

**LONDON DEVELOPMENT AGENCY
EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND OBJECTIVE 3
CO-FINANCING PROGRAMME 2005-7
“OOPS 50+” PROJECT
MEASURE/SPECIFICATION 2.2g
02 January 2005 to 30 September 2007
(Extended to 31 December 2007)**

EXTERNAL INTERIM PROJECT EVALUATION

Final at 09 February 2006

Commissioned by

THIRD AGE FOUNDATION

from

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**LONDON
DEVELOPMENT
AGENCY**

Key Evaluation Results of the Project

1. Overview of Project Actions

TAF's training model for older people is designed to be holistic and bespoke to individual needs. Vocational specific ICT training at NVQ Equivalent Levels 1 & 2 is delivered and underpinned by confidence and motivation building, personal development, individual action planning, life mapping, team working, job search/preparation and enterprise induction/business planning.

The OOPS 50+ Project has been running from 02 January 2005 and will continue for 3 months after its originally agreed finish date until 31 December 2007. There are 8 scheduled training intakes 6 cycles (over 3 month cycles), of 12 weeks duration each.

TAF's training provision is delivered for less than 16 hours per week, over 2 to 2½ days per week. Of the beneficiaries interviewed, the pattern of attendance was as follows, **demonstrating the flexibility of the support delivered to older learners and evidencing a successful retention strategy:**

% of beneficiaries	Hours per week attended	Hours of tutor contact per week
40%	10	1
10%	12	2
10%	14	2
40%	15	1

The 8% of beneficiaries interviewed (10) were receiving ICT specific training, as follows:

ICT Specific Training	% of Beneficiaries
Word Processing	70%
Spreadsheets	60%
Database	50%
Graphs & Charts	40%
PowerPoint	20%
Desk Top Publishing	40%
Website design	30%
Photoshop	30%
E-mail	40%
Internet	50%

2. Project Publicity/Marketing/Recruitment

TAF has been helping older learners exclusively for 10 years and has developed networks and links Pan-London. Their clients have come from 20 London constituencies and through joint working with sub-regional agencies e.g. JobCentre Plus. However, it is word of mouth that can be powerful. Of the 8% of beneficiaries interviewed, 20% came to TAF in this way.

Additionally, TAF undertakes targeted borough press coverage, networking events, open days, website promotion and direct leafleting for example to libraries; also past beneficiaries are used as positive role models. Of the beneficiaries interviewed, 40% came through these means.

To extend recruitment, JCP, IAG/nextstep, *OpShop and LLP Partnerships in London West/Central/South are working with TAF to refer potential beneficiaries. Of the beneficiaries interviewed, 40% came through these agencies – please see table below.

Recruitment Method
Recruited through TAF leaflet
Through *OpShop
Through Third Age Employment Network
Leaflet at JobCentre Plus/ connected with New Deal 50+ scheme
Leaflet at an external venue
Advertisement on electronic billboard
Part of an enquiry about updating training for building
TAF Leaflet - received direct mailing to home – was looking for an ICT course
Heard from a friend

TAF's website functions well to advertise its specific training courses. **However, it is suggested that a further facility might be included, to offer potential clients the means to register their interest and to possibly enrol for the course. For this, it would be advantageous to have project specific webpages if additional resources are available.**

TAF works to target area regeneration schemes focused at Pan-London older learners, to raise awareness of project successes/on-going recruitment, in which case studies are used. **It is recommended that the three times a year TAF newsletter should include project specific pages and that it should be distributed more widely to include Local Authority press offices, subject to an increased publicity budget.**

At this interim stage of the OOPS 50+ project in particular, TAF intends to roll out its outreach programme especially in boroughs where they have yet to recruit, (only Hackney/Haringey). However, constraints of staffing and finance have limited this to date. **It is recommended that project budget virement could be effected as**

soon as practicable, to provide additional resources for this important outreach work.

It is suggested too, that consideration be given to involving volunteers and staff in the recruitment process, after requisite NVQ 3 & 4 advice & guidance training & development activities. To date, this work is carried out exclusively by the Director of Projects, supported by the Office Manager/Administrator and at times, this has proved difficult, due to time constraints.

