'Experiences of Community'.

A Study of the Changing Experience of Community in the Camphill Communities in Scotland.

This study was conducted by Andy Plant between May 2006 and February 2007.

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1. Abstract

The Camphill communities in Scotland provide care and support in residential communities to people of all ages with learning disabilities.

The focus of this research is to assess the impact of both external and internal changes on the community-building impulse of these communities.

Over the last 10-15 years the communities have experienced a great amount of change on many levels.

There has been an increase in expectations and requirements from regulatory authorities, the integration of new management and organisational practices, an increasing emphasis on state-accredited training and qualifications and the recruitment of salaried workers to counteract the decline in the number of new residential unsalaried coworkers entering the workforce.

Parallel to these developments there has been a decline in the commitment to the traditional forms and expressions of the spiritual, cultural and philosophical ideals of the communities at the same time as there has been an increasing trend of individualisation and differentiation among the community members.

A central aim of the Camphill communities is community-building; the creation of a sense of community so that each individual feels respected, valued and included in the creation of a healthy and inspiring and mutually supportive social setting. The question that this study set out to address is what affect have the changes outlined above had on this community-building process in the communities?

This study was conducted through the use of a questionnaire that was sent to all residential coworkers who have lived in the communities for more than a year and to all employees who are actively engaged in community processes. The survey did not extend to those people receiving care and support in the communities or to any external stakeholders.

Out of a total population of approximately 1,000 people living and working in the communities, 396 people received a questionnaire and 157 people returned completed questionnaires.

What becomes clear from the findings of this study is that the coworkers who have been living in the communities for a considerable amount of time (11 years and more) enjoy the best community experience and yet feel that this experience is on the wane. In contrast, coworkers who have been living in the communities for a shorter time, and most employees, report a less intense community experience but say that the experience of community is improving.

Overall, those people who report the best community experience live and/or work in small and medium-sized communities.

Despite a great variety of responses throughout, most people agree on two accounts; firstly, that they do not have enough time and space for themselves and secondly, that the best way to improve the experience of community is to improve the quality of interpersonal relationships between community members.

The findings also show changes in the traditionally unsalaried workforce. 40% of the workforce in the communities are now salaried and this trend is set to increase over the next years. It appears from the responses that there is a lot of work still to do in order to create an environment of mutual understanding and appreciation in which all members of the communities feel valued, regardless of whether they are residential or employed.

2. Introduction

The 11 Camphill communities in Scotland that are the focus of this study are part of the world-wide Camphill Movement of intentional communities. The main purpose of the communities is to provide a home, education, care, support, training and work for people of all ages with learning disabilities. The communities are made up of families and individuals who live there on a long-term, unsalaried basis, non-residential salaried staff, short-term residential volunteers and those vulnerable people whose placements are funded.

The ethos and the practice of the communities is based on the inspiration of the founder of the Camphill Movement, Dr. Konig, and the insights of the Austrian philosopher Rudolf Steiner.

The Camphill communities are complex social organisations with several different levels of expression and activity.

They embody a spiritual and cultural impulse based on the insights of Rudolf Steiner and called Anthroposophy.

They are intentional communities and are founded on the principles of community and community-building.

They are care provisions, registered companies and charitable organisations and are subject to the relevant external monitoring and regulation especially in relation to care provision, employment, financial accountability and organisational governance.

The communities can be seen as a mix of cultural forms and practices and of formal organisational structures. Within this setting, community members experience a sense of community; an experience which is formed by the quality of relationships, the individual sense of belonging and feeling valued, and a communal sense of identity and shared meaning.

I have lived in Camphill communities for the last 28 years – first in Northern Ireland and then in Scotland. Through being involved in many conversations, meetings, courses, teaching sessions, retreats, conferences and community support groups, I have come to understand that there are certain trends currently coming to expression in the communities.

I have also come to realise that these trends are part of a process of accelerated change that has made itself felt especially over the last 10 or 15 years. This change has been both in the external and internal aspects of the communities and the trends are making themselves felt at all of the different levels outlined above.

These trends include a decline in the commitment to the traditional spiritual, philosophical and cultural forms and practices of the communities. At the same time there has been an increase in external regulation and a rise in the number of people working in central positions on a salaried basis. In addition, there has been a rise in individualisation and differentiation among the people living in the communities and an increase in the size, complexity and diversity of the communities.

Within this period, one of the communities has closed and two others have undergone a fundamental shift away from the traditional model of the communities in which most of the workforce is unsalaried and residential to a model in which all workers – with the exception of the one-year volunteer coworkers - are salaried and the vast majority live outwith the communities.

During this period of change there has been an increasing effort in the communities to respond positively to the challenges posed by the regulatory authorities to integrate new principles and practices in the provision of education, care and support, in management structures and in training and qualifications.

It becomes a question to what extent the communities, in responding to these external challenges, have devoted a similar level of attention, resources, commitment and enthusiasm to the central task of creating and maintaining a sense of community.

It would seem that this process of integrating new ideas, new practices and new people acts as a challenge to the resilience of the community-building efforts of the communities. The question is what affect have these changes had on the quality of the experience of community in the Camphill communities in Scotland?

The intrinsic sense of community and the community-building impulse are of central importance to the Camphill communities. My motivation in conducting this research has been to assess the health and vitality of this individual and collective sense of community.

If anyone would like to get in touch with me about this study, they could write care of Beannachar Camphill Community or e-mail me at andy@beannachar.org
After Easter 2007 I will have moved to Milltown Camphill Community and the e-mail address will be milltowncommunity.johnt@virgin.net

3. Research Aims

The focus of this research is to assess the impact of both external and internal changes on the community-building impulse of the Camphill communities in Scotland.

Previous work has highlighted this process of change and also the diverse responses to this change on both an individual and collective level. In 2003 Michael and Jane Luxford published the findings of their world-wide study of Camphill communities, 'A Sense for Community'. The purpose of this research work was to assess to what extent the insights of Rudolf Steiner and Karl Konig have a bearing on how the communities function today.

In 2004 William Steffen, on behalf of the Coworker Development Project of Camphill England and Wales, produced a report and discussion document entitled 'Co-workers and their Communities'. In 2005 he also produced reports of a series of retreats that had been held in the English and Welsh regions. The primary focus of these reports was on the loss and shortage of long-term residential coworkers in those regions.

This study, although dealing with similar themes and sharing a similar motivation to research into the life of the communities in a changing environment, will have a slightly different focus.

The question that I will be addressing in this study is: **'Given that the communities are having to find responses to many internal and external challenges on many different levels, what is the current experience of the sense of community?'**

This study is an exploration of how the sense of community is experienced today in the communities; to gauge if the experience has changed over the years, and if so, how and why; and to encourage those people affected by this change to suggest ways in which the experience of community might be enhanced.

The attempt to assess the changing experience of community is not an easy or straightforward enterprise. Some aspects of this study can indeed be assessed and analysed numerically and statistically. However, the experience of community is not something that can be measured and quantified through the use of objective criteria. It is rather about the *quality* of experience and is individual, subjective, intangible and transitory.

The main work of this study has been to encourage and enable people in the communities to express their feelings about their experience of community. The findings of this study are the distillation and interpretation of these experiences.

The overall intention of this study was to produce a document that is a well-informed and realistic appraisal of the current situation in the Camphill communities in Scotland in relation to the experience of community and community-building. The hope is that this document will then lead to a process of reflection and heightened awareness of the themes of this study.

People living and working in the communities will be able to assess to what extent the findings reflect their own individual circumstances and experiences. Together the communities will be able to reflect upon the community-building experiences of the last years. The intention is that new insights gained through these processes of reflection, appraisal and awareness will inform community processes, especially those that are engaged in finding new ways forward for the communities in response to a changing environment.

Over the last years I have increasingly occupied myself in trying to come to a deeper and wider understanding of community; what community is, why people choose to live in community, the historical, social and psychological context of community and also the processes of community-building and community development.

Within the context of this study, the terms 'Camphill' and 'community' become interchangeable. However, I am attempting to understand the concept and reality of *community* in general as well as to investigate life in Camphill communities.

Thus this research work is part of a wider project in which I will be aiming to explore the meaning and experience of community as widely as possible.

I am currently working on an article that is intended to complement the themes of this study and to put them into a broader context. The article is entitled 'Change and Development in Camphill Communities'.

In this article I will firstly be considering the different trends of change that have been making themselves felt in the communities and reflecting upon some of the explanations of these trends that have been put forward by people in the communities.

Then I will be looking at a wide variety of different models of societal change and development, before presenting some models of how organisations and communities evolve through recognisable stages of development. Finally, I will be setting out possible scenarios for the future development of communities based on these models.

Once both this study and the article have been completed, I intend to bring about a conference, gathering or retreat in order that people living and working in the communities have an opportunity to discuss the themes and issues raised by this work.

My intention is that this research study (which is now completed), the article (which is underway) and the proposed gathering (which is still just an idea), will act as catalysts to stimulate conversations and discussions about community-building.

My hope is that this work will enable these conversations and discussions to be held in a climate of realistic appraisal of the present situation and confidence in the future - confidence that the communities and the people living and working in them can determine the future experience of community out of deeper understanding of the processes at work in community-building.

Throughout this work it has not been my intention to make any value judgements about the responses or the findings. I consider that it is more important to search for meaning and find a sense of purpose in the current developments and trends in the communities than it is to make judgements about whether or not these developments are negative or positive.

4. Research Method

I began by gaining support for the research from the Scottish Neighbourhood Meeting and the Camphill Scotland Facilitators. I then sent out a letter to all the communities to invite their involvement and to arrange a visit to circulate the research questionnaires to people living and working in the communities.

The questionnaire was the basis of the research work (see Appendix 2).

Through the use of questionnaires I was able to reach more people than I could hope to reach through conversations and personal interviews. The questionnaires also enabled people to share their observations, insights and experiences in private and allowed for a more considered response than a spontaneous answer given in a conversation.

Through the use of a questionnaire I was able to obtain concise replies to a specific set of questions which I could then compare and analyse. In this way the questionnaire provided a structured focus that would have been hard to achieve through extensive interviews and conversations.

It is also my experience that, for a variety of reasons, many people are not able to freely express themselves in group discussions and therefore, through using a questionnaire I felt confident that I would be able to gain insights from a broader cross-section of the communities than would result from group discussions alone.

There are, however, drawbacks in every method. The drawback in using questionnaires is that many people are averse to filling in forms like this. Whether the reluctance is based on a principle or lack of time and interest, it is unrealistic to have expected a return rate that could give confidence that the findings would be really representative of the entire Camphill 'workforce'.

The criterion that I attached to the distribution of the questionnaires was that they were to be given to coworkers and employees in the communities who had direct experience in community processes and practices for over a year. This then excluded one-year coworkers, some employees, pupils, residents and external stakeholders such as Council members.

I considered that these exclusions were justified, as the intention was to evaluate changes in the experience of community. Therefore respondents would need to have been directly and practically involved in community-building processes over a long enough period of time so as to be able to assess whether or not there have been changes in the experience of community.

The questionnaire with its fixed questions that asked for focused replies provided a structure to the research process. This was complemented by the semi-structured conversations in the communities and the personal interviews. These were based on key questions but allowed for a looser and wider-ranging exploration of the themes. The latter also provided material for my wider work on the themes of change and development in the communities.

My intention in visiting the communities had been to initiate conversations about the current experience of community so as to encourage people to become involved by subsequently filling in the questionnaire.

In practice it did not always work out like that. In some situations the questionnaires were given out before the visit, in other situations this was done during the course of the visit. The response to my letter differed from place to place and allowed me to become involved in the communities in a variety of ways. A list of visits and associated research activities appears as Appendix 1.

In Newton Dee I gave a talk and joined in discussion groups as part of a community conference process.

In the Camphill Schools in Aberdeen I took part in a week of 'Ways to Quality' training as a way of observing the processes that were at work there. I also took part in two BACE sessions that turned to the theme of community-building.

In Corbenic I gave a talk and in Loch Arthur I gave a talk and took part in a conversation group.

I took part in conversation groups in Tiphereth, Tigh A'Chomainn, Beannachar, Milltown, Blair Drummond and Ochil Tower.

In Simeon I conducted personal interviews with several Camphill elders, but was not able to arrange a conversation with the staff for very practical reasons.

I also had personal talks with several people from various communities.

I was interested to compare the experience of the Camphill communities with other places that also combine care provision with community, and therefore I visited both L'Arche and Garvald.

