



social inclusion strategy in action



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



Neighbourhood Learning Centre

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Acknowledgements

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Shahida Awan (Chairperson)	Huddersfield Pakistani Community Alliance
Aleem Ahmed (Chairperson)	NLC Management Committee
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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.

<p>Family orientated learning</p>	<p>groups.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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 well 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 or 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 guidance to further their careers by building on their education. <p>▪ 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,</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ 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)
<p>Barriers:</p>	<p>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,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ High incident of unemployment, ▪ Educational underachievement, ▪ Drug abuse amongst the young people, ▪ Lack of advice provision, ▪ Poor health in terms of diabetes and coronary related illnesses. <p>The community feels abandoned, apathetic and least motivated in terms of self-help or involvement in</p>

<p>Specific barriers to learning:</p>	<p>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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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. ▪ 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.
<p>Sustainability:</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>NIACE funding for the pilot has come to an end on 30th 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</p>

<p>Learning Points:</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 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. 2. The local learning provision needs to be flexible, culturally sensitive and responsive to the learning status of individuals and families. 3. 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. 4. 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. 5. The local learning provision must include a program of learning and support to people and their families afflicted by drug abuse.
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