convert an old building in a rural town. Huge contractors are simply not cost effective for diverse small work.

And where did we get the idea that monopolies were cost effective, or could deliver consistent quality? The Hub's quality check processes are no match for the carrot-and-stick approach: that we have to deliver, today, in order to work tomorrow.

*Neil Grice, Hub Programme
Manager in the Scottish
Futures Trust, responds to
some of the points in
Malcolm Fraser's article.*



Join the HUB

The Hub has been ten years in strategic development by the Scottish Government, with its business case signed off in early 2007. The Scottish Government invited SFT to lead and manage the programme on its behalf in 2009.

Far from awarding "super-region contracts" down south, these contracts have been awarded to consortia that include Galliford Try, which operates as Morrison Construction in Scotland employing 650 local people and Davis Langdon, which has had a presence in Scotland for 55 years and employs 100 local staff.

Local builders, architects, tradespeople and SME's are all encouraged to join the Hub supply chains in all the Hub company territories. The reality is that these supply chains, which in the north of Scotland already consist of more than 100 local suppliers, will be used to deliver better community public services across Scotland, while ensuring best value for the taxpayer.

Malcolm Fraser also praises work in the private sector built "freed from European legislation". SFT, in common with all public sector bodies, must apply the law and work within the European legislation. This is not a choice.

Like all other architects, Mr Fraser can apply to join the supply chain and I encourage him to do so. He could work with SFT to help us add to the award-winning buildings that have already been procured this way.

Bricks, mortar and more: - mental wellbeing, resilience and regeneration

In this issue's regular column from colleagues at the substantial housing, health and regeneration project, GoWell, this article explores the strength of associations between physical and social regeneration and mental wellbeing.



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Do you generally feel good about your life? Do you have a sense of purpose and confidence that you can achieve the things you want?

If you are lucky enough to feel this way, then congratulations - you obviously have a high level of positive mental wellbeing. It's hard to over-estimate how important mental wellbeing is to people. It is what makes life a fulfilling experience or, without it, a grind.

Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS) in 2006. This is a validated tool for measuring people's wellbeing, and now forms the basis of one of the Scottish Government's national performance indicators on improving wellbeing across the population.

Improving the general mental wellbeing of a population hardly sounds like a straight forward task. Urban regeneration is one promising place to start. Successful regeneration may include a range of improvements to people's sense of opportunity and empowerment, and to their social and physical environments.

Analysis by Lyndal Bond and the GoWell Team has explored the characteristics of homes and neighbourhoods that are most strongly associated with residents having high (positive) WEMWBS scores. At this stage we have looked at strength of associations rather than their causal directions.

Our present findings fit well with the regeneration mantra 'it's more than bricks and mortar.' Some of the strongest associations with mental wellbeing were related to the way landlord services were delivered. In particular, a measure that combined general satisfaction with the landlord, a feeling that the landlord keeps residents well informed, and

that landlord decisions take residents' views into account was strongly associated with residents' WEMWBS scores. Better quality landlord services = higher mental wellbeing.

Of course, the bricks and mortar are important too. We found that people who told us they live in good quality homes and attractive peaceful neighbourhoods are most likely to enjoy high levels of mental wellbeing. This is in keeping with previous research on housing improvement. High satisfaction with housing improvement works was also associated with positive wellbeing.

These findings were based on a survey of 4500 adult residents living in some of Glasgow's most disadvantaged areas – places where improvements in wellbeing are particularly important. The same

survey also found evidence that for many measures, the quality of both the physical environment, and the quality of landlord services, was improving over time (albeit with room for further improvements).

One of our future tasks is to see whether further improvements will be reflected in better mental wellbeing for these communities.



Health researchers have been thinking about positive mental well-being for some time. Often, studies that look at mental health measure symptoms of negative ill health rather than positive wellbeing. However, there has been a growing unease about the assumption that these concepts are equivalent opposites. Two people, each free from any obvious symptoms of mental ill health, may still differ in terms of their positive mental wellbeing.

A collaboration between NHS Health Scotland, University of Warwick and the University of Edinburgh produced The Warwick-Edinburgh

For more information on GoWell, visit www.gowellonline.com or contact the GoWell Communications Manager on 0141 287 6269.

In the latest of a regular series of columns from the Poverty Alliance, Peter Kelly raises the issue of language and stereotypes in welfare, and the impact of damaging use by the UK Government and media.



