Getting smaller third sector learning providers up to speed with potential funding opportunities

Summary

The policy and funding context is changing regularly and it is very difficult for smaller third sector organisations to keep updated and thus have the opportunity to access specific funding possibilities.

With LSIS funding the Learning Curve was able to provide seminars to rectify this difficulty.

About The Learning Curve

The Learning Curve is a Not for Profit organisation, focused on workforce & organisational development within the voluntary and community sector.

Our website provides information & advice covering: the Voluntary Sector; Learning Curve activities; a range of courses and learning programmes plus learning related news & resources for all our partners and learners.

We have established a reputation as a centre of excellence in supporting the learning & development requirements of individuals and organisations with programmes and services tailored to their need, supporting individual and organisational development and widening access to learning for all communities.

The Learning Curve offers you its wealth of experience in delivering high quality training within Swindon, Wiltshire and across the whole of the South West and South East regions.

The challenge

The policy and funding context is changing regularly and it is very difficult for smaller third sector organisations to keep updated and thus have the opportunity to access specific funding possibilities.

The activity

With support from LSIS, we ran a series of seminars & workshops in the region to:

- Update third sector organisations on current developments in learning and skills
- Help them match their capabilities and mission to the types of funding opportunities available

- Enable them to take steps to improve their capabilities and attractiveness as potential sub-contractors/partners to colleges and other mainstream providers

The outcomes

- Attendees completed an evaluation form at the end of the seminars, where they were able to record their comments on different aspects of the day – content, quality of presentations and their overall comments on the whole event. In addition, a series of graded questions (1 to 5) to measure their satisfaction around the content, quality of presentations, overall experience was included in the evaluation form.

An attitudinal survey was carried out at the beginning and the end of the event which provided a snapshot showing a direction of travel which was instant feedback for all attending.

- Delegates reported improved understanding and confidence in understanding how best to access funding and prepare for partnerships.
- It is too early to assess impact but the hope is that third sector engagement with the learning and skills agenda will increase in quantity and quality

The impact

It is too early to assess impact but the hope is that third sector engagement with the learning and skills agenda will increase in quantity and quality

The lessons learned

The Third Sector has an important role to play in Learning & Skills in relation particularly to supporting the most vulnerable in our community.

However often they are smaller organisations and/or learning is only part of what they do. It is difficult for them to access the information and support they need to identify how they can contribute to the learning & skills agenda and access funding.

MCL means that the majority of third sector organisations will need to be a subcontractor or join a consortium. They need independent advice and capacity building support to ensure that they can prepare themselves properly to be an effective partner. They also need support to identify main contractors who are supportive and willing to work with them.

There is also a need for main contractors such as colleges to make themselves more open to engaging with third sector partners and to develop long-term and supportive relationships to the benefit of the learners.

Useful links

- [The Learning Curve website](#)
- [Third Sector National Learning Alliance (TSNLA)](#)