



LONDON
DEVELOPMENT
AGENCY

OOPS 50+ Project
Reference Number - PLEASE ADD
Final Evaluation

Commissioned by
THIRD AGE FOUNDATION



from

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Third Age Foundation (TAF), based in Hammersmith West London, is a specialist training organisation that has been instrumental since 1993, in delivering holistic personal development to 5000+ disadvantaged clients 40+ and 50+ and upskilling them in information technology skills (ICT), in order to facilitate their progression back into work and second level lifelong training.
- 1.2 TAF's clients are mature and bring with them experience of prior working (including from self employment) but increasingly, they are people who often have been out of work for 2 years or more; have been made redundant; or forced into early retirement sometimes due to domestic responsibilities or as a result of illness. Fundamentally, these clients lack confidence and can suffer isolation and discrimination.
- 1.3 TAF values and supports its learners sensitively and non-judgementally through a programme of inclusive, holistic, personal development designed to find a new focus and direction into sustainable ICT related employment across London's priority sectors, e.g. Health & Social Care. Importantly, TAF seeks to change mindsets and to transform lives.
- 1.4 TAF's OCR/RSA Pre-Entry ICT Skills for Life; New CLAiT Office (Level 1); and CLAiT Plus (Level 2) accredited training (Office and Media) seeks to be bespoke to individual needs. It focuses intensively on 50+ clients' complex needs and is tailored to fit in with training needs and personal availability. The training runs for between 6-12 weeks, offering up to 15 hours weekly, on 2-2½ days per week over 12 weeks.
- 1.5 The ICT training, (in addition to learning basic mouse and keyboard skills), offers Introduction to Computers & Computing and a choice of 8 ICT modules from Word Processing, DataBase, DeskTop Publishing, Powerpoint, Website Design, Spreadsheets, Graphs and Charts, PhotoShop, E-Mail for Business and Internet for On-Line Research.
- 1.6 Personal skills development comprises Life Mapping & Networks, Neuro-Linguistic Programming(NLP) for Confidence, Motivation and Orientation, Developing Strengths, Skills Assessment, Curriculum Vitæ and Action Plans, Team Building and Assertiveness Training: also Financial Stocktaking and Budgeting plus the TAF self-devised Enterprise Induction to prepare for Self-Employment (taken by at least 25% of beneficiaries).
- 1.7 There are different levels of open door training that deliver beneficiary progression routes up to NVQ Equivalent Level 2. Additionally, all clients undertake a flexibly delivered support package of intensive matrix/Customer First accredited information advice & guidance(IAG) and also accreditation of prior learning, followed by personal needs one-to-one assessment and negotiation of individual learning plans with monthly targets.
- 1.8 The Individual Learning Action Plans are reviewed monthly, using staged targets. NLP is delivered weekly and underpinning SfL and work advice and guidance are embedded into second stage curriculum vitæ preparation, job search skills, interview techniques and a pre-employability preparation skills package, leading into the TAF Self Enterprise Induction.
- 1.9 One-to-one exit interviews are given to all clients and on-going TAF support and tracking is available for a minimum 6 months, with underpinning job search assistance and higher level training and work signposting.
- 1.10 The OOPS 50+ Project is London Development Agency(LDA) ESF Objective 3 funded and has been running from 02 January 2005 to 30 September 2007. Interim evaluation was undertaken from January to February 2006 and has informed this final evaluation.

2. Evaluation Methodologies

2.1 Evaluation methodologies used have sought to measure projects' actual actions and targets against those approved, in order to capture progress made; interventions needed; lessons learnt; added value; and to make recommendations towards the project's exit strategy and sustainability.

2.2 Research methodology used to analyse key primary and secondary project data has been to review:

- The approved project , in particular all funded outputs, outcomes and milestones

- TAF quantitative and qualitative actual project data

2.3 Quarterly beneficiary monitoring data capture has included:

⇒ Gender	⇒ Modules studied
⇒ Age	⇒ Further learning opportunities
⇒ Borough of residence	⇒ Beneficiary areas of support
⇒ ESF beneficiary groups	⇒ Completers/early leavers
⇒ Prior employment/Length of unemployment	⇒ Qualifications at start of and at end of project
⇒ Types of beneficiary benefit	⇒ Onward destinations
⇒ Ethnicity	⇒ Sustainable development project actions
⇒ Learning difficulties and/or disabilities	⇒ ICT in-house applications/usage
⇒ Equal opportunities targets	

Also, project spend and areas of current underspend and virement have been reviewed.

