

WYLDA IN CASE STUDY

Strategic Engagement Project (2007-2008)

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1. What need did you address?

We needed statutory agencies and other potential partners to have a way to get involved in the issues concerning WYLDA, the third sector infrastructure consortium in West Yorkshire.

2. What did you do about it?

We looked at the issue of engaging with strategic partners over a six month period. This work culminated in a conference that we held in February 2008. We set the date of the event in June 2007, and we invited the Strategic Manager of the Association of West Yorkshire Authorities to chair it (so he had lots of notice). We allocated part of our Consortium Development Grant from Capacitybuilders to around a dozen key areas of work (economy, health, social enterprise, skills, district working and so on) and one person from the Consortium took responsibility for each, meeting key stakeholders in the autumn, inviting them to the event, and drawing up a short paper.

This engagement process was also key to fine-tuning the “business plan” which had been drawn up prior to the project starting. In other words, we saw the business plan as something that would continue to evolve, rather than being set in stone. We also used the process to explore in more detail the six areas which we felt were priority for the consortium.

The conference was followed by a meeting of WYLDA’s Executive group, in which we selected three key areas of work from the six priorities we had established. These three areas became the three WYLDA “modernization projects” which were then submitted to Capacitybuilders for funding.

3. What are the two main challenges that you faced?

Our main challenges were:

- i. Getting buy-in from other agencies (both statutory and other thirds sector agencies) to the concerns of the infrastructure consortium,
- and
- ii. having dialogue about these at a West Yorkshire level, where there are very few legal entities operating.

4. Do you consider your activities to be successful, and why?

During the course of the following year (2008-2009) we continued the dialogue with the Association of West Yorkshire Authorities, eventually submitting a paper to them about the development of a framework for third sector strategies. They have followed this up by senior officers meeting across the five authorities to discuss strategic issues for the third sector. We regard this as being a very positive outcome.

5. Has your work left any lasting impact?

The conference has been held again in 2009. Two of the local authorities came to present (jointly with their CVS) their work on their third sector strategy. It is likely that the conference will take place again next year.

The three modernisation projects have all received funding from Capacitybuilders and started during the year 2008-2009. Positive engagement is being noted with and between other agencies through these projects.

6. What are the three key learning points for other consortia?

- i. Business planning for the consortium is not an unwelcome activity; it is the process by which the consortium carries out its everyday work.
- ii. Other agencies are interested in the work of the consortium. For each of our two annual conferences, we have had 70-80 people signed up, with many of the key statutory agencies present.
- iii. Plan ahead a long way, and treat the resources coming from Capacitybuilders as the means for infrastructure agencies to work together, rather than as a resource for individual infrastructure agencies to carry out their work.