

WATERLOO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GROUP

PARENTS AND PROVIDERS NETWORK

FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

PREPARED BY

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Foreword/Introduction

This report focuses on the evaluation; quantifiable impact and the level of outputs achieved by the SRB funded Parents & Providers project developed by Waterloo Community Development Group.

CNT Associates were commissioned to undertake this work in March 2007.

CNT Associates wishes to thank David Fisher, Operations Manager, Julie Reynolds, Parents Outreach Worker from Waterloo Community Development Group and the parents from the Parents and Providers Network for their support in providing valuable information and anecdotes for the writing of this report.

The current Single Regeneration Budget (SRB 6) programme which ends in March 2007 was designed to have significant effect in terms of community impact and involvement and the original bid for SRB Challenge Funds reflected this.

This report, which was compiled using a range of methodology, reviews and evaluates the impact of the Parents and Providers network within the Waterloo area.

Executive Summary

The following evaluation outlined in this document focuses on the Parents & Providers Network Project, (PPN). The project was funded in the most part by SRB, (Single Regeneration Budget) funds and was developed and co-ordinated by Waterloo Community Development Group, (WCDG).

Throughout this evaluation we looked at the aims and objectives of PPN and evaluated the impact of the work undertaken and the legacy that the project will leave now that the funding is coming to an end. We assessed the progress and achievements of the project and looked at the way in which they overcame any unforeseen barriers.

The methodology used included, interviews with key worker staff, partners and funders of the project, as well as reviews of the SRB outputs, user testimony and desk research. The relevant information was gathered and assessed enabling us to measure the project as a whole including its future development and sustainability.

Evaluation Findings

The evaluation found that:

- The project was effectively managed by Waterloo Community Development Group
- PPN had not only succeeded in terms of its aims and outcomes but had also achieved in areas which had not been expected or previously identified
- The project had either achieved or greatly overachieved all its relevant SRB outputs
- There was a high degree of effective partnership and multi-agency working
- Effective use was made of volunteers, employers and employees
- High level of participation from people from Black Asian & Minority Ethnic Groups, Lone Parents and other 'hard to reach groups'
- The project enabled the empowerment of a number of otherwise isolated families the opportunity to interact and develop lasting relationships
- Many participants were sign-posted to other services or organisations within the local area
- A number of groups/services have been established in the Waterloo area providing easier access to families

Best Practise

A range of best practise was identified during the evaluation including:

- Informal networking approach- which paid dividends in terms of project commitment and partnership working
- Effective multi-agency working between the partnership and other agencies including, health visitors, local schools, family centres, baby clinics and others
- Parents were actively encouraged to take ownership of the services developed and provided with the support and training needed to enable them to do this
- A range of activities were provided that promoted inclusion and interaction of the local community as a whole

Areas for Further Development

Now that PPN has achieved both its aims and the outputs as required by SRB funding, the parents who have taken over the project need ensure its long-term sustainability. Some of the areas which need to be considered are:-

- More strategic development work with larger potential partners such as the local authorities, the Primary Care Trusts and others
- Further development of the PPN Communication Strategy to ensure the ongoing celebration of achievement – further newsletters, informative leaflets and further development of the website
- Plans for a development/fundraising strategy to ensure the project is sustainable
- PPN needs to ensure that it continues to be engaged with local provision and the ongoing development of the Waterloo Community Coalition (the exit strategy for WCRT)
- Further funding applications have been submitted however the results of these are still undecided

Conclusions

The overall findings of the evaluation have proved that the project has successfully achieved all of the aims and targets it had previously set out to do. It also enjoyed the highlights of over achieving on many of the identified SRB outputs.

Through the hard work and dedication of the Parents & Providers Network team a lasting legacy has been achieved by way of parent led groups and services.

Waterloo Area – Background Information

The Waterloo area covers both Lambeth and Southwark administrative boundaries and is made up of a diverse community: according to the 2001 census, there are six mainstream religions in the area with 42% of residents from a non-white background and/or not born in the United Kingdom.

The area although suffering from pockets of severe deprivation (with 44% of residents unemployed), is just outside the bottom 10% of wards on the index of multiple deprivation, and so missed out on the Sure Start Programme – with their packages of support offered to local parents and children.

Recent statistics show that there are 8968 residents in the Waterloo area, with 436 babies/children under five with the Lambeth area having the greatest number of looked after children in London. Lambeth also has the third highest teenage pregnancy rate in Europe.

In the Waterloo area, there is also a lack of open space available (which includes parks, play areas etc) – with only 10% of open space land use compared to 20% in the Westminster area.

In the light of all these statistics, and as a result of research carried out by Waterloo Community Development Group (WCDG) over the previous two-year period (i.e. Five available places with three registered childminders to cover the 484 children aged 0 – 4 years in the Bishops Ward alone), The Parents and Providers Forum was initially set up in May 2005.

