As part of the London Objective 3 European Social Fund Programme, the London Environment Centre, part of London Metropolitan University, has been delivering the Facilitating Sustainability Project which provides bespoke environmental support to education and training providers.

This support enables providers to make meaningful, tangible contributions to the sustainable development-crosscutting theme as part of their project delivery.

The project offers a number of different ways for providers to get involved. These include compulsory training workshops looking at environmental management, on-site environmental audits, and the chance to achieve the environmental award, Green Mark at Level 1. In addition there is a voluntary 2 part workshop looking at integrating sustainability into training delivery and a dedicated website of specific support materials.

LONDON ENVIRONMENT CENTRE

Chickenshed

Chickenshed is an inclusive theatre that has 650 Children's and Youth Theatre members who rehearse weekly and an Outreach programme of 20+ projects (another 1000 members) stretching through London, Liverpool, Blackpool and Scotland. There is also an allied project in St. Petersburg, Russia. ESF funding contributes to a programme of performing-arts education support, including an accredited BTEC National programme for students who would often not be considered by other organisations for this level of education.

Through the programme Chickenshed have achieved Green Mark Level 1.

Areas of achievement

- New contract in place to expand recycling to include glass, plastic, cardboards, fluorescent lights, cans, and batteries. Old IT equipment is now given to Computer Aid International.
- Use of electronic formats where possible including reducing mailing list and developing the use of emailing formats to promote the theatre.
- Steps were taken to reduce the large amount of energy used for lighting including a comprehensive inventory of lightings, motion sensors installed for lightings, energy efficient lights used and reduced voltage.
- With advice and support from the LEC, Chickenshed has just signed up for a 100% renewable energy electricity contract – worth £36k p.a.
- A timer was installed on car park lighting. The cost of this was justified by calculating that it would pay for itself in four months approximately.
- Actions for transport were quite limited due to the theatre being open at irregular hours. However, a transport survey was sent to staff, fuel use for the mini bus is monitored, and coaches are hired for group trips to reduce individual travel.
- Achieved Green Mark Level 1 Award

Benefits

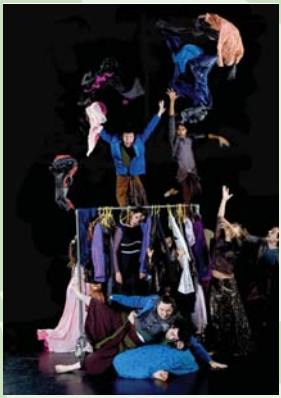
The expansion of the recycling provision has meant that Chickenshed is now sending 50% less rubbish to landfill, the cleaners have less work to do empting general bins and less bin liners are being thrown away every day.

Staff were shocked when they were told that the theatre consumes in excess of £30,000 of electricity every year, mainly due to the expensive theatre lighting used in productions. A reduction in energy use in offices is expected with the 'Energy Use' actions in place.

The theatre has experienced a culture change, with their insurers commenting on the noticeable difference when they visited the premises. People are now asking questions such as 'should I be putting this in the bin?' There are processes and structures in place that means there will be continual improvement led by the environmental team and the environmental policy.

General Manager, Jane D'Aulby feels that the Green Mark may help with presenting funding bids. They didn't expect to take it to the Green Mark Level 1 stage when they started, but now she feels like they can very easily answer questions about their sustainable development performance.

So, what next?



When an organisation is assessed for Green Mark the consultant will give further suggestions on continual improvement in the next year. Chickenshed's environmental team will be taking their Green Mark report and prioritising the actions.

One of the highest priority actions will be reduction of the use of virgin paper. Recycled paper is now used in nearly all areas of the theatre. This was made possible with help from the Green Mark consultant in signposting affordable suppliers.

The '3 Minutes to Save the World' DVD, that was shown at the first training workshop, has been purchased for the environmental team to view and this will be passed on to the education team to explore further awareness raising amongst students.

Having performed at the launch of Ford's new bio-ethanol vehicle Jane is researching the viability of converting the Theatre minibus.

Quote

Jane D'Aulby
General Manager,
Chickenshed

"We felt that like there were lots of things that we should and shouldn't be doing and we were not quite sure where to start. The programme allowed us to focus and breakdown the way we look at things. We didn't have to reinvent the wheel. The programme allows you how to look at your business, divide up what you do and reduce your footprint."

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