

Developing an Asset 1

Case Study: Asian Women & Girls' Centre.



The Challenge:

To raise sufficient funds to set up crèche facilities that would also be an income generating asset for the centre.



Summary points:

- Use professional advisers when you need to.
- Responding to the needs of centre users is a key driver of growth and expansion and is necessary to identify income opportunities.
- Partnering with Sure Start has brought significant investment in a key asset.



What and Why:

- **Expand on what the challenge is and the activities associated with it.**

The challenge is to provide practical meaningful support for centre users, from mental health support to homework clubs and childcare.

Outgrowing current premises led to the purchase of the building next door to run as a crèche.

- **How does the activity align with the organisation's mission / values / aims / objectives?**

Being very clear about their mission was critical to developing the support needed by the centre users.

Management responds to those needs and does not drive them.

One possible spin off from building a new crèche is the creation of a new kitchen which the catering staff and volunteers will be able to use.

- **How will the activity improve the financial sustainability of the organisation in the short, medium and long term?**

Potentially the sustainability of the centre could be improved by the creation of a new crèche as it will create 10 new jobs, and contribute to the local economy, as well as generate income for the centre over time.

This income would be used to continue the provision of other activities in the centre.

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? How?

- **What were the key steps in establishing the activity?**

Management responds to the needs of centre users so when asked for additional crèche provision it was clear they could not expand further without acquiring more space.

- They enquired about the property next door.
- Identified funding opportunities and considered a loan as well as local grant funding.
- Approached potential partners such as Sure Start and costed the project.

- **What additional resources / skills were identified as being needed by the organisation to progress the activity?**

Financial: Significant additional funding has been invested in the centre. Management must understand basic cost analysis to ensure cost recovery. Take advice on complex matters such as building works, this is not something to get wrong.

- A bank manager helped set up a spreadsheet.
- An architect was paid an initial amount with the promise of full payment on completion of the works. He project managed the building development.
- Management from Sure Start was involved in planning, costing and shaping how the new crèche would be run.

Personnel (staff, volunteers, board / trustees): Management committee is aware of new business being sought and gets updates on existing activity. Staff and volunteers are involved in the running of the centre and help monitor progress.

IT: IT is used for communications, and financial management

Assets: New buildings being used for community benefit become a focal point or landmark in a neighbourhood.

Once adopted by residents they are used and valued.

Although the centre owns the buildings they are very clearly for community use.

Monitoring and evaluation: Feedback is sought from centre users on a regular basis and used to inform projects and lead to new developments.

? Who's Involved?

- **How were stakeholders identified and brought on board?**

Funders: Funding opportunities have been identified by word of mouth, through local networks and the Charities Information Bureau newsletter.

Local Community: Local professionals have been brought in to work with the centre such as architects, bank manager etc.

Commissioners: There are established links to local authority departments such as social services, youth service who may want help with summer holiday clubs.

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Why Not?

- **What risks were identified in establishing activities?**

Personnel: Recruitment is from the local disadvantaged neighbourhood and often confidence levels are low, so a lot of support is initially needed. The centre has a policy for doing this.

Financial: Sustainability of covering costs is a worry when the organisation is still dependent on short term funding for running costs. Being able to cost some overheads into contracts takes away some of the pressure.

Existing provision: Much of current provision is short term and the administration to renew applications is very time consuming.

Other: Vandalism and security at the centre is an issue and a drain on resources.

- **How were these risks managed?**

Planning:

New programmes are fully costed to include staffing, and a contribution to overheads etc.

New fencing has been installed to make the premises more secure.

Reporting and monitoring is necessary on both funding and contracting activities. The centre was audited recently on its monitoring and was given an excellent report. There are systems in place to capture the necessary data on an ongoing basis.

Key Facts:

- **Organisation's name and trading subsidiaries:** Asian Women and Girls' Centre.
- **Organisation's mission:** In recognition of the discrimination and resulting disadvantage faced by Asian women and girls, the centre aims to promote equality of opportunity for the social group as follows:
 - Encouraging, developing and supporting projects which cater for social, educational and training needs;
 - Ensuring the development of pre-vocational and other courses in partnership with local voluntary organisations, to enable Asian women to access mainstream education, training and ultimately employment opportunities;
 - Supporting individuals and groups of Asian women and girls who are working to improve their economic, social or political participation in society.

FYE 2004 / 05 Turnover: £90,000 No. of paid staff 5

% Income grant v trading: 80 : 20 No. of volunteers 15

Status: Registered charity and company limited by guarantee Date of Inc. 1st April 1980

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Moving Forward:

The centre will always need a mixed economy of grants and earned income to continue as a community centre as some activities will never generate income to any significant level. Finding a service such as a crèche, which has income generation potential, and has a good strategic fit with other activities, creates opportunity for centre users. The centre has a policy of seeking growth through this kind of enterprise activity.



Background:

The Asian Women and Girls' Centre (AWGC) was established in 1980 and funded by grants and trust funding. The current building was purchased with the aid of Lottery Funding and is situated in Manningham. AWGC has worked in partnership with other agencies to provide services for women of the local community and benefited from Single Regeneration Budget (SRB), Neighbourhood Renewal Funding (NRF) and Objective 2 support. A new building has been purchased using a mix of funds from SRB, Early Years and Sure Start.

AWGC is a women's only centre and a substantial number of women have religious and cultural reasons for attending a centre restricted to women. However AWGC tries to encourage and support integration, and where possible provides signposting to other groups / support agencies. AWGC has established links with organisations in the Carlisle Business Centre, to provide a progression route for women who feel able to move on with their development. AWGC accepts that not all women feel confident enough to take this route and will continue to provide support on an individual basis.

A non-profit making organisation, AWGC was created to provide services to women only and has an exemption under Section 43 of the Sex Discrimination Act 1975.

Activities include:

- IT Training at basic and advanced ECDL level
- ESOL training: Delivered by Bradford Council in the centre on an outreach basis.
- Mental health surgery
- Provision of homework classes for girls
- GCSEs
- Sewing classes

All of the above resources are supported by a play group located on the premises.

The centre is currently over-subscribed for the courses and further expansion to meet identified needs is being restricted by shortage of crèche / nursery facilities and by lack of space.

Researched, collated and compiled by the Y&H Regional Forum, 2006 on behalf of the CIB.

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