

**PROJECT TITLE: YOUTHBUILD FOUNDATION (BURNLEY)**

**PROJECT REF NO: ESF/0203/42**

**LEAD ORGANISATION: B&N HOUSING**

## Overview of the Project Activity and Partners

The project was managed by B&N Housing (B&N) with assistance from a number of other organisations in the delivery of certain aspects of it.

Recruitment was carried out by a dedicated Training Mentor employed by B&N who visited Barden High School, local community and youth centres as well as the careers service, Access Point, Burnley Telematics, the Jinnah Organisation, the Bangladeshi Welfare Association, the Prince's Trust and the probation service to tell them about the project and to enlist their help in recruiting suitable young people to the project. The staff of many of these organisations were sceptical about the project's ability to convince the elders in the Asian community that the construction sector was an appropriate industry for their young people and did little to assist in recruitment. Much of the recruitment, therefore, was actually carried out by the Training Mentor through outreach work, literally on the streets of the Daneshouse area. A total of 19 trainees, all unemployed young men aged 16 to 20, were recruited with 13 of them completing the course.

### **Personal development training**

Project activity included a personal development training programme delivered by the Training Mentor which included modules in:-

- teamwork
- health and safety
- job seeking skills
- time management
- manual handling and lifting
- communication
- confidence building
- assertiveness
- first aid at work

At the end of the personal development course trainees were taken to the Outward Bound's activity centre in Aberdovey, Wales in order to strengthen their communication and team building skills.

### **Vocational training**

Trainees then registered with Burnley College of Further Education for their Carousel Programme in order to test their aptitude for their chosen occupation and to provide them with some basic vocational training. Whilst at college they initially spent 14 weeks on a the programme which allowed them to taste a variety of construction skills including bricklaying, painting and decorating, carpentry and joinery, plastering and plumbing. They subsequently enrolled at college for training to help them to achieve the Foundation Accreditation of Vocational Education in Construction (FAVE) certificate. Where the need was identified, they also attended college classes in order to improve their literacy/numeracy skills. A total of 15 trainees started the carousel programme with 12 progressing to specific vocational training. Whilst attending college the trainees were paid an allowance of £45 per week.

### **Work experience**

Once they were established on their training courses efforts were made to place the trainees with local construction companies to allow them to practise the skills needed to gain their qualification as well as providing them with valuable work experience which will assist them to find permanent employment at the end of their time on the project. Whilst on placement the trainees were paid an extra £15 per week in addition

to their basic allowance of £45

### **Mentoring support**

The parents and families of many of the trainees were initially doubtful about the project and whether the construction sector was appropriate for their young people. In order to overcome this, the Training Mentor visited all the parents in order to explain about the project and the benefits of working in the construction sector. Once the young people had started on the project, a crucial aspect of the support provided was the individual mentoring meetings with the Training Mentor which allowed discussion of any issues which are concerning either the trainee, the college tutor, the placement provider or the Mentor. As we have previously identified through other projects this support reduces the drop out rate and encourages the young people to sort out their problems early rather than leave them until they feel they are insurmountable.

### **Exit strategy**

As part of personal development programme the Training Mentor encouraged all the trainees to plan what their next step would be on leaving the project. He encouraged them to develop job-seeking skills which, along with their qualifications, would help them to find work/further training places at the end of the project.

### **Capacity building activities**

No part of this project delivered capacity building activities.

## **Achievements of the Project**

The hard achievements of the project can be measured by the certificates gained by the trainees as follows:

- Certificate in manual handling and lifting 14
- Certificate in First Aid 14
- Certificate in Health and safety at Work 14
- Certificate of achievement – FAVE 11

The project did not measure soft achievements of the trainees. However soft achievements of the project as a whole which are difficult to measure in absolute terms include:

- Information provided to parents and the elders of the ethnic minority community about the construction sector which helps to break down one of the barriers to employment for these young people.
- Support given to placement companies, who may not have ethnic minorities within their workforce, which helps to break down another of the barriers to the integration of ethnic minorities into the construction industry.
- Support and information given to construction skills tutors at the college who were not accustomed to having ethnic minority students in their classes. This helps to improve the opportunities for future intakes of ethnic minority students.
- Improved motivation of the young people who were previously not in education, employment or training which has led them to consider options for their future. The majority of the trainees reported that, initially, they had difficulty in getting up each morning but as a result of the project they understand the necessity of being alert during the day and of managing their time appropriately.