2.4 Strategic pan-London documentation and the fit with the LDA Co-Financing Organisation's Plan and the ESF Objective 3 London Regional Development Plan 2000-6; also the London Framework for Regional Employment and Skills Action (FRESA) and London Skills Commission labour market information have been evaluated.

2.5 Completed questionnaire and follow-up interviews with all TAF staff: the Director of Projects(1), project managers(2) delivery tutors(5) administration(1) and financial staff(1).

2.6 In total, 11 project beneficiaries were interviewed including those currently on programmes (6) and completers (5) - a 11% sampling overall.

3. Need for Projects & Gaps in Older People's Training Services

3.1 ICT remains a principal skills gap faced by people 40+ and almost 50% of people 50+ have no ICT skills (*LDA Economic Development Strategy*). Yet, 90% of new jobs require IT user skills (*2005/8 IT Sector Skills Agreement*).

3.2 *The London Skills Commission(LSC) Regional Skills Prospectus 2005/6 and Action Plan, DFES 'Skills for 21st Century' and London Development Agency(LDA) Economic Development Strategy* all identify the 40+ as an under-utilised target group for jobs at a loss of £31 billion annually to the UK's economy; also the under-investment in the 50+ (19

million in the UK today and 16% of the workforce, increasing to 20%+ by 2016). In West London alone, 27% of the population is 40+ (*LSC London West 2007/8 Annual Plan*).

- 3.3 TAF is a respected research ‘think-tank’ for older people, initiating research and raising awareness of age-related issues and leading good practice for strategic level decision makers including at regional, national and European levels. The organisation’s own research since 2002 (“*Past it at 40, A Grassroots View Of Ageism & Discrimination In Employment*”) documented barriers faced; also the lack of up-to-date ICT skills and programmes to provide progression routes into work.
- 3.4 TAF’s current project-wide training menu is providing targeted, innovative and age-specific progression opportunities for clients that includes OOPS (50+ pan-London outreach) and additionally, WC05 (40+ West London); IMPACT (40+ pan-London outreach); and WRENS (40+ West London, women only with management training).

4. Overview of Project Actions

- 4.1 TAF is delivering the OOPS Project to a client base that is all 50+. Beneficiaries are predominately male at 55%, well over the bid target of 40%. Recruitment in this specific age-group has been successful yet challenging. In this context, it is suggested that specific marketing and support strategies could be strengthened, possibly by increased joint working with age-specific support organisations, (e.g. *Wise Owls*) located in East London.
- 4.2 Equally, there might be positive targeting of 60-65+ learners, (c.f. strategies used by age-specific commercial organisations e.g. *Saga*), both in view of new 2006 Employment Equality (Age) Regulations and proposed Single Equalities Act and less favourable pension arrangements today. Currently, only 7% of learners are from this age group.
- 4.3 The ethnicity of beneficiaries interviewed was:

ETHNICITY	%
White-British	27%
White-Irish	27%
White-Any Other White Background	14%
Asian or Asian British-Pakistani	4%
Asian or Asian British-Bangladeshi	4%
Black or Black British-African	8%
Prefer Not To Say	12%
Not Known	4%

Up to the 16 August 2007, the OOPS 50+ Project has recorded average BAME levels at 24%, a result that is in line with re-negotiated bid targets at 20-30%. To increase participation levels further, it is recommended that BAME community groups might be involved in the marketing & publicity of future courses: also to sample materials to ensure that they are not Anglo or Euro-Centric. Active use could be made, too of Boroughs’ baseline monitoring data (e.g. at individual ward level) and 2001 Census information, to inform marketing strategies further.

4.4 It is of note that 19% LLDD levels were recorded amongst interviewed beneficiaries, with high satisfaction levels expressed over individual support received. LLDD learners had disabilities ranging from dyslexia, to eye and hand problems, to chronic back pain but

these were often under-represented by interviewees. Here it is to be recorded that targets were well up on the 14% project target, representing an area of good practice.