Peter Kelly

Director, Poverty Alliance

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It is quite clear now that the gloves are off for the UK coalition Government in respect to welfare. The budget in June this year highlighted very clear the direction they intended to take the welfare system. Capping Housing Benefit and freezing Child Benefit gave us an indication of what was to come. At the same time, restricting child tax credits to those with an income above £40,000 was presented as evidence of the fairness of the first round of cuts. The decision to end Child Benefit payments has been presented in much the same way.

But this was just the opening act. The real impact came in the announcement of the savage cuts that were part of the Comprehensive Spending Review.

A 12-month time limit on the Employment Support Allowance clearly identifies the nature of the welfare system that is desired. This is coupled with a proposed 10% cut in council tax benefit for those who have been claiming for more than a year than one year. In addition rules are going to be changed to increase the number of hours couples need to work to be eligible for working tax credits.

So much for family friendly policies or work life balance!

Of course we could have expected these cuts. The coalition has been nothing but consistent in their focus on cutting the deficit. However, as many others have pointed out, the changes announced go beyond efforts to drive down the deficit. What is taking place is an effort to change the relationship between the individual and the state. And with this effort comes a tougher language that emphasises the responsibilities of individuals to look after themselves, and a language the plays down the role of the state in ensuring that everyone can lead a dignified life.

Returning to the language of the 'deserving' and 'undeserving poor' is an essential part of changing this relationship between the individual and the state. If comprehensive, collective responses to social inequity are to be dismantled, then we need to show that only some are deserving of support. It is increasingly clear that for many Government Ministers in the future the basis of how we support our fellow citizens should be based not on their needs, but on the moral worth of their claim.

This goes well beyond the language of 'rights and responsibilities' or 'hard working families' that the previous Labour Government deployed. In the months leading up to the publication of Iain Duncan-Smith's 'radical' welfare reform proposals we have seen the increasing use of language that demonises people on low incomes and the places they live.

From Jeremy Hunt's attacks on the irresponsibility of people with large families who live on low incomes, or the Chris Grayling's use of private credit rating companies to look into the spending patterns of those on benefits, Government Ministers are keeping up a consistent attack on those living on benefits.

And of course, much of the mainstream media happily falls into line, using the same language as that used by the Government. Radio 4 is as happy to use the misleading notion of 'welfare ghetto's' as the Daily Mail is to repeatedly refer to benefit scroungers.



But in the midst of the deepest cuts to public spending and a radical programme of welfare reform, should we really be too concerned about how the Government and media describe poverty and 'the poor'? It would be a mistake to ignore this language. It makes it more difficult to defend the services that people on low incomes need, and to argue for more resources to address poverty and inequality.

It also has a real effect on those living on low incomes, stripping people of the dignity and respect to which they are entitled. It's time for our politicians and media to ditch this stereotypical talk, and treat everyone, regardless of their income, like humans.

The Poverty Alliance has launched a new anti-stigma campaign 'Stick Your Labels. For more information visit www.povertyalliance.org

The Numbers Game

Dr Stirling Howieson at the University of Strathclyde is interested in numbers. From understanding the ‘big bang’ to managing your credit card repayments, numbers hold the key to everything. Here in his regular column, he offers some more interesting figures...



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80- 200m² Pigs, Pokes and Horses

Some **18** years ago, the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland organised a competition encouraging architects to engage with the speculative volume housing market. Branded the “House for the 90s”, the conditions were unusually detailed, prescribing a maximum floor area of **80m²**. Many architects viewed such a brief as a ‘prize pig’ competition. It is difficult to get ‘Grand Designs’ into such a small poke.

Undeterred I fed and groomed a small sow for several months. Super insulation (U value **0.1W/m²°C**) enveloping a large thermal mass using hygroscopic materials and heat recovery ventilation, produced a dwelling that did not need a heating system and met the recent Scottish Government’s target for an **80%**

reduction in CO₂ emissions. I presented the drawings with a touchingly naïve degree of satisfaction and expectation. You may be able to imagine my disappointment when the prizes were awarded to three horses – dwellings with floor areas between **175** and **200m²**?

Now I would be the first one to agree that in the aesthetic and racing stakes a horse is much prettier and faster than a pig, but the rules were mandatory; this was a ‘pigfest’! My intemperate enquiry into this bizarre outcome was rebuffed by no less than the Secretary of the RIAS; the pharisees that formed the judging panel, “do not like pigs” and that was that!