## **Areas of Innovation**

This is a new approach to construction training in Burnley although the concept has been well tried and tested in the Bradford area as it has been delivered there since 1998. It is different to mainstream training activity (e.g. Modern Apprenticeships with the Construction Industry Training Board) as it does not require the trainees to have achieved a particular standard of education nor does it require them to pass an aptitude test. It relies instead on an informal assessment of the young person's interest in, and commitment to, their chosen occupation. This has previously proved to be a successful method of removing barriers to employment for young people who would otherwise be unable to find work in the industry. Some of the Youthbuild trainees in Bradford who had previously been rejected by mainstream providers have now achieved NVQ level 3 qualifications and 2 have established their own businesses.

The other area of innovation is the use of a Training Mentor who understands and is part of the culture of the families involved in the project. He is more easily able to identify with their worries and is in a better position to be able to allay them. For example, when parents are concerned about the trainees missing Friday prayers or Eid celebrations the Training Mentor understands their importance and is able to negotiate with college tutors or employers to ensure that, wherever possible, the trainees are allowed time off. Similarly,

where employers are uncertain about the time required for Friday prayers or Eid, the Training Mentor is aware of the requirements, can advise the employer accordingly thus ensuring that the employer's ignorance is not taken advantage of by the trainee.

## Identification of Areas of Good Practice and Areas for Improvement

### Good Practice

The factor which has made the major contribution to the success of individuals on this project is the dedicated services of the Training Mentor who has a smaller than average caseload of trainees. This has meant that he has been able to devote time to the trainees either as a group or as individuals to sort out any problems which they may have been experiencing. These problems include:

- Poor/non-attendance at college/on work placement
- Behavioural problems at college/on work placement
- Difficulty in relationships with college tutors/other students/employers/other staff
- Family issues e.g. parents wanting the young person to pursue another career path
- Working with people from different cultures – English, Pakistani, Bangladeshi

For example, as the construction industry is not a sector which the Asian population accepts as offering employment which is suitable for their young people it has sometimes been necessary for the Training Mentor to visit the homes of the young men who had expressed an interest in the project in order to discuss with their parents and families any questions or doubts which they might have. As many of their families wanted their sons to work in "white collar" industries it was necessary for the Training Mentor to explain to them that these young men did not have the aptitude for or interest in this type of work. Without this additional support, most of the young men would not have been able to start on the project.

Additionally, when the trainees started the carousel taster programme because the college tutor had not had experience of working with large groups of Asian young men, the Training Mentor attended classes with the group. As the tutor and the trainees became more accustomed to working together, the Training Mentor gradually reduced his presence.

Had he had a heavier caseload, the Training Mentor would not have been able to devote so much time to these trainees. This would have resulted in a lower take up of places on the project and could have resulted in trainees being expelled from college which would have meant that they would have been unable to continue on the project.

Another area of good practice was the way in which we responded to local needs by:

- Seconding a member of our Bradford team when we were unable to recruit a Training Mentor locally
- Adapting our recruitment methods when we received little support from other agencies
- Accessing training at other nearby colleges when Burnley College was unable to provide sufficient vocational training places.

### Areas for improvement

The main areas for improvement in connection with this project are:

#### Recruitment of staff

Despite advertising in the local press and through the jobcentre/community organisations we were not able to recruit a Training Mentor who had knowledge of the local area and its specific community. Even though we have delivered this project to similar communities in Bradford we found that there were significant differences in the way in which the community as a whole responded to the idea of the project, particularly as this was a new concept to them. This meant that the Training Mentor had to spend more time in the preparation and recruitment phase in order to ensure that the project was acceptable to the community.

#### College places

Although we believed that we had the full co-operation of the local college because of a number of factors this turned out not to be quite the case. It appeared that although the College's vice principal had agreed to our two organisations working together, because of staffing changes, possibly a breakdown in communications and the late start to the project it was more difficult than we anticipated. Some of the tutors, who had little previous experience of working with ethnic minorities, felt that we would not attract the young people to the project and that if we did they would be unlikely to succeed. There were also insufficient places for the plumbers which resulted in some of them having to go Accrington and Rossendale College.

#### Recruitment of placement providers

This aspect of our project is usually the most challenging one. It turned out to be even more challenging than usual in Burnley for a number of reasons. The main reason was that there are almost no ethnic minorities working in the construction sector in Burnley who would have been role models and ambassadors for our project. Secondly, most of the construction employers in the area are small companies who are already linked to the schools' work experience and job recruitment programmes. They were not interested, therefore, in providing work experience placements for our trainees as they were happy with the arrangements which they already had in place. In the main, trainees did not want to travel further afield to other towns for their work placements which placed further restrictions on the Training Mentor.

