



European Commission Capacity Building Project

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Practice Sharing Day

**Monday 16th February 2009
African Initiatives, Bristol**

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This peer learning day was held as part of the project "Building Local Capacity to Broaden Engagement in Global Issues", a three year project funded by the European Commission.

Within the terms of the project there will be six peer learning events over three years to address the topics of engaging hard to reach groups, extending learning to wider beneficiaries, and building the capacity of NGOs to implement this work. These will be specifically addressed by looking at:

- Introducing global issues with specific target groups
- Facilitating participatory methodologies
- Ensuring a range of perspectives are promoted

This is a report on the third of these events. It was held 18 months into the project and attendance was open to people representing organisations involved in the ECCB project and the wider DEA membership.

For further information about the project, or about this or future practice sharing days, please contact sejal.patel@dea.org.uk

Attendees

Sejal Patel (DEA)	sejal.patel@dea.org.uk
Val Bishop (African Initiatives)	val@african-intiatives.com
Alison Thomas (Bridges DEC)	alison@shropshirebridges.org.uk
Sue Errington (Devon DE)	dde@globalcentredon.wanadoo.co.uk
Nyeya Yen (GHARWEG)	gharweg@aol.com
John Davidson (Global Dimension Trust)	j.davidson@cybervine.co.uk
Tonia Mihill (PADEAP)	tonia@padeap.net
Theodros Abraham (Reconnect)	theodros@reconnectonline.org.uk

Programme of the day

Five 30-45 minute sessions were facilitated by 5 speakers from 5 organisations; these took the form of an initial presentation followed by a questions and answers style discussion. An additional half hour was allocated for questions at the end of the afternoon.

Val Bishop, African Initiatives

African Voices

The main aim of African Voices is to raise awareness and understanding of African diversity, context and issues, initiatives to address those issues, and links between Africa and Bristol/South West. African Initiatives are aiming to do this by strengthening and supporting Bristol based Diaspora communities and related organisations in Bristol and the South West to increase:

- Understanding and profile of Africa in schools and colleges through Global Citizenship
- Participation, a voice and a lead in development awareness raising and campaigns
- Understanding and profile of Africa in the non-formal sector and community organisations

Theodros Abraham, Reconnect

Building the capacity of Asylum Seekers and Refugees in London and the South-East to broaden their engagement in Global Issues

The main theme of Reconnect's project is to raise awareness of Global Issues and Development Education among the Asylum Seekers and Refugee communities in London and the South-East, enabling them to:

- Incorporate development education into the work of their respective communities
- Identify the underlying causes of their displacement
- Seek positive and constructive ways to address the causes of poverty and displacement
- Create conditions for better understanding among various RCOs and to focus their attention towards peace, stability and development
- Establish partnerships with grass root organisations in their respective countries/regions to enable them to actively participate in the development process of their respective countries/regions

Alison Thomas, Bridges DEC

Bringing Global Issues to isolated rural communities in Shropshire

By targeting three small, isolated communities and working intensively with them, Bridges DEC hopes to develop Development Education methodologies to engage a large proportion of Shropshire's population. The project aims to incorporate all community members, irrespective of their social category, role, age group or gender.

Their project results and outputs include:

- Enabling communities in isolated rural areas to engage with development issues and take appropriate action
- The development of capacity of communities and local media for marking global events

- The development and dissemination of a participatory methodology for working with 'hard to reach' rural communities, to be used by bridges and organisations in similar area

Nyeya Yen, GHARWEG

Building local capacity to broaden engagement in Global Issues

The aim of this project is to undertake development awareness activities on global issues, especially the Millennium Development Goals, among people from the BME communities, especially refugee and African communities, which are often harder to reach. By bringing groups and people together to undertake these activities, GHARWEG will be given a global perspective on the issue at hand, enabling people to share their experiences and support each other.

Outcomes of the project are:

- Groups will in put into decisions by development agencies such as the big International NGOs
- More awareness of the Millennium Development Goals
- Groups will support each other on development issues
- Seek further resources to develop new work that may accrue from joint work

Tonia Mihill, PADEAP

Development Education Association EC Capacity Building Package

This project has been designed to enable young people (14-19) from the BME and Refugee and Asylum Seeker communities in Haringey, London to access and respond to African development issues through a combination of Development Education methodologies and the creative arts. It aims to build the capacity of PADEAP to engage with broader audiences through the Arts, positive

Valerie Bishop, African Initiatives

African Voices

African Initiative's contribution to the ECCB is "African Voices" – a project to raise awareness and understanding of African diversity, context and issues amongst Bristol based Diaspora communities and related organisations in Bristol and the South West.

