

Place-based approaches are integral to deliver green jobs: a Bristol pilot study

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Place-based skills delivery can unlock better, greener jobs for local populations struggling to access and make use of standard skills provision. Collaboration of core organisations is key.

About the research

This is a 'What Works' pilot project set up to bring researchers and practitioners together to address local policy problems, using research to tackle identified issues at the scale of community and place.

The project leveraged the networks of the [Civic University Agreement](#) approach, where civic outcomes are identified and delivered based on a shared recognition of local need and the benefits of collaboration.

In this project, the convening ability of the civic university, working with key city partners, was used to address multiple issues around the delivery of local green skills for the community of Lawrence Weston in Bristol. Ambition Lawrence Weston, a place-based community organisation, are seeking to provide green skills opportunities to residents in the newly-opened Ambition House community hub, in response to barriers accessing training elsewhere.

The learning derived from this project can be scaled and replicated in different communities to support development of skills provision and training to improve the prospects of a range of audiences, younger and older, both working and not.

Through bringing together key organisations and people, we recognise the knowledge and resource that each brings and the common areas that need to come together to provide local solutions. Two workshops, each with over 20 participants identified barriers, opportunities and the place-based solutions that could deliver effective local skills and training in this and other communities across the city.

Green skills are those 'directly contributing towards the reduction of emissions, and helping to protect the environment' (WECA)

Policy implications

- Central government must recognise the need for more and faster green skills delivery. Government's role is to ensure flexible frameworks that allow local solutions to evolve and flourish.
- Local authorities play a key role in identifying and supporting local (green) skills delivery, combining analysis of future need with funding to provide future-proofed training.
- 'Green' skills require careful defining in terms that make sense in the context of local jobs and future need to ensure relevance.
- Place-based locally relevant solutions are the best way to recognise the needs of different communities and deliver skills and training that helps address embedded inequalities by focusing on a specific place
- The convening power of a framework such as the Civic University Agreement (CUA) provides an important opportunity to bring key local organisations together, with the weight to collaborate and realise tangible outcomes.



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Key findings

A place-based approach to delivering green skills can recognise the needs and nuances of different communities, tailoring solutions to their needs and aspirations and overcoming barriers to engagement. In our example, housing associations have a pipeline of local retrofit work which can incentivise upskilling with a clear pathway to jobs, combined with training provision in Ambition House. This also helps address transport issues which are a significant local barrier.

Future interventions should aim to empower ambitious community organisations who are embedded in their communities and are well-placed to identify resources, participants and local employers – together with opportunities and barriers. Collaborating with other organisations enables them to devise solutions that will work at the local level.

Addressing 'green skills' is not necessarily the best driver for local engagement. Working from the needs of a local community is likely to foster greater buy-in. This might mean using 'future' or 'resilient' terminology in promoting training offers, alongside demonstrating the longer term need for these new skills. That they contribute to net zero is a welcome by-product of new, more-skilled, better-paid jobs.

The capacities of schools can provide both an opportunity and a barrier to green skills approaches. Young people are a key audience, but schools frequently lack the resources and knowledge to support their young people in engaging with the skills of the future. Initiatives such as that run by West of England Combined Authority (WECA) to train careers advisors in retrofit and other green skills helps address this gap but additional funding for engagement with employers and for students to see a range of skills enacted in real life is needed.

Civic University Agreements are valuable in convening key partners and, in the case of Bristol, its ambitions and core signatories can help support city engagement, bringing together the organisations that currently work discretely on similar aims.

Further information

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References

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LGA: <https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/green-jobs-creating-workforce-deliver-net-zero>

Ambition Lawrence Weston: <https://www.ambitionlw.org/>

