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# Cynnal y Cardi: Legacy Evaluation of the Ceredigion LEADER Programme between 2007 and 2020

Final Evaluation Report

Ceredigion County Council

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County Council



Cynnal y Cardi Legacy Evaluation Report

## Cynnal y Cardi Ceredigion LEADER Legacy evaluation: Final Report

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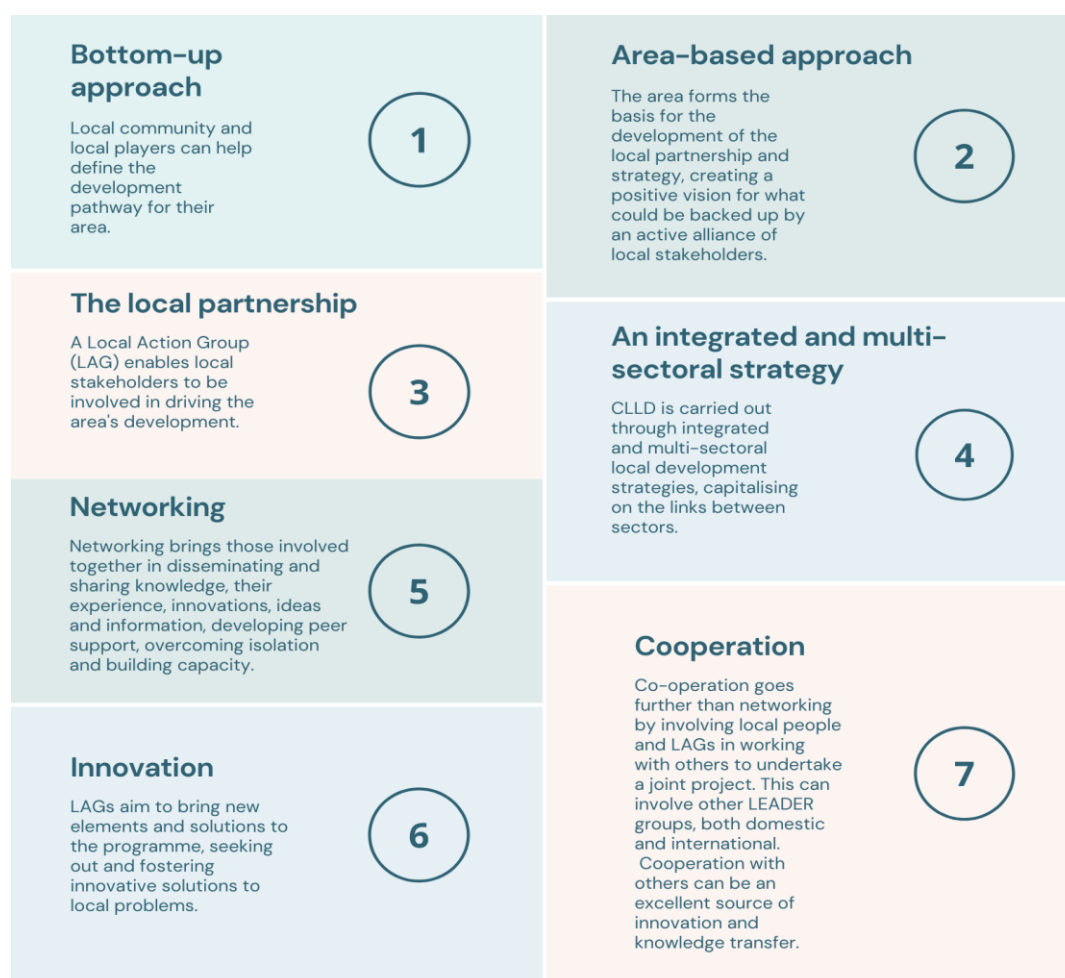
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## Executive Summary

This report presents the findings of the legacy evaluation of Cynnal y Cardi, the LEADER programme in Ceredigion which ran as two separate programme periods between 2007-2013 and 2014-2020.<sup>1</sup>