I had a conversation with the Community Leader and an Assistant Co-ordinator in L'Arche in Inverness; with the Manager and two Co-ordinators at the Garvald Centre in Edinburgh and with the two principal people in Garvald Home Farm at West Linton. I did not give out questionnaires in these places. Observations following these visits appear as Appendices 6 and 7.

I also sent out a modified questionnaire to a small number of people who had left the communities over the years in order that the insights learnt from their experiences could add another perspective to the survey.

The modified questionnaire was designed to give these respondents the opportunity to reflect upon the changes in the process of community-building in the same way that the original questionnaire had done. In addition, it asked the respondent to give the reasons why they had left Camphill and to ask to what extent they had felt supported in doing so. Further the respondents were encouraged to suggest ways in which the communities could improve the way in which it supports people who decide to leave. The findings from this questionnaire appear at the end of section 8 and inform the reflections on boundaries in section 10.

 A copy of this questionnaire is included as Appendix 3.

The months of visiting all the communities in such a short period of time, becoming aware of the variety between the places and the dynamism and unique character of each place was a very rich experience indeed. It was heightened by the pleasure of driving from Aberdeen to Inverness, Edinburgh and Dumfries over three months of a beautiful Scottish autumn.

5. Research Limitations and Other Issues

1. This was never intended to be an academically validated piece of research work. I neither had the experience and expertise nor did I have the time to acquire them. While I have tried to be as objective and as impartial as I can, the unavoidable fact remains that I am intimately involved with the communities that I am studying and therefore there is the possibility that personal bias affects the findings.

2. It should be borne in mind that, while sharing a common philosophy and ethos, the communities are very different from each other in ways that would be expected to directly effect the experience of community.

   The communities are at different stages of development. Some have been stable over many years. Others have gone through considerable change. Some have had many years' experience of the traditional forms of Camphill, some are engaged in recreating a common ethos and a shared vision in changed circumstances. There are different management structures in place from one community to another.

   In some communities the workforce is largely residential: people who have been in Camphill for many years and are not salaried. In other communities the workforce is predominantly or exclusively salaried and all or most live outside of the community. In others again, the workforce is mixed.

   There are differences in how close people live to each other, the level of interactions between people, the number and sizes of the houses and house-communities, the size of the community and of the estate. There are also differences in task; from working with children, young adults, adults and the elderly.

3. The responses represent the views of less than half of the people who were given a questionnaire. There were 157 replies from 396 questionnaires. The response rate was therefore 39.6%

    This represents an average response rate for the research questionnaires. Overall, the findings are based on the views of just 157 people out of approximately 1,000 who live and work in all capacities in the communities. See Table 1 (page 23) for a breakdown of the demographic composition of the communities and Table 2 (page 25) for a breakdown of the responses.

4. The research is limited to Scotland. This is the result of time constraints. I would have needed a lot more time, money and a remit to conduct research further afield.

5. It should also be borne in mind that there are some things that the research did not set out to achieve.

    It is not a comparison of Camphill care provision with other care provisions. It is not a comparison of Camphill with other community initiatives that are not providing care and it is not a study into the future viability and sustainability of Camphill communities.

Despite these limitations, I consider this study to be a valid appraisal of the situation in the communities and a contribution to a process of self-reflection in and among the Camphill communities in Scotland.

6. The Questionnaire Responses

The format of the questionnaire (see Appendix 2) was that some questions required a tick against a number and other questions required a written response. In the first category, many people ticked against 'something else' rather than agreeing with one of the choices offered.

Some people did not answer all the questions and many gave several answers to one question. I included all of these. Therefore the numbers quoted later as agreeing with a comment are not going to tally with the number of the respondents. There was a great deal of overlap between questions 6, 7 and 8 of the questionnaire and at times I had to use my judgement as to which answer best fitted which question in order to keep some semblance of order and consistency.

Questions 7-11 asked people to make written responses. In order to collect up the responses in separate categories of replies, I had to consolidate similar responses and attempt to ascertain how many people felt the same way despite the fact that they articulated it differently. In this process the responses became 'votes' for a category rather than me listing what every individual had replied.

It might be said that if only two or three people expressed an opinion, out of the 157 who replied, that this is not a statistically valid opinion. My view is that no view should be ignored and I have taken the position that if even only two or three people shared a concern or an insight, then it deserved inclusion.

It is noticeable that there was a great range and diversity in the written responses; only occasionally did a sentiment emerge that was supported by a large number of people.

In the light of the above, the best that could be said is not that '*it is clear that most people in the communities think that……….',* but rather that '*of the people who replied to this question, some of them seemed to think that………..'*
Readers would have to judge for themselves the validity of such a finding.

In order to enhance the validity of the survey findings, the best thing would be to circulate the findings to the respondents and ask them to say to what extent they agree or disagree with them, and then put out these new findings. This seems impractical. My intention is that this process of reflection and feedback on the findings would take place in a small conference expressly designed to do just that.

The readers are left to judge for themselves how much of what they read here is in tune with their own experiences and how much they can learn of value from the reported experience of others.

7. An Explanation of Terms Used in This Study

1. I deliberately did not define the terms **'community'**, **'community-building'** and **'experience of community'**. This was partly because I did not feel that it was necessary, and partly because of the difficulty of finding a concise definition. I also did not want to inadvertently lead people in a certain direction when they considered their replies.

   Community is a confusing term; it describes a place, a social setting, a concept and a feeling or experience.

   It is confusing still more when the terms 'Camphill' and 'community' are used interchangeably.

   However, I did emerge with a description of community based on the replies that people gave for questions 9 and 11, (the positive aspects of community and suggestions as how to improve the experience of community). This is not a vision statement but a pragmatic description of what people living in Camphill communities in the 21st century talk about when they describe their experience and aspirations of community. This is included as Appendix 4.

   I also include as Appendix 5 a definition of an intentional community that I formulated some time ago and will continue to revise.

2. There is not a generic term to describe all the vulnerable people who receive care, education, training and support in Camphill communities in Scotland and for whom the communities receive funding.

   The existing terms in use include pupils, students, villagers and tenants. There are also different terms that cover attendance; residents, boarders and day-attenders.

   No one term currently in use describes all of these individuals collectively.

   I am going to be using the term **'residents'** to describe all people who use the services provided by Camphill communities. It is not an accurate term, nor one that I am happy with, but it is the best that I can do until somebody else comes up with a better term. It will save me writing 'pupils, adults, residents and day-attenders' each time I wish to describe this group of people.

3. I have used the words **'service'** and **'service status'** to describe on what basis a person is connected to a community; either residential or employed and also to describe how long a person has been in Camphill.

4. **Anthroposophy** is a modern spiritual path of knowledge and self-development. It is based on the insights of Rudolf Steiner who sought to demonstrate the connections between the worlds of nature, humanity, the universe and the world of the spirit. The human being is seen as a being of both the earthly world and the spiritual world. The word Anthroposophy is a combination of two Greek words; 'anthropo', meaning human, and 'sophia' meaning wisdom. It therefore is concerned with exploring the wisdom of the human being; of the experience of being human.
Anthroposophy has given rise to many social and cultural innovations and initiatives in the fields of education, medicine, the arts, the sciences, agriculture, and also to the Camphill communities.

5. **Camphill.** The Camphill Movement, founded in Aberdeen by Karl Konig in 1940, is a world-wide network of intentional communities that provide education, training, care and support and work for people of all ages with learning disabilities. The ethos of the communities is inspired by Christianity and Anthroposophy and is based on healthy social relationships, mutual care and respect and the recognition and appreciation of the potential, the dignity and the spiritual integrity of each individual.

6. **An Intentional Community** is a group of people who have chosen to live together with a common purpose, working co-operatively to create a lifestyle that reflects their shared core values.

7. **Camphill Scotland** is the organisation that represents, supports and co-ordinates the work of the Camphill communities in Scotland.

8. **The Association of Camphill Communities** is the organisation that represents, supports and co-ordinates the work of all the Camphill communities in Britain and Ireland.

9. **The Scottish Neighbourhood Meeting** is the forum of the Camphill communities in Scotland for the discussion and sharing of issues and common concerns.

10. **BACE** is the Bachelor of Arts in Curative Education and Social Therapy. This is a degree course run by the Aberdeen Schools in conjunction with Aberdeen University. Students of the BACE live and work in the communities.

11. **'Ways to Quality'** is a quality assurance system and training course based on the insights and principles of Anthroposophy.

8. The Findings

In order to assess the comparative response rates for each service category I compiled a table showing the number of people in the communities differentiated into several categories. See Table 1 below.

This table is only as accurate as the responses that I received from people in the communities in reply to my request for these figures.

The confusing aspect of these figures to be aware of is that 9 people are both BACE students (advanced entry) and also long-term coworkers. To avoid counting them twice, I subtracted 9 from the total of all the columns. Thus the total figure of 1152 becomes 1143. This subtraction is consistent throughout the following and explains any apparent discrepancy in the figures in the findings and those shown in the table.

Throughout this paper, these 9 people are included in their appropriate 'length of stay' category and not in the BACE category. This does not really cause any distortion, as there is not a separate BACE 'voice'. The BACE students who are not advanced entry appear in the category of coworkers of more than one year and less than five years service.

The categories of Table 1 do not match the categories of Table 2, in that Table 2 shows differentiated categories according to length of stay for residential coworkers.

Throughout this work, percentage figures will not always add up to 100 as I have rounded decimal numbers to the nearest whole number.

Community	**1** Residential Pupils & Residents	**2** Day Attenders[1]	**3** Long-term Co-workers	**4** BACE Students	**5** Short-term Co-workers	**6** Employees (full & part-time)	**7** Family Dependents	**8** Retired Co-workers	**9** Others[2]	
Beannachar	19	7	8	4	15	12	8			
Blair Drummond	30	9			21	42[6]				
Camphill Rudolf Steiner Schools[3]	77	20	52	47[7]	45	73	32	8		
Corbenic	27		3		19	19				
Loch Arthur	26		17	1	16	5	9			
Milltown[4]	6	11	2		1	11				
Newton Dee	86	12	40	6	21	25	28	2	11	
Ochil Tower	26	13	12	8[8]	13	8	2		5	
Simeon	17		5	1	7	18	1			
Tigh A' Chomainn	6		2	2	1	2				
Tiphereth[5]	8	19	5		8	15				
Camphill Scotland						2				
Camphill Medical Practice						13				*Overall Total*
Totals	**328**	**91**	**146**	**69**	**167**	**245**	**80**	**10**	**16**	*1143*[9]
% of overall Totals	**27%**	**8%**	**13%**	**6%**	**15%**	**21%**	**7%**	**1%**	**1%**	

Notes:

[1] Total attending each day, not total using the service

[2] Column 9 includes volunteers and relief staff

[3] Murtle, Camphill and Cairnlee estates

[4] Milltown house and day workshop

[5] Including day services

[6] 7 residential employees

[7] 5 also included in column 3

[8] 4 also included in column 3

[9] 9 less than total of all columns due to notes 7 and 8

TABLE 1: ANALYSIS OF THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE LIVING AND WORKING IN CAMPHILL COMMUNITIES IN SCOTLAND – JANUARY 2007

Findings from Table 1.

- There are 1,143 people living and working in the communities.
- 419 fee-paying people make up 36% of the overall population living and working in the communities.
- There are 618 people in the active workforce and they make up 57% of the overall population.
  (The active workforce excludes columns 7, 8 and 9 - family dependents, retired coworkers and 'others').
- There are 90 family dependents and retired coworkers and they make up 8% of the overall population.

Overall breakdown of the workforce:

373 residential coworkers….60%

245 employees…………………. 40%

The total of 618 in the workforce can be broken down as follows:

167 one-year coworkers… ..27%

60 BACE students………….. ..10% (minus the 9 advanced entry students)

146 long-term coworkers…. 24%

245 employees…………………..40%

The total of 373 residential coworkers can be broken down as follows:

167 one-year coworkers………45%

60 BACE students…………………16%

146 long-term coworkers…….39%

Community	Questionnaires Out	Questionnaires Returned	Response Rate %	Breakdown of Responses				
				Employed	Residential Total	Residential 1+ - 5 years	Residential 6-10 years	Residential 11+ years
Beannachar	22	11	50%	4	7	3	-	4
Blair Drummond	34	10	29%	10	-	-	-	-
Camphill Rudolf Steiner Schools *1	140	58	41%	6	52	19	9	24
Corbenic	40	12	30%	5	7	6	-	1
Loch Arthur	20	5	25%	-	5	-	2	3
Milltown *2	13	5	38%	3	2	-	-	2
Newton Dee	78	35	45%	9	26	6	3	17
Ochil Tower	16	10	62%	-	10	3	1	6
Simeon	6	2	33%	-	2	-	-	2
Tigh A' Chomainn	5	3	60%	-	3	2	-	1
Tiphereth *3	20	4	20%	2	2	1	1	-
Others	2	2	100%	2	-	-	-	-
Totals	**396**	**157**	**40%**	**41**	**116**	**40**	**16**	**60**

*1 Murtle estate, Camphill estate and Cairnlee

*2 House and day workshop

*3 Houses and day services

TABLE 2: QUESTIONNAIRE RETURNS

Findings from Table 2

It is not possible to make definite conclusions as to how representational the responses are for each service category. This is because I do not know exactly how many questionnaires were given to each category. However, I can make some assumptions based on the distribution criteria and the table showing the number of people in different categories in the communities (Table 1).