The recent Highland Housing Expo, billed as “**52** fantastic houses designed with the future in mind” raised my expectations that, at last,

Scottish architects were addressing the requirement for affordable and utilitarian low carbon dwellings that don’t expose their occupants to toxic gasses or house dust mite allergens.

Alas it proved difficult to evaluate these dwelling types as the pig/horse quandary was once again evident. If we had been furnished with the build costs or asking price, some crude cost/benefit evaluation would have been possible, but with no such information made available and floor areas ranging from **79** to **169m²** what was Joe Public to make of this?

Some performance data was published, but in the main, these numbers suggested that the dwellings are about **20** years behind current thinking. Low carbon dwellings should not require **30kW** gas boilers - a recurrent feature of those dwellings that were actually finished on time for the Expo opening. Only one of the dwellings came close to meeting what is cost effectively possible, with a total annual heating requirement of circa **1500** kWh. This compared with **17,236** kWh for the most energy profligate design (producing a whopping **8.7** tonnes of CO₂ per annum for space heating alone). And therein lays the crux of the matter.

“The recent Highland Housing Expo raised my expectation that, at last, Scottish architects were addressing the requirement for affordable and utilitarian low carbon dwellings”

Despite a growing realisation regarding the importance of meeting reduced carbon targets by improving fabric and system performance, almost all of these “award winning” architects were happy to design dwellings where aesthetic juxtapositions (NB: if you wish to get serious about architecture you learn early in your career to express the complexity of your cerebral gymnastics using incomprehensible and florid gobbledegook) took up **40%** of the internal volume.

Another worryingly encapsulated the internal volume in an impermeable layer of synthetic black rubber and had the audacity to claim that it was a, “sustainable solar thermal absorber” (unfortunately on the wrong side of the insulation layer and shortly to be covered with ivy!) demonstrating a breathtaking ignorance of standard grade physics.

So if you are an individual with no possessions, only one change of clothing, wish to spend your life reading by the light of a flickering mercury filled fluorescent lamp inside a black rubber poke, properties are now available! Horses may be pretty, but when compared with the noble and intelligent pig, they appear -like many of these Expo dwellings – to be somewhat dim and consume far too much hay.

Interesting Times for Wider Role

Housing is a key element of regeneration, both as a fundamental necessity and as a driver for wider action. In the latest of a regular series of Scotregen columns, the SFHA's David Ogilvie the valuable contribution of the Wider Role fund to community regeneration in Scotland.



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As if we were stuck in the middle of a Chinese proverb, anyone involved in community regeneration in Scotland must by now surely recognise that those wishes have been realised and now truly “we live in interesting times”.

It is hard to know for sure where we are headed, but in light of the neo-Thatcherite spending cuts announced by the UK Coalition, and the accompanying cruelties hidden in the welfare reform agenda, one thing looks a sure bet: the need for regeneration in Scotland's poorest communities is more likely to grow than diminish in the coming few years.



Taking a Wider Role: Dunedin Canmore Housing Association's work in the broader regeneration of Oxfords, Edinburgh, was highlighted in the 2010 SURF Awards

Wider Role

Scotland's housing associations and cooperatives have long been part of the regeneration landscape, and given our concerns about the impact of the coming spending cuts, it won't surprise you to hear that the uncertain future of Wider Role fund has been exercising the minds of many in the sector recently. We want not only to protect, but to build upon the legacy of the community regeneration and empowerment activities that Wider Role has made possible over the past decade.

At the end of September, the SFHA hosted an evening reception at the Scottish Parliament to celebrate the achievements and ongoing potential of housing associations and cooperatives in the various Wider Role activities. Representatives from organisations from right across Scotland crammed themselves into the Main Hall of the Parliament to showcase their own wider role projects to MSPs and then hear from various speakers, including Craig Sanderson of Link Group, Calum Macauley of Albyn Housing Society as well as Labour's shadow housing spokesperson Mary Mulligan, and last but not least from the Minister himself, Alex Neil.

Positive Impact

It was heartening to see so many MSPs in attendance on the night, many of whom said how impressed they were with the positive social and economic impact that housing associations and cooperatives have delivered in their communities with the help of Wider Role programme.

