



## **Community of Practice Facilitator - Rural Programme Carnegie UK Trust**

### **Candidate Pack**

Thank you for your interest in the new post of Community of Practice Facilitator with Carnegie UK Trust's Rural Programme.

Since the establishment of the Rural Programme in August 2004, the Trust has run a UK and Ireland wide Rural Action Research Programme in collaboration with BIG Lottery fund and has supported a large Commission of Inquiry which completed its work in June 2007 with the publishing of its final report entitled 'A Charter for Rural Communities'.

The Charter set out 'Ideas for Action' – some, including the recommendation that there should be a new 'Centre for Rural Community Development', targeted at Carnegie Trust. Having taken soundings from our partners and stakeholders, the Trust has resolved to develop a 'Community of Practice' with an emphasis on the informal learning of rural community activists and others rather than a static building. In recognition of the fact that this Community of Practice needs active facilitation, this new full-time post has been created.

This pack contains the following documents:

- Briefing papers- Introduction to the Trust
  - A. Introduction for Candidates
  - B. Briefing on Communities of Practice
  - C. Briefing on Informal Learning
- Job description and person specification
- Equal opportunities monitoring form
- The recruitment process and how to apply

For further information about the Carnegie UK Trust and the Rural Programme, including downloadable copies 'A Charter for Rural Communities' and the Annual Report please see [www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk](http://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk). Hard copies are also available on request by emailing: [kirsty@carnegieuk.org](mailto:kirsty@carnegieuk.org)



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

## Briefing paper

In this pack you will find some information about the Carnegie UK Trust, the Rural Programme and the Community of Practice together with a job description for this post and an equal opportunities monitoring form. The Trust does not have a formal application form, however applicants should provide an up to date CV highlighting your experience and qualifications, together with a two page statement indicating in detail why you are applying for this post and what you can bring to Carnegie. You can find out more about the Trust on our website [www.carnegieuktrust.or.uk](http://www.carnegieuktrust.or.uk)

### **Background to the Carnegie UK Trust and its work current programme**

Carnegie UK Trust is a not for profit foundation. It is one of over twenty foundations worldwide set up in the early twentieth century by Andrew Carnegie, the Scots-American philanthropist, working to support a more just, democratic, peaceful and sustainable world.

As an enabling organisation, the Carnegie UK Trust has a powerful contribution to make – it is an independent foundation with a commitment to sharing its own knowledge and learning from others.

The Trust's aim, as stated in its latest 5-year strategy paper, is to seek to combine work at a more strategic level, with action and research drawn from grass roots, national and international collaborative projects. The Trust is committed to intellectual integrity and to thinking ahead in order to identify the social, technological, economic, environmental and political challenges and solutions for the future, as well as of today.

The Trust currently works in four areas:

The Rural Programme examines ways in which rural communities can be empowered to shape and influence change across the UK and Ireland. In June 2007, it successfully launched the findings of the Carnegie Commission of Inquiry into Rural Community Development. The programme is now moving into an implementation phase, working to ensure that the findings of the Inquiry are embedded into policy and practice.

The Democracy and Civil Society Programme was launched in 2006 and its key purpose is to strengthen democracy and civil society in the UK and Ireland. The programme focuses on identifying practical ideas and solutions that can enhance the policies and practices of those that shape democracy and civil society. It is currently running a Commission of inquiry into the Future of Civil Society, chaired by Geoff Mulgan former head of policy at Number 10.

After over a decade of activity – including action research and grant giving - the Carnegie Young People Initiative drew to a close in October 2007. The Initiative's key aim has been to support the participation of children and young people in public decision-making. The Trust will continue to raise the profile of young people's participation through its other programmes.

The Trust also takes an active interest in the promotion of more socially progressive and creative philanthropy across all its work and activities. Carnegie is a founding member of the Woburn Place Collaborative and a co-funder and architect of the Centre for Charitable Giving and Philanthropy.