1. Response from residential coworkers.

    Overall there are 216 residential coworkers who have been in the communities for more than a year. (This is the combined totals of long-term coworkers, BACE students and retired coworkers - columns 3, 4 and 8 on Table 1 - minus the 9 BACE students who are also long-term coworkers).

    The 167 one-year coworkers were not targeted in this survey.

    I can assume that all 216 of these people received questionnaires. I received 116 responses. Therefore the response rate for residential coworkers is 54%.

2. Responses from employees

    Overall there are 245 employees working in the communities. Not all of the employees were targeted. (For the 'target criteria' see Section 4. Research Method above).

    I do not know for sure how many of these received questionnaires, but I could calculate the figure from the two tables. (396 questionnaires distributed minus the 216 residential coworkers who received questionnaires). I thus assume that 180 employees received questionnaires. I received 41 responses. Therefore the response rate is 23%.

    It is not clear why the response rate of employees was less than that for residential coworkers. It could be that employees felt less engaged in the topics covered by the survey.

In an attempt to forestall this I had specified that questionnaires be given only to those employees who are directly involved in community processes. Despite this I still received several questionnaires back from employees saying that "I only work from 9 to 5 and I am not involved in any of this, so I would not know" and 'not applicable' entered in reply to questions about the experience of community.

It remains a question whether the lower level of involvement in these issues on the part of employees is a question of role or of choice; whether an employee's role or task precludes the possibility of such involvement, or whether the employees have chosen not to get so involved.

It also remains a question if the barrier to involvement is one that has been unintentionally created by the communities through the fact that they have not fully appreciated and valued the contribution of employees and integrated employees fully into the life and processes of the community.

Observation

Further work needs to be done on a number of issues concerning the integration of employees into the communities, but such work is beyond the remit of this study.

Conclusion

The findings in this paper represent the views of approximately half of the residential coworkers of more than one year of service.

The findings represent the views of just less than a quarter of employees who were given questionnaires.

Because of the low response rate of the targeted employees (23%) in comparison to the response rate for the targeted residential coworkers (54%), care should be taken in drawing conclusions from these findings.

Question 1: What is the name of the Camphill community in which you live and/or work?

See Table 2 above for the breakdown of responses from each community.

Question 2: Describe your position in your community.

Respondents were asked to put a ring around all the categories (19 listed) that describe their position. See Appendix 2 for the list of categories under this question.

People were not asked their age, but how long they had been in Camphill. Through an oversight I omitted to provide a space for employees to say how long they had worked in Camphill and therefore I could not break down the responses from employees according to length of service.

I divided the responses from residential coworkers into several categories according to length of service.

1. <u>More than 1 year and up to 5 years</u>. This covers people currently taking part in the BACE or otherwise in Camphill for less than 5 years. The research was not intended to include coworkers staying for less than one year.

2. <u>Between 6 years and 10 years.</u> This covers a hypothetical 'middle generation' of people; people whose experience of community life has been formed during the last decade of change. I would expect to gauge from their replies the kind of changes that the communities will need to make in order to attract new people and remain viable. As it turned out, this category had the lowest response rate (16 people as compared to 40 people in category 1 and 60 people in category 3). This might be because there are fewer people in this category, something that cannot be inferred from Table 1.

3. <u>11 years and more.</u> This covers those people who have been carrying responsibility for a considerable period and have seen the communities change over time. Some of these people are fully engaged in, and responsible for, many aspects of the community, some standing back and some semi-retired or retired. They all have a considerable amount of experience.

An analysis of the roles of the respondents shows the following:

1. 75% of employees have single tasks

2. All of the 1+ to 5 years coworkers have more than one task. Their tasks include day-to-day care of residents, teaching and class helping and leading workshops. Only 2 are involved in administration and management.

3. 62% of the 6-10 years group have single tasks. Most either have the task of running house communities – which also includes direct care of residents – running a workshop or teaching. Some combine these roles but most do not. Very few people in this category are involved in administration and management.

4. 35% of coworkers in the 11+ years group have single tasks. 44% of them have 3 or more tasks. People from this group have a wide range of tasks across all areas of responsibility. Their work is predominantly to do with running house communities - combined with direct care - and administration and management. A lesser proportion run workshops, are teachers or therapists and/or are involved in teaching and tutoring on the BACE.

Conclusion

It would seem that job specifications and contracted working hours protect employees from an excessive number of tasks. It is also clear that the longer people stay in the communities, the more tasks and responsibilities they accumulate.

It becomes clear later in the study that the difference in the experience of community did not seem to depend on the role of the individual respondent, but rather according to the length of stay and whether respondents were residential or employed.

Question 3: What made you decide to join a Camphill community?

This question was designed both to see what motivates people to join Camphill and to live in community and also to see if the reasons that people give have changed over the years.
Many people gave several reasons.

The major reasons given according to service status and ranked according to frequency of replies appear below.

1+ to 5 years:
- Work with people with special needs
- BACE, Curative education, Anthroposophy
- Explore community-living
- Volunteering after school/Alternative military service
- To have a new experience

6-10 years
- Community-living
- Work with people with special needs
- Anthroposophy

11+ years
- Community-living
- Working with people with special needs
- Anthroposophy
- Found something that I have been looking for. Destiny.

Employees
- Looking for a change, where my skills could be put to good use
- Anthroposophy
- Applied for a job
- Work with people with special needs
- Community-living

2 reasons given by residential people and not by employees are alternative lifestyle and working not for money.

Conclusion

The main reasons given for joining a Camphill community across all service categories are, in order:

- Community-living
- Working with people with special needs
- Anthroposophy

Question 4: For how many years do you intend to stay?

a) I year or less than 1 year

b) 1-4 years

c) 4 years or more but not indefinitely

d) Indefinitely

Responses:

1+ to 5 years

An even distribution across a) – c), but only 3 people said indefinitely

6-10 years

An even distribution across all choices

11+ years

10% said that they did not know or did not answer

6% said less than 4 years

14% answered 4 years or more but not indefinitely

70% answered indefinitely

Employees

9% said they did not know or answered a year or less than a year

20% said 1-4 years

34% said 4 years or more but not indefinitely

37% said indefinitely or until they retire

Some things can be noted in terms of future demography. 70% of residential coworkers of 11+ years of service wish to remain in their community. Their replacement would be either one of the coworkers of less that 10 years of service who indicate that they are going to stay indefinitely, an additional residential coworker or an additional employee. While the number of fee-generating people and the overall workforce numbers may well remain stable, the number of retiring people supported by the communities is obviously going to increase.

Most of the respondents (63%) in the 11+ years category have done 30 years or less service in Camphill. So, on the untested assumption that these people joined Camphill at round about the age of 20, the critical period is probably still 10-15 years in the future, when the older 37% have already retired and this younger group start to stand down from their responsibilities. Employees would presumably be replaced by new employees when they retire.

The response figures show that there are 44 people who are in the 11+years group and who replied to this question saying that they intended to stay in Camphill indefinitely. Some of these are already retired.

These figures show that there are only 8 people from the 1+ to 5 years and 6-10 years categories that intend to stay indefinitely. There is a thus a replacement shortfall of 36 people. No doubt some new residential coworkers will come from other communities, but it still seems apparent from current trends and from these sample figures that more employees than residential coworkers will be replacing the existing members of the workforce as they retire.

The real situation is far more complicated than this, for many reasons. Despite the relative stability of the 11+ year coworkers, there is a great deal of change in the people who do not stay so long. Nobody can predict with any accuracy how many residential coworkers will leave the communities and how many will join.

More detailed research is needed but nonetheless the figures from this survey seem to show, according to people's stated intentions, that when the people who are now in the 11+ years service category stand down, they will be replaced by a much higher proportion of employees than residential coworkers.

Conclusion

The current workforce is made up of 60% of residential coworkers and 40% of employees. The findings of this study indicate that the proportions will change significantly in the next 10-15 years.

Question 5: How would you describe your experience of community? Today, in the Camphill community where you live and/or work.

a) I feel great about being in a community. I often feel fulfilled and uplifted.
b) The experience of community comes and goes, but there is generally enough that I am satisfied.
c) I have little or no sense of community in my life.
d) Something else. Please describe your experience here.

Responses

Of interest here is to see which group of people express a greater sense of community.

I chose to focus on the variables in the reported sense of community in order to see if the experience of community is different according to whether the person is residential or employed, according to the length of service, whether the person is living and/or working in a large or small community and whether they are living and/or working in a community working with children or adults.

Of the 157 respondents 29% said that they feel great about being in a community, 49% said that they feel satisfied, 4% have a negative experience of community and 17% chose to answer 'something else'.

In analysing the replies, I had to create a new category for the 4 respondents (2.5% of the overall respondents) who said that their experience of community comes and goes but that they are *not* satisfied.
Two of the respondents said that they had little or no sense of community, one of whom said that it was because they are semi-retired.
When this figure is combined with those feeling not satisfied, the overall number of respondents who reported negative feeling about their experience of community is 4%. These are all residential coworkers.

The overall findings of the 157 respondents are as follows:

Feel great – 29%

Feel satisfied – 49%

Negative experience – 4%

'Something else' – 17%

The results break down as follows:

1+ to 5 years

Feel great – 24%

Feel satisfied – 68%

Little or no experience of community – 3% (this is one person)

Something else – 5% (this is two people)

6-10 years

Feel great – 20%

Feel satisfied – 53%

Not satisfied – 13% (this is two people)

Something else – 13% (this is two people)

11+ years

Feel great – 38%

Feel satisfied – 28%

Not satisfied – 3% (two people)

Little or no sense of community – 2% (one person)

Something else – 27%

No reply – 2% (one person)

Employees

Feel great – 25%

Feel satisfied – 59%

Something else – 16%

Observation

The feeling that the experience of community 'comes and goes but is generally satisfactory' must be taken as a positive one, albeit rather neutral in its overtones.

In the light of this it is clear that the vast majority of people living and working in Camphill communities have a positive experience of community.

Those people who have stayed longest in the communities have a more qualified experience in that more of this group than any other group answered 'something else'. It appears that the longer people stay in the communities, the more depth, complexity, ambivalence and variety there is the reported experience of community. Some of these comments are set out below.

The figures for residential coworkers compared with those for the other categories show that the positive experience of community increases over time.

24% of the coworkers who have spent 5 years or less in the communities say that they feel great about being in community. This drops to 20% in the 6-10 years category and then rises to 38% among those who have been 11 or more years in the communities.

This reflects what researchers have called the U-shaped curve of job satisfaction. There is evidence that job satisfaction declines from a moderate level in the early years of employment and then steadily increases up to retirement. (See Appendix 8).

Unfortunately, it is not possible to ascertain if this U curve applies to the employees in the communities, as length of stay was not recorded for this group.

Some of the responses made here under 'something else' more appropriately relate to questions 7 and 8.

In order to retain as much clarity and consistency as possible, I have used my discretion to list replies under the question that I feel that they relate to most appropriately, rather than where they were entered.

Below are some of the comments made under 'something else'.

Comments from employees:

- I am occasionally accepted by the community.
- There have been so many changes over the year that it is hard to describe a uniform experience.
- The experience of community depends on who you are working with

Comments made by residential coworkers:

- It changes so much that there is no uniform pattern of experience
- On a general level – yes. In my personal experience – no.
- On a general level - no. On the house level – yes.
- We must learn to understand the concept of community differently now. It is less of a place and a setting and more of a personal experience between people, which can happen anywhere.
- I experience a common purpose rather than community.
- It is more about collaborative experience than the experience of community deeply entering my life

I then analysed the responses from those people who reported the most positive experience; who replied that they feel great about being in community.