3. Retention of Beneficiaries

Since 1993, TAF has realised an encouraging retention rate of 80% to 90%, due largely to the holistic and bespoke training model for older learners developed, also perhaps the level of commitment that older learners can bring to their personal training. **For the 4 training courses to date, the retention level is confirmed at 87% that in itself, provides a model of good practice that has the potential for transfer.**

In the case of OOPS 50+, beneficiary support measures were built into the approved bid, whereby up to 10% of learners could receive travel support and up to 2% Child/Dependent Care. To date, these figures are 6% and 0% respectively, still evidencing the lower than anticipated take-up. **However, it is important that these project monies are not lost and that they are vired across into other areas of project overspend, for example personal development hours and recruitment.**

4. Outputs/Outcomes/Milestones

Approved targets for delivery were set and actual performance to date is noted, as follows:

OOPS 50+ Project Target	Profiled	Actual
Tackle social exclusion, labour market disadvantage and age discrimination	300	84
Offer MATRIX standard information/advice/guidance	300	84
Provide NVQ equivalent Level 1 accredited OCR/RSA package of basic skills	150	84
Progress to ICT upskilling training: New CLAiT Level 1	150	15
Progress to ICT upskilling training:CLAiT PLUS Level 2	30	4
Support into higher level progression routes in further education	60	6
Progress into full -time work roles	63	2
Progress into part-time work roles	57	2
Support towards self-employment and micro-businesses	21	4
Progress into volunteering/ business mentoring	15	1
Remaining unemployed/unavailable for work e.g. family commitments/disability/move away from area	24	11 early leavers

Other project outcomes recorded amongst the interviewed 60% new and 40% returning beneficiaries were:

Project outcomes	% of beneficiaries
Personal development	60%
Motivation and orientation training	60%
Personal action plans	60%
Key skills assessment	60%
Work advice and guidance	20%
Curriculum vitae development	40%
Interview techniques	40%
Job search assistance	30%
New CLAiT Level 1	50%
CLAiT PLUS Level 2	50%

It should be noted here that LDA OOPS 50+ beneficiaries progressing from Level 1 to Level 2 CLAiT training cannot be counted twice. As clients do break their training cycle for reasons such as short-term work contracts/domestic reasons, this should be factored in ideally.

It is important to record also, the soft outcomes and “distance travelled” of supported clients. Of the beneficiaries interviewed, 80% stated a more positive attitude, with increased confidence; 70% felt more responsible for their own learning; and 50% believed that they were better equipped to continue own learning.

Of beneficiaries interviewed, 60% said that they were ready to begin work. 60% of these were hoping to do full-time work and 30% part-time. Interestingly, there were 20% hoping to become self employed, too.

TAF actively encourages beneficiaries to do voluntary work during days of non-attendance at TAF and of beneficiaries interviewed, 40% were already undertaking these activities. For example, one lady was working as a volunteer at the *OpShop, London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham’s High Street job brokerage service, for 2 days per week.

5. Innovation/Good Practice/Added Value/End Products

TAF's training model for older people, (small group working of no more than 10), is designed to deliver confidence and motivation (NLP) building, team working, action planning, job search and life survival skills, curriculum vitae development and interview techniques, finance and budgeting, enterprise induction and business advice through underpinning one-to-one support.

Integrated ICT training, (including outreach laptop delivery in community venues Pan-London for beneficiaries unable to access TAF), is designed to secure personal

achievement and distance travelled; NVQ Equivalent OCR RSA CLAiT qualifications; and increased employability within the shortage ICT sector, especially for women in a sector where they are under-represented. **It is suggested that this holistic and bespoke, good practice training model developed could be piloted as preparation for entry into other shortage sectors, for example the creative industries and the care sector by TAF.**

Additionally, the “added value” Enterprise Induction/Business Advice for self-employment module, is to be noted as an effective progression route especially for older workers, to secure onward progression into full/part-time work that can be tailored to the financial needs and availability of the 50+. One beneficiary interviewed, a former self-employed plumber/electrician no longer able to work because of physical injury, was intending to set up as a self-employed bookkeeper for this specialist sector.