- 4.4 Of beneficiaries interviewed, 53% had been unemployed for 2 years or more, against the project baseline target of 15%. It is to be recorded, also that 4% of interviewees had been made redundant. Again, this success rate with the long-term unemployed and redundant represents an area of good practice and evidences measurable impact for TAF.
- 4.5 Interviewed clients were found to be suffering from a mix of problems and barriers that had affected their learning and training to date. 14% had found it difficult finding out about relevant training; 14% had found the focus on younger learners in Further Education (FE) Colleges not helpful and so had delayed training; 28% identified a basic lack of confidence and self esteem; and 38% cited age discrimination. However, 45% self-stated illness as a major issue and significantly, 69% identified out-dated skills and a lack of ICT qualifications as the primary barrier to confront. Additional difficulties recorded were depression and mental health issues.
- 4.6 Qualification levels of users interviewed were recorded at 31% for GCE Ordinary Level/CSE and 23% for GCE Advanced Level, with 24% holding degrees and 16% post-graduate/vocational awards. Only 6% had no formal qualifications. Skills levels of learners when last in work were assessed, too. Only 3% described themselves as unskilled; 7% as craft or related; 25% as professional; 38% as semi-skilled; and 45% as skilled. It was apparent throughout that learners from all educational and skills backgrounds valued the opportunity to upskill and retrain in ICT, so as to progress back into a changed workplace where they could compete on an equal footing with younger, more ICT aware colleagues.
- 4.7 Of learners interviewed, they were found to originate from 8 of the 11 London boroughs targeted by the project, with 2 additional boroughs represented (Harrow and Camden):

BOROUGH	%
Brent	7%
Camden	3%
Ealing	10%
Hammersmith & Fulham	37%
Harrow	3%
Hillingdon	10%
Hounslow	10%
Kensington & Chelsea	10%
Richmond	7%
Westminster	3%

These results are to be compared with the full project actual breakdown up to 16 August 2007. The targeted bid figures are given in (), showing increased recruitment in 7 boroughs.

BOROUGH	
Brent	5% (5%)
Ealing	9% (5%)
Hackney	7% (5%)
Hammersmith & Fulham	33% (50%)
Haringey	0% (5%)
Harrow	7% (0%)
Hillingdon	10% (5%)

Hounslow	4% (5%)
Kensington & Chelsea	13% (5%)
Kingston	3% (5%)
Newham	
Richmond	9% (5%)
Tower Hamlets	
Westminster	7% (5%)

- 4.8 Outreach has been delivered in Haringey, Hackney and Tower Hamlets in community venues to maximise accessibility; with additional provision in Brent (Duddenhill Centre); in Ealing (Ealing Community Resource Centre); in Hillingdon (Barra Hall); in Kingston (RaKAT Centre); and in Westminster (Abbey Centre). Recruitment has varied from good recruitment levels in Kingston (JCP referrals) and Brent (Asian elders), down to poor learner numbers in Westminster and Haringey, the latter failing to recruit any learners at all.
- 4.9 Clearly, the role of intermediary referral staff is key and active community co-ordinators and pro-active Job Centre Plus(JCP) advisers working with TAF staff have realised the most success and working with age-specific organisations (e.g. *Wise Owls* in Hackney). Another factor has been the level of ICT resourcing in the venues used, although TAF laptop provision is available and has been used widely. It is suggested, too that interested clients need to be signed up whenever possible, to maximise staff resources and avoid poor attendance figures.
- 4.10 Interviewed beneficiaries were spread across common training activities and ICT modules. This served to build confidence in learners and to strengthen group working and inter-peer support. They attended for 8-15 hours per week over 12 weeks and undertook the following pick and mix menu, according to individual needs and interests:

TRAINING MODULE		ICT MODULE	
Personal development	100%	Word processing	100%
Motivation/orientation training	100%	Spreadsheets	90%
Individual action plans	100%	Database	97%
Key skills assessment	100%	Graphs & charts	86%
Work advice/guidance	100%	Powerpoint	72%
Curriculum vitae development	100%	Desk top publishing	59%
Work advice/guidance	100%	Website design	76%
Interview techniques	100%	Photoshop	66%
Job search skills & assistance	100%	E mail for business	100%
Enterprise induction	25%	Internet for online research	100%