For this analysis, I excluded the replies made under 'something else'. I felt that I could discount these without distorting the picture. This is because these comments describe different experiences of the nature of community, rather than describing how the respondents feel about the quality of that experience.

Cairnlee is a training centre for young adults, and is one of the three estates of the Camphill Schools in Aberdeen. For the sake of this comparison, I took the responses from Cairnlee out of the replies from the Camphill Schools and included them among the communities that work with adults and as a small community.

The breakdown of those people reporting that they feel great about being in a community is as follows:

25% of 1+ to 5 years group of residential coworkers
18% of 6-10 years group
52% of 11+ years group
29% of employees

35% of respondents working with adults
27% of respondents working with children

44% of those in small communities
40% of those in medium sized communities
24% of those in large communities

I designated the communities into size categories as follows:

Small: Tiphereth, Milltown, Tigh A' Chomainn, Simeon and Cairnlee
Medium: Beannachar, Corbenic, Ochil Tower and Blair Drummond
Large: Camphill Schools, Newton Dee and Loch Arthur

Only one community, of medium size and working with children, showed 100% of respondents (7 in total) reporting that they feel great about being in community, when those saying 'something else' are excluded.

In comparison a large school community has only 15% of respondents (41 in total) saying they feel great, when those saying 'something else' are excluded.

The only negative replies (not satisfied and 'little or no experience of community') came from large communities.

5 out of the 6 of these comments came from a community that is both large and works with children.

Conclusions

1. It is clear that most respondents feel 'satisfied' rather than feeling 'great' about living and working in a community.

2. Statistically, it seems that the people who feel best about being in community are more likely to have been living in Camphill for 11 years or more and living in a small community that works with adults.

The Rule of 150

I decided to test these results against a theory which can be called 'The Rule of 150'. This is found in a book by Malcolm Gladwell called 'The Tipping Point'. (Gladwelll 2001).

A British anthropologist called Robin Dunbar, after studying primates, humans and a variety of social, religious, and organisational settings, has come to the conclusion that 150 is the maximum number of individuals with whom we can have genuinely social relationships and with whom we can share a sense of community.

Previously I had tested against three criteria. Now I re-organised the grouping of communities according to the size of the communities in relation to numbers alone. Cairnlee went back into the Schools and Loch Arthur went from being a large community (in terms of size) to join the ranks of the smaller communities (of less than 150 people). For the sake of this analysis the communities were no longer divided into categories of small, medium or large, but those with under 150 people and those with over 150 people.

I took these figures from Table 1 (page 23).

As above, I considered all the responses for a) - c) but discounted replies under the 'something else' category.

All the respondents from communities of 150 people or less in total (all the communities except the Aberdeen Schools and Newton Dee), reported that their experience of community was either satisfactory or great.

43% of them said it was great.

57% said that it was satisfactory

Respondents from communities of over 150 people (the Aberdeen Schools and Newton Dee), reported a wide range of community experiences ranging from 'great' to 'little or no experience of community'.

24% said that it was great

68% said that it was satisfactory

8% said that it was not satisfactory or that they had little or no experience of community.

Conclusions

1. As in the previous conclusion above, it appears that most people are 'satisfied' as against feeling 'great' about community life.

2. When the comments under 'something else' are discounted, it can be seen that a more positive experience of community is found in the smaller sized communities.

3. These survey figures confirm the theory of 'The Rule of 150' in relation to the Camphill communities in this study.

Further perspectives on the relation between the level of satisfaction in the experience of community and the size of the community is considered in the light of workplace surveys in Appendix 8.

Question 6: Has your experience of community and community-building changed over time?

a) There is less experience of community than previously
b) There is more experience of community than previously
c) There has not been any change over the years
d) Something else. Describe this here.

Responses

There were some confusing elements to questions 6, 7 and 8 of the survey.

- Several people had spent many years as a residential coworker and yet are now employed. As a result, they replied as an employee yet out of the experience of a long-term residential coworker. I accepted their replies as those of an employee.

- Some people have lived in a number of different Camphill communities and, when asked to describe the difference in their experience of community over the years, they described the difference between the communities in which they have lived.

- Some people are new to community life. Therefore some of these people, especially employees described their experiences before living or working in a community and now while living or working in a community. This had not been the intention of the questionnaires and I discounted these replies.

- There was such a variety of responses to questions 6 (under 'something else'), 7 and 8 that I had to collect similar responses together. In the process the personal voice of the respondent has been compromised in order to find a general sense of what I thought that people are articulating.

Overall results across all categories:

a) Less experience of community: 27%

b) More experience of community: 25%

c) No change: 7%

d) Something else: 34%

7% of the respondents made no reply.

Most respondents chose to qualify their answer to this question by responding under d). These comments appear below.

Of those who made a clear choice, the replies were nearly equally divided between those who feel that there is more community and those who experience less.

In the 1+ to 5 year category most people answered under d), 'something else'. Of the others, most said that they experience more community than previously.

The majority of employees also answered under d). Of the others, most expressed that either there has been no change or that the experience of community is better than previously.

In the 6-10 year group the responses were equally divided between more and less experience of community and fewer people reported 'something else'.

The most significant result is in the 11+ years group. Again, most answered under 'something else'. However, 41% of this group said that they experience less community now compared to previously. When I discounted those people who responded under 'something else', the figures for the remainder of the respondents in this group show that 86% experience less community, 7% more and 7% no change.

Conclusion

The conclusion is that younger residential coworkers and employees in general experience that there is more community than previously and older coworkers experience that there is less.

<u>Comments made under 'something else' appear below:</u>

1. 9 people said that, in one way or another, the experience of community is changing; that there is a new understanding of community that is different from the conventional understanding. Some said that community is more of a personal experience between individuals or among a group of individuals, based on freedom and initiative rather than on convention and conformity.

2. Some comments were similar to those made to question 5; namely that things change all the time. 7 people felt that things had neither got better nor worse.

3. 8 people said that it is now up to each individual to create community. It depends more than ever on personal effort and motivation.

4. 7 people said that since retiring their experience of community had decreased. 4 of these said that they now have little or no sense of community in their life.

5. 4 people expressed the view that the experience of community depends totally on the other people that you are living and working with.

Question 7: If your experience of community has changed, can you describe how it has changed?

It is not possible to give percentage breakdown for the replies to questions 7-11, so I present them ranked according to which comments got the most 'votes' after I had amalgamated the most similar of them. Obviously, I used my judgement in amalgamating these replies and, no doubt each person would have done this differently. These replies are across all service categories, except in situations in which there is a marked difference between one set of people and another. When this is the case, I have shown this. The number of people who 'voted' for each comment is shown.

1. There is more individualisation, differentiation and specialisation. There is less experience of togetherness and wholeness and community is experienced more in smaller settings such as the house community, workshop or in small groups.
   This was expressed by 35 people; more than twice the number of the next nearest finding.

2. The communities are more open between age groups, between residential and employed people and towards the wider society and to new ideas.
   15 people.

3. The places are becoming less of a community and more of an organisation, a good care provision or a good school. This was especially expressed by people working in schools communities. 14 people.

4. There is more room for initiative, diversity and personal freedom.
   10 people.

5. There is less commitment to ideals and less vision. 8 people.

6. 8 younger people said 'the longer I stay the better it gets', whereas 4 younger people said that 'the longer I stay the worse it gets'.

7. Community does not just happen by itself anymore. It depends on the individual to make it happen. The more inspiring the individuals are, the more that community is experienced. 5 people.

I include a list of comments made by 4 people or less and these are not ranked.

1. The focus of life has become work-orientated and there is little social life.

2. New ways of doing things have to be found in a more open and accountable environment.

3. One can only encourage others to work out of the ideals of Anthroposophy and Camphill and not demand it. This is positive but can have negative consequences.

4. There is less acceptance of what was formerly taken for granted and accepted by all.

5. My perception of community has developed. Community is more than a Camphill centre; it is an experience between any people anywhere.

Question 8: What are the reasons for this change?

Responses

1. Society has changed and 'things' have changed. These views are expressed in neutral terms by 25 people.

2. The negative effects of professionalisation and regulations. 20 people.

3. Individualisation. 19 people.

4. Negative effects of diversity and specialisation in living and working relationships. 16 people.

5. The natural development of human beings in the age of the Consciousness Soul and of communities from a pioneer stage to an organisational stage of development. 15 people.

6. Community is a personal experience and it depends on me, my attitudes and my involvement, the people that I am with and which community I am living and working in. 13 people.

7. People's needs change. 9 people.

8. The negative effect of employment. 8 people.

9. Less commitment to Anthroposophy and the spiritual aspects of community and less enthusiasm for them. 7 people.

10. The positive effects of changes in society and of regulations. 6 people.

These observations can be further combined according to one's views. If 3 and 7 are taken to be similar and combined, this would make this observation the largest grouping of all the replies.

If one combines the similar replies of 4 and 8, the combined observation becomes more significant.

I include here a list of other observations. All of these are less significant in that they were expressed by 4 or less people, yet they are of interest nonetheless as suggested reasons for why the experience of community has changed in the communities.

1. The children being admitted to the schools have more complex needs than previously.
2. We are tired and our ideas and ideals are running out of steam.
3. Some people are not making an effort.
4. Younger people are not staying.
5. We have become too comfortable, tolerant and materialistic.

Conclusion

If one considers the replies to questions 6, 7 and 8 together, certain themes emerge which I have tried to bring together below:

1. The communities are experiencing the effects of increasing individualisation and diversity and a corresponding loss of cohesion.

2. Some people say that the experience of community is in decline as the communities become more regulated, 'professional' and specialised.

3. Community is felt to be experienced more in small settings and relies more than previously upon individual effort.

4. The communities are experienced as becoming more open to new arrangements and new ideas, and people have more personal freedom than previously.

5. There is a general acceptance that society has changed, the world has changed, people have changed and the communities and the sense of community are changing as a result.

Observation

Some respondents expressed concern over the effects of an increase in the number of salaried workers on the experience of community.

This does not sit well with the finding that, in the future, the communities will rely upon employees even more than now to ensure their viability.

Question 9: What do you think are the most positive aspects of living and/or working in a community?

There was an enormous variety of responses to questions 9, 10 and 11; over 100 different responses to each question. As before, I have amalgamated similar responses and they are ranked below according to how many 'votes' each received. The number of 'votes' is also shown. Most respondents listed several aspects in their reply.

1. <u>Common shared purpose.</u> The experience of working together towards a common goal with like-minded people. Inspired to create something greater than the individual could accomplish alone. Finding meaning and purpose. Sharing life and sharing tasks. 72 people.

2. <u>Quality of relationships.</u> The mutuality of relationships; mutual support, care and interest. A special depth of relationships. Faithfulness; sharing of destinies. 56 people.

3. <u>Self-development</u>. People are challenged to develop, and become more self-aware. Overcoming egoism and selfishness. Improving both personal and professional practice. Challenged to become a better person.
   44 people.

4. <u>Sharing.</u> Sharing skills, experiences, inspiration, learning and life.
   36 people.

5. <u>Fulfilling potential/Transformative</u>. Everybody living and working in the community is encouraged and supported to develop to their full potential. People's lives are transformed. 28 people.

6. <u>Positive personal experience.</u> I feel needed, appreciated, fulfilled. I feel that I belong. I feel good about being in a community. I have purpose and meaning in my life. 27 people.

7. <u>Putting ideals into practice.</u> The integration of belief and real life. Doing something good in the world. 18 people.

8. <u>Celebration</u>. Laughter, fun, celebrating festivals and special events. 15 people.

9. <u>Good environment</u>. A secure environment for coworkers, families, employees. A supportive environment. Good surroundings. 14 people.

10. <u>Vulnerable people</u>. A common aim to help people with learning disabilities. 11 people.

11. <u>Unsalaried.</u> To work not for money. 7 people.

<u>Other comments that received less than 4 'votes' each appear below and are not ranked.</u>
- Working through interpersonal difficulties.
- Spirituality.
- A secure environment for pupils and residents.
- Friendship with pupils and residents.
- Self-directing. Individuals and communities are relatively free to decide for themselves what to do and how to do it.
- Ecological sharing of resources.

Observation

Considering that one of the top priorities of Camphill communities is to provide care, education and support to people with learning disabilities, it is somewhat surprising to see that this ranked so low (at number 10) in this list. It is ranked below the creation of a good environment for coworkers and employees.

Using replies from this question and question 11, I have compiled a description (not a definition) of a Camphill community of today. This appears as Appendix 4.

Question 10: What are the most negative aspects?

