

Race and Integration

What is Equal?

The Equal Programme is a European Social Fund (ESF) initiative which operates across all of the European Union. The Programme aims to develop and test new ways of challenging discrimination and inequalities in the labour market, both for those in work and for those seeking work.

Equal has acted as a learning platform, developing innovative ways of tackling existing labour market problems. It has presented evidence based outcomes which could be adopted by policy makers and delivery agents at local, regional, national and European levels.

The partnership approach in Equal is based around a model of Development Partnerships (DPs), consisting of organisations with common interests and different expertise, working collaboratively to deliver shared aims and objectives.

www.equal.ecotec.co.uk

www.equal-works.com

www.esf.gov.uk



The 'What Works in Community Cohesion' Research Study conducted for the Department for Communities and Local Government and the Commission on Integration and Cohesion, recognises that community cohesion is a multi-faceted concept. There appears to be a consensus that cohesion relates to encouraging positive relationships between different groups and policies to promote meaningful interaction are often a key part of local cohesion strategies. In some areas there is a particular focus on socio-economic well-being and empowerment. Cohesion is multi-faceted - positive relationships, equal life chances, civic engagement and participation, and common vision and values are all part of the integration and cohesion process. Policy makers must be constantly vigilant to the complexity of how different dimensions of community structure interact and compete.

A focus on supporting new arrivals is important – their lack of knowledge of the country and local area means they are among the groups most at risk from social exclusion. They are often groups that are very visible and around whom tensions can build within established communities. Tailored and innovative approaches – targeted at specific groups and individual neighbourhoods – are central to approaches to support target groups needs. Stakeholders have identified a broad range of approaches to developing community cohesion that have a plausible evidence base. The key features stressed in current research study can be summarised as having clear designated leadership and responsibility for taking cohesion forward, clear statement of vision and values that all can sign up to and informs work, clear planning, and monitoring of cohesion-related initiatives and programmes involving the community, effective partnership working across and between public, private, voluntary, community and faith groups and encourage best practice to be mainstreamed in key service areas.

For more info see www.communities.gov.uk/documents/communities/pdf/whatworks

A number of Equal DPs have developed innovative approaches towards tackling social exclusion and encouraging a cohesive response towards developing inclusive employment practices.

Key Messages

- A holistic approach has come together to provide information advice and guidance. This integrated approach has helped address migrants' employability as well as helping them with their other needs
- Migrants and refugees may have previous qualifications, skills, experience and training which need to be recognised so that they can work in a role they are happy and confident with. At present there is a mis-match of skills to jobs
- New arrivals have to be involved in discussions on issues that have a direct impact on their lives. By taking on board the views of individuals, more effective policies on their social and vocational integration can be developed
- Mainstream service providers need to better understand the different needs of groups that suffer from discrimination and to appreciate the diversity within such groups to facilitate their integration
- Employers can be engaged by offering incentives through taxation, grants and training support. This can encourage employers to offer and encourage the migrant workers to gain experience, skills assessment and training and signposting

Case Studies

NIACE

A project developed by NIACE in the East Midlands, called Upskill, has pioneered the development of occupationally specific skills adaptation programmes in accountancy, administration and health and social care. This has helped migrants and refugees to adapt previous overseas skills or attain new skills in these fields. This approach has resulted in the development of occupational ESOL courses, IAG and long term personal advisor support methodologies together with training provider and employer engagement strategies to facilitate entry into training, work experience and employment.

For further information please see www.niace.org.uk

ASPIRE

The Aspire DP has used a combination of theatre, music and "actuality" (recorded voices captured by video or audio), to develop entertaining and thought-provoking issue-led productions based on the real-life experiences of disenfranchised sections of society. This activity aimed to combat negative stereotyping and promote social integration.

The focus on artistic solutions helped to raise awareness, change stereotypes, generate interactions and improve community cohesion. Artistic solutions were seen by the DP as the easiest way to bring people together.

For further information please see www.aspire-birmingham.org.uk