- 4.11 Project success rates for ICT modules from 2005 to 16 August 2007 were:

PROJECT	SKILLS FOR LIFE	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2
00P5 50+	65% (1-5 modules) 55% (full qualification)	87% (1-9 modules) 78% (full qualification)	97% (1-4 modules) 61% (full qualification)

It is to be noted that success in 3 modules brings a Certificate qualification and in 5 or more, a Diploma.

- 4.12 Of clients interviewed, 59% wished to progress into full-time and 37% into part-time work. (Here, the difficulty of undertaking part-time work whilst on benefits is to be noted after

detailed client feedback on this issue). Just 4% were interested in voluntary activities, or self-employment, or re-employment as their own boss. Interestingly though, only 38% stated that they were ready to start work now, with some keen to take a second ICT training course and to receive more learning support including an end-of-course refresher on modules studied.

- 4.13 59% of those interviewed now felt more confident than at the start of the course; 55% more positive; 52% more responsible for their own learning; and 48% better equipped to continue their own learning. 76% believed that their project had improved employability and prospects substantially and 83% stated that they would be happy to recommend this training to others. Indeed, learners had done so already.
- 4.14 This evaluation found that an increase in opportunities for students to practise their acquired ICT skills was needed both during and after courses. Currently, teaching rooms and space are at a premium, as is access to the 3 ICT and 2 Personal Development specialist staff. It is recommended that additional funding might be sought to provide 2-3 hour, drop-in ICT sessions (e.g. to complete a curriculum vitæ), particularly as a number of students do not have access to a computer at home or easy availability through libraries.
- 4.15 Past students interviewed (5) from 2005 and 2006, reported a mixed pathway into work. 50% identified a lack of recent work experience and references as a major barrier, (although TAF gives references on request). Some had secured temporary or seasonal work but 50% of those interviewed had not secured full-time employment and were cautious about undertaking part-time work whilst on benefits, (*c.f. Section 4.12*).
- 4.16 This user feedback was not borne out always by the following all-project statistics for 2007, showing particular success with progression into self-employment and volunteering. The targeted bid figures are shown in ().

PROJECT	WORK PROGRESSION	FE/HIGHER LEVEL TRAINING
00P5 50+	18% full-time (21%) 19% part-time (19%) 18% self-employment (6%) 10% volunteering (5%)	18% (20%)

Overall, actual outputs have exceeded those estimated, particularly into self-employment – testament to the quality of the TAF Enterprise Induction delivered; also into volunteering. Numbers progressing into FE are up, too and those securing work on target for part-time employment and only slightly down for full-time work. It is to be recorded here, too that upskilled JCP referred clients are usually supported back into work by their referring Job Centre.

- 4.17 The difficulty of ensuring that ex-students already in work or further training report this to TAF is to be noted, too as is the funders’ ruling whereby clients progressing from Level 1 to Level 2 training cannot be counted twice.
- 4.18 Recommendations of this evaluation are to strengthen client progression routes into work by resourcing a dedicated job brokerage post and in-job support package, subject to the securing of additional funding: also to run regular employer-focussed events, possibly sector-specific, for example as breakfast meetings, or linked to the three times yearly external functions that regularly include renowned speakers such as Members of Parliament.

- 4.19 Additionally, short work experience integrated into training packages or longer periods on project completion need to be scoped, in order to fully prepare project beneficiaries for the world of work and anticipated sector-specific working.

