



EVALUATION REPORT



PROJECT TITLE: Creative Pathways

PROJECT REF NO: ESF/0203/215

LEAD ORGANISATION: Burnley College

Overview of the Project Activity and Partners

This project developed and piloted new approaches to engaging disaffected members of disadvantaged communities currently not participating in learning and supported their progress towards structured learning/employment.

The project focused on engaging 100 disadvantaged people through activities focused on music, drama and associated activities or sport, fitness and health.

The aim of the project was to widen participation in learning through engaging disaffected people from Burnley's disadvantaged communities by innovative activities based around people's interests i.e. music, drama and sport. The culmination of the programme was celebrated by the staging of a public display of the outcomes of the community art activities at a local festival. The project focused on progression towards structured learning and employment.

Partners included: Burnley Football Club, Mid Pennine Arts, and Tara Arts, with support from the local Borough Council who took a very active interest in the development and the delivery of the project as part of the local social cohesion agenda following the riots a few years previously. A range of other agencies including the Lancashire County Council Library Services, 2BR Radio, and the local Burnley Express newspaper all actively supported the project.

Achievements of the Project

The projected outcomes were achieved in all cases.

- 100 beneficiaries
- 20 females
- 70 working towards qualifications

The project maximised the available grant opportunity and delivered a major festival 'Reach 1' during the summer of 2003, which is being planned again for 2004.

While it is difficult to quantify there has been an increase in collaborative working between the many different and diverse ethnic groups represented in all areas of the local community especially from those living in disadvantaged wards.

Areas of Innovation

This project built on best practice in engaging non-learners and socially excluded through a community arts/sport initiative.

The focal point of a summer festival provided real impetus.

Burnley Football Club acted as a catalyst for the sports based activities and will be used again as a tool for engagement.

The creative arts aspects of the project built directly on the interests of the 16 to 30 age group in the main.

ICT was used extensively to develop inclusive learning opportunities and assist programme delivery. CD production and the use of high tech DJ gear attracted many younger individuals and again will be used in future to harness the learning interest of local youths living in our disadvantaged wards.

Identification of Areas of Good Practice and Areas for Improvement

Good practice

Partnership working and the generation of community interest and support were greatly enhanced via this project. Plans are in place to sustain this creative and supportive network for 2004 to 2006 in pursuit of continued ESF funding to maximise the impact of this project in reaching out to individuals from target groups of unemployed, ethnic minorities, disabled, asylum seekers and refugees and disaffected young people living in disadvantaged areas who would otherwise not participate in learning.

Areas for Improvement

The very nature of the project's funding limited the engagement of certain groups, including young people under 16. Additional financial resources from ESF or other support funding from the LSC or LCC LEA would have helped in making the combined efforts of our partners engage local school groups and the elderly as well as SME partners.

Communication between, delivery agents and the College administrative unit responsible for returns to the LLSC were 'fragile' at the onset of the project but improved as the project progressed. Personnel changes, which cannot be avoided, broke some lines of communication. The development of improved communications, maximising the use of ICTs, e-mail, the web and mobile text will be considered as well as a project launch party and more regular partnership meetings.

Lessons Learnt

Large partnership projects engage the interest of many local agencies, especially with focal activities such as highly visible and well-promoted central events. Additional resources are needed to truly maximise the potential of ESF to desired effect engaging local individuals from disadvantaged groups targeted by the current Objective 2 SPD, the Objective 3 Regional Plan and the LSC ESF Co-Finance Prospectus.

The use of new media and musical equipment could have been extended if additional costs had been included to cover the purchase of additional capital items.

Partnership working, while rewarding needs dedicated staff. A partnership manager, full or part time would be a welcome addition if the project was run again.

The client group has been hard to engage for evaluation purposes due to their social circumstances and the limited hours provided by the project for their participation as beneficiaries. Future activities would look to increase evaluation studies with focus groups run during training and learning sessions. Questionnaire surveys to follow up on client views and progress have achieved limited, if not negligible results due to the nature of the clients as compared to the high success we have seen on other evaluations. Capturing information more immediately will be necessary in future.

Dissemination of Good Practice including Details of Dissemination Materials Produced

A major feature in the Independent national news reported on the project 4/9/03.

Partnership meetings are to be planned to report on the success of the project now it is complete.

The evaluation document will be circulated to partners.

A web site was set up, and was linked to other web sites.

The LLSC had a feature on the project on its web site.

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

A local poster was produced and displayed across the Borough in shops, pubs, restaurants, doctors surgeries and community centres.

Regular newspaper features followed the progress of the project.

Training opportunities were promoted in the local College Shop, through the Burnley Express and on the web.

A CD was produced featuring the talents of local individual beneficiaries.

Case study

The Independent 4/9/03 acts as a case study.

Views of customers and/or partners

Customers

Student perception surveys are currently being analysed to reveal Creative Pathway student opinions.

A questionnaire survey was issued but no returns were received compared to approximately 10% being our normal return rate. This was believed to be due to the short term of engagement of each beneficiary and the transient nature of their social activities. A focus group study was set up, but no beneficiaries attended.

Partners

Newspaper reports have documented the views of partners. These are attached.

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

Information Communication Technologies

The project helped stimulate diverse and disadvantaged groups access and use ICTs. This was used for word processing, DTP, and CD production.

Equal Opportunities

The College actively promotes Equal Opportunities. A full review of beneficiary ethnic group has been reported on the final claim. Multi-lingual promotions, and bi-lingual staff were involved in the engagement and advice and guidance of partner groups and beneficiaries as and when necessary.

Sustainability

The energy and enthusiasm of partners for the festival together with underpinning skills development and courses provided by the College has led to the planning of Reach 2 for 2004. Additional funding for 2004 would support the targeting and engagement of new clients and further support the re-engagement of past beneficiaries for progression on to new learning opportunities. Mainstream funding will be used as appropriate to continue the provision of training.

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

Reach 2 is planned for 2004.

Training and learning opportunities will now be broadened to include the offering of DJ/media skills for beneficiaries in local community centres.

Details of tools used to evaluate the impact of the project

The tools used have included:

- Beneficiary questionnaire survey (minimal returns)
- 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

