



## EVALUATION REPORT



**PROJECT TITLE: Reaching Out**

**PROJECT REF NO: ESF/0203/214**

**LEAD ORGANISATION: Burnley College**

### Overview of the Project Activity and Partners

This project aimed to encourage participation in basic skills training by members of local communities by focusing activities around a multi-cultural festival. Members of the diverse communities in Burnley were engaged in fund-raising, event organising, marketing/publicity and general administration of the festival. They received the training in essential skills, including ICT, necessary to undertake these tasks. Training, as far as possible, was accredited to encourage progression on to further learning.

The aim of the project is to widen participation in learning through supporting local delivery within the community and linking learning to the organisation of a multi-cultural festival. Learning opportunities will focus on basic/key skills and include an element of capacity building.

The key partners were: Burnley Wood One Stop Shop, Brunshaw Estate Management Board, Training and Education Access Point, Al Nisa Women's Group, SW Burnley Community Enterprises

### Achievements of the Project

135 delegates attended 15 Courses in:

- Basic Computer Skills
- Community Arts – Family Tree
- Community Arts (ABC Welding Level 1)
- Computer skills
- Creative Bangla
- Creative Ceramics
- Creative Mosaics
- Creative Writing in Print
- Embroidery
- Glass Painting
- International Cookery
- Internet Training
- Local History
- NCFE Certificate in DJ Skills
- NCFE DJ Skills

A post-festival feedback event was held October 2003 at Turf Moor

In total 135 participants (81 women) benefited from the programme, as planned in the bid.

During September 2003 the Reach One Festival featured contributions from beneficiaries involved in the project.

The project acted to engage residents from a range of different ethnic backgrounds developing closer relationships between disparate groups as part of an attempt to address issues and concerns identified in the Task Force Report 2002 following the 'disturbances' of the previous year. The project went some way to create improved awareness between different groups for 135 beneficiaries, their families and neighbours.

### Areas of Innovation

Learners were engaged through areas of local interest introducing them to different cultures.

People came onto the programme because of their interest in culture and art at a local community level, wanting to share in others' experiences and pastimes, as well as to develop new skills. From this they became active learners as a consequence.

The Reach One festival was utilised as a focus giving impetus and purpose to much of the development work and learning of the beneficiaries. The learning experience was greatly influenced with this set objective and was reinforced by the learners. Exploiting personal interest and intrigue while focussing on a tangible outcome developed *application led learning*.

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

### Good Practice

Project staff saw themselves as community representatives building relationships especially with target groups that do not respond to normal marketing.

The funding has allowed subsidising of programmes, which has allowed the College to engage with a student until they have determined that learning, is for them.

The dedicated person-power helps build customer-relationships. This is seen as necessary development work and creates a real difference in terms of the effectiveness of engagement.

Prescribing a strict 'process' can hinder the work of project staff. This project allowed freedom to develop relationships with community members and has been noted by staff as a development opportunity for additional engagement and facilitation.

### Areas for Improvement

Customer relationships can lead to programme being developed although may be small numbers (<10). Staff view that these are people who otherwise would not engage with education 'head-on' and as a result of engaging with the College could be given confidence to proceed onto certified programme leading to a qualification. Additional funding would make it possible to run smaller groups, outside of the necessary cost efficiency and minimum class numbers driven by current national funding mechanisms. Without this many who could otherwise benefit from a more personal introduction back to learning will be further ostracised.

There is a perception that the current funding system and subsequent provision does not recognise the qualitative outcomes, which even though difficult/impossible to measure bring benefits to learners over a longer period in qualitative and quantitative terms, perhaps over 2 to 3 years time.

The motivation of the community workers could be questioned as it is in their interests to keep learner groups active with them instead of supporting progression on to more mainstream services. Progression of beneficiaries is to be monitored.

### Lessons Learnt

The project suffered some early teething problems between the partners but these were overcome specifically, it was felt, because everyone had committed to delivering a product for the Festival.

The festival was a huge success and the College impressed its partners by making a commitment and then delivering.

The staff involved with this project felt that partnerships were important and that they were done well. The interaction with all the partners allowed the College to build on its reputation.

The College is seen as a neutral (political/cultural) zone in area with severe ethnic rifts, which results in customers come to College rather than council for same services.

