

Keeping you informed

**Supporting Organisations
Support Communities**



change  Birmingham
Change Up
Consortium



Equalities embedded into our work

The Consortium has awarded a contract to b:RAP to help the Consortium ensure equalities is embedded into our work. b:RAP will be working with the Consortium to respond to three specific priorities:

Birmingham ChangeUp Priorities

Recognising, responding to and promoting the diversity of the voluntary and community sector in the city.

Addressing the inequalities that some community-based groups and voluntary organisations experience in accessing infrastructure support.

Broadened access to and increased satisfaction with support services provided by consortium members amongst frontline organisations.

ChangeUp Equality and Diversity Framework - b:RAP

Background to the project:

The Third Sector is currently in a period of transformation, one that will inevitably begin to affect us all in the work that we do. This transformation involves a shift, one that emphasises the increasing contribution that voluntary and community organisations can make to public service delivery and civic renewal. However, there are a number of challenges that accompany this change – not least the need for a quality driven Voluntary and Community Sector, which is structured and supported in such a way as to respond to a myriad of demands.

Improving equality practice can make a real difference to both the experiences and outcomes of staff, volunteers and ultimately beneficiaries. The Third Sector's reputation

has been built upon its relationship with its beneficiaries. However, understanding how to meet the demands and needs of an increasingly diverse population as well as respond to complex legislative responsibilities requires new sets of knowledge and skills. Equality cannot continue to be a 'tick box' or an after-thought; it should be something that the VCS does well, because it mirrors the original values of the voluntary sector – serving the most disadvantaged in society to the best of our capabilities.

This project has been commissioned to b:RAP by the ChangeUp consortium to assist consortia members in determining how equality objectives can be more effectively interpreted and implemented. The project will enable all consortium members to think more critically about equality practice, and the introduction of the Commission for Equality and Human Rights and the effect this will have on our approaches to equality.

The Project objectives are to:

- Promote the diversity of the sector.
- Address the inequalities that some community based groups and voluntary organisations experience in accessing infrastructure support.
- Promote best equalities practice across third sector organisations in Birmingham.

This will involve:

- Working collaboratively with commissioned projects to gain better understanding of the challenges they face.
- Working with commissioned projects to gain better insight into how equality objectives are being implemented.

- > Reviewing the equalities practice of commissioned projects to enable consortium members to develop and strengthen equality practice.
- > Working with the PMG and consortium member – to facilitate greater connection with their strategic equality objectives.
- > Developing learning resources for frontline and second tier organisations to increase understanding of the current equalities environment and the changes occurring in the third sector.

What this means for the Consortium

This project will be delivered over the next 12 months, and will involve working closely with all consortium members, so it is crucial that we establish an effective working partnership from the outset.

We will be in touch with members shortly to let you know when we may need your input, but in the interim if you have any queries regarding the project then you can reach Amy Roberts, Project Manager on 0121 456 7407 or switchboard 0121 456 7400 email: amy@brap.org.uk

About b:RAP

b:RAP is a strategic equalities-based advisory organisation with an established local, regional and national remit. It was formulated ten years ago to provide a progressive and evidence-based approach to mitigating widespread inequality and discrimination. Initially, as Birmingham Race Action Partnership, the organisation developed a reputation for offering an evidence-based and de-ethnicised approach to addressing issues of 'race' equality. b:RAP, since its inception, has drawn upon the philosophy and principles underpinning human rights, recognising the growing dissatisfaction with the traditional, 'silo' approach to equalities that only 'allows' people to have one relevant identity at a time.

The organisation operates in a number of policy areas (e.g. Health, Housing, Employment, Education and Criminal Justice) and builds up an operational expertise, based on policy analysis and work with delivery agents in each area. In doing so, we occupy a unique position: that of understanding the policy context which drives much of the work of public, voluntary and - increasingly - private sector organisations. Also, through our advisory and development functions, we have an appreciation of the challenges of equality implementation across these sectors. Our website (www.brap.org.uk) provides additional information you may find useful to understand and assess our background, philosophy and work.

Evaluating Our Effectiveness

The Consortium has awarded a contract to Rubus Services Ltd, to evaluate our work. We've provided some snippets (below) to show how Rubus will be working with the Consortium over the project. If you would like further information please contact Rubus details below.

How Rubus will be working with the Consortium.

The Process

Tiered engagement with Consortium members, reflecting the levels of engagement currently experienced within the Consortium.

Evaluation Champions

A designated officer and trustee from each PMG organisation and a designated officer from each project delivery organisation. The Evaluation Champions will own and drive participation and progress in the evaluation project over its lifetime.

Peer evaluation workgroups

A cluster structure, using social accounting and audit principles, that enables focussed working groups of Consortium members (staff and, where possible, trustees). The workgroups will establish a baseline and comparative view, so that we follow a learning cycle.

An evaluation workbook

Which will extend the Capacity builders toolkit to incorporate the Consortium's activities. The workbook will provide a framework for Consortium members to evaluate individually and constructively challenge within their cluster groups.

Stakeholder evaluation based on the Social Accounting approach.