## A. CARNEGIE UK TRUST RURAL PROGRAMME – COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE FACILITATOR POST

### Introduction

In the period August 2004–October 2007 Carnegie UK Trust supported a Commission of Inquiry (Carnegie Commission for Rural Community Development) and the publishing of their final report called 'A Charter for Rural Communities' which has been well received. It presents a future vision for sustainable rural communities and a strong belief in asset based approaches. These aspirations are very far from being a reality, yet there is a great interest in implementing these ideas. Carnegie UK Trust has identified a strategy to support the realisation of the ideas within the Commission report through the continuing development of a community of practice supported virtually and through a programme of events, managed by Carnegie's Rural Programme.

The Charter for Rural Communities identified four specific 'Ideas for Action' for Carnegie UK Trust; the most significant of these is the 'Centre for Rural Community Development'

**We call upon Carnegie UK Trust to work with others to establish a UK and Ireland centre for rural community development to support policy and practice development.**

We support the development of a centre for rural community development that can support learning and development across the UK and Ireland and increasingly internationally. It should support action research, promote innovative learning approaches and materials, network facilitating opportunities for communities and professionals to learn from each other and support the training of the trainers. *The diagnostic model (i.e. the 'petal' model) at the heart of this report should inform its curriculum.* Finally, the centre should take to the road on learning journeys to visit communities, share and test knowledge and emerging practice, and encourage communities

Building upon the experiences of Carnegie's Rural Programme to date and the views of our partners following the publication of the Commission's report, we are very clear about the **REMIT** for 'the Centre':

- Carnegie should continue to build a '**community of practice**' with participation by community activists, professional community development workers, policy makers and funders. This needs to be achieved through a mixture of face-to-face events and a virtual network.
- Carnegie should not be constrained by labels such as 'rural community development' – instead we should learn from a number of disciplines
- Carnegie should develop mechanisms for learning exchange to happen in innovative ways.
- Carnegie should include in our network international partners who share our vision of sustainable rural communities

- Carnegie should further develop the ‘petal’ model of sustainable rural communities through investment in ‘early adopter’ communities. This authentic ‘grass roots’ intelligence is a distinctive characteristic of our work and enables us to speak with authority to policy makers and politicians. We should aim for fully evidenced application of the ‘petal model’ and asset based community development demonstrating how **real** rural communities can apply these ideas
- The curriculum should be informed by the ‘petal’ model of sustainable rural communities and should address the gaps in understanding that have been identified in Part One.
- Our outputs will include a lively events programme, a web-based resource, publications and policy briefings alongside investment in pioneering rural communities who will be our ‘living laboratory’.
- **It’s not a ‘Centre’!** We have a strong steer from partners that there is little appetite for the establishment of anything that was ‘remote, academic and elitist’. Our partners have emphasised that they appreciate the focus on a ‘Community of Practice’, facilitated and supported in a sensitive and collaborative style – in other words, an extension of our established way of working, although there will be a need for a ‘hub’ to manage this activity.

We have identified **gaps** in our existing knowledge or understanding or areas that have been neglected in current practice.

All of these ideas fit within the concept of **the ‘petal’ model of sustainable rural communities**:

- Asset based approaches feature strongly in the Commission report. Although asset building is a relatively new concept in the UK and Ireland, there is a wealth of **international** experience of Asset Based Community Development, in both developed and developing countries. Asset Based Rural Community Development approaches have a repertoire of associated techniques such as asset mapping to be explored.
- The importance of the **economic** dimension when addressing issues of social justice – especially the actions that rural communities can themselves influence.
- The growing recognition of the role of rural communities as **stewards** of increasingly scarce resources in an environmentally vulnerable world – water, food and energy resources that will support the nation as a whole. Also, rural communities have an appreciation of the urgent need for speedier responses to the challenge of climate change.
- An appreciation of the **new range of skills, knowledge and understanding** that rural communities will need to deploy if they are to secure positive outcomes in future – a curriculum that builds upon but that cannot adequately be embraced by traditional community development approaches.
- The need for a **multi-dimensional and multi-disciplinary** approach to inform that new curriculum and to secure sustainable rural communities

of the future – informed by human ecology, complexity theory, psychology, architecture and futures thinking just as much as sociology and geography.

