

## European Commission Agrees UK Framework

On 30 July 2007, the UK Government reached agreement with the European Union Regional Policy Commissioner, Danuta Hübner, and European Union Employment and Social Affairs Commissioner, Vladimír Špidla, on the UK National Plan and Priorities for Cohesion Policy 2007-2013. The UK National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) details a £6.7 billion programme over 7 years in line with the Lisbon Strategy for growth and jobs.

Danuta Hübner said: "This is good news – we have approved the UK's framework, which I know has strong support within the country after a thorough public consultation process. I am particularly impressed at the UK authorities' commitment to increasing investment in support of the EU's Agenda for Growth and Jobs."

Commissioner Špidla added: "The UK's strategy shows strong commitment to improving investment in human resources. Creating more and better jobs is at the heart of the European reform agenda. The UK's priorities will enable the workforce to upgrade its skills, boosting employment and enabling people to adapt to changing circumstances more easily."

The Government plans to act on the broad priorities set out in the Framework with 22 Operational Programmes. Actions to promote the Framework priorities come under the following headings and will help to support national strategies:



The Prince of Wales visit to Roots and Shoots, see page 3

- **Enterprise and Innovation:** Promoting research, knowledge transfer and commercialisation of new products and services, encouraging entrepreneurship and supporting a thriving small and medium sized enterprises sector;
- **Skills and Employment:** Training a skilled, adaptable workforce, tackling obstacles in the workplace and supporting employment opportunities for all. The UK has already exceeded the three Lisbon employment targets (70% overall employment rate, 50% older worker employment rate, 60% female employment rate). The Government's aim is to reach an employment rate

of 80% of the working-age population. To achieve this, a further 2.3 million people need to be recruited into work.

- **Environmental and Community Sustainability:** Encouraging innovation to support sustainability, ensuring sustainable development, production and consumption and promoting social and economic cohesion in local economies, including urban and rural areas. Programmes should support the UK Climate Change Programme, which emphasises the need for carbon reduction to go hand-in-hand with boosting competitiveness and economic growth.

The Framework provides the structure within which more detailed Operational Programmes are continuing to be negotiated with the Commission: at the national level, for the European Social Fund; and, at the regional level, for the European Regional Development Fund.

Information on the programming state of play can be found on the regularly updated "scoreboard" kept on the European Commission's website [www.ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/index\\_en.htm](http://www.ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/index_en.htm) ■

### Commentary

Ray Phillips

#### The Pace Quickens!

Light is beginning to appear at the end of the tunnel. After what have seemed to be interminable months of waiting, Government negotiations with the European Commission are now focusing down on the detail of the Operational Programmes for ESF and ERDF.

In London, public consultation closed at the end of July on the draft London ESF Regional Framework. The duly revised Framework was "signed off" by the Mayor, in August, and forwarded for approval to the Government's ESF Division in September, when the Commission is expected to agree the England ESF Operational Programme.

Meanwhile, arrangements are being finalised to establish the 4 Co-Financing Organisations for the London ESF Programme: Learning & Skills Council (56%); Department for Work & Pensions (24%); London Development Agency (12%); and London Councils (4%). Attention is being given to the production of Prospectuses that will detail the respective coverage of each CFO. These will

be published with the anticipated launch of the Programme in October.

With regard to the LSC and DWP programmes, applicant organisations must have successfully submitted a Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ). If you need more information on this, please contact the ESF Team at LVSTC.

Progress on ERDF is less advanced. The London Operational Programme, revised in the light of earlier public consultations, was "admitted" by the European Commission in July and is now subject to detailed negotiations. These are expected to conclude in November. Given the less geographically focused nature of this Programme than Objective 2, current attention is being given to the development of appropriate delivery infrastructure. LVSTC has been invited to a meeting for infrastructure organisations being convened by the Mayor, in September, and will report back to sector providers.

Inevitably, with all the formal and informal preparations underway for both ESF & ERDF, we're challenged as a sector to be suitably placed when the starting guns are fired. LVSTC is seeking to meet this challenge in several ways:

- Website ~ via regular updated information under Agenda 2007
- London Euroscene Byte-size e-Bulletin ~ (contact Ian Foster) published every 4-6 weeks
- London Euroscene ~ bi-monthly with an Agenda 2007 Special in October
- ESF & ERDF Focus Groups ~ convened monthly by the ESF & ERDF Teams at Bromley Hall

Please don't hesitate to get in touch and contribute to any of the above. As sector providers, we need to work together and with partners in other sectors to fulfil the programme promise on "diversity"

**Now is the time to stand and be counted!**

### london euroscene bytesize

highlighting the latest news on the Structural Funds [ESF & ERDF], EU policy, Sector news and much more...

