

The WICKED Project

2-Year Progress Report

March 2007 – April 2009

What's Tir Coed?

Tir Coed is a registered charity (Charity number 1115229), established in 1999 as an alliance of countryside agencies. Through facilitation and partnership working, Tir Coed develops woodland initiatives for disadvantaged communities in rural Wales. Tir Coed uses one of our most plentiful untapped resources – Wales' woodlands – as a focus and meeting place where people can come together to learn new skills, whilst enjoying both the therapeutic and direct health benefits of woodland activities.

What's WICKED?

The WICKED project, (*Woodland Initiatives - a Catalyst for Kids' Education & Development*), is an innovative **pilot** project running for 3 years, from March 2007 to February 2010. The Project develops woodland initiatives for disengaged and socially disadvantaged young people aged 11 to 19 years who live in the rural counties of Ceredigion, Powys, Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire and promotes the Welsh woodland resource as a venue for young people's education and skill development. The WICKED project helps young people learn new skills and gain confidence through hands-on workshops and activities. The Project is delivered through three different initiatives, targeting specific groups of young people.

❖ The Acorn Initiative

❖ Tree Wise

❖ Working your Woods





The Acorn Initiative



Acorn is a respite activity project for young carers. Young carers are introduced to Forest School sessions and are given the opportunity to undertake survival skills, woodworking, community construction projects and arts in the woods activities. Support Workers will be given the opportunity to attend training, so that they can transfer skills to the young people over the long-term.



Acorn Achievements in the first 24 months of WICKED:

- ❖ 195 young carers participated in Acorn Activities
- ❖ 66 Acorn Activities run across the 4 WICKED Project area counties
- ❖ End of Year Celebration in February 2008, brought together young carers from 3 counties for a residential weekend
- ❖ Powys Big Summer Bash brought together Young Carers from across Powys for a 2-day festival at the Doldowlod Estate. Tir Coed was one of the sponsors of this festival.



The Tree Wise Initiative

The aim of Tree Wise is to create woodland-based Disaffection Support Projects, providing accredited wider curricular training programmes for groups of up to eight 14-16 year olds, who have not succeeded well in a formal school setting. Tir Coed is working in partnership with the Local Education Authorities and Youth Services in the Project area to create Tree Wise projects.

The Tree Wise projects run one-day a week during term time and are led by Youth and Education Service staff. Tir Coed provides training for Youth and Education Service staff in relevant practical skills, green woodworking, construction, arts and music and in how to transfer these skills to disengaged young people in a woodland setting; so enabling these individuals to lead Tree Wise projects with Tir Coed assistance. Tir Coed oversees and helps to coordinate Tree Wise Projects, identifies woodland sites in suitable locations, assists with set-up costs, health and safety procedures, site hire costs, material costs and trainer costs for group projects. As well as the accreditation already provided by the education and Youth Services, Tir Coed can offer internal assessment of OCN units.



Tree Wise projects are pioneering, offering practical skills-based education to those young people who are not suited to a traditional educational setting. Tir Coed wants Tree Wise projects to be as flexible as possible, to be centred around the needs of the young people involved, to offer them rewarding and purposeful activity, to give them new practical skills and to increase their social skills and confidence levels to help to prepare them for adult life. Once the WICKED Project funding has come to an end, Tir Coed will encourage the Education and Youth Services to sustain Tree Wise projects over the long term.

Tree Wise Achievements in the first 24 months of WICKED:

- ❖ 8 Tree Wise projects set up
- ❖ 88 young people participated in Tree Wise Projects
- ❖ 22 Local Education Authority Staff and Youth Workers trained to lead Tree Wise projects



- ❖ Completed a variety of tasks, including:
 - Building pole lathes and shave horses
 - Arts activities
 - Construction projects
 - Tree ID
 - Countryside & woodland management
 - Willow work
- ❖ 90% of all participants gained accreditation, including:
 - Bronze Youth Achievement Awards
 - Open College Network (OCN) Credits
 - Duke of Edinburgh Awards
 - John Muir Awards

Working Your Woods

Work-based training for young people aged 16-19 years who are not currently in education, employment or training. The young people follow a programme of woodland skills taster sessions, including woodland management, construction projects which would benefit the local community, green woodworking skills and wood manufacturing. Following this, the young people are given the opportunity to access volunteering opportunities, further accredited training and work experience.



Working your Woods Achievements in the first 24 months:

- ❖ 52 young people participated in Taster Sessions
- ❖ 72% gained Open College Network Accreditation
- ❖ 82% showed a positive attitude to career development
- ❖ 49% progressed to further training or employment



WICKED achievements in the first 24 months

Progress against WICKED Project Targets:

Target over 3 years	Achievement in 24 months	Progress
600 young people involved in the Project	337 young people involved	Over half way there, 263 young people still to target
40 Support Workers trained	34 Support Workers and Youth Workers trained	Nearly reached 3 year target
12 sets of Working your Woods Introductory sessions	10 sets of Introductory sessions	On target
36 Acorn activities for Young Carers	66 Acorn activities	Attained nearly double 3 year target
4 Tree wise Projects set up	8 Tree Wise projects set up	Attained double 3 year target

Feedback:

"As time went on the group became more comfortable with each other and more free to express themselves. I think this was enhanced by the fact that they were all working together to achieve one final end result. By the end of the course it was hard to stop them all from working to even take a break!!!"

Working Your Woods Trainer

"It was noticeable that children who were more "mod cons" dependent became enthused with the elemental opportunities, e.g. making charcoal, whittling, building with natural materials, when they would rely on technology at home."

Acorn Trainer

"The whole group became more committed as the project progressed and they were able to witness the results of their hard work. They were all very proud of the compost toilet & workshop they had built and of the items they produced. All left with a greater sense of worth and confidence in their abilities. I also noticed an increased level of respect and co-operation within the group and some excellent team work was displayed."

Youth Worker

"Mum stated that since her son has been on the project he (Pupil X) has been much happier and has been more helpful at home. She stated 'I have had my son back'. The school have also reported that his behaviour and motivation has improved. Pupil X has reported that he is very happy with the project and has enjoyed every aspect of his experience."

Education Inclusion Officer.

"I have noticed a big change in Pupil Z, and so have his parents and his special needs teachers, regarding his ability to learn. Working outdoors in the woodland environment has helped Pupil Z to achieve his potential in many settings."

Tree Wise Leader

"I have been working with young people for over 8 years now and more specifically with disengaged youth over the last 5 years and this has been without doubt one of the most positive projects I have been involved with. The learning outcomes have been clearly visible and I hope to get involved in future projects if possible."

Youth Worker

"I am really pleased that I referred xxx to you and I would like to thank you for the wonderful work you have done with her on Tir Coed and assisting her in finding options and possibly a career for her afterwards."

Careers Wales Advisor

"Thank you for all of your help and support ... xxx and the rest of us are thrilled to bits, hopefully this will be a turning point for xxx as his academic education was not successful."

- Mother of a Working your Woods trainee