Valerie began with a brief introduction into African Initiatives and the project which Val started running as of August 2008. The organisation was built primarily of a workforce with Val being the only female; however the organisation has now shifted with a lot more women being recruited.

African Initiatives organised a meeting where community groups, community organisations and individuals, including 250 people from the Diaspora communities, all met and discussed what was important. 3 main areas were identified:

- The media representation of Africa
- Africa in Education
- Local governance

Through this meeting partnerships were forged and new partnerships were formed.

From African Voices came the formation of a forum called the African Voices Forum, which now has over 100 members from as far as Wales, Scotland, as well as communities and individuals. Val is a member of their management board. The African Voices Forum, with the help of its Chair, is registered with the Charity commission, and has its own easily accessible website africanvoicesforum.org

The African Voices Forum has faced challenges, the biggest being Political and Ethnic. It was challenging working with a big group, even more so being a woman. Another challenge was that people expected to be paid to participate. There were capacity gaps within the basic community – basic financial skills, and knowledge.

Another challenging factor is that committees are only kept for a year at a time so it is difficult to determine how you continue/carry forward the knowledge from committee to committee.

In year 2 of the project, African Voices have made a DVD and resource pack with the community. They carried out workshops and interviewed school children to see what it is that they want and made a film that shows the reactions to the questions that were asked.

In order to produce an effective DVD, African Initiatives went to the African Voices Forum who then asked people who can help to come forward. They also had their own African Initiatives volunteers

who helped out. African Initiatives decided on questions with the African Voices Forum, members and communities. They took this to a filmmaker/director and produced the DVD.

There were 20 volunteers working at a time on the project, as well as a core group who were working on the resource pack, and 2/3 people who worked alongside Val to develop the project.

One question raised was whether they will sell enough copies of the DVD to make it economically worthwhile. Val explained that with African Initiatives doing the design for it, funds were available to print the DVDs for distribution among Bristol schools. For other distribution networks, other means will have to be found.

Another question asked was the extent to which political/ethnic differences affected the project. Val stated that it was fraught with differences. People from certain countries would not talk to those from other countries. Many did not talk to the Somali community as they receive a lot of help from the local Council. In order to overcome this, a few leaders came up and took charge; they took on a lead role to steer discussions. The Chair was the CEO of an organisation in Bristol and he took on this role alongside 2 influential women to ease problems. These leaders were able to bridge the gaps and represent all countries, bringing the people together and getting them to work together.

The main worry now is about the new committee. Will the work continue? Will relationships continue? Will these gaps continue to be bridged? Only time will tell.

So where does this leave the African Voices Forum when the project ends? African Initiatives are hoping to leave the African Voices Forum in a position where they could continue even if funding stops. They are also looking to distribute the resource pack throughout the region and also throughout the UK. They will continue their partnership role in future education projects.

Theodros Abraham, Reconnect

Building the capacity of Asylum Seekers and Refugees in London and the South-East to broaden their engagement in Global Issues

Reconnect's contribution to the ECCB is "Building the capacity of Asylum Seekers and Refugees in London and the South-East to broaden their engagement in global issues" – a project to raise awareness and understanding of Global Issues and Development among the Asylum Seekers and Refugee communities in London and the South East.

Theodros Abraham used to organise Development Education programs for an organisation in East London, but it was difficult to get people involved. Following a feasibility study that was commissioned by UNCHR, Reconnect was formed to translate what was found in the feasibility study.

Reconnect works mainly on the fields of teachers and journalists, people who are able to promote issues and pass on information and knowledge of these issues.

The key features and challenges of the project have been:

- RCOs – Refugee Communities and Organisations
 - They usually consist of middle class men
 - They do not represent gender
- In Somali communities, there is a lot of difficulty getting the Somali people to work together
- The wider beneficiaries include organisations working with refugees

Events/Workshops that have been held through this year of the project are:

- Refugee Week Event, in partnership with the Institute of Education
 - 98 participants signed up for the event
 - Mogib Hassan, a Yemeni poet, attended
 - A German radio station attended, taped the event and interviewed Theodros
 - Volunteers, who were trained at Thames Valley University in partnership with Reconnect, filmed the event and took photos
- Round Table Discussion, December 2008
 - Members discussed seeking funding to survey how to establish teachers in developing countries; and funding to send teachers to developing countries

Reconnect are also working on a newsletter and feasibility study. The newsletter is to be produced to involve RCOs, communities and individuals more.