To make sure that you receive this exciting new e-bulletin, then please go to [www.lvstc.org.uk/](http://www.lvstc.org.uk/) mailinglist to join our mailing list.

# CEEP: Quality Finance Workshop

Karin Podschun

The CEEP team ran a one day intensive Quality Finance workshop on Wednesday 4 July 2007 for its members. It gave participants a broad based introduction to fundraising and budgeting techniques together with an opportunity to learn how to raise finances for their organisations.

The event took place at Stifford TJRS TRA Community Centre, the premises of Stifford TJRS (a CEEP Member) who were excellent hosts. Not only did they ensure that the event went smoothly but also provided a delicious lunch prepared by women from the local community.

The training was facilitated by Kwasi Ofei, the CEEP Coordinator, and was delivered in two sessions. The first session focussed on fundraising. Participants learnt how to develop a fundraising strategy, how to identify sources of funding and how to access funds. They were given the opportunity to examine different planning tools and test them in a practical exercise.

After lunch, in the second session the facilitator explained the different types of budgets and different budgeting techniques. The participants then went on to explore the different elements of budget costs, analyse cost behaviour and how to calculate a project unit cost. Participants of the workshop found the accompanying exercise particularly useful since they were able to apply their understanding of the sessions to prepare a realistic project budget for an ESF Funding application.

Feedback from the Quality Finance workshop has been overwhelmingly positive. Participants felt that the day



provided an opportunity to gain theoretical information as well as the ability to apply the knowledge gained in practical exercises. Since then, CEEP has been asked to deliver the training internally to several CEEP members and due to overwhelming demand has decided to repeat the workshop on 21 November 2007.

CEEP are also running the following workshops: Strategic Thinking and Business Planning, Developing an ICT Policy, Effective Governance, Developing and Working in Partnership/Consortia. CEEP events are

specifically targeted for CEEP members, BAMER groups. However, non - BAMER group with large numbers of beneficiaries drawn from BAMER communities are welcome to attend our events.

To book onto any of these workshops please visit our website at [www.lvstc.org.uk/ceep\\_events.php](http://www.lvstc.org.uk/ceep_events.php) or contact the CEEP team at LVSTC. ■

volunteering is becoming a rewarding experience and it could be a valuable opportunity for beneficiaries who have completed their training received through diverse ESF funded projects to progress and brush up their work skills and gain new experience. The Met Volunteer Programme welcomes volunteers from all backgrounds; however there are certain key criteria that have to be met before they can consider an applicant: the potential volunteer has to be over 18, has to be a permanent resident in the UK for the past three continuous years and has to currently live or work in one of the Metropolitan boroughs.

To receive more information about the programme please contact your local Met Volunteer Programme Co-ordinator. Details can be found at: <http://www.metpolicecareers.co.uk/default.asp?action=article&ID=77> ■

## The European Parliament on your radar

MEPs returned to work at the end of August. Among the major legislative reports due for adoption this autumn:

**Consumer Credit Directive** - 2nd reading;  
**Railways** (passenger compensation + liberalisation of networks) - 3rd reading;  
**Aviation emissions in the Emissions Trading Scheme** - 1st reading;  
**European Institute for Technology** - 1st reading;  
**Directive on the control of the use and possession of firearms** - 1st reading;  
**Directive on marketing of products** - 1st reading;  
**Sanctions on employers using illegal immigrants** - 1st reading;  
**Use of sustainable pesticides** - 1st reading;  
**Airport charges** - 1st reading.

# Volunteers Breaking Traditional Stereotypes

Karin Podschun

Going voluntarily – The London Employer Coalition's 'MET Volunteer Programme'

**Volunteers are breaking down the traditional stereotypes and providing crucial links to community policing.**

The London Employer Coalition is a confederation of business leaders from companies such as British Gas, Sainsburys and Compass, as well as public sector employers like Transport for London. It also includes senior representatives of London's main employment and skills agencies, including Jobcentre Plus and the LSC. It brings the employer's perspective to the process of getting disadvantaged Londoners off benefits and into sustainable work. Its core business is to build long term relationships between employment and skills providers and employers. The aim is to create a win-win situation in which providers get jobs for their customers, and employers get good staff.

As part of this strategy of being the deal-maker for welfare-to-work in London, the London Employer Coalition is also promoting a range of volunteering initiatives including the 'MET Volunteer Programme'. It

has been described by Volunteering England, as "The best volunteer programme of its kind in the public sector". The programme has proven very successful since its introduction in 2001, boasting more than 500 volunteers in all London's boroughs. The aim is to match members of the community with their local police to provide volunteers to support them and ultimately to increase the contact between local communities and the police.