6. Complementarity/Synergy/Dissemination

It is recommended that as part of the final evaluation, careful consideration is given to developed project methodologies for example engaging difficult-to-reach clients; also end products that could be disseminated and transferred Pan-London to key stakeholders and funders, to include the wider European Union. Indeed, this work is already underway and in the case of the European Union, TAF is actively involved already in 2 projects funded under the SOCRATES GRUNDTVIG Adult Learning Programme. **Interest in TAF’s work with older learners continues to grow transationally and this “multiplier effect” should be appraised within the final evaluation.**

7. Project Successes

100% TAF teaching staff were interviewed and they recorded a range of project successes including:

- 🌐 successful, niche provision for empowering older learners
- 🌐 holistic approach for supporting multi-disadvantaged clients
- 🌐 strategy for fighting ageism in the workplace
- 🌐 clients gaining gradual confidence to progress to employment
- 🌐 addressing isolation and emphasising the social importance of working together
- 🌐 development of team working skills, business etiquette and a professional approach
- 🌐 varieties of learning from small group to one-to-one
- 🌐 each group being different and being able to tailor to individual needs
- 🌐 innovation that helped kick start people back into work
- 🌐 transition into employment being shared amongst peers
- 🌐 confidence in beneficiaries to look for the right type of job
- 🌐 provision of external accreditation that was transferable in any ICT related capacity
- 🌐 happy students gaining on-going examination results
- 🌐 permanent need for this type of older persons’ ICT training

- only 2 clients said they never wanted to see a computer again!
- a 63 year old ICT terrified client now doing a technical course!

Beneficiary levels of 100% satisfaction amongst those interviewed, were recorded:

- “I found the project helpful”
- “It changes your approach to gaining employment in a positive way, with updated skills”
- “I feel others could benefit in a similar way to me”
- “The course was comprehensive, relevant and quality”
- “It is an excellent project for mature people especially”
- “It is an opening achievement for a new goal”
- “I found the course enjoyable, interesting and excellent”
- “The tutors are excellent making it a first rate course”

Additional areas of success recorded by this evaluation are:

- Retention of clients - at 87%
- Level of second or third course attendance for clients - 30% of those interviewed
- Safeguarding of jobs with some returning to former work, better equipped to progress
- 89% recruitment of the 50+ rising to 95% for those aged up to 70, to be considered in the context of government proposals for an increased pension age of between 66 to 70
- Pan-London recruitment realised in all boroughs except Hackney & Haringey
- Increased levels of hard-to-reach local residents engaged – an increase of 11% on numbers targeted
- High recruitment of beneficiaries unemployed for 2 years+ (64%), with particular success in engaging those who have not worked for 3 years+ (56%)
- Recruitment of BME clients above profile at 31% (as against 29%); also women at 75% (as against 50%) and those with disabilities at 14% (as against 10%)
- Engagement of 20% of beneficiaries with no/low qualifications, especially male, thus taking forward the Lifelong Learning agenda
- Support delivered to an increased number of women returners to the labour market at 75% (as against 20%)
- Increased numbers of beneficiaries helped to move towards employment at 40% (as against 29%)
- Reduction in the number of early leavers (13%), evidenced by the successful 87% retention rate

8. Project Areas for Improvement

- Late start to the project owing to constraints of funding and extended negotiation with the LDA

- Age limitation of only 50-64 for all clients on OOPS 50+ - 10% had to be turned away/referred elsewhere – also widening narrow definition of economically inactive so that only “registered unemployed” can be helped.
- Under recruitment of men by 15%
- Shortfall in Personal Development hours for one-to-one sessions to address individual issues – now being included as part of the recruitment process but further budget virement needed
- Volunteering needs to be expanded in the second OOPS 50+ project year
- Lower than profiled achievement of units/qualifications – partly attributable to a much delayed project start and eligibility of beneficiaries and the changes in OCR qualifications
- Under-progression into jobs at 10% to date against a profiled percentage of 34%, to be seen in the context of 8% returning to TAF/Further Education to undertake more training. Historically there is a longer lead time with 50+ clients.
- Some management information systems incompatibility, with time heavy requirements to align TAF’s and LDA’s beneficiary and financial databases – LDA support is being given now
- Measurement of existing and new employer employment that can be evidenced. Targeted publicity for employers is suggested, as is the promotion of case studies: similarly an increase in work shadowing opportunities and business mentoring, where possible.

