

social inclusion strategy in action



Huddersfield Pakistani Community Alliance -Thornton Lodge Neighbourhood Learning Centre (NLC/P/10)



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Thornton Lodge Neighbourhood Learning Centre (Huddersfield) Social Inclusion Strategy

Acknowledgements

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Shahida Awan (Chairperson)	Huddersfield Pakistani Community Alliance
Aleem Ahmed (Chairperson)	NLC Management Committee
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Dennis Carrington	Department for Education and Skills
Sheena Whittingham Peter Crosbie Kate Fleming	KMC Community Education and Regeneration
Roger O'Doherty	Voluntary Action Kirklees
Mumtaz Ali	ICT Manager Thornton Lodge ICT Centre

Social Inclusion Strategy

Aims:

To establish a community based learning provision in the Thornton Lodge area of Huddersfield with the following key characteristics:

- Easy access to learning opportunities
- Easy access to information, advice and guidance to learning opportunities
- Flexible learning programs
- Family orientated learning
- Bilingual approach to learning
- To encourage and enable involvement of local residents in the development and management of the provision, i.e., encourage local ownership.

Aim	Activities
Easy access to learning opportunities	 A Local base at the heart of the community, within walking distance of the target community. Visually prominent shop front with bilingual signposting. Drop-in provision for people to receive information about learning opportunities, facilities within the centre without entering into commitment. Bilingual staff with the ability to communicate freely with the target group. A general advice provision/surgeries to cater for community needs and entice them into the centre. Newspapers of different languages to bring people in and also to promote learning. Culturally sensitive and safe environment, for example: women 'only' provision on a selected day. Actively enforcing of anti-harassment and anti-intimidation policies, and ensuring that the trained staff and volunteers are available to supervise activities and attend to any concerns. One to one advice and support to learners and volunteers on learning and progression issues.
Easy access to information, advice and guidance to learning opportunities	 Surgeries by providers on learning opportunities and progression routes, for example: Careers Service, GAIN, Job Placement Link, Surestart, Homestart, Cloverleaf, Fire Service, Black Governors Network, Young Peoples Services, etc. Open days and information sessions. Multilingual written promotion material delivered through local shops, mosques, and door-to-door. Organised a large-scale community festival bringing all sections of the community together. Over 2000 people, mainly women and children took part in this one-day event. A number of service providers were present with information stalls A website has been developed for the Huddersfield Pakistan Community Alliance which not only provides information on PCA but also the activities of NLC and encourages people to give feedback and suggestions
Flexible learning programs	 Classes timetabled throughout the day and evenings, scheduled to meet the needs of the target

	 groups. The learning programs reflect the expressed interest of the local residents. We operate a system for logging the interest of potential learners. Some of these are enrolled onto learning programs through NLC and others are referred to appropriate agencies. We have introduced an ICT based learning facilities with the help of UK Online initiative. For the ICT based learning we provide structured learning programmes for groups of learners as wells as encouraging individuals to try their hands on using computer technology. People are now using our facilities for reading news, E-mailing and chatting with family and relatives abroad, accessing the Internet for information and general recreation. This helps to breakdown barriers and takes away the fear element of using technology. NLC works in partnership with a number of providers to maximise learning opportunities throughout the target area at different locations, e.g. Islamia Girls College, Thornton Lodge Community Centre, Voluntary Action Kirklees, etc. Taster course targeted specifically at women and elderly to entice them into learning, e.g., Beauty Tips and Driving Theory courses. Women only provision on a selected day to cater for cultural sensitivity. Promote learning through volunteering. A number of NLC volunteers have progressed into paid jobs within their chosen areas of interest and others have progressed as volunteers on other projects more suited to their interests. NLC offers volunteers opportunities to pursue their careers, e.g. individuals studying C&G 730/7 teach of facilitate on selected programs on a voluntary basis to gain experience. New Arrivals – we have significant number of people coming into area for settlement, frequently the new arrivals are coming with considerable education, and with the lack of advice and guidance their talent goes to waste. The NLC has provided many of these individuals with voluntary opportunities and access to advice and guidanc
Family orientated learning	 Through NLC our focus is very much on family learning. Therefore our learning provision is widely based, diverse and flexible, targeting children, parents and grandparents, etc. For example,