The fact is that housing associations and cooperatives are more than landlords: their commitment extends beyond way that, reaching out into the broader community. They are, as the Minister Alex Neil described it “local regeneration agencies” in their own right. Through Wider Role, they have delivered a diverse range of projects which have improved the quality of people's lives through improved employability, skills, financial inclusion, much needed environmental improvements, and improved community health and wellbeing.

In many ways, Wider Role funding has been the oil, lubricating that machinery, helping housing associations and cooperatives realise their broader regeneration objectives.

And in doing so, they have delivered added value: for every pound of wider role funding allocated this year, a further £2.50 additional funding has been levered in by housing associations and cooperatives from a variety of different sources, including their own reserves. In many cases the leverage rates are higher. This is the unique selling point for associations and cooperatives in terms of their contribution to Scotland's social and economic wellbeing: they make a little go a long way.

Whilst there is some debate about the future strategic direction of Wider Role policy, there is a consensus across the sector that Wider Role has played (and should continue to play) a valuable role in helping achieve our broader community regeneration and social inclusion objectives.

Ultimately, we believe community regeneration is an integral part of what we do.

Further Information: www.sfha.co.uk

Letter from America

Scotregen's regular USA columnist and international community facilitator, Denys Candy, shares some thoughts on creative regeneration.



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Elements of Creative Regeneration: Part One

Confronting a deadline, I fired up my laptop around midnight on October 4th 2010 and perused videos from the Scottish Screen Archive archive. "Select one that intrigues you - no other rules," SURF's Andy had counseled.

Although my choice would be integrated into a video presentation at a November 10th conference on 'Creative Regeneration', I deliberately bypassed several film clips with obvious relevance to my work as an Urbanist, trusting intuition to guide me.

Habits Change

Instead I settled on one from the 1970s, a news story about a craze then beginning to infect Scotland – jogging!

It depicted several "ordinary Scots" arriving at a stadium, all toggled out (love those hairstyles!) who were given earnest instructions on how to jog around a track. The following morning, strolling the short distance from Lothian Road to Edinburgh's Waverly station, I encountered no fewer than three joggers. No one seemed to bat an eyelid. Jogging, a non-habitual "trend" of the Seventies had gradually taken root as a habit – an accepted practice.

So it can be with creatively regenerating communities. I advocate sowing seeds of more creative attitudes and methods of community practice, "from the ground-up," to generate new habits of place-making as an alternative to conventional economic development. Over time, this "creative regeneration" can take root in multiple forms as skillful means of tackling the challenges of health and sustainability in cities, towns and rural areas alike.

Melding 'local' and 'outside' expertise

Creative regeneration starts with collectively re-experiencing familiar places to generate more options for their future. I was reminded of this in October while walking around the Abbotshaugh woodlands adjacent to the Dawson Community Center in the Bainsford/Langlees area of Falkirk. As a component of 'The Helix Project' (<http://www.thehelix.co.uk/news-and-events>), the woodlands will be the site of the Abbotshaugh Sentinel, a public art project led by Glasgow artist Jephson Robb who was chosen by a local panel.

I was there as part of a "Helix week" to offer insight on strategy and facilitate clarification of a framework and timetable for moving the project ahead. I walked the woodlands numerous times – solo and with many others during a series of events. A broad cast of characters was involved, ably herded by Grace McDonald of the Helix. They represented multiple perspectives, constituencies and skill-sets. People empowered to speak about the nitty-gritty of budgets, time and technical challenges sat with others more tuned in to creative and design issues or strategic and political matters.

Over countless cups of tea at the Dawson Center, conversations (including a few arguments) buzzed concerning the place, its history, challenges and potential. A rich body of collective knowledge and data emerged to inform the upcoming work, resulting in better strategic information than would otherwise be available and achieving buy-in among core constituents based on common understanding of obstacles and opportunities.

These benefits of creative regeneration result from effectively melding the experience and technical knowledge of "locals" with that of "outsiders." To achieve this, "outsiders" must initially prioritize forming local relationships over offering expertise and "locals" must be open to new perspectives. Both must be willing to listen deeply and stretch their perspectives to include awareness of the landscape.

In the case of woodlands or rural areas, this means asking questions like, "What does the land want?" What do the trees, water, and wild-life want?" Similar questions apply to denser urban areas (for example, we have substantial deer and turkey populations in Pittsburgh) and might also include, "What messages are the buildings and the streets giving us?"

Next time, I will address Re-Imagining and Re-making places through creative regeneration.