### Lessons Learnt

The first thing learned as a result of delivering this project in Burnley was the **importance of local knowledge**, knowledge of the community, community organisations, the existing college provision and employers in the construction industry. As previously explained we had intended to recruit a new Training Mentor with all this local knowledge but we found it difficult to recruit suitable staff in the Burnley area. In order to fulfil the LSC agreement, therefore, we had to second one of our existing Bradford Training Mentors to work in Burnley. Because of his lack of local knowledge and contacts and the fact that the Youthbuild concept was new to the area and did not have a track record to rely upon he found it very difficult to deliver the project than he would have done had he been working in Bradford. The delay in recruitment resulted in the project starting later than anticipated which meant that we had less time in which to take the trainees through their programme and for them to achieve their qualifications etc. It is difficult for B&N to resolve the lack of suitable, experienced qualified staff. Its role could be in highlighting the issue to more appropriate organisations like the LSC as this problem is certain to have an impact on the area's ability to deliver the LSC's mainstream programmes.

A second lesson learnt, also linked to local knowledge is that of the importance of **community acceptance**. As Youthbuild has been delivered in Bradford since 1998, the concept has been well publicised and has support from a number of community organisations including youth centres. We also have a successful track record which means that families within the ethnic minority community know about the project as they frequently have relatives or friends who have accessed previous training courses. This means that it is easier for us to recruit young people to the training and that we do not have to work so hard to sell the idea of the construction sector as there are already young people from the ethnic minorities who are training/working successfully in construction as a result of the Youthbuild project. The Training Mentor found that many of the community organisations which he approached were a little suspicious of him and that they did not feel comfortable with an outsider coming into their area and organising training for their community. This situation was not helped by the fact that B&N has tried previously to set up a Youthbuild project in Burnley but did not succeed because of lack of funding. It is not too surprising that the community was a little wary of what was proposed. However, during the life of the project the Training Mentor has attended the Daneshouse and Stoneyholme Partnership Steering Group meetings where he was able to keep the members up to date on progress. As a result of this he feels that members have a more positive view of the project.

Because of the national publicity given to the shortage of skilled workers in the construction sector, places on vocational training courses at colleges around the country were oversubscribed for the September 2003 intake. This has meant that most colleges had no spare capacity which could be used to train our trainees. [Even though the deputy principal of Burnley College was involved in the design of the project and he had confirmed that there would be sufficient places for our trainees as and when we needed them,](#) we still found it **difficult to access college places** for the vocational training which the young people need in order to achieve their qualifications. We have learnt that, once funding has been approved we need to spend more time in the planning and preparation stages in order to ensure that all partners and staff are able to fulfil the roles to which they originally agreed. This is particularly important when delays occur at the start of a project (as in this case) which may lead to difficulties for other partners who may have to alter their own schedules.

### Dissemination of Good Practice including Details of Dissemination Materials Produced

We do not currently have any plans to disseminate any details of this individual project. However, this project would be included in any dissemination report produced on our portfolio of Youthbuild projects. We would also have no objection to details of this report being included in any wider dissemination activity which the

LSC decides to undertake.

#### Details of Publicity Undertaken (attach copies of any advertising/publicity materials produced)

We produced posters and leaflets specifically to assist the recruitment process. The Training Mentor put up posters in the local shops in the Daneshouse area. He left leaflets and posters with all contact organisations including schools, community centres and training centres.

Attached is a copy of a leaflet and a poster.

#### Case study

See Annex A for a copy of two case studies for:

- Mohammed Nizam
- Mohammed Ikraam

#### Views of customers and/or partners

As our main customers were the trainees their views were paramount in deciding on the level of success of the project. We asked them to complete an evaluation questionnaire at the end of the personal development activity, on completion of their Outward Bound course and at the end of the project as a whole.

##### **Evaluation of personal development training – summary of responses**

This evaluation, which was completed by 79% of the trainees, referred to the various modules of the personal development programme and showed:

Most useful part of the course was CV writing	46%
All of the course was useful	60%
No changes need to be made to the course	66%

Comments from the trainees were

"I've learnt how to treat other people and I have wrote a CV on computer and I did it right".

However some trainees did identify duplication of training which they have had previously and said " I have already passed a programme of health and safety" and "I found most of it not useful because I have done it before"

When planning future courses we need to take any prior learning into account

##### **Evaluation of Outward Bound training – summary of responses**

This evaluation was also completed by 79% of the trainees and showed:

The skill which I learned most about was team work	73%
I will use this skill most at work in future	40%
All of the parts of the training were useful	93%

Comments on this training were I "learnt that nothing is impossible", I "found the activity difficult but the main thing is I had a try and did well", "In the future I will take a stab at anything" "It has given me confidence for the future".