The feasibility study will help to identify the means by which trained teachers can return to developing countries on a short stay process (Refugees cannot return to their own country but are able to go to

other countries). The study will look into what is available in terms of resources and facilities, and what is needed to achieve this. It will help to set up links with Ghana, Ethiopia and Southern African countries. It will inform whether or not a pilot is needed; whether or not the developing countries being targeted will employ UK teachers at the expense of teachers already in that country; and whether or not that country has a shortage of teachers. One point that must be kept in mind is that both employed and unemployed teachers in the targeted countries should not be in competition with teachers coming from the UK. Teachers will be able to facilitate their wanting to go back to the developing countries to teach, by using existing structures as opposed to trying to set up new ones.

The post-project challenges Reconnect faces are:

- How they will sustain involvement/activities after year 3
- Funding
- Whether or not they should continue with this project after year 3; and how they will continue.
A lot of organisations are facing a lack of funding – funding is coming to a halt.

So, what are Reconnect doing to overcome these challenges?

- Many teachers in teacher training are representatives of RCOs, and so there is involvement in the project.
- Reconnect are looking at bringing in communities to contribute to projects, ideas, etc
- Reconnect have applied for a DFID Mini Grant
- Reconnect are working with Thames Valley University to set up a qualification for Journalism
- Refugee journalists need basic training i.e. placements need to be set up

Alison Thomas, Bridges DEC

Bringing Global Issues to isolated rural communities in Shropshire

Bridges DEC's contribution to the ECCB is "Bringing Global Issues to isolated rural communities in Shropshire" – a project to develop the Development Education methodologies to engage a large proportion of Shropshire's population.

Alison began by informing us that during year 2 of the EC Capacity Building Fund, Bridges DEC have held 5 events. Their project involves working with 4 communities – communities that are very white, very rural, small and very monocultural.

The first event held was at Hinstock primary school and was entirely school based. The event was organised to coincide with Fairtrade Fortnight, and as a result the school now uses Fairtrade refreshments at every event. The audience understand their own community; however Bridges are trying to break them out beyond their own community.

The second event was a Mwani festival held at Maesbury primary school featuring a fusion of local and African food, with African dances and stories. The event was hosted by the school and involved many community members in the planning and execution of the event itself. The headteacher was amazed at the success of the event.

The third event was held in Farlow village, the most cohesive community. This was a three day Gum Boot dancing and International Flower Festival event, with Bridges DEC supplying the Global Dimension. The students learned about South African Gum Boot dancing and presented a dance to parents who also enjoyed a traditional South African meal cooked by community members. Following this the community's International Flower Festival was held, where flowers representing different countries were displayed, with the children learning about the different countries and producing their own displays.

The fourth event was a Gum Boot Dancing event held at Bitterley village where the community also put on a South African evening with a gum boot dancing display featuring children from the local school and African food cooked by members of the local church and community. However, although the photos show that the event was a fun experience, the reality was like "pulling teeth" to get people involved.

The fifth event was held at Hinstock – "Arts & I" – an event that brought artists to the rural parts of Shropshire. Bridges DEC helped Hinstock become the venue for Arts & I which was attended by The Téa Hodžic Trio from the Balkans. 90 people from all over the community attended including people who had no connection to the school. The audience was thrilled by the evocative music and found the

evening highly entertaining. Many local people had admitted to being sceptical beforehand but were pleasantly surprised at how much they enjoyed the event.

So what are the plans for 2009?

- Bridges DEC wants to set up an "Arts & I" steering group with Hinstock being a venue for the events
- Maesbury was successful although the school are unsure why, however they will continue the good work.
- Bitterley's plans for 2009 are unsure. Who knows what is planned?
- In Farlow the community works well, and so future events are on the cards.

The big question: how do you cultivate community cohesion? The answer: by connecting the individuals, groups and organisations in the community and building opportunities to work together.

Nyeya Yen, GHARWEG

Building local capacity to broaden engagement in Global Issues

GHARWEG's contribution to the ECCB is "Building local capacity to broaden engagement in Global Issues" – a project to undertake development awareness activities on global issues, especially the Millennium Development Goals, among people from the BME communities, especially refugee and African communities, which are often harder to reach.

GHARWEG have remained small and focused, offering training in English (ESOL) and helping people develop skills in order to find employment.

Year 2 of the EC Capacity Building Project began with the steering committee forming an activities programme and since a number of events has taken place.

The Brain Drain and prospects for reversals seminar and workshop event held by GHARWEG included lively discussions on issues of brain drain and underutilization of skills of Africans in the UK. Participants stated that they have to find ways to support skills transfer to Africa. Financial and monetary factors were found as factors impeding skills transfer to Africa. The meeting informed the bid to DFID for a major grant to deliver development awareness targeted at second-generation African- Caribbeans. Though not aimed at skills transfer, the ultimate goal will be to work with young people who will eventually volunteer to work in Africa.