5. Publicity/Marketing/Recruitment

- 5.1 TAF has developed active organisational networks and robust agency links Pan-London across 17+ key deprived IMD ward boroughs and has sought to be pro-active in its targeted publicity and marketing strategies. They adopt a range of methodologies including press coverage (budgetary limitations), networking events, open days, shopping centre events, website promotion, direct leafleting e.g. to libraries and input at exhibitions, displays and job fairs (e.g. Adult Learners' Week/Notting Hill Housing Trust Community Events).
- 5.2 Increased targeting might include leisure centres, doctors' surgeries/health centres, working mens' clubs, nurseries and include even supermarkets (e.g. advertising on the back of till receipts). Local radio could be considered too, also those delivering in community languages.
- 5.3 Word-of-mouth remains important and as already noted, students actively refer peers into TAF's ICT specialist training. To maximise this, a client focus group could be formed to strengthen this promotion route and case studies with photographs could be featured, further.
- 5.4 Internet marketing could be increased, possibly with intermediary organisations also. Employers and Local Authority work placement officers could be encouraged to place their vacancies with TAF, too and JCP might display TAF course information and other practical information regarding enrolment.
- 5.5 Currently, the most popular referral route remains that of a JCP adviser. Indeed, 76% of learners interviewed came via this route. For this reason, resource should be invested to ensure that these staff in each local office in boroughs to be targeted, are kept fully up-to-date and involved, perhaps through formalised links with named officers. (This might be incorporated into the current intermediary contract with JCP, too). Other access routes identified included 11% by word-of-mouth; 4% through exhibitions; 4% through leaflet drops; and 3% via IAG advice received, including from nextstep and CIPD-TASIG.
- 5.6 Course promotion materials (e.g. leaflets/flyers) and project level materials and information were accessible on request and carried required equal opportunity and Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) statements and the LDA logo. However, the layout used and heavy text concentration does require some updating and/or re-design with possible re-branding to be appraised. A suggested addition is the use of the plain English *Crystal Mark*, also.
- 5.7 It is suggested further that a comprehensive and updated marketing folder of all TAF training provision should be centralised for ease of access by clients, also staff when advising on progression routes. Additionally, a copy could be displayed in all teaching rooms as part of a TAF information board that could be a place to visit, for example by making it the location of free TAF logoed pens/pencils perhaps.
- 5.8 TAF has offered a specialist design tutor led DDA compliant website since 1999 that carries details of courses and current job vacancies, taken from a West London site (www.jobswestlondon.com). This is updated 1-3 times per week. The website does not include internet job search facilities but does offer facilities such as a forum and a chat room that are monitored carefully. TAF processes website data, for example recording the

- number of website hits, e.g. levels of users on a daily basis: a 24 hour sampling indicated 69% first-time users and 31% repeat users.
- 5.9 To increase the age-specific branding of TAF's website, some suggested areas to consider are the inclusion of project-specific pages fully updated with relevant information e.g. course content/times, together with case studies featuring a range of successful clients, linked to the main page. Also, an employer-specific webpage would be advantageous and could be tailored by sub-region and sector.
- 5.10 Another idea to raise awareness with older learners not always ready to go online for information, is to ensure that all TAF computers have the website as a screensaver and that it is promoted at external events. Additionally, it is suggested that that the three times a year TAF newsletter could include project-specific update pages and beneficiary case studies.
- 5.11 Here it is to be noted, too that TAF could advertise employee-specific short ICT courses, for example on Saturdays or in the evening. Additionally, employers could buy advertising space in the newsletter and even advertise jobs, work experience or voluntary activities.
- 5.12 With regard to recruitment, underpinning matrix specific IAG with skills coaching and mentoring are delivered at the central Hammersmith premises and in all outreach centres by staff qualified to a minimum of NVQ IAG Level 4. The recent pressure on the Director of Projects to lead on this work has been alleviated by the appointment of a well-experienced post 16 manager experienced in this work, (with additional OFSTED & ALI Inspection expertise too).
- 5.13 However, there still remains some shortfall and delay at busy times and for clients with specific needs, e.g. ESOL. Some sub-contracting to another age-specific agency with a similar mission (e.g. *Wise Owls* with whom TAF already works), is to be considered. Alternatively, TAF tutors might be offered an upskilling/training opportunity, subject to their current teaching and tutoring commitments.