Stakeholder workshops for:

- frontline voluntary & community organisations (with potential to focus on generic and specialist infrastructure)
- and
- public sector partners – providing the opportunity for more in-depth appraisal.

Mini case studies to draw from the wider evaluation and engagement work. Mini case studies will assist the Consortium to understand emerging good practice and impact within its own delivery plans.

Expected Outcomes

To establish whether the intended outcomes and outputs identified for the capacity building projects commissioned by the Consortium have been achieved.

The measurement of the Consortium's own activity and impact to meet the purpose of the evaluation as a whole.

To support and inform the development and effectiveness of the Consortium itself.

To support and inform the development and delivery of the six priority projects and the Small Grants Scheme.

To measure the effectiveness and impact of the Consortium's equalities framework.

Effect on Frontline Agencies

Fundamentally the evaluation should question whether, as a result of the Consortium's work:

- VCOs in Birmingham are assisted to achieve their mission through the

infrastructure services on offer and a more strategic and sustainable approach to infrastructure services has been achieved.

the things it set out to achieve, but how far the Consortium has progressed towards its own goals and towards the goals established by Capacitybuilders (Destination 2014).

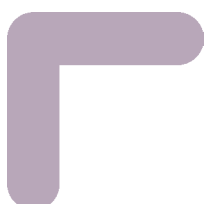
> There is more effective joint working between infrastructure services and linkage to relevant public and private sector services. Whether this has delivered a better result or a better experience to VCOs.

This approach combines quantitative and qualitative assessment techniques, self-appraisal and peer appraisal amongst Consortium members, and ample opportunity for external stakeholders to provide both structured and unstructured input into the evaluation process.

> Whether relationships between infrastructure providers and public sector agencies have been strengthened.

Contact Rubus Services Ltd.
Falstaff House, Enigma Commercial Centre,
Sandys Road, Malvern WR14 1JJ
Telephone 01684 878067
Email liz.wy@rubus-services.com
Web www.rubus-services.com

Through the evaluation Rubus will consider not only whether the Consortium has achieved



Birmingham ChangeUp Consortium Small Grants Scheme

Grants Awarded to April 2007

Afro-British Support Group	Funding for ABSG trainers to work with 5 Refugee Community Organisations to build their capacity by assisting them to comply with relevant quality assurance systems by putting in place appropriate policies and procedures.
b:RAP	Half day equalities awareness event - "Beyond Legislation": Equality in the Third Sector. The event will provide infrastructure agencies with the opportunity to reflect on their own practices around equality and diversity.
Midlands Regeneration	To train and mentor Midlands Regeneration staff (and develop their IT and software) to enable them to offer a specialist and tailored fundraising service to VCOs.
Saathi Care	Development of model of support for faith-based groups which can then be replicated by other organisations.
Jericho	To work with a social housing provider to trial a new type of social enterprise. If successful this will build Jericho's capacity to support other similar types of enterprise in the future.

	Deadline	Decisions Made	Report Due on Work Undertaken
Round 2	5pm Friday 1st June 2007	Monday 4th June 2007	Friday 13th July 2007
Round 3	9am Monday 30th July 2007	Friday 3rd August 2007	Friday 2nd November 2007

Project Focus

Update on Specialist Support Plus

In the last newsletter we gave an overview of the six priority projects, this month we examine Specialist Support Plus which seeks to:

- > raise standards and coordination amongst VCS and freelance / independent consultancies specialising in performance improvement, diversity and equality, workforce development and HR, finance, premises, etc;
- > promote easy access to specialist support services by frontline VCOs.

by:

- > establishing and facilitating 3 networks as follows;
- > Network 1: consultants and specialist LIOs providing forms of consultancy support);
- > Network 2: frontline VCOs;
- > Network 3: funders of specialist support.

- > delivering 3 events. The content of these 3 events will be set in discussion with the 3 networks.
- > creating a clear map of specialist support services to be available through the Birmingham ChangeUp web portal;
- > increasing the pool of volunteer and professional consultants offering appropriate and effective services to frontline VCOs.

Specialist Support Plus is linking with some of the other projects commissioned by the Consortium to see how we can best coordinate the involvement of frontline VCOs.

The partners involved in this project are The Digbeth Trust, BAYC, b:RAP, BVSC and the Development Agencies Network.

If you are interested in becoming involved in this project please contact James Fitzpatrick at The Digbeth Trust on 0121 753 0706 or email jamesfitzpatrick@digbethtrust.org.uk

Support to Contract

Birmingham ChangeUp Consortium Training

Writing a Tender

Date: Tuesday 26 June 2007

Time: 9.30am - 1.30pm

Business & Financial Planning - for Contracting

Date: Thursday 28 June 2007

Time: 9.30am - 4.30pm

Organisational Development - Fit for Purpose to Contract

Date: Tuesday 6 November 2007

Time: 9.30am - 4.30pm

Venue: iSE Professional Development Centre

For more information on these courses please contact: Sarah Aziz or Karen Thompson
iSE Professional Development Centre
Rubicon House, Ravenhurst Street, Camp Hill, Birmingham, B12 0HD

T: 0121 771 1411 F: 0121 771 1421

Email: sarah.aziz@i-se.co.uk or karen.thompson@i-se.co.uk

Meeting the Needs of the VCS!