- The need for politicians and planners to have access to new **legal, financial and structural instruments** to enact the opportunities identified above – investment in the community ownership, management and control of a range of assets which are secure in perpetuity.
- The extent to which successful rural community development incorporates **cultural** aspects – arts, language, traditions and rituals, narratives and festivals. These activities give meaning to communities and develop a shared sense of place. Yet they are neglected in traditional rural regeneration.

These important areas for development, based upon the organising idea of the ‘petal’ model of sustainable rural communities, have emerged both from the work of the Carnegie Commission for Rural Community Development and the work to date of RARP partners. **These conclusions should underpin curriculum development.**

### **The web-based network**

Some interactions between members of the Community of Practice can occur over the Internet, through conference calls, video-conferencing and so forth. The community would focus on a specific topic, supported by online media tools. For example, by integrating live Web conferencing, streaming video, narrated PowerPoint presentations and facilitated discussions it would be possible to deliver a conference entirely online, over several days. Online conferences would allow participants to receive content from community experts, ask questions, network with other attendees, and obtain practical resources and information. People could attend from anywhere and at any time, which is ideal for geographically dispersed groups. The overall costs of an online event would be far less than its physical equivalent. It would seem that much of our communication will take place virtually.

### **Face-to-face events**

It is generally considered to be more effective to integrate online activity and **face-to-face encounters**, based on the assumption that deeper relationships between participants can create richer collaborative experiences and that group interactions that employ technology before and/or after a face-to-face event are stronger. Rather than end the collaborative experience when participants walk out the door, a virtual structure is provided to keep people engaged, connected, and productive over a period of time.

**Overcoming the isolation experienced by rural innovators by bringing people together seems to be an important ingredient in network building. This builds on the reputation of the Carnegie Rural Programme to date in building the ‘Community of Practice’.**

## **Why informal learning is central to our work**

The priority beneficiaries for our work will be rural community activists, professionals and policy makers who all have much to gain from participation in the 'community of practice'. In implementing the Commission's model of the sustainable rural community of the future, the single most effective action for Carnegie UK Trust to take is the creation and structuring of opportunities for people to network, communicate, mentor, and learn from each other to help capture, formalise, and diffuse tacit knowledge.

There is a growing recognition that valuable learning often takes place through **informal learning**. The latest thinking about this learning style is set out in a companion document. Informal learning is based in conversations, social interactions, and projects in which learning is part of the interaction between people. Informal learning isn't limited to a predefined body of knowledge, but rather emerges from the interaction of people. At the heart of it is the transfer of tacit knowledge--knowledge that's not articulated but is acquired by individuals through experience. It is informal knowledge about how things really get done.

## **Our Vision: Collaborative Meeting Places supported by a Virtual Hub**

We have already embarked upon the building of a Community of Practice through a mixture of face-to-face meetings and online support. The venue for the face-to-face meetings seems to be very important; the place can embody the same principles that we extol in Asset Based approaches: reflecting locally distinctive features, celebrating local cultures, being rooted in real rural communities through the hosts. These meeting spaces are convivial spaces for community learning. There are undoubtedly existing locations around the UK and Ireland that fit this description – for instance the Eden Foundation are developing a farm steading building for this purpose in Cornwall and the Nant Gwrtheyrn Welsh Language Centre is located in a former slate quarrying village on the northern coast of the Llŷn Peninsula in North Wales.

We believe that it is possible to design special occasions/ events in memorable places where community members can learn from one another. This would involve a programme of **carefully planned and hosted events** for large and small audiences which build the Community of Practice; places where rural people who don't normally meet can invent new possibilities for their communities.

Such a programme of events would take an immense amount of planning – matching our growing network of contacts with interested rural communities; providing stimulating resources and a welcoming venue. The learning of the growing Community of Practice would then be consolidated by online communication.