9. Preparation for Exit Strategy/Sustainability

TAF has adopted a pro-active approach to securing onward funding for its older persons’ ICT training by approaching sub-regional funders for example Learning & Skills Councils, London Development Agency, Local Authorities, The Big Lottery and Charitable Trusts: as well as regeneration agencies in the boroughs where the project is recruiting most successfully, e.g. Regensis in LBH&F. **It is to be noted that TAF have just been awarded co-financing funding for 2006-8 by the London West Learning and Skills Council to help older women.**

TAF has begun to review the an additional phase of project development, by providing additional training within further priority sectors such as the Creative/Cultural industries. **It is recommended that the viability of this roll-out model should be included within the final evaluation.**

TAF has already been successful in securing wider European Union through the EU SOCRATES GRUNDTVIG 2 Programme. Increased activity is being scoped at present, the result of an increased level of interest from other EU countries.

TAF is appraising also, the viability of using its delivery model as potentially self-sustaining. This specialist training, designed exclusively to meet the complex needs of the increasing numbers of older people in today’s society, could become a funded delivery model to key employers and sectors, particularly within West London.

10. Summary of Key Recommendations

(a) Joint Working/Partnership

- ⇒ It is suggested that the network of higher level training providers could be widened to increase the number of progression routes available to beneficiaries.

(b) Project Management

- ⇒ A recent intermediary contract with JCP has facilitated partnership working, although there are some areas to refine. For this reason, it is suggested that this structure should be reviewed during the final evaluation
- ⇒ It is recommended that employer representation is secured further, perhaps additionally functioning for the purposes of business mentoring

(c) Equal Opportunities

- ⇒ It is suggested that the agreed inclusion of learners 64+ should be maintained, in order to add capacity and prepare for proposed government changes for a higher retirement age.
- ⇒ A requirement made of all LDA funded projects, was that they were in a position to deliver minimum equality targets of women (50%), BME (29%) and disabled (10%). It is to be noted that OOPS 50+ has over-delivered in each case: 75%, 31% and 14% respectively and provides an exemplar of good practice for transfer.
- ⇒ Meeting individual client's needs and empowering them towards employment using ICT skills is a particular success of the OOPS 50+ Project and as such, provides a potential model of good practice being developed for wider dissemination by TAF.
- ⇒ In order to increase the already recorded inclusiveness of the Project, consideration might be given to ensuring that the client intake is in line with boroughs' baseline and statistical data, too. Similarly the gender mix could be addressed to attract more men onto the Project.
- ⇒ Given the historical under-utilisation of beneficiary support measures by TAF clients, it is proposed that a significant proportion of these underspend monies are vired into providing additional Personal Development provision, in view of some shortfall within currently allocated hours and the increasing level of individual beneficiary need, including during recruitment.
- ⇒ It is suggested that to raise further awareness, that the Equal Opportunities Policy should be discussed in more detail with both beneficiaries and staff, to promote wider ownership of TAF's equality values and practices.

(d) Information and Communications Technology (ICT)

- ⇒ It is recommended that subject to further resources becoming available, a project-specific webpage could be constructed that could carry project news, developments and beneficiary case studies, for wider transfer; also a client interest/enrolment form. Additionally to be considered could be the direct involvement of project beneficiaries; also to contribute towards TAF's quarterly newsletter, particularly important to sub-regional strategic agencies and employers. .
- ⇒ In order to increase the 60% level of beneficiary usage, consideration might be given to an extended access, in addition to the drop in sessions on a Wednesday, using available laptops to practise taught skills. However, this would need additional resources and staff time being made available.
- ⇒ It is recommended that during the lifetime of the Project that the website job search facility be widened to encompass as many of the boroughs targeted (11). Further suggested is the inclusion of some additional user information to facilitate the access of all job sources given – work that would need to be separately funded.