Emerging results from Phase 2 of sector mapping work...

The ChangeUp Consortium continues to work with BVSC.

During February to April, over 535 voluntary and community organisations in Birmingham participated in a large scale mapping project which sought to gain a clearer picture of the size, services and capacity organisations working across the city.

The project will help to ensure the Consortium's work and priorities are clearly rooted in the needs and aspirations of groups working on the 'frontline' by providing:

- More robust and representative data on sector capacity, needs and aspirations – which can help us develop and refine the projects and planning.
- A baseline against which both changes in the sector and the impact of the Consortium's work and plan might be measured.

BVSC are currently doing a final 'clean up' of the data and analysis of the data, which provides a far more representative sample than previously available, including many smaller, less formal group shows:

- Over a third of the sample had income of below £10,000 per annum.
- Over a third also had no paid staff.
- 80% of organisations involved volunteers.

Support services

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the area of support that most organisations identified as a need was around finance and funding. This was true for all organisations, with or without paid staff. The specific issue of most concern was "Accessing Long Term Funding", cited by 282 organisations (51% of the sample).

Supporting volunteers was a significant issue for over 50% of organisations surveyed, while over a third also mentioned issues of performance improvement, quality, ICT, workforce issues and working in partnership with other voluntary organisations.

Full Consortium Meeting

The ChangeUp Consortium is organising a seminar where you can hear more about the mapping work on **1st June from 10am-12.30pm** at Muath Welfare Trust, The Bordesley Centre. The event is being organised and will focus on how we work together to ensure evaluation, needs assessments and mapping, inform our practice and priorities in supporting voluntary and community organisations, including:

- Presentation of key findings from the above mapping work.
- The opportunity for all participants to share key lessons and findings from their work with voluntary and community organisations.
- The opportunity to influence further work to build our understanding of the sector and the impact of second-tier services.
- An introduction to the evaluation of the Consortium's work taking place over the next year.

The event is aimed at staff in all Consortium member organisations involved in managing, planning and delivering support to voluntary and community organisations.

Please bring along information, reports or findings from evaluation or mapping work your agency has undertaken regarding the support in offers to voluntary and community organisations - so we can build a shared picture of 'what we know'. There will also be the usual opportunities for sharing updates about new projects and developments within the Consortium and beyond.

To confirm your attendance please contact:

Sarah Aziz – sarah.aziz@i-se.co.uk

If you would like to discuss the format of or a contribution to the event:
Jon Fox - jonf@bvsc.org

Members Organisation Focus

If you are a member of Birmingham ChangeUp and would like to let other members know what your services, latest news and views are within this newsletter then contact Dave Lane on 0121 464 4376 or email david.lane@stpaulstrust.org.uk

I'SE

I'SE, established in 1998, currently undertakes core work focusing on business support, capacity building and sustainability for the social enterprise and trading VCO sectors. It specialises in partnership working with a wide range of organisations drawn from the public, private, social enterprise and community / voluntary sectors. Its work is delivered at all levels from local to international. Examples of services delivered on a contract basis include: support to an individual or organisation for business start up; specific action research and development initiatives: for example – “How best to support the sector to win contracts through procurement routes”; production of a toolkit to support the sustainability of refugee and asylum seeker organisations, and work to support specific business sectors and social enterprises [e.g. - health, environment, employment and training].

I'SE delivers an extensive training and professional development programme through its unique Professional Development Centre. Our most popular courses include: Leadership, Business Planning, Marketing, Procurement, Quality and Impact Measurement, and Full Cost Recovery. I'SE has been supporting the implementation of the Skills for Life Strategy by the delivery of Continuing Professional Development support to tutors/trainers and providers of Skills for Life Learning, Basic Skills Awareness, and Adult Literacy, Numeracy, and Language Support. I'SE continues to work with a range of organisations to address this agenda and partners include: LSC, colleges and higher education establishments, Core Skills Partnership, Health organisations, Jobcentre Plus and Probation.

I'SE has also played a lead role in supporting the start-up of social enterprises that provide employment for disabled people and other disadvantaged groups. The organisation is actively involved in the national body Social Firms UK and is the West Midlands regional “hub” for Social Firm support. As the regional agency we provide a range of support including; advice on start up and development, sustainability, clustering, and procurement. We also contribute to the joint delivery of seminars and conferences across the country with and on behalf of SFUK.

Partnership working has included the development of the Performance Dashboard, a quality tool to support the development of social enterprises and piloting the new, independently assessed, Social Firm Kite Mark (Star Social Firm). ISE works extensively on quality and impact measurement and working collaboratively on these issues to support new thinking and the development of new approaches.

I'SE, in partnership with Social Firms UK, has also been developing a programme of replication, licensing and franchising. This work has involved taking examples of best practice in social enterprise provision and modelling processes for replication, with the intention of building a national network of quality assured Social Firms that trade under a single brand name and have a clear brand image.

ISE has itself started a replication business in the form of Aquamacs. It has done this to understand the model and learn how best to support other organisations wanting to use the same approach. Currently this business employs one person over 50 and another with disabilities.