Both virtual and face-to-face communication needs to be expertly facilitated if the Community of Practice is to be really effective, making the best use of these tools:

- **Team and community blogging** Using blogging to make community collaboration easier, more engaging and inspiring

- **Co-authoring and collaborative content management** Using wiki software to jointly create and update web-based documents by all community members.
- **Discussion forums** Message boards and forums are the classic conversation engines and are particularly well suited for collaboration on specific topics or projects.
- **Document management** A good document management system to give members the capability to post, organise files.
- **Hypertrails** Creating trails of hyperlinks that connect related pieces of content, news, documents and conversations
- **Help systems** Indexed help pages searchable by keywords
- **Member profiles and directories** The personal profiles and member directories support networking among members, allowing them to find people with similar interest, affiliation, or geographic area.
- **Calendaring** By using the calendar feature, members can review, add and edit events, milestones, and appointments.
- **Real-time messaging and chat** The real-time connections between members via phone calls, instant messaging, text and video chats are channels for sorting out thorny issues that would be more cumbersome to do by e-mail.
- **Project work areas** These are workspaces designed to help teams of the community organizing around projects of shared interest and coordinating their collaboration in and among those projects.
- **Tools for eliciting common views and intent** Features to allow the community to know better its shared views and intent would include voting, polling or surveys and rating
- **Notifications** Interest-based notifications. Members' receive automatic notices when a new event, object, topic, or reply appears that matches their interests.
- **Conversation management** Facilitators create and customise forums and topics by designing the conversation space to match the community's needs.

### **Carnegie UK Trust responds to the challenge set by the Commission:**

With a commitment to develop a new concept for informal learning for rural community activists, professionals and policy makers; not a 'Centre of Excellence' (although what happens there is truly excellent), nor entirely virtual (although relationships could be sustained online) – but the creation of informal learning spaces that facilitate the exchange of hard-won experiences, stimulating innovation and the rapid prototyping of the model of sustainable rural communities of the future – all happening in magical surroundings!

**B. Briefing on Communities of Practice**  
**Communities of Practice: The Organizational Frontier**  
**By Etienne C. Wenger and William M. Snyder**  
**In Harvard Business Review January-February 2000**

<b>NEW ORGANISATIONAL FORM</b>	A new organizational form is emerging that promises to complement existing structures and radically galvanise knowledge sharing, learning and change.
<b>SHARED EXPERTISE AND PASSION</b>	Communities of practice are groups of people informally bound together by shared expertise and passion for joint enterprise
<b>FREE FLOWING, CREATIVE WAYS</b>	People in communities of practice share their experiences and knowledge in free-flowing, creative ways that foster new approaches to problems
<b>GENERATIVE ROLE</b>	Communities of practice can drive strategy, generate new lines of business, solve problems, promote the spread of best practices, develop people's professional skills, and help companies recruit and retain talent.
<b>LEADERSHIP</b>	A community of practice can be made up of tens or even hundreds of people, but typically it has a core of participants whose passion for the topic energises the community and who provide intellectual and social leadership
<b>INFORMALITY</b>	Communities of practice are informal and membership is self-selected
<b>APPROPRIATE MEMBERSHIP</b>	Members of an existing community, when they invite someone to join, also operate on a gut sense of the prospective member's appropriateness for the group
<b>WORK RELATED</b>	Communities of practice learn together by focusing on problems that are directly related to their work
<b>EFFECTIVENESS</b>	In the short term that makes their immediate work easier or more effective
<b>CRITICAL CAPABILITIES</b>	In the long term, it helps build both the community and the shared practices –thus developing capabilities critical for the continuing success of their organisations
<b>SELF-PERPETUATING</b>	The strength of communities of practice is self-perpetuating. As they generate knowledge, they reinforce and renew themselves. That's why communities of practice give you not only the golden eggs but also the goose that lays them



<p><b>BENEFIT FROM CULTIVATION</b></p>	<p>Although communities of practice are fundamentally informal and self-organising, they benefit from cultivation.</p>
<p><b>REPECT THEIR NATURE</b></p>	<p>Like gardens they respond to attention that respects their nature.</p>
<p><b>THREE STEPS</b></p>	<p>Three steps:  Identify potential communities of practice that will enhance the company's strategic abilities  Provide the infrastructure that will support such communities and enable them to apply their expertise effectively  Use non-traditional methods to assess their value</p>
<p><b>INVEST TIME AND MONEY</b></p>	<p>Senior executives must be prepared to invest time and money in helping such communities reach their full potential</p>
<p><b>SPONSOR AND SUPPORT</b></p>	<p>One way to strengthen communities of practice is to provide them with official sponsors and support teams</p>
<p><b>FACILITATE THEM</b></p>	<p>Facilitators co-ordinate the groups, organise events, respond to queries from members, and keep the communities current on information from external sources</p>
<p><b>HIDDEN FOUNTAINHEADS</b></p>	<p>Communities of practice are increasingly becoming the "hidden fountainheads" of knowledge development and therefore the key to the challenge of the knowledge economy.</p>
<p><b>ARTFUL DILEMMA RESOLUTION</b></p>	<p>It is crucial to appreciate the paradox (dilemma?) that these informal structures require specific managerial efforts to develop them and to integrate them into the organisation so that their full power can be leveraged.</p>