Parents and Providers Network - Background Information

PPN's central aim was to develop a Waterloo-wide strategy and consultation forum that would link up young parents/carers of young children across the numerous children and family services providers. Its mission was that the Waterloo Parent and Carers Network would provide a hub that would gather relevant information for parents on local services and provide a range of information on support agencies, strategies and much more. It would also offer an opportunity for parents to come together and share their experiences, skills and knowledge.

The aim of the project covered the following key areas: -

Participation

- To engage with parents and carers who are excluded or underrepresented
- To assist parents and carers in accessing the support and information they need
- To enable parents and carers have their say on future services

Provision

- To ensure that services reflect the needs of parents and carers
- To identify gaps in service
- To ensure services are inclusive

Positive Change

- To build confidence and motivation
- To breakdown barriers
- To identify opportunities for parents and carers

The underlying philosophy of the project was to work with local parents, to ensure that people know where and how to access the support they may need: that with appropriate support the challenge of becoming a new parent is seen as an opportunity for positive change. This would also include the following areas of support:-

- Identify possible return to work routes available to parents with young children through link up with the Opening Doors project
- Through the link with Opening Doors, manage a change in career path and/or help with accessing paid employment
- Work in partnership with parents and other agencies to offer support to overcome language and cultural barriers
- Work in partnership with parents and other agencies to offer support to overcome post natal depression, or feelings of inadequacy and lack of confidence or motivation.

The Parents & Provider's Forum was also established to encourage an understanding of parents and young family's needs and opportunities in respect to new and current services.

It was to enable less advantaged parents increased access to existing opportunities and services through the forum and to highlight regeneration opportunities within the Waterloo area thus providing training and child care support for parents wanting to enhance their parenting and work based skills.

The Forum was also expected to help identify unmet needs and ways of addressing those needs including maximising the use of and improving co-ordination between existing services/ activities, as well as proposals for new services and facilities needed in the area.

The Providers Partnership

Through research WCDG identified that there was a large gap between local need and provision in relation to childcare, health visitors and support groups and that the provision that was available was not need-driven and had a lack of customer focus. It was felt that instead of being strategically informed, provision had become funding and target focussed.

It was to address these issues that WCDG launched "The Providers Partnership". This partnership which meets on a quarterly basis, prior to the Parents and Providers Forum, is an opportunity for those local service providers working within both Lambeth and Southwark to meet with each other and also with representatives from both the aforementioned London Boroughs.

Project Impact and Evaluation

The aim of the Forum was that it would develop from two initial aspects:

1. A Parents Network – providing a specific point of contact/ base - providing the following services:

- The means for local parents and carers to pool their skills, knowledge and time
- Events and activities as means to consult with local parents to ensure inclusion in local development and regeneration projects
- Training for local parents to enable them to participate more effectively in civic life, to access appropriate services more easily, to meet other young parents/carers of young children in the area, to share knowledge of parenting skills, and to create confidence
- A monthly newsletter/ website (or other means of communicating local activity) covering Mon-Sun activities/services for young families in Waterloo
- An opportunity for parent participation in project development, mother and baby groups, and a Healthy Start Clinic service in Waterloo through liaison with the Primary Care Trust and local health services.

2. A Providers Strategic Partnership:

- Bring together statutory, private and voluntary sector to enable better engagement between sector
- Share knowledge, best practise, planning
- Forge new partnerships and develop existing links
- Consider provision strategically and holistically to impact upon decisions and delivery
- Develop new ways of working with customers through the Parent's Network
- Support and progress specific projects, presenting opportunities for making collective bids for identified gaps in services.

Projects and Activities

Training

The parents and providers network both provided and sign-posted parents to free local training opportunities. Training courses ranged from First Aid – (Appointment Person or Paediatric), to Risk Assessment, Food Hygiene and Child Protection.

The courses were run on a first come first serve basis with access to child-care which enabled parents with young children the opportunity to attend. Child-care was provided in-house, when possible, with supervision by a fully qualified and registered childminders, thus providing a sense of security and freedom for those parents attending the course.

The results of these opportunities included:

- Sixty-nine parents accessing training
- One parent going on to full time employment
- One parent setting up and opening their own business which is still trading
- One parent accessing an NVQ in childcare
- One parent in the development stages of a mobile crèche facility
- A number of parents accessing volunteering opportunities

A number of the above were made possible by the close links made by the project with other opportunities such as the Waterloo Opening Doors project.