6. Induction/Retention/Support

- 6.1 All interviewed clients were given a full project induction and satisfaction levels were high. Learners felt informed and were comfortable with the code of conduct and signing student contract. A review of equal opportunities, health & safety, quality assurance, client care, complaints procedure, harassment and data protection policies had been included. To be noted is that these policies are displayed on the walls of training rooms, also. Perhaps further awareness raising could be delivered by a mid-training review point.
- 6.2 Course retention levels are high at 80% for first courses and 86% for second courses. Undoubtedly, Personal Development workshops incorporating NLP delivered one-to-one are instrumental. However, some staff felt that insufficient hours were available for this and funded sufficiently to ensure sustained client interaction. Also timetable clashes were reducing the amount of NLP input for some clients.
- 6.3 14% of interviewed clients referred to care responsibilities. Currently, TAF is supporting 18% of beneficiaries with travel and/or child/dependent care and so this provision is clearly meeting demand at current levels; also exceeding the funded bid levels at a totalled 12%.
- 6.4 Additional learning support is provided for learners on request, for example for visually impaired learners with printed hard copy resources and on-line learning available in larger

format. Specialised needs are met wherever possible, although one interviewed beneficiary regretted the absence of speech recognition programme facilities such as *Texthelp* or *Dragon*.

7. Management/Financial Monitoring Systems

- 7.1 Since 1997, TAF has been in receipt of ESF and a range of other borough, sub-regional and pan-London funding and so offer fully audited, robust, fit-for-purpose systems to meet the requirements of the capital's major funders (e.g. the LSC and LDA). However internal systems have to be tailored to each funder's differing and varying requirements which increases the administrative workload significantly.
- 7.2 A Director of Projects provides leadership and strategic development. She leads operational management too: marketing, recruitment, induction, service delivery, monitoring, evaluation, quality assurance, health & safety and the ESF cross-cutting themes. To provide further management support, a new post-16 sector and adult learning inspector appointment has been made. Still to be resourced though are project co-ordinators, to free up the Director of Projects to focus predominately on strategic priorities.
- 7.3 To meet an increasing workload, the Office Manager/Administrator now works 4 days per week, supplemented by volunteers. It is the recommendation of this evaluation that a full-time administrator is required; also a projects-specific administrator to free up teaching staff from routine duties such as photocopying.
- 7.4 All data is entered electronically on a weekly basis and refined monthly (e.g. with pivot tables), onto a centralised Excel database (Access being explored currently), by the experienced Office Manager/Administrator. Every class has a colour coded file and each beneficiary, a separate plastic file building into which all collected paperwork/monitoring documentation is entered and refined monthly in hard copy, too. The database is sampled monthly by the Director of Projects, to identify and action under-performance/slippage e.g. in outreach delivery; also to ensure client satisfaction.
- 7.5 TAF uses an EXCEL database and a '*Quickbooks*' system, supported by a retained FCA qualified accountant 2 days a month. Project re-profiling is managed by the Director of Projects with this accountant support. Currently, a requirement to implement formula funding and to complete advance reporting and claims quarterly, have proved challenging and expensive on administration/specialist financial input, as it would to any small organisation placed in this position. It is suggested that an increase in administrative resources should be requested of the funders.
- 7.6 Client follow-up is activated routinely through questionnaires and telephone contact to record those entering work including volunteering and self-employment; also entering further education or progressing into other ICT training providers including with TAF. Quarterly follow-up is effected for 6 months, too. However, response rates remain problematic, although the return rate for TAF clients is in the region of 30% and as such, is considerably higher than for other training providers. Perhaps other reporting facilities could be considered, e.g. a standard letter issued during the exit interview; a feedback section on the website; or a small incentive payment, e.g. a voucher or training manual.
- 7.7 The Director of Projects reports to a Management Committee quarterly and she can draw on the complementary skills of TAF's trustees from the business and public sectors, to action project interventions and remedial actions.