## C. Why informal learning is central to Carnegie's Rural Programme

### What have we learned from Carnegie's Rural Programme to date?

Carnegie UK Trust has the benefit of long-term relationships with rural communities and in particular of the experience of managing the Rural Action Research Programme from 2004 onwards. The following lessons are important:

- The 'petal' model of sustainable rural communities is being already being enacted in part in countless places across the UK and Ireland.
- Innovation is happening in remote locations, often simultaneously, with the recreation of many wheels.
- There is a real thirst to learn from other people's experiences – authentic knowledge that is not available on courses or from agencies.
- Networking (nationally and internationally) and taking time for reflection on 'what works' are strong characteristics of Carnegie's Rural Programme.
- Carnegie can provide a very effective bridge between policy makers and the rural community innovators. Carnegie can speak with authority to policy makers because of authentic connection with grass roots organisations.

'Carnegie's instinct to trust people to come up with their own ideas and to develop their own plans is very stimulating and refreshing'

Hamish Swan, Chair of Aviemore Destination Management Organisation

In implementing the Commission's model of the sustainable rural community of the future, the single most effective action for Carnegie UK Trust can take is the creation and structuring of opportunities for people to network, communicate, mentor, and learn from each other to help capture, formalise, and diffuse tacit knowledge.

There is a growing recognition that valuable learning often takes place through **informal learning**. Informal learning is based in conversations, social interactions, and projects in which learning is part of the interaction between people. Informal learning isn't limited to a predefined body of knowledge, but rather emerges from the interaction of people. At the heart of it is the transfer of tacit knowledge--knowledge that's not articulated but is acquired by individuals through experience. It is informal knowledge about how things really get done.

Formal learning is entrusted to 'experts' and learning institutions. Can we really place our faith (and resources) in conversation, networking, relationship building, and other social learning conduits a valid means of pursuing learning?

- Even in the world of work it is acknowledged that 70 percent of what an employee needs to know to do his or her job successfully is learned outside of formal training. Our challenge is to extend learning for rural community activists and others by creating opportunities where people can learn from informal interactions.
- Tacit knowledge is extremely difficult to capture, codify, and deliver through discrete learning objects and traditional training programmes. Our challenge is to find a way to elicit and share practical know-how that would otherwise remain untapped.

In sum, informal learning is that which allows the tacit knowledge resident in a group to emerge and be exchanged, sometimes by serendipity, sometimes in the course of accomplishing a specific project, through the construction of 'spaces' that support learning.

**This concept is best explained by reference to one of Carnegie's Rural Action Research Programme initiatives:**

Rural Community Carbon Network is organised by RuralnetUK. This project will raise the awareness of the actions that rural communities can take in response to the climate change challenge. It builds on existing, isolated community action and will support other rural groups who wish to take collective action by providing access to an online panel of community experts, good practice toolkits and a mentoring service linked to a small grants programme. The Rural Community Carbon Network will link up existing groups with nascent ones for peer-to-peer support and knowledge transfer through events, twinning and online

**Rural Community Carbon Network - Supporting collective responses to climate change** - Early 'pioneer' low carbon communities have been very supportive of the network, seeing it as an effective way of managing the knowledge transfer process. As can be seen on the Google map the idea has really caught on, with many rural communities anxious to exchange experiences- [www.ruralnetuk.com](http://www.ruralnetuk.com).