Nyeya notified the project partners of BME networks that are featured on Sky TV – OBE on Channel 307, PASSION and BEN on channel 184 which featured 3 series on the Ghana elections. Nyeya was invited to discuss the elections which lasted one hour followed by a 30 minutes phone in with high volumes of calls from Europe, Nigeria and Ghana, and the UK. Nyeya explained to the project partners that the new Ghanaian government have stated that they are social democrats and are not corrupted, and now that the people of Ghana are more politically aware and are also aware of the level of corruption, corruption should decrease.

He went on to tell us that BMEs are excited of Obama Barack's triumph as US president, with the belief that they can do something.

One of the major challenges faced by GHARWEG is that of funding. Organisations that GHARWEG work with have lost funding and are unable to continue resulting in the loss of partners. To help combat this GHARWEG is looking to enter funding schemes as delivery partners for a more successful chance of receiving funding.

Tonia Mihill, PADEAP

Development Education Association EC Capacity Building Package

PADEAP's contribution to the ECCB is "Development Education Association EC Capacity Building Package" – a project to enable young people (14-19) from the BME and Refugee and Asylum Seeker communities in Haringey, London to access and respond to African development issues through a combination of Development Education methodologies and the creative arts.

Tonia began with a background to PADEAP - an organisation that was set up in 1997 in Uganda as an education wing, mainly working with refugees in East Africa. Its London office was opened in 2002, with development awareness initiatives and involving mainly the adults in African Communities in discussions and seminars surrounding the issues in Africa.

The EC Capacity Building project is about building capacity and looks at ways to connect with the young people. Adults are working to develop awareness of Africa; however the youth are not involved and are not engaging. PADEAP's target group is 13-19 year olds and focuses on contemporary arts and issues, regularly holding events such as "Contemporary African Arts" in the Bernie Grant Centre near Tottenham Town Hall.

Tonia gave the project partners the opportunity to ask questions about the project.

How are you able to access the 13-19 year old groups? What is their main interest and engagement? What is the best way to engage this group?

The target group is of African Heritage, and of refugee background. The biggest challenge was that PADEAP is not a community based organisation in Haringey.

How did you find the group?

By working with other organisations and building partnerships with organisations who work with young people. Organisations would have carried out community outreach, however they didn't and so not many attended the workshops. PADEAP then contacted and found community groups they could work with by feeding into their workshops etc. There was limited success as organisations are territorial and are all fighting for funds. Haringey is also a much divided area with many "turf" issues, although the young people may not be directly involved they still feel threatened.

The first two workshops held had a small attendance and was not worth the resources, and so no more were done.

An Initiative youth centre in Haringey were attracted and interested in how PADEAP could work with the youth groups they work with. From this interest came the Summer University program, a free program for 10-18 year olds giving young people the opportunity to take part in activities they may

not usually do, incorporating vocational and study skills development. As many other summer workshops such as nail art and football etc are run in the area, PADEAP deliberately did not display issues and were subtle so as to compete with them; the workshops need to come across as interesting. They had a very positive response to this scheme. One advantage is that Tonia is aware of black artists, poets and musicians who can deliver in-depth workshops discussing development awareness and issues. People who can deliver issues and the arts can communicate it to the young people, drawing on African heritage and their roots and portraying it in a contemporary way.

Performers are brought into informal settings such as youth centres. The facilitators needed to be very good and of high quality as young people can come into the workshops and leave when they want to. Therefore the performers/artists need to be engaging. Youth workers were also there to engage with the young people and with the performers/artists – everyone is therefore learning.

Haringey is very divided, with a majority African and Afro-Caribbean population. PADEAP have been working with girls who are still subject to issues such as “turf”. In year 3 of the project, PADEAP will be looking more to working with mixed groups with workshops open to all young people.

How have you built the network of black artists?

The network has been built through personal interest and projects regarding the black arts such as music, poetry, drama and visual arts. Ongoing groups allow expansion and sustainability. Youth groups are able to go to schools and inform them of the projects going on.

Are the artists expensive?

The artists cost from £250 to £400 per day but they are worth it. They are inspirational and are able to get their message across, engaging young people into development awareness and the arts.

The first series of workshops had a charge to ensure young people attended and to ensure commitment. PADEAP’s future goals include finding ways to involve the workshops into the transition period for young people going on to high school. However once the project ends and funding stops, how do we continue?

What interests do the young people take in where their parents are from?

It starts from everyday experiences and what they are learning.