There are some significant differences between residential coworkers and employees in the comments made in response to this question that was not so marked in regard to other questions. Therefore I show some of the replies from residential coworkers and employees separately.

2 respondents entered 'none' here and 2 made no entry; the implication being that these 4 felt that there are no negative aspects.

Concerns that are shared by both residential coworkers and employees are listed below.

1. Not enough free time and too little time for personal renewal and personal interests. People expressed that they feel overwhelmed by work and by other people; by responsibility and a never-ending stream of issues and concerns. 44 people.

2. Boundary issues between the individual and the community. Not enough privacy and respect for the individual. 44 people.

3. Difficulties and misunderstandings between people. Interpersonal conflict. Some of these are unresolved and long-standing. 22 people (15 of these are from the 11+years group).

4. The outlook of both some individuals and communities is too narrow and insular. 14 people.

5. Loneliness and social isolation. A feeling of not being recognised or appreciated. 13 people.

6. Gossip. 12 people.

7. It is not always clear what everybody is doing. Some people work the system to their advantage. Not everybody is pulling their weight and some people 'hide'. 10 people.

8. Stagnation. The feeling that things have become stuck and there is a failure to see the need to change. Resistance to change. 9 people.

9. Other people decide what is best for you. They make decisions about you and your task without asking you. 9 people.

10. Power imbalances. Power is concentrated in the hands of a few long-term residential people. 7 people.

There were several observations made only by employees.

1. The feeling of being 'exposed' to others in a manner that would not be normal in other work situations. 6 people.

2. Poor communication and the lack of communication. 4 people.

3. The perception that employees are seen as being 'second class' members of the community and are undervalued. 3 people.

4. Concerns over the unprofessional attitudes and poor personal standards of others. 3 people.

5. There is pressure to conform to the conception of community. 2 people.

6. The inability to make personal decisions without having to go through a lengthy and frustrating group process. 1 person.

7. Situations in which some individuals are able to sabotage the decision-making process in a way that would not be possible in a conventional management setting. 1 person.

<u>There were also some observations made only by residential coworkers:</u>

1. There are too many expectations, some of them unreal, about what I should be doing. I feel imposed upon. I am made to feel guilty. 17 people.

2. People are too judgmental. People judge too quickly and too harshly. 8 people.

3. Unhealthy situations are not addressed. Examples that were given here include poor character traits and personal behaviour that go unchallenged, power struggles, people who are depressed or 'burnt-out', people living in unhappy circumstances.
   People are afraid of getting involved. They are afraid of being seen to be interfering and of having to deal with the consequences of getting involved. 8 people.

4. People take advantage of you. 6 people.

5. Relationships do not go deeper than working together. 5 people, (all from the 11+ years group)

<u>There were a number of other comments, which were mentioned by 4 people or less.</u>

The first concern was expressed by both residential coworkers and employees. The rest that follow were expressed only by residential coworkers.

- There are endless meetings with no clear decisions. The decision-making process is too slow.
- The challenge of having to meet the shadow side of others on close terms.
- My own weaknesses and vulnerabilities which I have to try and hide in order to protect myself.
- Family boundaries are not protected enough. (Comment from a family person).
- Family boundaries are too protected. (Comment from a BACE student).
- Some people are held back by others and not allowed to achieve their full potential.
- Arrogance. The feeling that we in Camphill know best.
- Routine and complacency.
- Some people get into a dependency relationship with others and with the community.

Question 11: How do you think that the experience of community can be improved?

Responses

1. Relationships. More interest, care, respect, tolerance and forgiveness for each other. Create time and space for creative social activities; music, dancing, art. Create time to socialise in order to break down the barriers between age groups and roles. To get to know each other better. To have the courage to go through interpersonal difficulties and to try and resolve them. 84 people.

2. Issues about how the communities are run. More participation in making big decisions. More equality between the age groups. More democracy. Inclusion. More and better communication. Listen more carefully to people. Improved team-working. Empowering the new generation. More accountability and transparency about what everybody is doing and how they are doing it. 44 people.

3. Change. Respect the past but embrace the need to change. The need to create a new vision in tune with our time and recognising that things have changed. Accept what is happening and be open to change. 29 people.

4. Lifestyle balance. To improve the balance between personal time and work. To create smaller settings for both living and for working. To create separate spaces for living a personal life and community work and involvement. Respecting the different needs of individuals. To create more time and space for the individual and also for personal renewal - yet within the community setting. 28 people.

5. Ideals. More commitment to the ideals and forms of Anthroposophy, Camphill, community, Curative Education and Social Therapy. More emphasis on ethics and spirituality.

   Training course of community-building. All of the above should be written down and given to people and used as part of training for new people.

   22 people.

6. Motivation. Encourage motivation, enthusiasm and commitment to all aspects of community life. To encourage people to work out of love.

   22 people.

7. Self-development and personal transformation. To learn to overcome selfishness and egoism. More emphasis on, and more time for, personal self-development practice. To help each person to find the meaning and significance of their life and destiny. 18 people.

8. Communal activities. More common activities, events, experiences. More involvement in cultural, spiritual activities and celebration of the festivals. 12 people.

9. Individual effort. The recognition that it is now up to me to do something to improve the experience of community; through my effort, example and my enthusiasm and inspiration. I cannot wait for community – or change, or improvement - to happen by itself. 11 people.

10. Turn outwards. To relate better to the 'outside' world. To collaborate with similar initiatives. 10 people.

11. Openness and honesty. 8 people.

12. Integrate and value employees on an equal basis. 6 people.

Other suggestions:

1. Selection. 2 employees thought that there should be better selection during the recruitment process so as to find people who are really committed to a community work environment.
   2 residential coworkers suggested that there should be a more rigorous assessment and selection of potential new residential coworkers.

2. Focus. 4 residential coworkers thought that the focus of the community should be as much on the needs of the whole community as on the needs of the individual fee-paying resident.
   2 people thought that the focus should be directed principally onto the needs of the fee-paying pupils and residents. The needs of the community and of other individuals should not compromise this focus.

3. Ways to Quality. Throughout questions 7, 8, 9 and 11, 11 people considered 'Ways to Quality' to be of great benefit in introducing positive change into communities.

Observations

1. It can be seen that suggestions as to how to improve relationships and contact between people occupy the minds of the respondents far more than any other issue. This was a concern raised by 82 residential coworkers and 2 employees.

2. Suggestion number 4 - that relates to a better lifestyle balance -was raised only by residential coworkers.

3. Suggestion number 12 - that relates to the better integration of employees - was raised by 5 employees and 1 residential coworker.

4. All the other suggestions were voiced in a roughly equal measure by people of all service status.

5. It can be seen that there was less correlation than may have been expected between the replies for questions 10 and 11. It might have been thought that suggestions as to how to improve community life would follow more or less directly from what were considered to be the most negative aspects.

   The aspect that was seen to the most negative, that of the imbalance between personal time and community responsibilities, was only ranked fourth in the suggestions for improvement.

   The most common suggestions regarding improvement were concerned with relationships, which was ranked third in the list of negative aspects.

   The next two most common were suggestions about how the places are run, and the need for change. The latter two were not ranked as correspondingly high in the list of negative aspects as they did in the list of improvements.

Other Comments.

The final section of the questionnaire invited respondents to write any other comments. In this section I have combined these written comments from the questionnaires with insights from other sources listed below:

- Group conversations in some of the communities that took place during research visits.
- From two BACE discussion groups.
- From some personal interviews with some older Camphill coworkers that were conducted as part of the research.
- From the questionnaire for those who have left Camphill

1. <u>Community and size</u>

- "Having lived in a relatively small community and later in a larger one leads me to the conclusion that size really matters. In a larger community, I think that smaller groups or house communities or neighbourhoods need to be granted a higher degree of autonomy in their striving to create a healthy experience of community within a smaller context".
- "When a community gets too big, it becomes a question if it is possible to be aware of everybody". "In a smaller place it is easier to see what everybody is doing – people remain more visible and more accountable".
- "We need to give more autonomy to small groups so as to avoid too much control which makes people lose interest and disengage. Autonomy encourages the creative energy of initiative and personal responsibility".

2. <u>Change and Diversity</u>

- "I experience the tension of trying to distill the essence of the old traditional way and also being open to the new ways into the future".
- "I experience the old crumbling away and we are not yet able to see the future. I am looking for my own part to play in this, my own responsibility".
- "The community forms are fast dissolving, but the commitment to the place and to each other remains".
- "We have swung from an extreme fundamentalist approach to Anthroposophy to a swing of embracing 'the ways of the world'. We need to be in control of the next swing".
- "We have to ask ourselves if we are creating the best community that we can create in these circumstances: something worthy of a modern community. We are becoming complacent; we are doing a good job, but are we really working towards the future?"
- "Things have become so complicated that new people no longer take on the 'wholeness' of the community. New people join the place rather than joining the Camphill Movement".
- "I am not sure that we all believe the same things anymore, even though we have the same ideals".
- "The community cannot answer everybody's needs – so some people leave and some people live outside. That's got to be O.K."
- "People are beginning to stop asking 'what can I do for the community?' and instead are asking 'what can the community do for me?"
- "Previously we had less security but lots of commitment. Now we have less commitment and more security. But it is harder to know what we stand for. It has become easier to discuss practical issues than to discuss our ideals".
- "Individualisation and choice have changed our communities. What is important now is the true human encounter. We must create moments of togetherness and celebration even though we are individuals. This will need trust and conviction".

- "It is the law of all social organisms – eventually they all either become diluted and dissipated, or are re-discovered or re-created in a new form".

- "Despite all the changes, the truth is still there and it lives strongly".

- "We can no longer say 'Camphill does this or that', now only the individual can do it out of their own individual responsibility".

- "The regulations are society's way of saying that it wants its vulnerable people looked after properly. Legislation and regulation have been the prime movers in shaping change in social care in Camphill communities and have given us valuable tools that were not previously available in Camphill".

- The view was expressed that previously the leaders in Camphill communities were inspirational figures who took the lead in all realms of community life; they held the Sunday Services, carried the festivals, they gave talks and offered personal support and guidance. They were active in the esoteric work of the community and in the work of the Anthroposophical Society. They also gave the lead in the management of the community. Increasingly nowadays, these roles have become separated; it is not necessarily expected that the people who take the lead in management would be active in the cultural and spiritual realms of community life.

4. Priorities and balance

- "Things go wrong if other issues are allowed to over-ride the top priority – the residents".

- "The priority must always be the well-being of everybody in the community – not just the residents".

- "Previously Anthroposophy was seen as fundamental – the core of everything and support was for everybody in the community. Now the core task has become the support for the residents and one can only hope that Anthroposophy is still at the core. We have become less of a community with vulnerable people and more of a community for these people".

5. The perspective of some employees

- "Some of the [residential coworkers] work hard and live out their ideals as far as they can; others have got lost".
- "I have become disillusioned and cross as I see that people do not live out their ideals".
- "I am looking at community from an 'outside' perspective and I find that many of the supposedly dedicated live-in coworkers are very self-centred and have no chance of surviving in anything but a supported community".
- "It is as hard to appreciate what it is like living in as it is to appreciate how it is to be employed".
- "I no longer feel like an 'outsider', but I had to prove myself before I was accepted".
- "I respect and admire the work done in Camphill".
- "I am aware of my feeling part of the community growing as I remain working here, and as I feel more 'accepted' by all. This is one of the satisfactions of the job…….It has been a struggle for me at times to accept how [the community] runs, but I realise that's it for me to change, not [the community]. Sometimes I feel that acceptance to be against my will, and that I am 'submitting' in some way! However, I feel that the changes are benevolent ones and that [the community] is very much a valuable and good influence on me".

6. Motivation
- "In order to help people you first have to care for yourself".
- "You need to assess carefully your own needs and capabilities in order to commit to community".
- "Community only works when you invest in it – your time, energy and commitment".

7. <u>Experiences of Community</u>

- "Community is not a career option and is not for everybody. It is a question of finding the right people".
- "What a new coworker now meets depends on *who* they meet; what they meet in the people they are involved with. Community lives in the individual".
- "The experience of community depends entirely upon the quality and character of the leader, whether it is in the house, a workshop or the community in general" (L'Arche).
- "Is it the residents who carry the community impulse rather than the coworkers and staff? The sense of community lives in the place; in the residents who live there all the time".
- "My experience of community is that it is alive and real. But it is precarious and fragile".
- "The community changes and relationships change; people change and the task changes. The appearance of the community in its social form is not the community; the reality is in and between each of us".
- "Community is not general – it is not for all people and all places – it is a combination of the right people in the right setting at the right time. It is not possible without the residents, who provide the common purpose and create community through their openness, honesty, friendliness and vulnerability. And even with all those things, it is still a challenge".
- "Overall this community has changed my life. It has given me faith that people can be good. I am astounded by people's creativity and energy. I feel my life has been enriched beyond measure".
- "We are still only trying. We have not stopped learning".