##### **Evaluation of the project - Summary of the responses**

The project evaluation questionnaire was completed by 68% of the trainees.

The main findings from those who answered are:

##### **Pre project experience**

Did not do well at school	53%
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Excluded from school	23%
Done nothing since leaving school	38%
Started training/further education but did not complete the course	38%
No work experience	61%

It is clear, therefore, that the vast majority of these trainees did not have the appropriate skills and experiences to equip them to find jobs and training once they left school. It was essential, therefore, that they had access to additional help such as that provided by the Youthbuild Foundation project if they were to make the transition from school to work.

#### **Most useful part of the project**

Personal development course	46%
College	23%
Residential outdoor activity	20%

Trainees who commented said that the personal development course "will look good on my CV" and that the health and safety module "taught me how to save lives".

One of those who found college most useful said that the carousel programme helped because "I learnt a bit of each trade" whilst another said because "I had to wake up in the morning"

#### **Least useful part of the project**

Personal development	15%
College	15%
Work placement	15%

It is interesting to note that 46% of the respondees felt that all of the activities were useful.

Personal development was found to be the least useful by one trainee because "I have already done this with the Prince's Trust" and another said "because it was quite long"

#### **Most enjoyable part of the project**

Residential outdoor activity	63%
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Those trainees who gave this as their preference said "I made a lot of new friends" and "I learnt a lot"

#### **Least enjoyable part of the project**

Having to get up in the mornings	15%
Painting and decorating module of the carousel course	15%

Although none of the trainees gave a reason for disliking the painting and decorating module the Training Mentor said that this was liked least because many of the trainees felt that too much time was spent on it as they already knew that this was not what they actually wanted to do.

#### **Trainees' major concerns at the end of the project**

What can I do now the project has ended?	23%
Why can't the project continue?	15%

One trainee commented "It was a waste of time as there was no continuation" and another it was "good but what next?"

These comments highlight our own concerns about raising expectations through this project and then being unable to provide a progression route once the funding ends. We had anticipated that trainees would be able to continue training through their local colleges linked to mainstream training once they had completed their time with us. Unfortunately, that has not turned out to be the case due to lack of space at the college.

#### **Comments from college partners**

The main partner in this project has been the construction department of Burnley College. Steve Clough, who was appointed as a temporary acting head of department at the start of this project was supportive of our aims and could see the benefits for both the college and the trainees as there were very few ethnic minorities in construction in the college. At the end of the project he told the Training Mentor that he was surprised at the motivation of the trainees who he had not expected to pass the qualification. Many of them had attended on additional days to ensure that they were able to complete the course and one trainee's work had been of such a high standard that it had been displayed along with that of second and third year students.

Three trainees went to Accrington and Rossendale College because of the lack of space at Burnley. These trainees wanted to be plumbers but as there were no vacancies at all in plumbing they had agreed to take a

basic plastering qualification at Accrington and Rossendale College. The plastering tutor was reluctant to take the trainees because he felt that they would lose interest and that they would not complete the course. However, he was pleasantly surprised that they all completed the course and achieved their certificates.

## Comparison of how the project dealt with Information Communication Technologies, Equal Opportunities and Sustainability

### **Information Communication Technologies**

All trainees used computers to create their own CVs as part of the personal development training programme. Six of the trainees who were training to be joiners also attended a computer aided design course which involved the use of computers.

The project administrator and the Training Mentor used computers to record all the information required to monitor, evaluate and control the project activity and expenditure.

### **Equal opportunities**

The construction industry is dominated by white males. This project's main aim was to help to increase the number of ethnic minorities in the construction sector by encouraging them to consider construction as a possible career option and by encouraging employers to take these young people on work experience placements. These placements gave both parties the opportunity to work together to learn about each other without either of them having to give commitment to a permanent job. As we recruited young people from the Daneshouse area where the majority of residents are from ethnic minority communities, 100% of our trainees were from ethnic minority families.

We were not successful in recruiting any young women onto the project nor did we attract any disabled trainees. The Training Mentor made contact with the Padiham Community Centre which has a high proportion of girl members but was not able to persuade them to allow him to give a presentation.

To date, we have managed to recruit one white female trainee through one of our Bradford projects. Based on initiatives delivered by other organisations in Bradford it appears that women are more attracted to single sex training. We also know that, because of cultural conditions, the construction sector is not considered by the community to be an appropriate career for Asian girls. This is an issue which projects like ours have to decide whether this is a view which is within our remit to try to change.