The screenshot shows a Mozilla Firefox browser window displaying the Rural Community Carbon Network website. The page title is "Rural Community Carbon Network: Maps - Mozilla Firefox". The URL in the address bar is "http://ruralnet.typepad.com/rccn/maps/index.html". The website header includes "ruralnetuk", "RNUK Ltd", "Contact Us!", and "Link of the month: Experts Online". The main heading is "Rural Community Carbon Network" with the tagline "Supporting collective responses to climate change".

The page is divided into several sections:

- CATEGORIES:** Funding, Homepage, Maps, Proposal, Research, Supporters.
- ARCHIVES:** A list of months from October 2007 to October 2006.
- RCCN LINKS:** A section titled "NEW" with a link to "Map of Community Carbon Projects" and a "Useful links" section containing "advice", "agency", "awards", "biofuel", "blog", "calculator", "carbon", and "co-operative".
- Maps:** A section titled "Mapping work continues" with the text: "Our work mapping community projects in Britain and Ireland continues and can be accessed here. use the controls in the top left to zoom in and out. Click and hold to move the map around. Click on a pin to see the details of the project. To see the map full screen click [here](#). If your project is not yet featured please leave a comment and we will add you." Below this text is a Google map of Europe with numerous colorful location pins (red, yellow, green, blue) scattered across the British Isles and parts of Europe. The map includes navigation controls and a "Map | Sat | Hyb" selector.
- RECENT POSTS:** A list of recent blog posts, including "The mini anonymous survey - results announced!", "The RCCN receives 'collective support'", and "The case for network support IS the case for RCCN..".
- RECENT COMMENTS:** A list of recent comments, including "Tracey Todhunter on The RCCN receives 'collective support'" and "GED EDWARDS on Mapping Community Carbon Projects".
- Subscribe to this blog's feed:** A link to subscribe to the blog's feed.

The footer of the page shows the date "September 15, 2007" and navigation links for "Homepage", "Maps", "Permalink", "Comments (0)", and "TrackBack (0)". The browser's taskbar at the bottom shows several open applications, including "Inbox - Microsoft Out...", "Informal learning (Re...", "Blackboard Academic...", and "Rural Community Car...". The system tray shows the time as "13:36".

In the history of informal, face-to-face learning, a number of structures have evolved to support learning. These include

- Groups of people brought together for a short period of time to learn about a specific topic (for example: finding about wind power generation)
- Communities of practice: groups of people that share 'ways of working' and who meet together to exchange knowledge and share resources
- Learning networks: cross-organisational groups focused on knowledge sharing that is focused on a specific issue (such as Community Land Trusts for example).

The success of these forums for informal learning relies on the ability of participants to meet in a defined space for here-and-now learning. Our challenge is to develop these informal networks and to create collaborative learning spaces in which informal learning can occur.

### **Could we rely on an entirely 'virtual' network?**

A virtual network would comprise a group of people connected solely via technology. All interactions would begin and occur over the Internet, through conference calls, video-conferencing and so forth. The community would focus on a specific topic, supported by online media tools. For example, by integrating live Web conferencing, streaming video, narrated PowerPoint presentations and facilitated discussions it would be possible to deliver a conference entirely online, over several days. Online conferences allow participants to receive content from community experts, ask questions, network with other attendees, and obtain practical resources and information. People can attend from anywhere and at any time, which is ideal for geographically dispersed groups. The overall costs of an online event would be far less than its physical equivalent. There is a requirement for a high level of preparation and competence with new media technology.

However, it is generally considered to be more effective to integrate online activity and **face-to-face encounters**, based on the assumption that deeper relationships between participants can create richer collaborative experiences and that group interactions that employ technology before and/or after a face-to-face event are stronger. Rather than end the collaborative experience when participants walk out the door, a virtual structure is provided to keep people engaged, connected, and productive over a period of time.

**Overcoming the isolation experienced by rural innovators by bringing people together seems to be an important ingredient in network building.**

**We are not the first organisation to consider how informal learning might be supported: there is a strong tradition of folk schools and study circles to learn from:**

The folk education movement played a vital role in the history and culture of Scandinavia and North America. Folk schools are particularly associated with the work of Danish educator N.F.S. Grundtvig (1783-1872). Grundtvig was especially concerned with the development of a school that would give dignity to the life of the small farmers who made up a significant proportion of Denmark's population in the nineteenth century. The residential **folkehøjskoler** was a place where young adults from all regions could meet and live together to study their mother tongue and the history of Denmark, and feel pride in its culture.

