

**In-house Training Services
(IHTS Ltd)**

**Evaluation of LDA funded Skills for Life
Training**

**Management Summary of the
Final Report**



SYNERGIS

May 2008



“This course was very helpful for my work”

Beneficiary

“A remarkable achievement”

Employer

Acknowledgements

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Asian People’s Disability Alliance
Hartwig Care
Kent Lodge
The Meadows
Stifford Community Centre

Management Summary

1. Methodology

A robust and comprehensive methodology was deployed for this evaluation, including a mix of primary and secondary research using quantitative and qualitative data. Exit strategy forms from 103 beneficiaries were analysed, along with 12 employer feedback forms. A further five employers took part in one to one interviews using a semi-structured questionnaire. Beneficiary data and background documents were supplied by In-House Training Services (IHTS) who also took part in a detailed interview.

2. Project background

The purpose of the project was to provide accredited Skills for Life literacy and English for Speakers of other Languages (ESOL) training for employees of small and medium enterprises (SMEs); primarily to black and minority groups (BME). Also to improve employability, increase transferable skills and encourage progression and continuing professional self-development.

3. Project aims and objectives

The project aimed to recruit and train 200 employees in Skills for Life from targeted business sectors, including:

- Manufacturing
- Food and drink
- Transport and logistics
- Retail
- Health and education services (care).

The target was to recruit a minimum of 80% beneficiaries from BME communities. With a further target of 5% of the beneficiaries to be disabled people. 90% of the beneficiaries were to achieve a nationally recognised Skills for Life qualification. In addition, the capital's most deprived boroughs were in scope for the project, across three geographical sub-regions.

The project objectives were:

- Carry out initial and diagnostic assessments of each participant.
- Develop an individual training plan for each participant.
- Identify employers with appropriate employees in the targeted geographical and business sectors and recruit them to the programme.
- Deliver workplace training courses leading to City & Guilds Skills for Life qualifications at Entry level 3, level 1 and level 2.
- Provide beneficiaries with improved skills and confidence leading to further progression and (for employers) a more skilled, productive and motivated workforce.

- Ensure beneficiaries had the opportunity to gain a nationally recognised qualification.
- Contribute to economic and social sustainability.

4. Project outputs and spend

The project was highly successful in meeting and, in some areas, exceeding, the agreed outputs. The achieved outputs were:

- 220 beneficiaries were recruited
- 80% completed the course
- 93% of course completers achieved a qualification
- 98% of beneficiaries were from BME communities
- 21 employers from the targeted sectors were engaged in the project
- four sub-regions, covering ten boroughs were involved.

Further outputs include:

- 100% of the 103 beneficiaries who completed feedback forms said that they had learnt new skills or improved their skills
- 98 of these 103 beneficiaries said that the course had helped them in their work
- 95 of the 103 had plans to continue their education
- employer feedback proves an increased capacity to take on a higher level of work in the company
- employer feedback also demonstrates increased ability among beneficiaries to achieve qualifications
- a higher level of commitment from employees to their company
- an increased motivation among employees to pursue other training opportunities.



“The course has especially helped with my NVQ 2 in Health and Social care”

The **project was successful in keeping to budget** with a minimal variance below the agreed budget figure.

5. Assessment of impact

The full report provides a commentary against each of the seven project aims, objectives and outcomes. **The primary aims were all met or exceeded as were the additional outcomes of:**

- improved skills and confidence of beneficiaries
- further progression for beneficiaries
- giving employers a more skilled and motivated workforce
- contributing to economic and social sustainability



“Now they realise they can be a project administrator or manager in the future.” Employer

In addition strategic added value has been demonstrated through the wider impact the training has had on beneficiaries’ lives outside of work as well as the awareness raising among employers about staff training and literacy needs.

6. Trends and issues

This section of the full report provides commentary on:

- key barriers to achievement
- key opportunities for success
- management and delivery processes
- added value
- value for money
- exit strategy.

In brief there were **no insurmountable barriers to the project’s achievement**. Key opportunities for success included IHTS’ successful provision of high quality teaching, a mix of teaching methods and small class sizes. In addition, learner motivation and manager support were also crucial.

Management and delivery processes included working closely with employers to identify beneficiaries’ needs prior to training and tailoring courses accordingly. **The project has added value** through offering training which is not widely available and also through reaching employers that are not accessing such programmes.

This project has shown good value for money. The project’s actual cost compared favourably with the forecast. The financial budget categories were carefully considered and a realistic forecast made. During the lifetime of the project the finances were re-profiled to reflect projected activity, thus ensuring that margins between forecast and actual spend were minimal.

The exit strategy for beneficiaries and employers was a key consideration for this project and IHTS have been **successful in helping both parties plan and implement successful strategies** for further training, courses and qualifications. In addition, IHTS has been successful in winning further funding to continue this enormously valued training with other companies and employees.

7. LDA cross-cutting themes

These themes of **sustainability, equality and health** have all been successfully tackled through this project. **Sustainability has been successfully achieved** as a result of low-skilled employees gaining the opportunity to improve their employment prospects and undertake further education at higher levels. Employers have seen the positive impact of improved Skills for Life on their businesses.

Equality has been successfully promoted through giving low-skilled employees the opportunities to upskill themselves and take on new responsibilities at work. Beneficiaries have also been able to apply for and gain other jobs and further education places.

Health has been successfully promoted through improvements in beneficiaries' communication skills and therefore their improved access to health services and provision.

8. Key conclusions and lessons learnt

This project was highly successful in meeting its key aims, objectives and outputs, as well as adding value. The target of 200 beneficiaries was exceeded and 220 low skilled beneficiaries were trained in Skills for Life; 153 achieved the nationally recognised qualification at Entry level 3 and above and 11 more achieved at Entry level 1 and 2. The target for BME beneficiaries was exceeded. In addition, the key employment sectors and geographical areas were successfully engaged in the project. Overall the project has led to a more skilled, productive and motivated workforce.

Lessons learnt include:

- senior management support is crucial to ensure full cooperation from supervisors and employees
- data gathering of disabilities' information is very sensitive on employment-based training and for robust results data must be gathered separately to other beneficiary information
- analysing feedback from beneficiaries and employers more formally on a regular basis
- revising questions posed to employers to elicit information for impact evaluation requirements.

These lessons learnt relate to minor improvements since **IHTS' management and delivery processes have been proven to be highly effective in achieving the targeted results.**



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