Experiences of people who are retired within the communities.

This section was not a part of the questionnaire. Instead it is an issue that I have lifted out of the findings as I consider that it reflects yet another perspective on the experience of community-building.

Table 1 shows that there are 10 retired coworkers living in the communities. This should not be taken as an accurate figure as people were not asked to specify the number of retired people when I asked for the breakdown of people in the communities.

The questionnaire did not have a category of 'retired' to tick. 7 people volunteered the information that they are retired or semi-retired. Four of these expressed their gratitude for the support they received. One of these and the other three expressed the feeling that, because of their age and their lack of involvement, they experienced very little in the way of community and social interaction. 'Being retired means the loss of the sense of community; life is too busy to include me'.
Two of these older people said that they would still like to contribute in some way to the life of the community.

Observation

Issues around the inclusion and value of older coworkers will become increasingly important as more residential coworkers retire within the communities.

Experiences of people who have left the communities

I sent a modified questionnaire to 14 people who have left the communities over the years, as I wanted to include their particular perspective into the research. (See Appendix 3 for a copy of this questionnaire and see under Section 4: Research Method, for how the questionnaire was modified).

8 of these people replied. 4 of these had been long-term coworkers and had been in Camphill from between 12 and 24 years. All but one of these had left the communities between 12 and 16 years ago.

The other 4 are BACE graduates who have left in the last 5 years.

The experiences of the 4 long-term coworkers.

The reasons for leaving that were given included exhaustion, poor relationships within the community and the feeling that community life had become too narrow and insular.

These respondents had experienced flaws in community life; power struggles, the breakdown of relationships, conflict between individuals and groups. They had seen some people 'hiding' and some becoming overly dependent.

They had also had positive experiences; they had witnessed true humanity and the significance of human encounters. They had felt the fulfilment, synergy and spirituality of community.

They saw causes for change in the experience of community in the impact of regulations, and the trend towards professionalisation and towards the community becoming more of an organisation. They also experienced less idealism in the one-year coworkers and in other new people joining the community,

They felt that any improvement in community life would be the result of efforts made on an individual level. These would have to be in terms of increased levels of personal motivation and commitment and through greater efforts in mutual support.

<u>The experiences of the BACE students:</u>

All these respondents said that they left because they had finished the BACE course and they wanted to continue their studies, learn new skills, or live and work in a different setting. Some indicated that they hoped to return to a Camphill/Steiner School environment at some time in the future.

Their experiences indicate that they felt very positive about community life, and yet also recognised that the sense of community varied from one community to another. Some of them commented on what they saw as a trend in the communities towards more individualisation, choice and questioning of the traditional forms and ethos of the communities. They saw this trend as part of the more general changes in society at large and what they saw as the excessive intrusion of the state into the life of the communities in the way of regulations. Their suggestions to make positive improvements in the experience of community included being more open to new coworkers and new ideas and involving people more in the running of the communities.

There were also some observations on the relation between the sense of community and the size of the community. These have been incorporated into the section 'Other Comments' (pages 59-63).

The observations on the positive and negative aspects of community coincided with the views of others and included, on one hand, aspects of insularity, social isolation and the lack of personal space and on the other, sharing, support and the feeling of being needed and being able to contribute.

Echoing comments made previously by others, one person said that '*mountains can be moved and great things achieved*' and another '*once you find the right balance to develop and maintain the healthy social life in Camphill, there is really nothing that makes an individual's life more meaningful and fulfilled than living and working in a community of like-minded people*'.

The aspect of most interest is the experiences that these people had of leaving their communities, which can tell us much about communities and boundaries.

It might be expected that the BACE students would experience few problems at the point of leaving. Their studies have a definite beginning and end, and although there might be the hope that they would stay on afterwards, there is no formal agreement that that would be the case.

However, the experiences were mixed. Two people felt that they had been supported in their decision to leave at the end of their studies, albeit with some minor reservations; one said 'generally yes' the other said that the problem was more the guilt they themselves experienced at leaving.

But the other two said that only a few people expressed any sympathy or support and otherwise there was either a lack of interest or even resentment. These more negative reactions were put down to a lack of confidence in the community and projections of betrayal and envy. One comment was that emotions can be very painful on both sides at the point of leaving and a lot of goodwill is required to deal with these emotions.

The experiences of the departing long-term coworkers were also mixed. Two thought that they were supported and two not. One expressed the feeling that 'you are either in or you are out'.

While recognising that individual circumstances require individual responses there was nonetheless the feeling, even among those who had had a positive experience themselves, that some are helped more than others; 'Camphill is wonderful at supporting some people and dreadful at supporting others'.

Further, they felt that it would be helpful if the boundaries could become softened so as to alleviate the painful side of issues such as guilt, hurt and bring more objectivity into financial support packages.

9. A Summary of the Research Findings

1. Of the 157 respondents, 29% said that they feel great about being in a community, 49% said that they are satisfied, 2% feel that they are not satisfied and 2% have little or no experience of community. 17% chose to say 'something else'.

2. Overall these findings indicate that 78% of the respondents have a positive experience of community - defined as being satisfied or feeling great - and 4% have a negative experience. The remainder wished to qualify their experience, or elaborate upon it, in one way or another.

3. Most of those who said that their experience of community was 'great' were people who had spent a longer time in Camphill and/or people who are in small and medium sized communities.

4. When asked to describe how their experience of community has changed over the years, roughly equal numbers felt that there is less community than previously (27%) as those who felt that there is more (25%). Most people chose to say neither less nor more but 'something else'.
Those people who said that there is less community than previously were mostly coworkers who have been living in the communities for over 11 years. Those who felt that there is more community than previously were mostly employees and coworkers who have been living in the communities for less time.

5. Respondents said that the three most crucial ways in which communities have changed are the following:

- There is more individualisation, differentiation and specialisation
- The communities are more open
- They are becoming more of a professional care organisation and less of a community.

6. When asked to suggest what are the reasons for these, and other, changes, respondents replied that the main reasons are;

- The fact that things have changed generally in society and in the world; the communities are operating in a different environment than previously.
- The negative effects of individualisation, differentiation, specialisation, professionalisation and regulations.

7. The main suggestions as to how to improve the experience of community were:

- To improve the quality of relationships.
- To improve the way in which the communities are run
- To be more open to change
- To improve the balance between work and personal time
- To encourage commitment to the ideals of Anthroposophy, Camphill and community.

8. 40% of the workforce of the communities are employed. The findings indicate that this figure is set to rise over the next years. It does not seem that the communities have fully taken on board the consequences of this trend and this research highlights some concerns about the extent to which employees are integrated into the communities and valued as members of the communities.

10. Some reflections

After visiting the communities, and after having been involved in many conversations and discussions about the experience of community and after reading all the questionnaires that were returned, I have the sense that some central themes have emerged. Below are some reflections on these themes, that seem to be fundamental to community-building.

<u>Balance</u>

Many people want more balance in their life. They feel overwhelmed and exhausted and under too many expectations as to what they should be doing. They want more time to themselves, to renew themselves, and to socialise and get to know others better.

At the same time, it seems as if people want more common events, more community activities and celebrations, more commitment to the ideals that inspire community life in Camphill.

It appears that some aspects of community life are both positive and negative; getting more involved in community life means having less time for oneself. Creating a stronger sense of community may lead to becoming less open to things beyond the immediate boundaries of the community. Developing a stronger commitment to the traditional forms and structures of Camphill may lead to attitudes that are resistant to change and new ideas.

This dichotomy in finding a healthy balance is summed up by the observations of one respondent who said that the most positive aspect of community is "never being alone" and the most negative aspect is "never being alone".

It appears that living in community is a continual balancing act between competing demands. The difficulty in finding the right balance between these demands keeps people in a state in which they say that "my experience of community comes and goes, but there is generally enough that I am satisfied" as against saying that they feel fulfilled and uplifted about being in community.

Relationships.

It is very obvious from the replies that the quality of relationships is of crucial importance in determining the experience of community.

There is an ambivalent quality to relationships in general that can make them both the best and the worst aspect of community living.

Good relationships are cited as being the second most positive aspect of community. Different aspects of unhealthy and disappointing relationships appear as four out of the five main most negative aspects of community given by residential coworkers.

The wish for better relationships, and more time to form better relationships, appears as the top priority on the list of ways to improve the experience of community.

People say how difficult it can be to have to encounter the 'shadow' side of the other person so closely and perhaps on a daily basis; how unresolved interpersonal difficulties and conflict can mar the experience of community; how they feel 'at the mercy' of other people who make decisions about them from a position of power and influence; that some people with selfish tendencies can misuse trust and tolerance to take advantage of others.

And yet the most positive aspects of community are said to be the experience of working together with others in creating something better than one could achieve alone; the experience of finding meaning and purpose in sharing life and work with other people; the mutuality of supportive and faithful relationships.

This ambivalence seems to indicate that, although some of the people who replied are fully engaged in, and committed to, building community, the real manifestation of true community still remains elusive. Most respondents say that the experience of community comes and goes; it is an aspiration for most people rather than an achievement.

<u>Boundaries.</u>

In response to Question 10 and also under 'Other Comments', some of the people who have retired or left the communities, and some employees expressed the feeling of being 'outside' the boundaries of the community. There are different experiences; either the community has moved on without them, they have moved out of the community or they feel that they have never really been included. In each case there seems to be a shared feeling that they are not in community as much as they would wish.

In this sense it seems that the community boundaries are rather rigid and closed to people who are not fully recognised, or no longer fully recognised, as being a full member of the community.

And yet, within the boundaries of the community, a number of people, in responding to Questions 8 and 10, express the feeling that some people are not pulling their weight, are 'hiding' or 'working the system to their advantage'. It is said that these situations are not challenged; that the communities have become too tolerant.

It seems as if there are some inconsistencies about the boundaries of communities and within communities. It might also be that communities have different boundaries of inclusion for different groups of people depending on their location in relation to the boundaries and their perceived activity and contribution to the work of the community. Further, the degree to which individuals are valued, challenged or tolerated seems to depend on location and contribution.

In the light of this, people who have moved out, live out or have left the community are less included or not included, even if they may wish to still feel part of the community.

Employees live out but contribute actively and directly to the work of the community and hence may experience a certain amount of ambivalence in how they are included.

People who are retiring or retired within the communities might also experience that they are less included than before and less than they would like.

On the other hand several people who responded to the survey expressed that, in their experience, some people who live in the community make little contribution to the work of the community or display selfish and unhelpful behaviour traits. The fact that these situations can go unchallenged seems to imply that living in the community (location) leads to a greater level of inclusion within the boundaries of the community than does contribution to the work of the community. The implication is that a greater amount of inclusion, generosity and tolerance is extended to people resident in the communities than to those living outwith the communities, and that this is not necessarily related to the level of the individual's contribution to the community.

It will be said that people in the communities are just too busy and involved in the daily work to have the time to include everybody who wishes to be included. While this is understandable, nonetheless there are several factors that have emerged from this survey that do not sit comfortably with what has been described above:

- The communities are going to have to rely more heavily than previously on employment in order to secure their future viability.
- Many of the residential coworkers currently in positions of responsibility within the communities intend to stay indefinitely and hence retire within the communities.
- Many respondents to the survey think that the communities should be more open and relate better to the wider society.

All of these factors are going to test the inclusive nature of both the internal and external boundaries of the communities.

A variety of complex issues and concerns about community and boundaries appear throughout the replies:

Between the individual and the community

Between one individual and another

Between groups within the community

Between residential and employed workers

Between people who are fully integrated and those who are more peripheral

And between the community and the wider society and the state

Communities need to have a boundary to order to experience a sense of identity; as being separate from the general society of which they are a part. The individual needs to have a boundary in order to retain a healthy sense of autonomy and yet still be active and involved in community. A great deal of the community experience seems to depend on where these boundaries are drawn, who sets them, and how flexible, inclusive and responsive to change they are.

Change

The focus of this research has been on change; on assessing the perceptions of the level of change, the impact of change, the reasons for change and in eliciting suggestions for improvement, which also implies change.

Communities, in common with all living organisms, organisations and social groupings, go through processes of change, development and evolution.

The results of the survey show clearly that the vast majority of people living and working in the communities are experiencing change in their sense of community. Only 7% said that they are not experiencing change.