This subsidising of programmes needs to be co-ordinated across the whole community otherwise people start to play off one provider against another (link to partnerships).

The last two years have seen a proliferation of training providers so there is a lot of competition for the

college. Other agencies are often very well funded and can provide resources etc free. The College could, with additional targeted funding be more flexible in some of its processes in order to be more re-active, pro-active and competitive.

Raising expectations can be dangerous if expectations are not met, or even exceeded. Trying to bring women of different cultures together proved problematic and a rethink of approach is necessary maybe with a focus more on establishing a 'women's club' between communities looking at domestic, family, culture and work issues e.g. cooking, parenting, art and job search.

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

The College participates in many forums locally and regionally including the Social Inclusion and Employment Network, East Lancashire Learning Partnership and the Lancashire College Consortium. Anecdotal and experiential evidence of best practice is communicated informally via these groups.

Dissemination materials have included an article in the Independent 4/9/03.

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

The biggest publicity came from the festival, which was a huge success. Plans are already underway to establish how this can be turned into an annual event.

Adverts and promotional leaflets were produced to engage beneficiaries directly in the learning opportunities provided.

#### Case study

An individual case study has not been undertaken for this project. The Independent article 4/9/04 provides an overview from an independent source. Each group produced something of cultural interest for the Festival, several are on display in community locations now, acting as dissemination tools in their own right of beneficiary activity and where available these can be viewed upon request.

A focus group session was held with several beneficiaries and this revealed that the project had given them new insights and a real opportunity to work towards a defined objective and produce interesting artworks to share. The College had given them a new opportunity that they may otherwise not have pursued and several were looking to go on to progress on to other courses.

#### Views of customers and/or partners

- "Course excellent-keep coming back term after term" – Embroidery
- Disappointment at the lack of integration between ethnic groups. An Asian Ladies group were doing a similar topic and despite requests no combined events (apart from the festival day) took place. The group felt that an opportunity to learn new skills and forge cultural ties had been lost. They understood the Asian ladies concerns regarding having no men present but felt that this was something that could be achieved. They hoped that this could be achieved in the future. - Embroidery
- "Working on the [festival] project was good", "more scope on big project", "Quite like to do big project again" – Embroidery
- "Tutor had the vision, we learned later as project evolved"- Embroidery
- "No way to go college – good that college comes to the people" – Creative Writing
- "Brilliant to see something [anthology] in print" - Creative Writing
- "I understand that courses aimed at those of working age but pity could not be opened to under-16's as these are the future adults"- DJ Skills
- "Educational Evolution" - Creative Writing
- "Brought out creativity of students that they did not know they had" - Creative Writing

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

There is a high demand for IT classes but it can be difficult to maintain the equipment used for delivery and this will need to be addressed in the future, especially in community locations where there is an absence of technical support on the right level of security. However, in general the use ICT was in line with expectations.

The project was open to all members of the community and steps were taken to ensure that no one was

unfairly excluded. The College operates an Equal Opportunities policy and this is monitored on official returns. Project reports and claims have identified the ethnic backgrounds of beneficiaries.

ICT was offered for learning and support of beneficiary studies. This is common practice for the College. E-mail was valuable to those working on plans to display exhibits at the festival and improved inter-community communications.

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

Many of the groups have engaged learners who would not otherwise attend a college. They are being encouraged and guided onto structured programmes. Additional funding resources are to be sought through the Local Strategic Partnership, the LLSC, URBAN II, Priority 2 Objective 2, Job Centre + and the NWDA.

Progression opportunities are available to all beneficiaries through mainstream college and partner provision. However the further engagement of new community members from disadvantaged backgrounds will be impaired without additional flexible funding for more innovative 'outreach' activities.

As mentioned the festival is planned to run again with new opportunities for the display and sharing of beneficiary exhibits.

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

The tools used have included:

- Beneficiary questionnaire survey
- College student perception surveys
- Regular monitoring of enrolment and completions
- Project review meetings
- Focus groups with students and staff (lowly attended)
- Staff interviews
- Partner reviews
- Gap analysis framework
- The Excellence model for process and performance management

#### Additional Information

N/A

SIGNATURE:

DATE