### **Sustainability**

The most important way in which this project was able to contribute towards sustainable development was its ability to recognise the needs of everyone by widening access for young people into training, education and employment. As a result of this project 3 people found work and 12 achieved qualifications which will permit them to continue in further training.

The project made careful use of natural resources, delivering training as close to the trainees' homes as possible, ensuring that travel was kept to a minimum.

Unfortunately, our plan to establish a community business (through which some of the trainees could either be employed or continue with their training) did not come to fruition because our funding application to the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund was not accepted.

## Sustainability of the Project's Activities (Exit Strategy/Mainstreaming)

We do not plan to deliver this project in the Burnley area in its current format now that this funding has come to an end. As the LSC West Yorkshire are keen to include Youthbuild activities in Entry 2 Employment, we are currently in discussion with Careers Bradford (the LSC's lead contractor on E2E) about a contract to start this summer. Once 2E has been embedded in the Bradford area we would consider extending to other areas, one of which may be Burnley.

#### Details of tools used to evaluate the impact of the project

The project has been evaluated using:

- Evaluation forms completed by each trainee at the end of the personal development programme
- Evaluation forms completed by each trainee at the end of the project
- Case study of two trainees
- Comments from college staff
- Information from project and trainee files

#### Other information

The project stayed within its original budget and provided value for money as it attracted young people to training who would not otherwise have been attracted to any formal learning processes. It has encouraged them to think positively about their future with many of them intending to enrol on NVQ courses in September 2004.

SIGNATURE:

DATE

### Trainee case studies

**Name of trainee:** Nizam

**Date of birth:** 6.4.82

**Chosen occupation:** General construction

**School career:** Spent 6 months in Pakistan during last year at school which affected his GCSE course work resulting in him achieving grade D in 9 subjects.

**Post school education:** Burnley College – passed foundation course in digital electronics and an intermediate course in IT. Started advanced course in IT but left before completion because of the disruption caused by the change of examining body. Attended the Prince's Trust 12 weeks' personal development course.

**Previous work experience:** A few weeks' employment in an administrative post which he left because he didn't get on with the people he was working with. A few weeks' voluntary work experience as a computer technician in Burnley College

**Experience on the project:** Took part in all the activities organised through this project. Is studying for a BTech National in Construction and Building Design at Blackburn College. Had work placement at B& N in Burnley and has now been offered a job there as a Repairs Assistant. Nizam felt that the personal development programme was the least useful to him because of the intensive course which he had already participated in through the Prince's Trust. The most useful part was the opportunity to attend Blackburn College where he did not know anyone. He had previously attended courses at Burnley College where he found himself easily distracted because a number of his friends were also attending courses there. This meant that he did not make the most of the opportunities which those other courses had offered him. He now realises that this was a mistake and is determined to make the most of this training.

#### Future plans

Nizam will continue to go to Blackburn College and hopes to be employed by B&N as an Inspection Officer. Ultimately he would like to qualify as a quantity surveyor.

**Name of trainee:** Ikraam

**Date of birth:** 15.8.86

**Chosen occupation:** Plumber

**School career:** Attended school regularly but achieved only 1 GCSE at grade C. He felt that his education was disrupted because of racist fights at school

**Post school education:** Burnley College – started a course for young people who wanted to join the public services as he wanted to join the police force but did not complete the course.

**Previous work experience:** Had 2 week's work experience in administration in a mail order company arranged through school. Worked for approximately 6 months in seasonal packing work. Has occasionally been helping his father who is a self employed plumber.

**Experience on the project:** Took part in all the activities organised through this project including a work placement in plumbing and achieved his FAVE qualification. He enjoyed the training at college although he felt that too many of the trainees did not take the project seriously which meant that the

training of others was sometimes disrupted. He was disappointed that there were no places on the plumbing course at college for him to continue training after this project has ended. He will now have to wait until September 2004 before he can re-enrol and continue his training. He also felt that because recruitment to the project was from a fairly small area and because Burnley is a small town he knew too many of the trainees on the project and too many of the other students at college. This meant that he did not always pay attention as he should and sometimes allowed his friends to distract him.

**Future plans.** He **will** continue to help his father, when there is sufficient work, whilst continuing to look for other work. He will apply for college in time for the next intake in September 2004.

Eventually, he hopes to become a CORGI registered plumber and to become a self employed plumber like his father. He feels that, as he is the eldest son, it is important that he sets a good example for his younger brothers to follow.