By coming to a better understanding of the processes of change and development, and some of the theories of how communities and organisations change and develop, the Camphill communities may come to further insights as to how to move forward into the future; how to develop the attitudes, structures and forms that integrate all the changes that are now experienced into the life of the communities in a healthy and sustainable manner.

11. A Final Word

The general concept of 'community' defies a concise definition. Specifically within the Camphill communities, the experience of community is so diverse and differentiated that it will not easily submit to a definition that would be universally agreed upon. The understanding of community and the experience of community have changed over the years and, to an increasing extent, community means different things to different people

From the conversations that I was involved in during the course of this research, and from the questionnaire responses, I became more aware of just how different the experience of community is for different groups of people.

Whereas most people in this study agreed that the experience of community has changed, some felt that the change had been for the worse and some that it had been for the better.

For people who have been in Camphill for a good number of years, the decline in the experience of community that many of them spoke of seems to relate to the fact that they feel that there is currently less commitment to, and appreciation of, some of the traditional aspects of Camphill. There are less community talks, less Sunday Services, less study groups, less socialising and friendships, less sense of service and commitment to all aspects of the community.

People who have joined the communities more recently seem to experience more freedom and choice in what they do and how they do it and less expectation that they have to uphold and commit to the traditional community forms. They say that community is more of an individual experience than previously.

It is different again for people who are employed in the communities. For them the community is one of several settings of social responsibilities and interaction that they are engaged in. Their social and cultural engagement, and their experience of community in the Camphill communities, will be compared with other experiences in the other social settings in which they are active. The perspective and experience of an employee is different from that of a residential coworker. These differences merit a great deal more appreciation and understanding in the light of the findings of this study.

This study has revealed a differentiation in the experience of community, dependent upon many factors including service status, boundaries, relationships and the size of communities.

In order to create healthy, vibrant, inclusive and sustainable communities there needs to be a genuine appreciation of these differences of experience and the will, and skill, to integrate them into a harmonious whole; a whole in which each person feels recognised, appreciated and valued as an individual. This, after all, is the essence of community-building, and as people in this study have been saying, it does not just happen by itself - it's up to each individual to make it work.

I hope that this study can be seen as a beginning of an exploration into how people relate to their experience of community and how this is changing. I hope that it also serves as a way for people to understand and appreciate how other people experience community.

But most of all I hope that this will be a catalyst for lively and forward-looking discussions that will serve to rekindle interest and concern in the changing experience of community in Camphill communities and how to continue and improve this process of community-building into the future.

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Follow links to 'Coworker Development'.

APPENDIX 1: LIST OF RESEARCH VISITS AND ACTIVITIES

2006

March 22nd	Meeting with Camphill Scotland Facilitators to discuss research plan.
April 1st	Research supported by Scottish Neighbourhood Meeting.
May 2nd	Meeting with Robin Jackson and Manuela Costa to co-ordinate research themes.
May 23rd	Letter to all Camphill communities in Scotland to explain the research project and to arrange visits.
June 16th	Support Group meeting for Blair Drummond.
July 12th	Visit to Tigh A' Chomainn. Questionnaires given out.
September 4th	Questionnaires sent to Beannachar.
September 7th	Conversations with 4 residents in Simeon.
September 14th	Visit to L'Arche Inverness. Conversations with Community Leader and Assistant Co-ordinator.
September 18th	Questionnaires sent to Newton Dee and Camphill Schools.
September 22nd	Visit to Blair Drummond. Conversation with some staff. Questionnaires left for distribution.
October 2nd	Conference in Newton Dee "Heart of the Community". Gave a talk on "Changing Social Forms in Camphill Communities".
October 9th	Conversation in Tiphereth. Questionnaires left for distribution.
October 10th	Conversation with 3 people from Garvald Centre, Edinburgh. Conversation with 2 people at Garvald Home Farm, West Linton.
October 12th	Conversation with people in Milltown. Questionnaires left for distribution. Questionnaires left for Workshop Co-ordinators.
October 13th	Questionnaires sent to Simeon.
October 15th/16th	Gave talk at Loch Arthur "Changing Social Forms in Camphill Communities". Conversation group about community-building in Loch Arthur. Questionnaires left for distribution.
October 17th-20th	'Ways to Quality' Course in Camphill Schools Aberdeen.
November 13th	Talk at Corbenic. Questionnaires left for distribution.
November 13th	Conversation with Ochil Tower extended Core Group. Questionnaires left for distribution.
November 27th	Conversation session with BACE stage III.
December 1st	Writing up of findings from questionnaires begins.

2007

January 12th	Contribution on community-building to BACE stage II workshop.
January 16th	First draft of findings completed. Sent to 3 people for critical evaluation prior to final write-up (Robin Jackson, Sam Sinclair and Angelika Monteux).

APPENDIX 2

COMMUNITY-BUILDING RESEARCH PROJECT QUESTIONNAIRE

I am conducting a research project into community-building in the Camphill communities in Scotland. As part of this research I am hoping that you will fill in this questionnaire and return it to me by **30ᵗʰ November.** I am giving you a return envelope to make this as easy as possible.

Please put a ring around the letters that best describe your situation and write replies to the questions. Not all questions may apply to your situation. Please use the space on the last page to write anything further that has not been covered by the questions.

As I am not asking you to write your name on the questionnaire, it is clear that all the replies will be anonymous.

Once I have received back all the completed questionnaires, I will circulate or publicise the results in one form or another.

Thank you in advance for your help and involvement with this research.

1. What is the name of the Camphill community in which you live and/or work?

....

2. Describe your position in your community: Put a ring around all the letters that describe your situation:

a) House Co-ordinator/Houseparent
b) Responsible for the day-to-day care and support of pupils/residents
c) Teacher
d) Workshop Leader
e) Farmer or Gardener
f) Therapist
g) Class-helper
h) Administrator
i) Manager
j) Member of Management Group
k) Other (please specify)

l) Long-term coworker: How many years have you been in Camphill?…….
m) Medium term coworker (1 year – 3 years)
n) BACE student (specify which year)………………
o) 1 year coworker
p) Other (please specify)………………………………..

q) Residential
r) Employed
s) Non-residential volunteer

3. What made you decide to join a Camphill Community?

4. For how many years do you intend to stay?

a) 1 year or less than 1 year
b) 1-4 years
c) 4 years or more, but not indefinitely
d) Indefinitely

5. How would you describe your experience of community? Today, in the Camphill community where you live and/or work.
Put a ring around the letter that best describes your experience.

a) I feel great about being in a community. I often feel fulfilled and uplifted.

b) The experience of community comes and goes, but there is generally enough that I am satisfied.

c) I have little or no sense of community in my life.

d) Something else. Please describe your experience here.

6. **Has your experience of community and community-building changed over time?**

a) There is less experience of community than previously
b) There is more experience of community than previously
c) There has not been any change over the years
d) Something else. Please describe this here.

7. **If your experience of community has changed, can you describe how it has changed?**

8. **What are the reasons for this change?**

9. **What do you think are the most positive aspects of living and/or working in a community?**

10. **What are the most negative aspects?**

11.   How do you think that the experience of community can be improved?

Please write anything else that you want to say below. If there is not enough space here, please add a further sheet of paper.

Thank you for your help. Please return this questionnaire to me by 30th November.

Andy Plant
Beannachar Camphill Community
South Deeside Road
Banchory-Devenick
Aberdeen   AB12 5YL

APPENDIX 3: The questionnaire sent to people who have left Camphill communities.

1. **For how many years did you live in Camphill?**

2. **When did you leave Camphill?**

3. **Why did you leave Camphill?**

4. **Describe the experience of community in the Camphill place(s) in which you live.**

5. **Do you think that the experience of community changed over time? If so, in what ways did it change?**

6. **What do you think were the reasons for this change?**

7. **How do you think that the experience of community could be improved?**

8. **What do you think are the most positive aspects of living in a Camphill community?**

9. **What are the most negative aspects?**

10. **Did you feel supported in your decision to leave Camphill?**

11. **If not, how could Camphill improve the way in which it supports people once they have decided to leave?**

APPENDIX 4: A Description of a Camphill Community

People were not asked to write a description of a Camphill community as part of completing the questionnaire.

What follows is a compilation of many remarks that were made by respondents under Question 9, that asked them to list the most positive aspects of living and working in a community and under Question 11, ways in which the experience of community could be improved.

'Camphill communities are communities of like-minded people, who are inspired by a shared sense of idealism and common purpose, who dedicate their lives to creating a safe, supportive and challenging environment for all of its members – including vulnerable children and adults – in which each person is encouraged and enabled to develop towards their true potential.

Many of these people are inspired by the spiritual insights of Anthroposophy and the ethos of Camphill.

The members of Camphill communities feel challenged to work towards overcoming selfishness and egoism and to create relationships of mutual care, interest and support that can be of unusual depth and honesty. They are committed to creating communities of deep meaning and purpose that have the potential to transform people's lives and to do some good for the world.'

APPENDIX 5: Towards a Definition of an Intentional Community

This is a definition that I have been working on for some time. It is by no means complete but perhaps serves to indicate the complexity and many levels and layers that make up an intentional community.

'An intentional community is a recognisable and distinct group of people who share the intention to live and work together. They are held together by sharing a certain set of complex and elusive meanings, symbols, rituals, traditions and an ideology that is separate from the prevailing culture of mainstream society.

They are separated from others by a sense of identity and by permeable and changeable boundaries, which are both abstract and real and can be physical, social, spiritual and cultural.

The shared experience of community, and the intensity of that experience, are transient; they vary from time to time and from person to person depending on what else is happening in their life, the quality of their interpersonal relationships, their sense of commitment, length of stay in that community, their investment in the community, their sense of inclusion and ownership; and to the extent to which they are embedded in the values and identity of the community.

The everyday experience of community is interspersed with brief and intense moments of heightened insight and grace.

The sense of community demands a constant process of reflection and reinforcing if it is to remain vibrant and meaningful, both to its members and to those outside the community.'

APPENDIX 6: Observations following a visit to the Garvald Centre in Edinburgh and Garvald Home Farm, West Linton.

The Garvald communities were founded in Scotland in 1944 by Hans Schauder. They are based on the same philosophy and practices as Camphill communities and traditionally the only real differences have been that the staff in Garvald communities are salaried and the communities are predominantly urban.

Today Garvald runs 6 organisations in and around Edinburgh; the Garvald Centre provides supported accommodation and workshops, The Engine Shed offers work training, the Columcille centre provides workshops and Garvald Glenesk provides residential care. Garvald West Linton is a centre for residential and day-care services and Garvald Home Farm next door is a small land-based community for adults.

In the Garvald Centre home life has become very individualised and is little different from mainstream provision. The sense of community is experienced in the craft and activity workshops and in the many and various staff training courses that are based on the principles of Anthroposophy and Social Therapy. The experience of community is found in the mutuality of relationships between people in their workplace rather than in the forms and structures of shared living settings. It is experienced as being dependent upon the initiative of the individual.

Garvald Home Farm has resisted the pressure for hierarchical management structures, work shifts, training and qualifications, televisions and technology. The community sees its mission as being open to anybody who wishes to experience a simple, shared lifestyle which includes adults with learning disabilities and is based around home life and farm work.

The people I spoke to there said that some people regard them as being 'backward', but they see themselves as forward-looking in that they provide an experiential learning environment free of distractions.

It seems that Home farm has consciously 'bucked the trend' of most communities to always grow, get bigger, and to increase in diversity and complexity. The community has remained small and retained its simplicity and cohesion.

APPENDIX 7: Observations following a visit to the L'Arche community in Inverness.

The L'Arche communities were founded in France by Jean Vanier just over 40 years ago. The communities are homes for people with learning disabilities and their assistants. They are based on Christianity, encourage the development of the spirituality of the assistants, and are open to people of all religious beliefs. The movement has 126 communities in 30 countries. There are 8 L'Arche communities in the UK – providing places for 120 people with learning disabilities - and 2 more will open shortly.

There are many similarities between L'Arche and Camphill; the inspired founder-leader, the spiritual/religious emphasis, building community with vulnerable people and the emphasis on meaningful work. As in Camphill the places for the residents are state funded and the L'Arche communities are experiencing an increase in both regulation and the need for organisational professionalism.

These similarities between Camphill and L'Arche prompted me to visit the L'Arche community in Inverness in order to share experiences of community-building over the years.

The following is based on the conversations that I had there with the Community Leader and an Assistant Co-ordinator. I use the words of the people I spoke to without any interpretation.