Future Vision 8

In the eighth of a series of Scotregen columns from the International Futures Forum, Andrew Lyon and Dr Pete Seaman offer some new horizons in future regeneration thinking.



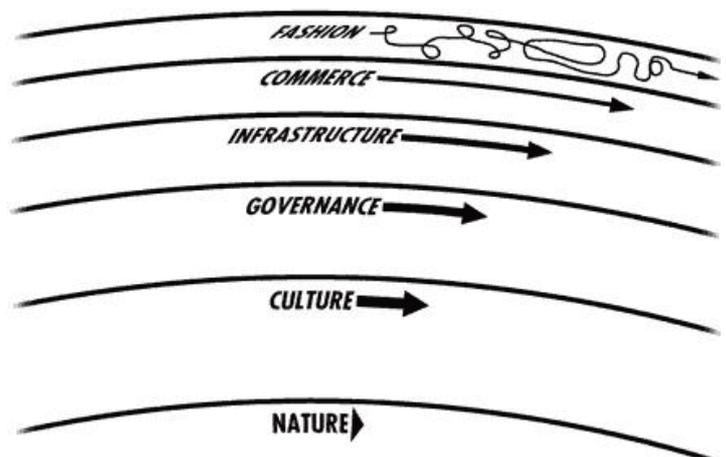
All the best for 02011!

At this time of year it is common to think about the future whether through reading your horoscopes for the coming year or reassessing progress and priorities in our personal lives. But how long is your view of the future? Perhaps you think far enough ahead to make plans for your retirement, think about your children's education or their first house. As professionals, undoubtedly the 2014 Commonwealth Games will be on the radar of someone you know. Perhaps peak oil (which according to some commentators is to happen around 2030) is encouraging you to think about far sighted actions so that we can adapt to a world where oil is scarce.

It has taken a global financial crisis and subsequent threats to our systems of welfare to bring an elongation of the time frames in which we operate. Politicians have begun to talk of responsibility and continuity across generations hastened by deficit and challenges in funding higher education, pensions and how we care for the elderly. Whilst it is glib to suggest a longer term view of the future (or even the present) may have prevented both the financial crash and our current predicament, a shift in time horizons is certainly necessary to help us better prepare for future shocks. What will the communities of the future need and how can we ensure they are best able to prosper, one, two or seven generations hence?

The Long Now Foundation (www.longnow.org) was established to encourage the thinking on longer timescales necessary to ensure our planet is inhabitable for future generations. Stewart Brand proposes

civilisation as operating at multiple paces at the same time. Fashion and commerce operate at a fast pace and learn quickly. Nature and culture change slowly but have deep remembering. Infrastructure and governance operate in the wide middle and need to be adept at both rapid learning and deep remembering.



Problems arise when we mix up our timescales and apply the wrong ones to the issue at hand, like using up a geological resource (oil) that has taken millennia to lay down at the pace of commerce or fashion. Our governance structures too, nation states, multi-nationals and global organisations are unused to thinking along the timescales necessary for dealing with these types of problems. For governments there has been a temptation to build systems around the quick returns and votes provided by short term economic prosperity. Intergenerational transfers of assets require a different mindset that seems out of kilter with the pace demanded by modern capitalism.

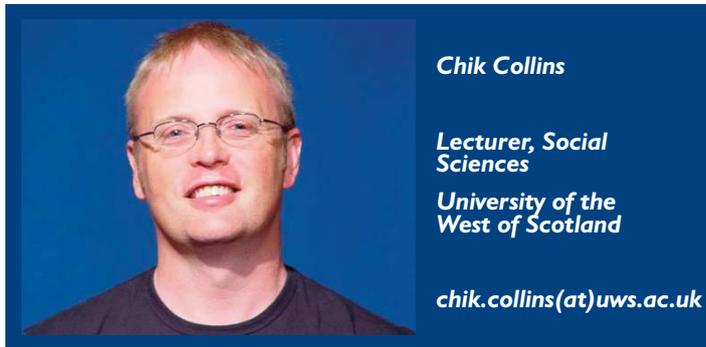
For today's regeneration efforts to continue to bear fruit many generations hence they must include elements that lift them out of the rapid pace of commerce and democratic cycles or face future shocks that can set them back generations. One key theme in the history of human civilisations is that they ultimately fail. In a global civilisation the cost of such failure will be greater than ever experienced before.

