



An Excellence Gateway case study

Published: 30th July 2012

East Riding of Yorkshire Council: Addressing under-representation of gypsies and travellers in learning and promoting the development and sustainability of new businesses

Contact person

Robert Adams – email: Robert.adams@eastriding.gov.uk

Outline the aim

Our intention is to bring together the gypsy/traveller communities and arts/craft people to enhance the development and sustainability of new businesses through a combination of virtual business solutions and community tourist/craft ventures. We will be working across the East Riding, with a focus on Bridlington, Cottingham and Goole

The challenge

The East Riding of Yorkshire Council's Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (2008) notes the long-standing role gypsies and travellers have played in society and how prejudice, discrimination and legislative change have increasingly marginalised this distinctive ethnic group, and that they face considerable prejudice and discrimination - "The last acceptable form of racism" as Trevor Phillips put it as Chair of the Commission for Racial Equality. The Adult Education Services targeted engagement is outstanding and shows a clear correlation to our diversity strategy, particularly in relation to addressing economic disadvantage and digital exclusion and has been successful in attracting more male and ethnic minority learners across all post codes. However, we have recognised difficulties in engaging with gypsy and traveller communities, especially in rural areas, isolated communities, those in permanent accommodation that excludes/ isolates them from their 'home' travellers communities, and itinerate travellers who are excluded from permanent traveller sites and 'mainstream' support. The travellers we have engaged to date tend to be at milestone or pre-entry sfl literacy and numeracy levels. The main problem to be solved therefore is to engage with the gypsy/

travellers communities to support employability and economic independence and confidence building to engage with 'mainstream' education and communities.

Partnership organisations

1. METAS (Minority Ethnic and Traveller Achievement Service) – to facilitate initial introductions and engagement with established gypsy/ traveller communities, and attend each weekly session to ease the relationship and some of the tensions.
2. DOC (Developing our Communities) – supported throughout by attending each weekly session.
3. MIND – to facilitate initial introductions to artists they work with, and to support awareness of mental health issues.
4. Moorlands Centre – hosts the Goole group.
5. The Hinge Group – voluntary social workers who facilitated shift from old site to new site.
6. East Riding Fire Brigade – accommodation at the local Fire Station to run a number of our sessions.
7. And, East Riding of Yorkshire Council, Adult Education Service – manage the project, supply tutors and learning mentors to run the sessions and support individual learning.

The outputs

1. Attendance at weekly teaching and learning sessions;
 - a. Overall 53 learners engaged; 12 in Goole, 12 in Cottingham and 29 overall in Bridlington. Work was produced by the learners on family history research, lace- making, jewellery, painting, and creative writing (see presentation for sample of work).
 - b. 1 learner did learning mentoring, 3 currently doing Improving English and Maths, 3 families involved in family learning sessions and IAG sessions. 1 learner wants to undertake L2 NVQ in Care. 1 learner in undertaking L2 Equine Studies at Bishop Burton and we are supporting her with homework on literacy.
2. Presentation at Adult Education Service 'Show and Tell' Staff Conference on Friday 18 May 2012 to raise awareness of gypsy/traveller project, issues faced and future development to encourage future participation of other staff; 55 participants attended this event (21 Tutors, 10 Support Staff, 4 Volunteers and 7 Managers).

The impacts and outcomes

1. Change in behaviour by learners and staff. There was remarkable change in the in the behaviour of learners, such as improvement in female attendance and latter male attendance, especially at lit/num sessions. Staff had to learn how to be less formal and more responsive which is really supporting individual learner needs.

2. Removal of barriers to learning and progression of men into lit/num provision, and onto family learning.

3. Impact on the community

Set up of Women's Support Group in Bridlington which will be community led.

4. Changes affected by senior managers

Funding sourced and found to ensure continuation of the project beyond end date.

5. Changes to the organisation and sustained partnerships and collaborations for future working.

We are already seeing an impact with progression onto mainstream provision and other impacts as noted above. In terms of Web Page development and set up, this should be running by mid-September 2012.

Overall 53 learners all from the gypsy/ traveller and MIND groups, although irregular attendance.

Apart from progression to other provision, production of art and craft work (as stated above) there will eventually be web site development.