8. Quality Assurance

- 8.1 TAF obtained *Investors in People* (IiP) in 2000 and underwent successful reviews in 2001, 2003 and June 2006. *Matrix* was obtained in September 2002 and re-accredited successfully in September 2005. *Customer First* was awarded in May 2004 and re-accredited in August 2007, with TAF being one of the first London voluntary sector organisations to achieve this, as was the case for *matrix*, too. Additionally, TAF had achieved *PQASSO* at Levels 1, 2 and 3 by November 2004. To be noted further is that TAF has taken part in ALI inspections of IAG services and *LearnDirect*, as a service provider
- 8.2 TAF's ICT Tutors all hold City & Guilds 7307/7407 Stage 1 and/or Stage II. The Personal Development Tutor is Advanced NLP qualified and the Business Advisor has specialist qualifications and has run her own business successfully over a number of years. All staff hold NVQ Level 4/5 equivalent qualifications and have 5-8 year service records at TAF.
- 8.3 Quality assurance targets are applied to marketing and publicity; IAG; recruitment; induction; service delivery; support measures; retention; client progression, achievement and completion; also health & safety, equal opportunities, sustainability and health; and to external evaluation and forward exit strategy and sustainability.
- 8.4 TAF prioritises continuous improvement and consults learners through questionnaires and user groups, also on an individual basis at the start, interim and final stages of their course. Learner representatives provide further targeted assessment to both the Director of Projects and to Management Committee members quarterly in their meetings.
- 8.5 It is to be noted that recently, TAF agreed a new quality assurance timetable. The assessment work is managed through TAF-wide and project-specific monitoring and evaluation policies. Monthly targets using quantitative and qualitative performance indicators are set to measure project funded outputs, outcomes and milestones and to assess and resource key delivery areas (e.g. IAG and Accreditation of Prior Learning-APL); induction; service provision efficiency; qualifications delivered; also use of resources and value for money achieved.
- 8.6 Currently, TAF is finishing Self Assessment Reporting to complete in October 2007, supported by London West LSC and their specialist deployed resources. Provision grades are: overall effectiveness (2); leadership and management (2); equality of opportunity (2); ICT (2); and quality improvement (2/3). It is to be noted, too that TAF's new management appointment with adult learning inspectorate skills and experience is leading this process.
- 8.7 To be recorded here additionally, is TAF's commitment to the delivery of the ESF cross-cutting themes and to the monthly monitoring and evaluation of strategies used. Project-specific policies and performance indicators in place deliver Equal Opportunities, Sustainable Development and ICT, as required in all London ESF Co-Financing Plans.
- 8.8 Equal Opportunities are to be evidenced in increased support for LLDD clients; in-project support measures; and in the use of positive case studies featuring non-traditional learners. Sustainable Development is evidenced through awareness raising with learners to contribute to in-house targets, e.g. by recycling ink/toner cartridges and paper; by turning computers/lights off; and by using public/group transport. TAF makes further commitment by recycling old computers and with the social and economic impacts achieved through its older persons' training that contribute to a higher and more stable level of growth and employment. ICT underpins all TAF service delivery, being used 100% for marketing and management and 75%+ for project delivery.
- 8.9 It is to be recorded, too that TAF is cited on GOL, DCSF, DIUS and DWP websites, as a best practice and 40+ age-specific research organization. To be mentioned further is that the

Director of Projects has been a regular invitee at European level to promote good practice in older persons' upskilling and training; also the success and advantages of using ESF funding to achieve this.

9. Successes/Failures/Areas for Improvement/Lessons Learnt

9.1 Successes recorded by this evaluation are:

- Additional in-house learning support
- Beneficiary satisfaction rates
- Borough recruitment levels
- Progression rates: ICT SfL → New CLAiT Level 1 → CLAiT Plus Level 2 (Office & Media)
- Effective support for the long-term unemployed, especially 2 years+
- Good retention - 80% for first courses and 86% for second courses
- High levels of support for LLDD clients
- Innovative learning modules, e.g. a self-enterprise module
- In-project travel and child/elder care support
- Learner-centred, holistic personal development and NLP
- Outreach delivered in new deprived targeted boroughs
- Self-employment preparation
- Skilled and experienced teaching staff with strong tutoring skills
- Strong links with sub-regional stakeholders and funders
- Transformation of students into self-reliant, responsible future employees
- Value for money and low unit cost

9.2 Interviewed beneficiaries recorded satisfaction levels of 100%, with extensive praise given:

- 'A nice experience of getting help into the mainstream'
- 'Different learning styles catered for-it was enjoyable and fun!'
- 'Fantastic opportunity to learn with like-minded people'
- 'Great to train with others of common age and commitment'
- 'It's a really good course – I'm happy it's available!'
- 'This training is an excellent idea'
- 'Understandable, superb course.'
- 'Wonderful course - good, thorough teachers, very patient and they give lots of help!'

