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Orchard Park and North Hull Enterprises Limited, Kingston-Upon-Hull *United Kingdom*

Best Practice

New for 2002

Categories:

Gender Equity and Equality:

- access to resources
- empowerment
- removing barriers to equity
- social integration

Poverty Eradication:

- job creation
- vocational training

Economic Development:

- enterprise development (formal and informal sectors)
- entrepreneurialship
- training

Level of Activity: Neighbourhood

Ecosystem: Continental

Summary

Orchard Park and North Hull Enterprises Ltd (OPNHE Ltd) is a local economic development agency based in Orchard Park and North Hull, two extremely disadvantaged housing estates on the northern edge of the city of Kingston-Upon-Hull. Since its establishment in 1989 the company works on a non-profit making basis to the benefit of the residents of these two areas. It aims to develop and regenerate the local economic structures by encouraging the creation of jobs and enabling those jobs to be realistic and sustainable as well as restoring the ethos of self-belief and dignity amongst the inhabitants and enabling the community to take part in that process.

OPNHE's mission statement is to establish and maintain a model of Best Practice in the delivery of locally based economic regeneration through continuous innovation and development of services and opportunities of benefit to the disadvantaged and excluded.

OPNHE operates as a community/business partnership between public and private sector and the residents of Orchard Park and North Hull and is independent from local and national government. The voluntary Board of Directors equally includes public and private sector representatives alongside residents of Orchard Park and North Hull.

Starting in 1989, OPNHE worked with three staff, three managed workspaces and a budget of Sterling Pound 60,000 per annum. By 2001, OPNHE had placed its 1000th resident into training and nearly 6,000 residents into employment. OPNHE now employs over one hundred people, many from the local area and has a turnover of pound 2 million.

Narrative

SITUATION BEFORE THE INITIATIVE BEGAN

Orchard Park and North Hull were established as resettlement areas for residents displaced as a result of the decline of the fishing industry in the 1960s and the subsequent slum clearance of the Hull docks. Since then, these two estates suffered from high levels of unemployment, exclusion from the local economy and low skills. They were furthermore characterised by high benefit dependency, poor housing and a disproportionately large number of lone parent households as well as drug abuse and a high crime rate.

ESTABLISHMENT OF PRIORITIES

OPNHE's main priorities are the social and economic regeneration of its area of benefits, the provision of the highest quality jobs, advice and training for local residents and the continuous development of economically beneficial projects from a point of need. It furthermore intends to be a valuable and integral part of the community and to be socially and ethnically responsible. These priorities are based on the obvious disadvantages of OPNHE's target area and determined by the local social and economic conditions, gaps in provision and community need. They reflect the aim to permanently change the situation of the residents for the better.

FORMULATION OF OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

OPNHE's main aim is the regeneration of North Hull. The objectives through which it achieves this are defined by the needs of the local community and have been developed on the basis of a local area study carried out in 1991 and existing background research.

- Re-engaging socially and economically excluded residents
- Assisting the disadvantaged into jobs
- Assisting the disadvantaged into training
- Assisting the disadvantaged to start a business
- Supporting new businesses and stimulating locally based economic activity
- Removing barriers to employment and training
- Maximising the private sector contribution to the economic regeneration of the area

MOBILISATION OF RESOURCES

Financial

Financial resources were provided by the Environment Department through its Urban Programme, Hull City and Humberside County councils, European Regional Development grants, the Employment Service and private sector companies. OPNHE was and is committed to researching and utilising income from a wide variety of sources. Currently OPNHE's grant income includes the Single Regeneration Budget, ESF Objective 3 and ERDF Objective 2. Other capital funding comes from private sector donations and contract and rental income.

Technical

In the early days, OPNHE operated from a converted youth club building and raised Sterling Pound 150,000 from private sponsors and the Employment Service in both equipment and money. Following the provision of further capital grants from the same sources as mentioned in the financial section, a new 2 storey office and workshop complex was constructed and occupied in 1993. Also, instead of buying new appliances OPNHE used and still uses second-hand PC's from local universities or colleges and obtains refurbished desks and other furniture instead of buying new items.

