**Proposal**

**Professional Development Group**

**Context**

Staff changes have meant that people have to engage in live learning at a very fast rate. Within this environment how do we empower people to achieve their maximum personal potential? How do we acknowledge individual value within a cumulative process? The challenge is common across the entire organisation. All staff have pivotal roles in the organisation.

The main internal organisational challenges include

> the need for flexibility and versatility
>
> pooling of knowledge
>
> development of effective multi-partite communications.

The vast bodies of expertise and knowledge developed in this organisation implies the need to look at non-traditional management practices to assist in the process of maximising and utilising the available expertise and knowledge.

**Proposal**

I propose that we establish a learning group within NCVA. The membership of the group will be voluntary but will include both administrative and development staff. The model for the group will be innovative but will draw on the work on reflective practice (particularly critical reflective practice) and of learning organisations as developed by Donald Schon, Peter Senge, Chris Argyris and Edwin Schein and on the action learning of Jack Whitehead, Pam Lomax and Jean McNiff. The group will be self-directed and participatory with the members of the group deciding on their own areas of learning or research and on the content of their study. While certification of the work of the group would be desirable, the group itself will decide whether it is required and what format it will take.

**Purpose**

The primary purpose of the group is to enable the group to develop its own model of professional development that is suitable for the members of the group. It is anticipated that through this process the work of the members of the group will contribute to the work of the organisation. While individuals will be working, in most cases, on individual projects the nature of their study will contribute to the development of a learning organisation.

**Goals**

The immediate goal is the formation of a group of people who are interested in critically examining their own work with a view to improving practice.

The secondary goal is to examine the possibility of providing a system for certifying the work of the group as work based learning.

**Practicalities**

It is desirable that both administrative staff and development staff are represented. To this end we should set up a pilot scheme, at the invitation of the CEO, to start the process moving. This group could feed back to the rest of the organisation with the possibility of other groups being formed. A number of members of the certification section and Barbara and I have already expressed an interest. I would be willing to take responsibility for setting up the group and for working with it for the foreseeable further.

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