There have also been soft impacts, such as, confidence building, reducing (or at least offering a forum for discussing) tensions, health and wellbeing (especially around mental health). There have also been at least 3 families that have subsequently joined the library.

.

Working relationship with LSIS

LSIS supplied the funding to set the project up.

Good value for money

The project offered excellent value for money, eg

1. Partnership working enabled efficiencies through shared accommodation and especially a sharing of information to identify and engage with existing gypsy/ traveller communities, which then freed up time for outreach work to engage with non-identified individuals.

2. The project also offered a forum to advance in particular mental health awareness (through the involvement of MIND) and community cohesion (through addressing some of the internal tensions between gypsy/ traveller families themselves in relation to the new Woldgate Site, and between gypsy/ traveller communities and local authority, especially as the project allowed a more flexible approach to attendance than is normally acceptable in educational settings).

Senior managers involvement

Senior manager oversaw the project, facilitated the initial partnership meeting with METAS, fed through to the Adult Education Service SMT on a regular

bases, wrote interim and final reports, directed sourcing of other funding for continuation of the project, and attended LSIS dissemination day.

Stakeholder involvement

YSS (Youth Support Service) who gave advise to under 18 year olds.

Children's Centre who supported women with very young children.

Learner involvement

- Initial suggestion of projects, such as family history project.
- 12 learners attended events, such as the Cottingham Day event, Halgate gypsy/ traveller day, and the Seamer Horse Fair.

Raising awareness

- Internally at Staff conference on Friday 18 May 2012.
- Externally at LSIS dissemination events, 26 June and 3 July 2012.

The intention is to follow this up (after we have presented at the 3 July 2012 dissemination event) with an article in local press and East Riding of Yorkshire Council's Staff Magazine 'The Grapevine', and the Equality and Diversity Network news bulletin.

Continuity of project, after LSIS funding

Our intention was always to continue the project through Community Learning funding and eventual progression to Learner Responsive funding, and if possible through additional funding streams. We have now secured funding through UKOnline to support this.

Did you experience any difficulties in implementing the project and how did you overcome these?

Engagement – this has been problematic throughout for a number of reasons, primarily due to issues in the Bridlington area, such as; tensions which emerged between gypsy/ traveller families in relation to plots on the new Woldgate Site, which necessitated giving some sessions over to mediation and running parallel sessions; and family arrangements that impacted on attendance, which necessitated working in some instances very much on a one-to-one bases resulting in a shift through the project from the initial dominance on female participants to male engagement in lit/ num sessions; and a very different perspective on the importance of continuous attendance and engagement, which is less of an issue in settled communities but is as yet unresolved with travelling communities.

Staffing – we had planned to use existing Adult Education tutors, however, at the request of the gypsy/traveller communities in Goole and Cottingham we

agreed to use tutors they already knew and had a positive relationship with. This resulted in a hold up whilst we deal with HR issues. However, staff have shown a real keenness to engage with the project.

Artist/Partner engagement – although there has been extremely good partnership working in most cases, we had initial problems engaging with the art and craft community. To address this we switched our focus to working with MIND who contacted the art/craft people they work with and thought would be keen to engage. We gained 3 of their members to work on the project, as well as a number of our own art/ crafts tutors.

The lessons learned

1. Time and communication is needed to develop trust between the communities and the authority/organisation.

Initial stages would have been extended considerably on reflection.

2. Involvement of the whole and extended family. Sessions would have been put on on-site, such as use of trailer.

3. Highly individualised approach to meet learners needs, and Informal learning with different activities needed to keep engagement. Wouldn't have necessarily done anything different it is just about being highly aware of this need.

4. Understanding that small successes are building blocks to future engagement. Initial outcomes on project proposal would have been less to do with main achievements and more to do with informal and relationship/personal outcomes.

Demonstrating impact – evidence of short and long term impact

Overall 53 learners all from the gypsy/ traveller and MIND groups attended. Apart from progression to other provision, production of art and craft work there will eventually be web site development.

There have also been soft impacts, such as, confidence building, reducing (or at least offering a forum for discussing) tensions, health and wellbeing (especially around mental health). There have also been at least 3 families that have subsequently joined the library (please see learner numbers as stated above).

Disclaimer

The Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS) support the development of educational e-practice. We may refer to specific products, processes or services. Such references are examples and are not endorsements or recommendations and should not be used for product endorsement purposes.