In the U.S. this movement has taken many forms, from study circles and family camps, to centres preserving folk arts and promoting social justice and citizen participation in

the solution of major social, economic and environmental problems. The most notable example is the **Highlander Folk School** inspired by the Danish model but developed within a uniquely American Southern context. The Highlander Folk School in Appalachia served as a training ground for labour organising in the coal mines in the '30's and 40's, the civil rights movement of the '50's and '60's, and environmental and economic justice in the '70's and '80's.

It also seems that our colleagues in community development organisations in America and Australia who deploy Asset Based Community Development frequently use the mechanism of **study circles**. As an informal, practical method for adult learning and social change, the study circle is rooted in the civic movements of 19th century America, and the use of study circles and similar small-group discussion programs is growing rapidly in the United States and many other places around the world. Study circles are voluntary and highly participatory. They assist participants in confronting challenging issues. **Study circles bring the wisdom of ordinary people to bear on difficult issues so that the group can capitalise on the experience of all its members.**

We can conclude from these manifestations of informal learning certain characteristics that are as relevant today as they were in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century;

- The learning is community-based and non-formal
- It enables groups of people to use their collective experience and expertise as a basis of community organising
- It is education that focuses on building community
- Vocational competence is not its primary purpose, though such competence may be a by-product
- It depends on collaboration, encouragement, and the natural interest in learning, rather than on such artificial stimuli as grades and credits. It does not use test scores to classify or discriminate against students
- It is a school for learning to live a good life, not for making a livelihood
- It involves a group of people bound together by common values, assumption, experiences

### **Vision: Collaborative Cultural/Retreat Centres**

This paper explores the potential to adapt the folk school method in a contemporary setting: to rethink the nature of conviviality, community, and informal learning for the digital age. What are the human, environmental, and technological qualities that make for effective community learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? Ray Oldenburg is an urban sociologist from Florida who writes about the importance of informal public gathering places today. In his book *The Great Good Place*, Oldenburg demonstrates why these gathering places are essential to community and public life.

**Third-places**, as defined by Oldenburg, are 'great good places between home and work' where people from different ages and walks of life come together to turn the habitual into the extraordinary. Examples of third places include cafes, theatres, public squares, museums, and concert halls. They also include dedicated locations for passing events or celebrations, such as carnivals, fairs, markets, or circus. Third places are important to community learning in that they bring together folks who wouldn't otherwise meet, to do things they wouldn't ordinarily do!

Our Rural Action Research Partners, the Eden Foundation in Cornwall, have demonstrated that they are masters of the art of creating 'third spaces'.

These spaces afford an opportunity for community members to explore, recast and ultimately to invent new potentials together. Third places are convivial spaces for community learning. They are the piazzas, cafes and market places of tomorrow.

Is it possible for Carnegie to tap into rural communities' needs, aspirations, and collective intelligence, by imagining and designing special occasions and places, where community members can learn from one another? Is it possible for us to invent the piazzas and coffee houses of the future: places/events where not just young and old, but also insiders and outsiders, can feel at home, learn from each other. Providing places (virtual and real) where rural people who don't normally meet can invent new possibilities for their communities.

**Oldenburg cited eight characteristics of 'third' spaces: they are particularly relevant to the needs of activists from dispersed rural communities**

- **Neutral Ground:** In conurbations, there is a critical mass of humanity who share interests and therefore who can choose to meet up. If rural areas are to benefit from the rich and varied association of inventive and entrepreneurial people, there needs to be neutral ground where they can meet up: somewhere where individuals can come and meet up with like minded participants.
- **Leveller:** Acceptance and participation is not dependant on an individual's status at work (such as professional community development worker) or in society (parish or community council chair or landowner). There are no formal criteria for membership.
- **Conversation is the Main Activity:** and humour is valued. Where the past experience of many participants will be of lectures or seminars where they are talked at, in third spaces conversation is spirited, engrossing and there is a sense of genuine inquiry.
- **Accessibility & Accommodation:** Third places are easy to access and are accommodating to those who come along. They keep long hours and conversation may continue into the early hours. Activity is not rigidly structured.
- **The Regulars:** A cadre of regulars who attract newcomers and who give the space 'mood' and set the tone of conviviality. Eden Foundation is particularly good at this – mixing and matching individuals who they imagine will get on and have interests in common.
- **A Low Profile:** Third places are without pretence and are comfortable and homely. Much conversation happens around a large table, accompanied by good food.
- **The Mood is Playful:** Word-play, wit, frivolity are normally present. Food and music seem to be an important ingredient as is a sense of place.
- **A Home Away from Home:** Home like, easy, warm, a feeling of 'rootedness'