(e) Sustainable Development

- ⇒ It is proposed, that staff could be more actively engaged in promoting environmental protection for example, through recycling of ink and toner cartridges. It is recommended too, that greater awareness is raised amongst participants for example to be mentioned in the code of conduct.
- ⇒ 3 external events per year prove effective to engage employers but in order to accelerate this work further, it is suggested that business mentoring might be piloted.

(f) Project Management Beneficiary/Financial Monitoring Systems

- ⇒ It is recommended that sufficient administrative resources are built in to provide a full-time administrator required by a project of this size, if resources allow.
- ⇒ Response rates to client follow-up remain problematic, although the return rate for TAF is in the region of 30% and as such, is considerably higher than for other training providers. Perhaps other approaches could be scoped such as an annual reunion event.
- ⇒ It is recommended that the process of measuring actual spend against profile should be effected at least quarterly, in order to provide timely interventions and quarterly updating to funders, as required.

- ⇒ The Director of Projects is able to draw on the varied skills of TAF's management committee including in accountancy/financial management, resources that has been under-used to date, possibly.

(g) Project Intervention/Remedial Actions

- ⇒ It is recommended that consideration be given to recruiting an additional person with the right skillset to add capacity in the recruitment of community-based learners who can be difficult to reach, if the current project budget allows, for example through virement.
- ⇒ It is suggested that consideration might be given to an expansion of staff resources to include additional Skills for Life provision; also ESOL support. It is recommended that this be costed in for future training projects.

(h) Project Actions

- ⇒ Flexibility of attendance hours/days is evidencing a successful retention strategy
- ⇒ It is suggested that the mix of learners on 2 compatible funded programmes would be an important area to evaluate as part of the final project evaluation.

(i) Project Publicity/Marketing/Recruitment

- ⇒ It is proposed that a facility might be included to offer potential clients the means to register their interest and to possibly enrol for the course on the website. For this once again, it would be advantageous to have project specific webpages, if resources allow.
- ⇒ It is recommended that the three times a year TAF newsletter should include project specific pages, if current funding for publicity allows.
- ⇒ It is recommended that project budget virement be effected as soon as practicable, to provide additional resources for important outreach work.
- ⇒ It is suggested that consideration be given to involving volunteers and staff in the recruitment process, once they have achieved NVQ Level 3 & 4 in advice & guidance and development activities

(j) Retention of Beneficiaries

- ⇒ For the 4 training courses to date, the retention level is confirmed at 87% that in itself, provides a model of good practice that has potential for transfer.

- ⇒ It is important that underspent project monies are not lost and that they are vired across into other areas of project overspend, for example personal development hours, interviewing 1-2-1 and recruitment.

(k) Innovation/Good Practice/Added Value/End Products

- ⇒ It is suggested that this holistic and bespoke, good practice training model developed could be piloted as preparation for entry into other shortage sectors, for example the creative industries and the care sector by TAF..
- ⇒ The “added value” Enterprise Induction/Business Advice for self-employment module,” is to be noted as an effective progression route especially for older workers, to secure onward progression into full/part-time work that can be tailored to the financial needs and availability of the 50+.

(l) Complementarity/Synergy/Dissemination

- ⇒ It is recommended that as part of the final evaluation, careful consideration is given to developed project methodologies for example engaging difficult-to-reach clients; also end products that could be disseminated and transferred pan-London to key stakeholders and funders, to include the wider European Union. Interest in TAF’s work with older learners continues to grow transationally and this “multiplier effect” should be appraised within the final evaluation.

(m) Preparation for Exit Strategy/Sustainability

- ⇒ It is recommended that the sustainability of this older persons’ training model developed, should be included within the final evaluation