	 by making parents familiar with ICT they are able to appreciate and make sense of IT and its relevance to their children's education. Equally parents who acquire the taste of learning are able appreciate the benefits of good education and hence are able to play a more supporting role to education of their children, both at personal and school level. Throughout the summer of 2002 we ran a family learning program with multiple learning activities, this was a successful project and we are committed to running it again next summer during the school break.
Bilingual approach to learning	• We have significant proportion of learners whose first language is not English; therefore, this need has been built into all our learning programs. In many cases people who start their learning activities in their own mother tongue after gaining confidence and interest they go on to learning in English, thereby acquiring English which helps to open up a wealth of other opportunities. To aid this an Urdu language package is install on all computers. Learning is about developing confidence, interest and habit.
To encourage and enable involvement of local residents in the development and management of the provision, i.e., encourage local ownership.	 Community consultation – visiting local businesses, organisations and key figures in the locality Made the local community aware of the project through promotional material, open days, and information sessions. NLC operates an open door policy, inviting anyone to see what the project is about and how it operates. Established a steering group comprising of representatives of local residents, businesses and organisations. Plans are in progress to constitute the steering group into an independently constituted organisation so that the management will be transferred to the local community. All our activities are transparent and open to community input. Regular feedback from local residents, learners, volunteers, and partner agencies. We built on the research that was carried out in the learning needs of the local community. Steering Committee Members Aleem Ahmed - PCA representative and Local Accountant (Chairperson)

 Sabir Hussain - Representative of Madni Mosque 	
Hafeez-ur-Rehman - Local Resident	
Shahzad Hussain - Local community activist	
Mahboob Alam - Local Business man and Tutor's Rep	
Munawer Bakhs - Local resident	
Ihsan MeerIslamia - Girls College	
 M.T.Haq - Local Solicitor 	
 Michael Spencer - Local resident and Learners Rep. 	
 Sebastian Francisque - Local resident 	
Shagufta Kauser - PCA and local resident	
Nadeem Riaz - Local resident	
Molana Imran - Local Imam	
 Zafar Khan - Local businessmen 	
Ranjit Kaur - Local resident	
✤ M Q Khan (Career Advisor) - Local resident	
Mohammed Sarwar - Local Councillor (advisory capacity)	
Thornton Lodge is an inner area of Huddersfield in the metropolitan Council of Kirklees. This is a	
multiracial area with high concentration of the South Asian community particularly people of Pakistani	
origin. The local community displays all the symptoms of poverty and social exclusion, for example,	
 Educational underachievement, 	
 Drug abuse amongst the young people, 	
 Lack of advice provision, 	
 Poor health in terms of diabetes and coronary related illnesses. 	

	terms of accessing opportunities and resources. This situation is further compounded the absence of community development and community- based infrastructure. It is in this context that the work of the Neighbourhood Learning Centre was located and subsequently developed over the last 12 months.
Specific barriers to learning:	 Lack of information and guidance about learning opportunities. (This point is more important considering that for a significant percentage our learners English is not their first language) The education provision is remote, inflexible and culturally insensitive. The research report highlighted transport, timetabling of courses, learning bureaucracy, family commitments, and formality of learning as being key barriers to access. Some providers are impatient and require results instantly, without making any allowances for new a project in a socially and culturally difficult setting. More than often these organisations start from a negative premises and have a lack of confidence in small projects such as ours. This is partially due to lack of understanding of the neighbourhood learning as a concept and see it as a threat to their interests. In a multicultural setting, multilingual approaches should be adopted for education; for example, it should be possible for first and second-generation settlers to access learning in the languages they feel most comfortable. The learning needs to built on and take account of life experiences of learners.
Sustainability:	 The learning provision needs to be more family focused, enabling different generations and age groups to take part in a flexible and inclusive learning environment. The above barriers were identified through a major research into the learning needs of the local community
	that preceded the commencement in October 2001, and were further confirmed by the feedback we have received from our consultation with local residents, as well as partner agencies and learners. NIACE funding for the pilot has come to an end on 30 th September 2002. There is a possibility that we will receive further funding for the next three months through KMC Community Education and Regeneration section, and the local Community Chest Fund. This short-term funding is intended to enable us to explore

	and secure relatively long-term funding through National Lottery (Community Fund), Learning Skills Council (LSC) or the Local Learning Partnership (LLP). Our recent attempt to acquire funding from LSC failed primarily because in our estimation there is no real understanding of the neighbourhood-learning concept amongst the LSC's. However we will continue to work with the local LSC to impress on them the validity of our approach to learning.	
	The ICT aspect of our provision that is funded through UK Online will continue and there is a possibility for a joint application through the local consortium for the ICT centres in South Kirklees.	
Learning Points:	The Steering Group will continue and develop into an independently constituted organisation representing and voicing the learning needs of the local community. Hence, will continue to develop partnership with various providers to lure resources into the area.	
	 The timescale of 12 months for a new project in an area and community where there is not an established history of learning provision is very unrealistic. The local learning provision needs to be flexible, culturally sensitive and responsive to the learning status of individuals and families. We found some of the main providers, with their rigid rules and bureaucracy, find it difficult to relate to and make sense of more informal/ flexible approaches to learning. Some providers do not have an understanding of the neighbourhood-learning concept and may see a threat to their own plans and aspirations; they are inclined to be more hostile. Therefore considerable time and resources are required to overcome these difficulties. The local learning provision must include a program of learning and support to people and their families afflicted by drug abuse. 	