## Community of Practice Facilitator - Rural Programme

This is a full-time post, based in our Dunfermline headquarters. This post requires travel throughout the UK and Ireland

**Salary:** Between £27,000 and £38,000 per annum (depending on experience and levels of responsibility at the Trust)

### **Main tasks and responsibilities include:**

- To facilitate the development of the rural Community of Practice
- Promoting transformational and peer learning within the Community of Practice
- To involve people from different sectors and disciplines in the Community of Practice
- Undertaking action research
- Managing commissioned action research
- Identifying stakeholders to actively involve in action research
- Developing diverse mechanisms for gathering information to inform action research
- Facilitating meetings involving diverse stakeholders
- Making public presentations about the work of the Trust
- Representing the Trust at meetings with other funders
- Documenting findings/minutes from meetings/interviews
- Reviewing and editing reports for publication
- Undertaking other activities as directed by the Director

### **Person specification:**

#### Essential

- Degree level qualification
- Proven track record of undertaking action-orientated and participatory research
- A proven ability to influence policy and practice through research
- Experience of applying diverse research methodologies, including the use of ICT
- Strong analytical skills and the ability to provide creative insight into and write about complex issues that may lack evidence or data
- Excellent writing, presentation and communication skills and an ability to communicate with people of all ages and backgrounds in plain English
- Excellent listening skills
- Sound facilitation skills
- Excellent attention to detail
- A sound understanding of and keen interest in rural development
- An ability to work as a member of a team and collaborate with a wide range of stakeholders
- Ability to work to and meet deadlines
- Self-motivation

#### Desirable

- Post-graduate level qualification

The hours worked for this post are 35 hours per week. Annual leave is 25 days plus public holidays. There is also a contributory pension scheme.

Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form

In line with our Equal Opportunities Policy, we operate a monitoring procedure to record the gender and racial origin of all our applicants. This aids the regular checking of our recruitment and selection process, which we carry out to ensure that no group is put at a disadvantage either directly or indirectly.

***Please return with your application***

Job applied for:

1. Name:

2. Gender:

3. Age:

4. How would you describe your racial origin?

5. Disability – Do you consider yourself disabled?  
If YES, are you registered disabled?  
If YES, please give number:

6. Where did you see the advertisement for this post?

7. Do you require a work permit for the UK?



# The Recruitment Process

## Timetable

Job Advertisement	5 <sup>th</sup> December 2007
Opening date for applications to be submitted	9 <sup>th</sup> January 2008 <i>(by email only)</i> <i>NB Carnegie UK Trust will be moving to new headquarters early in the New Year – to avoid loss of documents please ensure that applications are not emailed before this date</i>
Closing date for applications:	12 noon, 17 <sup>th</sup> January 2008
Interviews:	28 <sup>th</sup> January 2008 in Dunfermline
Candidate takes up post:	As soon as possible after Feb 2008

## To Apply

If you would like to apply for this post then please **email** the following

information after Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> January to Lucy Smith [lucy@carnegieuk.org](mailto:lucy@carnegieuk.org)

- A copy of your curriculum vitae
- A two-page statement of interest in this post, outlining what skills and experience you bring to this role
- A completed equal opportunities form
- Contact details for two referees
- Details of current terms of employment (including annual salary and period of notice required by current employer)

## Information

If you would like to discuss the role, please contact Kate Braithwaite, the

Director of the Rural Programme on 07779 367780/ [kate@carnegieuk.org](mailto:kate@carnegieuk.org)