Six weekly newsletters - Communications Group

Although not identified as an output in the initial proposal, it was a milestone, work with the parents identified the need for regular news updates in order to ensure that local people were aware of the services of the Waterloo Parents and Providers Project. As a direct result of this need a communications group was set up. This group consisted of eight users and beneficiaries as well as the WCDG Families Outreach Worker. This ensured that all involved had an input into any communications that were produced and supported the ethics of WCDG to empower local parents to “do it for themselves” and meant that WCDG were “putting parents at the heart of Waterloo”.

There have been no less than twelve community newsletters produced on a six-weekly basis. They incorporate a range of information on local community issues. This includes news and local events, up and coming initiatives, environmental/development issues, a recipe corner, advertises volunteering opportunities, training workshops, useful contacts, and a complete section providing details of what’s on over the following weeks in Waterloo. The

majority of these articles are written and produced by parents themselves, and everyone is encouraged to have an input.

The newsletter also informs parents of the details of the next Waterloo Parents Networking meeting.

The communications group is also responsible for the production of all of the information leaflets produced by WCDG in relation to the various activities of the Parents and Providers Project.

The newsletter which is distributed directly to over 200 parents and with another 200 being distributed through health visitors, clinics, local shops and the library will continue to be produced after the life of the project. Although funding has not been secured to aid this WCDG will continue to support its survival.

Waterloo "Baby and You" Drop In

The Waterloo "Baby and You" Group is a parent-led project which is open for parents with babies from 0 to 18 months. This provides an opportunity for new parents to meet on a weekly basis at the community room of "Buffer Bear" nursery. A Health Visitor (either from Lambeth or Southwark) attends the group on a monthly basis for informal chats, baby weigh in and support workshops, which are offered free of charge. These workshops included Baby Massage, Sleep and Routine advice, advice and guidance on nutrition and weaning, communicating with your baby and a session called musical steps which encourages parents to interact with their child through music and rhyme. Many of these sessions carry fact sheets, which have also been made available to parents in a number of languages. This project also developed a weaning recipe book. As well as direct services or sessions, this group enables parents to meet with other like-minded parents and discuss the trials and tribulations of having a young baby.

With the aid of parent volunteers working on a rota system the group to continue to meet after the life of the project.

Cinema-tastic

The Cinema-tastic club provides families with the opportunity to attend shows at both the cinema and the theatre free of charge. It also keeps up to date with special offers and community events held by all the cinemas in the Waterloo area. Because of the opportunities this club provides, over 450 tickets have been donated allowing families to enjoy what can be an unaffordable experience.

Recently the Parents and Providers project has been working with the British Film Industry National Film Theatre and are part of the NFT's parent baby and parent toddler cinema. The club will continue to benefit families with work underway to open both a parent and baby & a parent and toddler session in May 2007, which will provide regular access for all.

Outings and Visits

PPN has also worked in partnership with other local organisations such as SE1 United, Coin Street Family & Children's Centre and Waterloo Green Trust to provide a range of outings and visits for the parents and children that attend the network. There have been Teddy Bear Picnics, museum visits, a river cruise and visit to Somerset House, Ice Skating, London Eye visit, Art Galleries and a trip to the seaside. Most of the parents & children who have taken part in these outings would not have had an opportunity to visit some of the places that PPN have offered, some of the parents felt that they were not "accessible" or were too expensive. This has also supported and developed local parents culturally and promoted community cohesion.

Project Impact

Partnership Working

Throughout the duration of the project, WCDG has worked with a range of local organisations and agencies, which has assisted in the success of the project. PPN forged partnerships with local museums, galleries such as the Tate and theatres, which has supported the cultural theme. This partnership work has resulted in a massive increase in private sector leverage which has risen by approximately 370% more than expected and which accounted for the increase in new cultural opportunities. It has also allowed PPN to work with a range of local groups on projects such as the Baby & You Group – supported by Waterloo Green Trust – growing flowers and tomatoes. A series of 4 healthy living bear themed picnics were held on millennium green in partnership with Waterloo Green Trust, 3 healthy living sessions with Blackfriars Settlement, 3 with SE1 United and also supported the Coin Street family and Children's Centre, Family Links sessions.

Best Practice

This evaluation has identified a range of best practice utilised throughout the delivery of the project including the informal networking approach used by the WCDG outreach worker. This has encouraged parents to become engaged with the project, allowed parents the freedom to be involved when it was feasible for them and has in the longer term gained their commitment to the project.

This project has also been the forum for development of a range of relationships that are also invaluable – from the parents meeting up together

and forging friendships to the parents meeting local statutory providers and being able to have meaningful dialogue.

Parents have also been actively encouraged to take ownership of the services developed and provided with the support and training needed to enable them to do this. This has not only provided personal development and built confidence but has also supported the project after March 2007.

Finally the range of activities that PPN provided and their partnership approach promoted inclusion, supported community cohesion and the interaction of the Waterloo Community as a whole.