Volunteers come from very different backgrounds with a range of experience and bring with them a wealth of information and perhaps identify areas of concern or cultural issues which may help with policing in that borough. Volunteers who join the programme receive training to fulfil their roles. These vary from supporting safer neighbourhood teams, assisting at front counters, general administration, press office support, neighbourhood watch support and police cadets support. Participants are encouraged to bring their life skills and coordinators will assess these skills to see if a volunteer can be suitably matched to a role in their borough.

The Metropolitan Police is aiming to increase the number of volunteers to 3000 for 2008 and is actively recruiting. From being a minor role for backroom staff,

# Prince Praises Eco-Charity's 'Marvellous' Work

Lindsay Swan, Roots and Shoots

**The Prince of Wales praised the 'marvellous' work of *Roots and Shoots*, the south London charity which is celebrating 25 years of providing vocational training to disadvantaged young people from Lambeth and Southwark.**

The Prince was shown round the charity's acclaimed half acre wild garden and new eco-building by founder and manager Linda Phillips and patron Kate Hoey MP, meeting trainees, staff and supporters.

He watched as children from a local nursery and primary school observed and drew the insects which flourish in the wildlife meadow and met Clive Watson, a member of the London Beekeepers' Association, whose base is at *Roots and Shoots*.

The trainees, who spend a year at *Roots and Shoots* working towards an NVQ in horticulture or retail (part funded by ESF), showed the Prince their preparations for the forthcoming Open Weekend. He heard about the work experience gained by horticultural trainees at Buckingham Palace and Mark Lane, Buckingham Palace and Clarence House



gardens manager was among the guests.

HRH toured the £1.3 million eco-building, the hub of *Roots and Shoots*' activities. Built in wood from sustainable sources, with sheep's wool insulation, it has a sedum roof and photovoltaic panels, generating all the charity's own electricity with some left over to sell through the National Grid. Rainwater is collected for the WCs and for the building's many interesting and exotic plants.

The late Queen Mother visited *Roots and Shoots* in 1988 and the Prince reflected on how amazed his grandmother would have been to see how it has grown. He commented particularly on the "Cornish

echiums which have spread over this sub-tropical part of Lambeth," before unveiling a commemorative plaque and declaring the eco-building officially open.

*"We are thrilled to welcome His Royal Highness to **Roots and Shoots** in our silver anniversary year and to show our wonderful new building and the wild garden at its summer best," said Linda Phillips. "The trainees have all enjoyed telling him about their work."*

A new website [www.rootsandshoots.org.uk](http://www.rootsandshoots.org.uk) has been launched, coinciding with the Royal visit. ■



Angela Heap

**The brand new sports and community building in Stonebridge West London is now completed. The Pavilion, costing £2.8 million, opened in January 2007. The Pavilion was funded through a variety of means, with ERDF playing its part in the overall funding package!**

To mark the official opening a football tournament and sports taster session took place on 18 February 2007 at Stonebridge Recreation Ground, Hillside, London NW10 8LW.

The football match involved a celebrities' team lead by Luther Blissett - former England, Watford and AC Milan player and now a football pundit - versus a locals' pavilion team, a cross bar challenge, football shooting speed tunnel, basket ball and tennis as well as a tour of the building.

## Stonebridge Pavilion - Recreation Jubilation 2

Hillside Housing Trust received the go-ahead for the major development works on Stonebridge Recreation Ground following a Brent Council planning meeting in early November 2005. Nigel Swanton, Principal Development Manager at Hillside said: "We have spent three years working closely with the local community and funding agencies to achieve this successful outcome."

The building and land development consists of:

- a wonderful new pavilion housing a reception area, office, changing rooms, café, multi-purpose hall, training rooms and viewing terrace
- state-of-the-art artificial sports pitches (Multi-Use Games Areas) with new floodlighting and fencing
- a refurbished grass pitch
- a cycle route

Work on The Pavilion and artificial sports pitches took 12 months to finish.

The Pavilion development brought in more than £1.5 million of external funding from the following stakeholders - Football Foundation, European Regional

Development Fund (ERDF), Big Lottery Fund, London Marathon Charitable Trust, The Veolia Environmental Trust, Sport England and London Borough of Brent. Stonebridge Housing Action Trust funded the shortfall in development and building costs. The project contractor was Durkan Pudelek Limited assisted by Eger Architects.

For further information please contact Ade Adeniji, Hillside Housing Trust, Communications Officer, on: Tel: 020 8963 4978 Email: [ade.adeniji@hillsidehousing.co.uk](mailto:ade.adeniji@hillsidehousing.co.uk) ■



# The Limehouse Project: Delivering Employment Results

Sajeda Qureshi, Limehouse Project

**The Limehouse Project (LHP) launched the LiWETE Learning To Employment 2 Programme under the European Social Fund on 1 April 2005 and ran the project until 31 March 2006.**

The Project fell under Priority 1 – Community Economic Development and Measure 1.3 – Community Skills Development.