### About LEADER

The LEADER programme is an EU initiative to support rural development, co-financed by each EU member state and the EAFRD. Encompassed by the Rural Development Programme (RDP), LEADER aims to combat rural inequality through supporting local development projects.<sup>2</sup> The programme places a strong focus on innovation, the piloting of new approaches, networking, and bottom-up community working. The LEADER approach is characterised by the following characteristics:



<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cynnalycardi.org.uk/>

<sup>2</sup> [https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/policy-in-action/rural-development-policy-figures/priority-focus-area-summaries\\_en](https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/policy-in-action/rural-development-policy-figures/priority-focus-area-summaries_en)

## Case Study

**Aber Food Surplus are an Aberystwyth community and volunteer led group that aims to reduce food waste in the town.**

Cynnal y Cardi funded the pilot in 2019, which supported the organisation to pilot areas of activity including waste management innovation, community engagement, and campaigns, marketing, and promotion. Over 37,000 meals were redistributed in the period funded by Cynnal y Cardi.

The pilot successfully enabled the organisation to grow, test new ideas, and establish a sustainable presence in Aberystwyth, with the group having around 60 volunteers at present.

Aber Food Surplus has developed significantly since the funding from Cynnal y Cardi and have been able to secure other sources of funding to enable them to thrive.



### *Cynnal y Cardi*

LEADER in Ceredigion has been led since 2007 by the Cynnal y Cardi Local Action Group (LAG). The LAG is made up of a representation of three sectors – private, community and public. The purpose being to ensure a well-balanced representation of interests.

For the 2007-2013 RDP, the Ceredigion Economic Regeneration Partnership (CERP) successfully applied to establish a LEADER programme in Ceredigion, securing £2.5 million in funding. Ceredigion County Council was chosen as the administrative body for the programme. A Ceredigion Local Action Group was formed, and a Local Development Strategy (LDS) was produced to guide the LEADER programme.

For the 2014-2020 RDP programme period, the Cynnal y Cardi LAG secured £3.45 million in funding to deliver the LEADER programme up to 2020. An updated LDS was developed for the 2014-2020 LEADER Programme, and it was once again administered by Ceredigion County Council. A total of 54 projects, 9 cooperation projects, and various animation activities have been funded during the programme period to date, with work ongoing with until the end of the programme period. A range of projects funded as part of the 2007-2013 and 2014-2020 programme periods were assessed as part of this evaluation, with the main body of the evaluation report providing case studies of 12 Cynnal y Cardi implementation and cooperation activities.

### *Impact and Legacy of Cynnal y Cardi*

Cynnal y Cardi, over its two programme periods, has had a positive and lasting impact on the county, addressing a diverse range of sectors including the local economy, the environment, culture, heritage, the Welsh Language, skills and education, and health and wellbeing.

## Case Study

**Ysgol Fenter y Cardi was a Cynnal y Cardi scheme that provided bursaries to Ceredigion residents with an aspiration to start a new business or community enterprise. It worked with a total of 53 businesses within the 2007-2013 Programme Period.**

As a part of this evaluation, four recipients of the scheme were spoken to. Two of the recipients were still running their businesses which the scheme helped to develop, whereas another two recipients had run their businesses for several years until retirement and a job change respectively.

All recipients spoken to stated that the bursary had been invaluable to the establishment of their businesses, with three of the four adding that they would not have been able to pursue their businesses without the support received.

Two of the businesses, a wedding photography business and a gardening business, both received bursaries which enabled them to invest in the necessary equipment to make their business ideas a reality.



Cynnal y Cardi has developed a lasting legacy through providing funding and support to develop the capacity of a number of community organisations, individuals, and businesses. Many of the recipients of LEADER support have established themselves as providers of valuable services, or continue to deliver a range of social, environmental, and cultural goods within their communities. Businesses created through support from Cynnal y Cardi continue to operate today, and communities and organisations continue to utilise assets and infrastructure that were secured through support from Cynnal y Cardi.

### *Cynnal y Cardi Case Studies*

The Cynnal y Cardi Legacy Evaluation Report sets out a range of case studies, covering projects supported in both 2007-2013 and 2014-2020 programme periods. These case studies also include cooperation projects delivered in conjunction with other LEADER programmes in Wales.