Successes

This project boasts numerous successes including bringing together the community whatever their cultural, religious or ethnic background. By providing a support network to parents that would have been isolated if not for this project, it has meant that local parents have forged relationships and friendships which will continue to thrive even if future funding is not found. Families have been given the knowledge and opportunity to participate in building a future for themselves and others who experience the trials and tribulations which can diminish the heart of any community.

Conclusions

The overall findings of the evaluation have proved that the project has successfully achieved all of the aims and targets it had previously set out to do. It also enjoyed the highlights of over achieving on many of the identified SRB outputs.

This project has not only achieved the aims and target set out within the SRB funding remit, but has also achieved numerous "softer" targets which are sometimes the way in which to overcome barriers to inclusion.

This project has ensured local peoples' involvement and empowerment; it has supported an informal network and sign-posted to other networks and has brought some of the parents and children of Waterloo together. It has also bridged the cultural barriers to bring parents and carers from 33 countries together to be actively involved in the Parents and Providers Network.

Through the hard work and dedication of the Parents & Providers Network team a lasting legacy has been achieved by way of parent led groups and services.

In closing, the impact of the project can be summed up in the comment of one of the parents who not only said that PPN support was fundamental but went on to say "The Parents & Providers Network helped local parents to get out to meet and get to know each other, also to access services and events –

it has enabled local parents to feel they are valued, worthwhile and that there is a way to get support organised”.

OUTPUTS

Below are the specified SRB funder’s outputs and target that the project agreed to produce throughout the life of the project. The final totals maybe slightly different as this report was written prior to the end return being completed.

OUTPUT	TARGET NO.	ACHIEVED NO.	COMMENTS
Local jobs created	1.4	1.4	Training & volunteering opportunities have contributed to these results.
Local people given access to new health opportunities	96	400	The project has had exceptional results in this area. They have not only obtained their target, but exceeded it by a large margin.
Local people given access to new cultural opportunities	40	739	This was by far the projects greatest achievement, exceeding their target by nearly 700. one reason for this was the work of the cinema-tastic group
Voluntary organisations supported	0	4	
Community groups supported	0	2	
Individuals employed in voluntary work	100	125	
Capacity building initiatives carried out	0	8	
New child care places provided	228	298	Once again an over achievement

As well as the above, the project has achieved numerous soft outputs that were not identified in the original proposal. These have been achieved as a direct result of work undertaken by the staff, volunteers and parents of the Parents & Providers Network.

ADDITIONAL OUTPUTS ACHIEVED	COMMENTS
Isolated parents befriended	Parents were met at their homes and accompanied to groups for support
ESOL courses run	A ten week ESOL course was ran
Individuals obtaining ESOL support	15 parents attended ESOL training
Further funding bids submitted	Big Lottery (reaching communities) & Tesco's Trust
Isolated families interacting with other families in similar situations as themselves	Parents were actively encouraged to "pair up" with other parents
Parents given the confidence to deliver more positive parenting	Parents were given the chance to access information and services which enabled them to become more confident in their own abilities
Children displaying more relaxed behaviour	Parents being supported became more relaxed which was displayed in the children's behaviour
Services are more accessible	The network encouraged service providers to go out into the community and engage parents rather than waiting for the parents to come to them
Over 100 parents given one to one support	The projects outreach worker provided one to one support
Parents developed social relationships	Many of the parents meet outside of the groups on a regular basis
Families accessing opportunities	Many families were given the opportunity to participate in activities they would not normally be able to afford such as, theatre and cinema trips
Parents with disabilities valued	Parents with disabilities were actively encouraged to take part in activities
Parents group obtained £5000 for play equipment for local school reception class	Johanna School supported the parents in a bid

There are many more additional benefits to the project which we have not mentioned, however the greatest aspect was that parents have been provided with the opportunity to interact and feel valued.

Appendix 1

List of organisations and people consulted

David Fisher	WCDG
Julie Reynolds	WCDG
Parents of the PPN	

Appendix 2

List of Partnership Organisations

- BA London Eye
- Blackfriars Settlement
- Buffer Bear Neighbourhood Nursery
- Coin Street Family and Children's Centre
- Family Link
- Geraldine Mary Harmsworth 1 O'clock club
- Great Lakes African Women's Network
- Hullabaloo
- Imperial War Museum
- Johanna School
- London Borough – Lambeth
- London Borough – Southwark
- Morely College
- Museum of Garden History
- National Film Theatre
- Old Vic
- Primary Care Trust
- SE1 United
- South Bank Centre
- Tate Modern
- TRA's
- Waterloo Action Centre
- Waterloo Arts and Events Network
- Waterloo Community Regeneration Trust
- Waterloo Gingerbread
- Waterloo Green Trust
- Waterloo Job Shop
- Young Vic