Only 1 interviewee felt that the training was too intensive and covered modules that she felt would not be needed in her stated expected routine applications ICT work.

9.3 Failures and/or areas for improvement identified by this evaluation are:

- Administration shortfall, also at course level to support delivery staff
- BAME participation levels
- Employer engagement
- Employment rates lower than targeted, especially part-time
- Initial assessment, diagnosis of need and target setting showed some small gaps
- Marketing materials to be re-designed and/or re-branded, also no Crystal Mark usage
- Personal development sessions shortfall for some learners
- Progression routes into work not sufficiently robust
- Sector-specific ICT upskilling courses missing
- Staff development time shortfall
- Staff roles and responsibilities updating needed
- Strategic positioning of TAF

- Tasters to engage more learners into new modules, (self-enterprise)
- Website functions and features to be expanded

9.4 Lessons learnt have included:

- Age-specific consultancy could be offered, also a retirement advice scheme
- Drop-in ICT facilities to be offered at TAF, subject to available accommodation
- Employer link functions to be agreed
- ESOL specialist provision for clients to be introduced
- Flexible teaching and tutoring required throughout
- Job brokerage service to be established
- Links with JCP advisers to be formalised by local office
- Market fuller menu of ICT upskilling training
- Market courses also to employers & employees, with details of available completers
- Publicity routes and methodologies to be further developed
- Short work experience to be integrated into training or longer post project completion
- Targeting the 60-65+ age group through older persons' upskilling funding e.g. ESF
- Targeting the under-skilled in work, vulnerably employed and self-employed

10. Exit Strategy/Sustainability

10.1 TAF is well advanced in the process of reviewing possible commercialisation of their innovative older persons' ICT training. Strategies being considered and further recommended include:

- Promoting employee short courses to employers
- Providing consultancy services on older persons' issues
- Piloting a retirement advice scheme
- Maximising usage of premises during evening and weekend hours.
- Marketing training to Borough Regeneration Heads where recruitment has been good
- Targeting specific sectors (e.g. retail/housing) to provide preparatory ICT upskilling
- Selling ICT training modules commercially
- Becoming a social enterprise

10.2 TAF strives to adopt a pro-active approach towards securing onward ICT training sustainability. They network and interface consistently with the major London sub-regional funders, for example the LSCs, the LDA and Local Authorities, as well as charitable trusts in order to be at the forefront of new funding opportunities and joint working activities.

10.3 The new ESF Programme 2007-2013 will offer TAF opportunities to tender for funding to support its edge-cutting work with older people. Indeed, older workers without Level 2 qualifications and SfL, unemployed and employed, will be targeted through Priority 1 (extending employment opportunities for the workless) and through Priority 2 (developing a skilled and adaptable workforce). The 4 London Co-Financing Organisations (the LSC, DWP, LDA and London Councils(LC) are just beginning their expression of interest stage, in advance of later invitations to tender this Autumn.

10.4 It is to be reorded here, too that TAF is an organisation active at European level. To date, it has secured EU SOCRATES GRUNDTVIG 2 Programme funding, co-ordinating and leading a 7 country partnership to produce a practitioners' guide to empowering older people. TAF would be advised to look at other EU Programmes such as LEONARDO DA VINCI focussing on vocational training, with employer partnership.

APPENDIX 1 DELIVERY STAFF QUESTIONNAIRE



OOPS 50+ LDA Final Evaluation

Introduction

This final external evaluation has been commissioned by Third Age Foundation from Global Gateways Limited to identify and assess project achievements and areas of good practice realised; also to identify areas for further improvement. The results and recommendations are to be made available internally and to wider external audiences, including the London Development Agency and other key stakeholders.

May we ask you to contribute to this process by completing this questionnaire and being available to take part in a later follow-up interview, as part of the evaluation.

QUESTIONNAIRE 1: DELIVERY STAFF

Name : _____ Job
Title _____

1. Why did Third Age Foundation (TAF) become involved in the project?

2. How has the project met any existing gaps/shortfalls in TAF's mainstream provision?