A number of innovative projects have been funded and supported, with some of the projects reviewed as part of the evaluation providing valuable examples of innovative action that could inspire similar actions elsewhere. These include Aber Food Surplus, Here for You (Area 43), Compassionate Communities (Arts4Wellbeing), Tregaroc, and Academi'r Dyfodol (Coleg Ceredigion). Many funded projects have therefore provided valuable blueprints that can aid innovation in future.

Video case studies were also produced as part of the evaluation<sup>3</sup>. These present the legacy of three Cynnal y Cardi projects: Ysgol Fenter y Cardi, Ceredigidol, and the projects that stemmed from the Aberarth Community Action Plan. The video case studies include interviews with beneficiaries of the funding and support.

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<sup>3</sup> Video case studies can be found at: <https://www.cynnalycardi.org.uk/evaluation/> (for English page), and <https://www.cynnalycardi.org.uk/gwerthuso/> (for Welsh page)

### *Cynnal y Cardi and the LEADER Approach*

The projects supported by Cynnal y Cardi have adhered to LEADER principles, with evidence supporting the bottom-up approach and collaborative nature of very many projects. Bottom-up working is evident within a great deal of the projects assessed, with the impetus and ideas for projects often coming from community organisations, and the involvement of a significant number of volunteers and members of the community in delivering the project. Projects such as Cyswllt Amaeth, Aber Food Surplus, Compassionate Communities, Cambrian Futures, and Tregaroc demonstrate this principle very clearly. Project coordinators across a range of projects spoke of the added value that a grass-roots or bottom-up approach can provide to the delivery and success of a project.

Innovation is a key element of LEADER. The funding of pilot projects that propose innovative solutions to problems is at the heart of its ethos, and as a result, LEADER programmes are empowered to take risks. A key added value of the LEADER approach for a number of the project leads interviewed for this evaluation was this willingness to take a risk in funding a pilot that was novel or innovative. Some of the successful and innovative projects reviewed as part of the evaluation were considered somewhat risky by their coordinators, but the success achieved by projects such as Compassionate Communities and Tregaroc demonstrate the dividends that investing in innovation can deliver.

### **Recommendations for future CLLD**

- i. **Recommendation 1** – The collection of evidence for social benefits arising from interventions is challenging, but innovative and brave options to measure social benefit must always be explored. This applies especially to LEADER, as it often funds interventions with difficult-to-measure outcomes with potentially significant “soft” consequences, outcomes, and impacts.
- ii. **Recommendation 2** – Ensure that the lessons learnt from the most innovative projects are suitably disseminated both within Ceredigion



and with other LAGs across Wales and beyond. Projects like Academi'r Dyfodol, Compassionate Communities, Here for You (Area 43), and Aber Food Surplus are well placed to inspire similar initiatives elsewhere that can continue develop innovative solutions to the problems facing various communities.

- iii. **Recommendation 3** – Ensure that the LAG is used not only for the scrutiny and selection of projects, but also as a forum to develop ideas for projects either in development or already underway. Ensure that the LAG's time is used most efficiently to provide the space for engagement with projects. Regular progress reporting to the LAG on projects underway and sufficient time for LAG members to discuss projects can provide the space for LAG members to feed back into projects with ideas and guidance.
- iv. **Recommendation 4** – Some projects relied heavily on additional time put in by the lead organisers beyond the core hours or roles for which they were funded through Cynnal y Cardi. There were some instances where the paid-for hours of project facilitators or coordinators were supplemented by many additional hours volunteered. It is recommended that in reviewing applications for projects, consideration is given to how realistic the proposed funded roles are, and whether additional money needs to be allocated to suitably compensate individuals for their labour.
- v. **Recommendation 5** – Ensure that support provided to project administrators addresses their training needs. There was minor criticism that the administrative support from Cynnal y Cardi was too focused on improving the evidence collecting of the organisation. It is recommended that opportunities are capitalised on to provide the necessary training to project leaders, so as to add additional value to the funding and support provided by Cynnal y Cardi, and to maximise the capacity of the funded community organisations.
- vi. **Recommendation 6** – Build on the experience that Cynnal y Cardi staff have developed over the past two programme periods and

ensure that any future CLLD initiatives are able to capitalise on the expertise that has been developed through the delivery of LEADER.