Coworkers are salaried and called 'assistants'. Those people who are state-funded are called 'core members.'

L'Arche is a community, a service provider and a 'spiritual location', a place where people grow spiritually. They are places of transformation. People join the communities out of their 'brokenness' - L'Arche welcomes assistants who are 'fragile' – and the assistants are transformed by their encounters with the core members. L'Arche is not a place of sufferance and people are expected and challenged to grow. People are called to their vocation of service and spiritual growth in a L'Arche community, and are accompanied and supported in their development by a 'discernment group'. The role of this group – which includes core members - is to help the person to see what is required of them; how best they can fulfil their vocation.

The life of the community is marked by common prayers, the blessing of meals and the monthly community celebrations. Religious life is ecumenical; the communities adapt to the religious practices of the culture and society that they are a part of.

The experience of community changes all the time and is dependent on the personality of the leaders and the personnel. L'Arche must be a place for both the core members and the assistants – not for one at the expense of the other.

In the Inverness community there is one main house for the residential core members and other people are supported in independent flats. All the core members work in the workshops.

Previously the local authorities were wary of L'Arche and regarded it as a Christian sect. As a consequence, there were no referrals for a time. L'Arche refused to compromise and argued their case that they are inclusive and ecumenical and that they provide excellent care and support to vulnerable people. As a result they now have a waiting list and are building new and better workshop facilities.

All the assistants are salaried. The salaries are on different levels related to needs (whether single or married), not to role, responsibilities or hours worked. The system is now seem as unfair and is to be changed in an attempt to stop some people 'hiding', taking advantage of the system and not pulling their weight.

L'Arche is experiencing that fewer assistants choose to stay after an initial year or two. Explanations given for this trend include changes in the world and in youth culture; there are more choices and opportunities for young people. It seems that young people have different priorities now; they are more consumer-orientated and come with laptops, mobile phones and I-pods. There have also been changes in the wider care environment; friendships and mutually supportive relationships, so central to the ethos of L'Arche, are now frowned upon. Distance and objectivity are seen to be more professional.

Assistants complain about a lack of free time and more recently, they would rather live outside the community and come in to work rather than live in the community. However, for reasons that were not made clear, it was said that people who have previously been in conventional employment complain less.

The biggest challenges facing L'Arche are:

- The high turnover of assistants - but in a positive light, this means that more people have the possibility to be transformed through the L'Arche experience.
- The expectations from the regulatory bodies. The requirement for single rooms means new buildings, which means more fund-raising efforts.
- The over-emphasis on material aspects of care on the part of the Care Commission and Social Work departments and the over-emphasis on rights rather than a balance of rights with responsibilities.

Reflections:

The challenges facing L'Arche are very similar to those faced by the Camphill communities. If L'Arche in Inverness is representational of all the L'Arche communities then it is clear that there is noticeably more emphasis on vocation and the spiritual growth of the assistants in L'Arche than in Camphill. It also seems that, through the use of the 'discernment group', the more senior community members are held more accountable to their vocation and to the community in general in L'Arche communities than in Camphill communities.

APPENDIX 8: A look at some workplace surveys

I thought that it would be of interest to compare the findings of this study with some workplace surveys that measure job satisfaction. This comparative exercise was not intended to be part of the study nor was it built into the research objectives. For this reason this comparison appears here as an appendix.

Obviously the comparison is not a true comparison of like with like. Camphill communities are indeed workplaces but the full picture is more complex than that. For all the respondents of this study, the community is indeed a workplace, but for some of them it is also their home and the setting for their personal, family, social, cultural and spiritual life.

A further limitation in this comparison that should be understood at the outset is that my study did not target certain categories of workers in the communities. For reasons that have been explained in the Research Method (page 12), I did not include one-year coworkers nor some categories of employees. Therefore, the target sample was neither as inclusive, nor did it provide as representative a cross-section of the workforce, as did the workplace surveys it is compared with.

However, it is interesting to compare the relative sizes of the survey samples. My study is based on replies from 157 people. This represents 25% of the active workforce in the communities in Scotland.

In contrast, of the surveys of the British workforce cited below, the Work Foundation survey was based on just 1,089 respondents; the Economic Research Centre survey was based on 28,240 respondents and the British Psychological Society report was based on 10,000 respondents. The size of the British workforce currently stands at 27 million people. Thus, the best of these surveys is based on a sample of just 0.1% of the total research population.

I am not aware of any large-scale comparative studies that measure the fulfilment and satisfaction of people living and working in a range of communities. Nor I am aware of any studies that compare the quality of the experience of living and working in a community with that of a conventional life or work situation

However, in 2001, Dr. Sam. D Sinclair conducted a survey of the workforce of the Camphill Schools in Aberdeen using a questionnaire that had been designed by the Gallup Organisation to research into workplaces. In his 'Worker Opinion Survey' Dr. Sinclair compared the results from the respondents against the statistical prediction for each of the sixteen statements that they were asked to respond to. This represents a survey of a community workforce using a research method originally designed for a conventional workplace.

After analysing the results, Dr. Sinclair makes the following observation:

'The findings are not significantly different from those found in most organisations. It seems that, despite the fact that Camphill communities offer a fairly unique work environment, relations among the people who work there, and between the people and the organisation, are much the same as one might expect to find across most types of workforce'.

This is a conclusion that is confirmed by comparing the levels of satisfaction with the experience of community in this study with several surveys of the conventional workforce.

For the sake of the comparison, it should be borne in mind that the results of my study show that 78% of respondents reported a positive experience of community, 4% a negative experience and 17% said 'something else'.

The following is a collection of results from various websites. Detailed references appear below.

A survey by the Scottish Institute for Residential Child Care showed that 74% of workers in residential child care are either satisfied or very satisfied with their jobs and 14% are either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. This figure is slightly higher for those working in the voluntary sector (76%) than for those working in the local authority sector (72%).

A report from The Centre for Future Studies entitled 'Joy Of Work?' showed that, in general terms, 80% of the UK population feel satisfied with their life and 70% feel that their life is good.

In relation to the workplace, 60% of UK workers are satisfied or very satisfied with their work and 15% are either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. The report said that self-employed workers are the most happy despite working longer hours. Further, it showed that the content of a person's job and the extent to which it fulfils the worker's personal ambitions, are more important in determining satisfaction than is pay.

A study for The Work Foundation showed that 35% of UK workers are very satisfied with their current job, 43% are quite satisfied, 10% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, 6% quite dissatisfied and 5% very dissatisfied. This can be seen as 78% expressing a positive feeling about their work as against 11% expressing negative feelings.

The press release for this study said that these findings are consistent with other surveys on job satisfaction. '*According to the British Social Attitudes Survey 2005-06, 36% of people are completely or very satisfied with their jobs and 40% are fairly satisfied'. (British Social Attitudes 22nd report).*

The Work Foundation survey and the British Social Attitudes survey are the only surveys from which I could access more detailed information that showed a difference between those saying that they are 'completely or very satisfied' and those saying that they are 'satisfied'. The two previous surveys had combined these two categories in the presentation of the final findings.

If one accepts that 'completely satisfied' or 'very satisfied' in these workplace surveys correspond to the 'feeling great' category in this study, then it appears that the Camphill communities do not score so well as the conventional workplaces.

The Work Foundation survey shows 35% in this more positive category and the British Social Attitudes Survey a corresponding 36%. This is compared to the 29% of Camphill respondents who say that they 'feel great' about living and working in a community.

But the Camphill communities score better in a comparison of the reported levels of dissatisfaction. Whereas 4% of the Camphill respondents report a negative experience of community, the percentages of people in these surveys who say that their workplace experience is negative are 14%, 15% and 11%.

Observation

My study shows that 78% of the respondents have a positive experience of community.

Workplace studies show that a very similar number of the respondents are either very satisfied or satisfied with their job. The figures are 74%, 60%, 78% and 76%.

While it may be said that this is not an accurate or fair comparison, it nonetheless appears to show that the levels of satisfaction and positive feeling among people living and working in Camphill communities are matched by similar levels in conventional workplaces.

Other factors of interest and relevance to my Camphill study emerge from a consideration of workplace surveys. I did not ask respondents to indicate their gender on the questionnaire and therefore I cannot draw any conclusions as to whether men or women are more satisfied with community life. However, other studies show that gender plays an important role in determining the level of job satisfaction.

The Work Foundation survey cited above found that women are slightly more likely to be satisfied with their job compared to men.

This is confirmed in a paper called 'Job Satisfaction in Britain' published by the Economic Research Centre.

Other reports quantify the difference. A report by the Institute for Social and Economic Research shows that 22% of women are completely satisfied with their work in contrast to 17% of men. The report of the Scottish Institute for residential Child Care showed that 75% of women were satisfied with their job as against 71% of men.

Despite the fact that I did not look for a gender factor in determining the satisfaction levels of people living and working in Camphill communities, I did, nonetheless, identify two other factors of significance. I found that the respondents who expressed the most positive experiences of community were those who lived and worked in small and medium-sized communities. Further, the findings of my study showed that there is a correlation between satisfaction levels and length of service; those people who had been living in the communities longest reported the most positive experience.

Both of these findings are confirmed in workplace surveys in conventional work settings. Firstly we can consider research results relating to the size of the work setting:

The paper cited above that was published by The Economic Research Centre showed that the lower levels of job satisfaction in the UK were found in larger work establishments.

The findings of a survey by the Canadian Federation of Independent Businesses confirmed the findings of previous studies that '*the smaller the workplace, the more satisfied the employees'*.

The survey findings pointed out that this was despite the fact that the smaller businesses paid less in the way of salaries and offered least in the way of benefits, proving again that salary is not necessarily a determining factor in bringing about workplace satisfaction.

Secondly, we can consider the correlation between satisfaction and length of service:

A report published by The British Psychological Society, entitled 'Is Job Satisfaction U-shaped in Age?' observed that job satisfaction does not simply improve the longer the worker stays in the job. Job satisfaction is not linear with age but is U-shaped. Workers are generally satisfied with their work in the first years of employment, but then the level of satisfaction falls. After a certain point the satisfaction level rises again and then increases steadily until retirement.

The authors of this report found that the influence of age in relation to job satisfaction is greater than other factors associated with gender, education, ethnic background or income.

The research cited above by the Economic Research Centre also found evidence of this U-shaped trend in job satisfaction.

The Canadian research quoted above makes a point that is very relevant to the findings of my study of Camphill communities. It says that the top five most important factors that influence workplace satisfaction are to do with the intrinsic quality of the work experience rather than with more measurable benefits. These intrinsic qualities focus especially around interpersonal relationships – the quality of decision-makers, communication, the relations between managers and employees, and the atmosphere at the workplace. Also included here is the sense of personal achievement and opportunities for personal growth.

These findings reflect the findings of my study of Camphill communities. Thus, this comparative exercise serves to show clearly that the quality of relationships is crucial in determining the experience of satisfaction in both Camphill communities and in conventional workplaces.

Conclusion

The comparison between the responses from my study and workplace surveys highlights some common factors that seem to apply in both community settings and conventional work settings:

- That in both settings the quality of relationships is one of the most important factors in determining the experience of the people involved
- That new people experience a level of satisfaction that declines over the years and then increases again as they stay longer.
- That the smaller the setting is, the more satisfied people will be.
- That there is less difference than might be expected between the reported levels of satisfaction in a community setting and a conventional workplace.

References for Appendix 8

1. Camphill Rudolf Steiner Schools Worker Opinion Survey. June 2001. Author: Dr. Sam D Sinclair. Sinclair Assessment and Management. Unpublished.

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3. Centre for Future Studies. 'Joy of Work?' a report by Nick Isles. (No date given).
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4. The Work Foundation. Survey 'The Good Worker'. A survey of attitudes towards work in the UK. Conducted July 2006.
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APPENDIX 9: Directions for future research

I mentioned previously that I am currently working on an article that I am calling 'Change and Development in Camphill Communities in Scotland'.

This will look at the changes that have occurred in the communities in the last 10-15 years, consider the reasons that have been put forward for these changes and, in the light of theories and models of organisational and communal development, suggest possible patterns of future development in the social forms of Camphill communities.

Several other related issues arose during the course of this research, all of which would merit further attention. I have listed these below.

1. A demographic survey of the workforce of the communities; highlighting trends and forecasts

2. A survey of how residents feel about community as a response to their needs.

3. The experiences of one-year coworker; to assess expectations on joining the community and reflections on leaving.

4. A study of the motivation and commitment of people who live and work in the communities: why people join and leave the communities. Have these reasons changed over the years?