Expanding our understanding of the future involves elongating our understanding of the past and present also. One way to do this is to think of the current year within the context of a 100,000 year timeframe, so wishing you a prosperous 02011!



LANGUAGE GAMES

Chik Collins, of the University of West of Scotland, continues his personal look at the role language plays in social change.



The Terms of Civil Discourse: Post 10/20

After the Comprehensive Spending Review (10/20/10 – US style), academics were formulating their ‘takes’ and circulating drafts. An exchange around one draft jumped out. It raised the predictable issues about what was being done to whom; but also the implications for the terms of public debate.

The article was on social and spatial inequalities – the stuff of urban policy. While highly critical, it also adhered to a certain form of ‘civil discourse’. It highlighted implications of the CSR for poorer groups. A new age of social polarisation was anticipated. The draft had anger, but muted anger – no impugning of motives, no questioning of the moral calibre of the inexperienced young men fronting these extreme austerity measures. Questioning of good faith lies beyond the bounds of the familiar ‘civil discourse’.

Jurgen Habermas and Regeneration

Writing like this stands in a tradition which places great hope in the capacity of reason and argument to prevail against ignorance and prejudice. The tradition received something of a boost 25 years ago, through the work of a German thinker.

In *The Theory of Communicative Action*, Jürgen Habermas sought to redefine the social sciences by effecting a ‘linguistic turn’. Inherent in our use of language, he insisted, is the impetus to seek shared understanding based simply on the force of reason and argument. Perceiving this, he maintained, it becomes clear that language itself contains the seeds of a more open, inclusive democracy – able, through ‘communicative action’, to contain the



‘colonising’ forces of power and money.

But there is a problem applying this in practice. I encountered it myself in Ferguslie Park in the early 1990s. What does one do when the force of argument is about to be outgunned by the argument of force – by power and money – in ways which will prove damaging for all concerned?

In Habermas, the moral imperative seems clear – maintain the ‘communicative action’ until the force of argument prevails. But in practice this can leave the powerless vulnerable. One can be instilling false hope about what is likely to be achieved through dialogue.

Actually, the language of urban regeneration has long been framed on quite Habermasian lines: ‘partnerships’, ‘participation’, ‘dialogue’ and ‘learning’ based on ‘evidence’. It has – on the surface – been about good people working together to learn how best to help the poorest communities. Many have continued to want to believe in this, even when much of the evidence has challenged it. Indeed, it has typically been regarded as ‘bad form’ to say as much.

“What does one do when the force of argument is about to be outgunned by the argument of force?”

Can you help me here Jurgen?

But on 10/20 things were just so stark – the celebrations as the cuts were announced (‘more, more, more’). It turned out that the problem with ‘the broken society’ had been that it wasn’t *broken enough*.

One of those commenting on the draft article posed the question: Was it really possible now to continue along the familiar lines of ‘civil discourse’? The central presumption of good faith, as regards concern for avoidable suffering in ordinary lives, had long been in serious doubt. Post 10/20 it seemed no longer remotely tenable. Such suffering was now seen as acceptable, even desirable, in pursuit of a ‘higher ideal’. This is what ‘the big society’ amounts to – now that the lipstick is off.

There’s certainly a point here: on 10/20, a ruling elite was publically rejoiced in the anticipated misery of others. Somewhere in *The Theory of Communicative Action*, Habermas may have some advice as to how one ought to respond.

He would not advise abuse – perhaps along the lines of hair colour and resemblance to rodents. But a continuing belief in the good faith of all concerned?

IMBY – Planning for a resilient future

Planning Aid for Scotland (PAS) is a unique and independent charity that helps people to engage in the planning process. In their latest regular Scotregen column, Petra Biberbach looks at the relationship between young people and planning.



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PAS works hard to raise the profile of planning and promote a system that really includes everyone. A strong focus of its work is on the most hard-to-reach and seldom-heard groups and this very much includes children and young people.

As we know, planning is about quality of life, health and happiness and is not an academic or an abstract thing. For some young people it's about skate parks, open public spaces, youth centres, sports pitches or mobile phone masts, for others it's about affordable housing, walking routes to



school, cycling, a sense of place and identity and a long list of other lifestyle and practical things.

Voice and Vision

We also need to explain to young people that planning is not just a licence to object to things you don't like – it's about giving voice to your vision of what a place should look and feel like and how you connect with it. Planning, if done right, is an enabling system and a way to make a

better place to live in, from a planning application for a play park to developing greenspaces and a safe neighbourhood.