The Limehouse Project (LHP) is a grass-roots community voluntary sector organisation, which has worked in particular with the local Bangladeshi community for over two decades. It is based in Limehouse, Tower Hamlets and it manages and delivers an extensive range of services designed to implement the organisation's mission

*"To alleviate the difficulties and help to realise the aspirations of the most disadvantaged members of local communities, particularly those from ethnic minority origin, women, young people and children"*

Part of the LHP services includes facilitating a range of education and training programmes designed to enhance trainees social integration and employability. Trainees are taken from the Black, Minority and Ethnic communities and are female only. The aim of the training programme is to engage with women from the BME communities who for various reasons including social exclusion, economic inactivity or cultural and religious barriers find it difficult to access mainstream training facilities. The Limehouse Project Training Team, LiWETE (Limehouse Women's Education, Training & Employment) deal specifically at making the transition into employment as stress free as possible.

Most of their beneficiaries are unemployed local women from BME communities, and a large proportion is from the Bangladeshi community. Many of these women also speak little or no English. They conduct outreach sessions to be able to engage these women in their training programme, a difficult feat as most have spent years excluded from the training and educational world because of social, economic or cultural reasons.

Some of the issues faced by their clients include reluctance to engage in training because of prior negative experience or lack of confidence; language problems (either specifically with English or generally, i.e. literacy issues); lack of access to support in developing self-esteem and basic life-skills, such as readiness to attend training sessions, ability to manage

time, and lack of confidence in working with others outside the family environment. Little access to 'first step' learning programmes that will help develop confidence and facilitate progression to more focused, skills-based learning is also a major hurdle.

Under the ESF Project the Limehouse Project worked closely with local Bangladeshi residents to engage some of the most socially and financially excluded Bangladeshi women in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets in training to improve their access to the labour market. The need for such a project is evident from the fact that women from within this sector are disadvantaged because:

- They have a broad range of cultural and religious sensitivities which prevent them from accessing training as they feel these will not be respected by training agencies.
- Lack of self-confidence, discomfort in unfamiliar surroundings and a general unwillingness to travel far means that none of these women are prepared to attend agencies in the mainstream training provision.
- Lack of English language skills, means they are unlikely to be able to access mainstream training institutions which cater to their particular cultural needs as speakers of languages other than English
- No access to free childcare can make it difficult for women with young children to leave the house and access training in the day-time.

Limehouse Project focused completely on unemployed BME local women (16+), and specifically Bangladeshi women. They provided in-house standard classroom training and progression mentoring (support on the transition into employment). They also provided work placements with relevant employers and an 'after-care' service.

Limehouse Projects target over one year period was to assist 105 women to improve their employment and social skills necessary to enter the employment market.

The tailored support sessions provided workshops such as Effective Parenting course, confidence-building workshops and basic skills development in areas such as time-management, language for the workplace and even the organisation of outings by public transport for those women who had no experience of independent travel. The LiWETE

Learning to Employment Project displayed direct linkages to ESF activities in the Objective 2 area by delivering both a strategy and a commitment to increase the employability of individuals focusing on improving the skills of unemployed Bangladeshi women with low skills experiencing multiple deprivation and exclusion within the labour market.

All of the learners developed their training and vastly improved their social skills and confidence. A number of beneficiaries went into employment as a direct result of the assistance provided by the Limehouse Project, and others now have the confidence to further develop their skills by accessing training provisions which they previously believed to be unobtainable. This success was all possible as a result of ESF funding. ■

## UK MEPs will be leading on a number of reports this autumn, including:

North West Lib Dem, Chris Davies on **vehicle emissions** (vote October; plenary vote November);  
London Cons. Charles Tannock on **EU neighbourhood policy** (vote October; plenary vote November);  
W. Mids Lib Dem. Liz Lynne on **social reality stocktaking** (vote October; plenary November);  
N.E. Lib Dem. Fiona Hall on **energy efficiency action plans** (vote November; plenary January 2008);  
E. Mids. Labour Glenis Willmott on **EU health & safety strategy** (Committee vote December; plenary January 2008);  
W. Mids. Labour Neena Gill has been appointed rapporteur on **quality of life for older people** - no timing yet available;  
South East Labour Peter Skinner has been appointed rapporteur on the **Solvency II Directive** - no timing yet available.

*All timings are subject to change*

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*Euroscene is edited by Humera Gondal. Views expressed in Euroscene are not necessarily those of LVSTC.*

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