The key to influencing the planning system is certainly to get involved at the right moment. Time and again PAS hears stories from across Scotland about people suffering the consequences of not being involved, through lack of knowledge and understanding. But the "right moment" can equally refer to the age of those getting involved, as young people are often not empowered with the right tools and information.

Getting the planning message across to young people can be an added challenge, and we need to use different methods and tools to engage them. PAS has developed the flagship Planning to Act® (PtA®) project, using drama and arts-based learning. The project works best when youth workers or teachers join in and is most effective in areas where there have been major changes and developments, such as new housing projects, a new school or regeneration and construction work.

Taking the N out of NIMBY

IMBY (In My Back Yard) is the latest PAS innovation. IMBY is a cartoon alien and is a project that introduces primary school children to town planning from the perspective of how the landscape is shaped and why. It covers topics of interest to children, including vegetable gardens, houses, supermarkets and play parks.

The project encourages every child to focus on issues that are relevant and interesting by setting their learning in the real-life context of their community. The planning system raises difficult questions which require

problem solving skills and a developed sense of social responsibility.

PAS is also working on a youth engagement programme, supporting young people to learn about the planning system and to apply that learning in the real life context of a community. The scheme will support them in being co-opted onto a local community group, such as a community council, and advise on how they can make an informed contribution during meetings and with tasks.

Our work with young people is not just about planning - it's about engaging in wider society, becoming active

citizens and learning about rights and responsibilities. It relates strongly to citizenship, confidence building and speaking in public – most of all it's about having a stake in creating the future Scotland.

www.planningaidscotland.org.uk

Planning Aid for Scotland helpline: 0845 603 7602

Review: How social networks power and sustain the Big Society.

By Jonathan Rowson et al.

- reviewed by Edward Harkins, Networking Initiatives Manager, SURF

This paper is an account of the first of three years of the RSA Connected Communities project. The paper is focused on 'real world social networks, as opposed to online interactions'. It is, therefore, something of a contrast to the common understanding of 'connected' as to do with the Internet and other online interactions. Online interactions are recognised, nevertheless, by the authors as in some cases playing a part in real world interactions.

The authors state that the paper was produced in the context of depleted public sector funding for community development and regeneration in the UK. The authors also state that, 'A major objective of this report is to inform practical steps through which the coalition government may attempt to turn their vision of the Big Society into constructive policy interventions.' Promotion of the social networks approach as a policy tool for the roll-out of the Big Society reads, indeed, in places as the primary purpose of the paper.

Drawing on RSA members' experiences with community policy and practice, the authors recommend 'a fresh approach to developing communities, based on mapping local social networks in as detailed a manner as possible...' For some readers, the authors call for a complete rethinking of 'community' will be the more interesting aspects of the paper. The authors are on especially thought-provoking ground around the limitations of viewing communities in



exclusively geographical terms. They also, usefully, make a distinction 'between two concepts that are often conflated: social property and social capital.'

For the authors, it is social networks that we best focus on. They offer graphic modeling as an approach to making possible the necessary detail - and sensitivity - for the mapping, development or support of social networks in communities. They also offer descriptions 'of the structural attributes of social networks as a "law" of connectivity to aid understanding' of social networks.

As can be expected of the RSA, the paper is well structured and written - and well referenced. It draws extensively on projects with a community in London and another in Bristol. The paper does, however, read very much as written by professionals for professionals.

The authors also seem a little over-ready to generally dismiss the model and history of area based initiatives. It might have been better if more recognition had been given to the shortcomings of the various actors in dealing with communities as part of area based initiatives.

For example, evidence on how the New Deal for Communities (NDC) programme in England failed to improve levels of social capital in target communities is cited by the authors. But it is also reported that the NDC model, like many other models of area based initiatives, was 'dogged' by 'shallow and unrepresentative local engagement [with members of the communities]'.

'Shallow and unrepresentative engagement' will fatally damage any approach to community regeneration or community development work - including a social network approach. It would be welcomed by many if the next two years of Connected Communities programme included investigation of the reasons or causes by the common and enduring failures on community engagement across many fields of policy and practice.

Connected Communities: *How social networks power and sustain the Big Society*. by Jonathan Rowson, Steve Broome and Alasdair Jones. Published by the Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (RSA). September 2010.

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