Human

Staff have been drawn from a range of backgrounds across the private, public and voluntary sectors and for some the company has offered their first opportunity for paid employment. OPNHE has a policy of local recruitment and nearly half of its employees are local people.

PROCESS

One of OPNHE's main problems was and still is the funding of its services. With no core funding available. The company relies heavily on the funding bodies, e.g. EU Structural Funds or the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB). The short-term nature of this funding also causes problems. This is why OPNHE is actively seeking to diversify its funding and income base in order to consolidate its position. By actively engaging partners and projects in the European Union OPNHE has already managed to make its operations more secure. The issue of charity registration is also currently under review as this would open funding from sources such as the National Lottery.

When OPNHE started in 1989 there was another problem; it proved difficult to gain the trust of the local people as they were suspicious about OPNHE's motive and not used to somebody being actually interested in improving their social and economic outlook. Thus the service was slow to start with and visits to the company offices were less than 25 per month. This has changed considerably over the years as residents became aware that OPNHE has brought many changes on the estate and proved to be very successful in improving the conditions for them. Today, there are around 34,000 visitors a year and OPNHE is a viable and integral part of the local community.

Policy decisions are made by the Board of Directors which itself reflects the partnership OPNHE stands for. The Board is made up of residents, 5 private sector representatives, 2 public sector representatives and the Chief Executive. Thus the people living in OPNHE's target area can participate directly in the decision making process and input their ideas. Also, through their presence, the private sector and local authorities can influence OPNHE's activities.

Ongoing monitoring is carried out by the Chief Executive and reviewed bi-monthly by the Board. In general, monitoring is part of the funding regulations/contracts and the management process. The monitoring of business and job creation is done in three monthly intervals. SRB funding also requires quarterly monitoring. The Job Shops do monthly reviews and have to return monthly statistics to the Employment Service. Specific projects undergo external evaluation.

In 1998 OPNHE was awarded with the charter as an "Investor in People" as national recognition of its commitment to the development and welfare of its employees. This charter was renewed in August 2001. As part of the accreditation a staff appraisal scheme was established which also sets the outline for training plans.

RESULTS ACHIEVED

- Better co-ordination and integration between various actors, organisations or institutions;
- Changes in local, national and regional social, economic and environmental policies and strategies;
- Improved institutional capacity at the national, sub-national or local levels;
- Changes to local or national decision-making, including the institutionalisation of partnerships;
- Recognising and addressing specific opportunities and constraints;
- Changes in the use and allocation of human, technical and financial resources at the local/national level;
- Changes in people's attitudes and behaviour.

From 1992 to 2000 OPNHE assisted 4,788 residents into employment and 1,372 into training, 339 new businesses and 735 new jobs were created. Every year about 34,000 people visit OPNHE and seek advice and help in employment issues, training and business support.

Outputs are chosen so that they fit into the overall action plan and complement the aims of OPNHE. The impact is measured quantitatively through individual beneficiary records, questionnaires completed by OPNHE clients and follow-up action such as mail and telephone research. It is harder to measure the qualitative impact. The provision of standard national recognised qualifications (NVQs) or equivalents is a sign for the high quality services of OPNHE.

SUSTAINABILITY

UPBEAT is a very successful Intermediate labour Market model that provides participants with a year of full time, waged employment in a local SME, coupled with related vocational training. This project simultaneously assists disadvantaged people into training and jobs as it provides them with an opportunity to gain work skills and a qualification while earning a wage.

Another way to successfully re-engage socially and economically excluded residents is to use the arts as a tool. The A.R.T. project (Achieving Real Transportation) provides free arts activities for local people and by engaging them in enjoyable activities develop their self-esteem raises their aspirations and their employability. Through its Business Support unit, OPNHE supports new businesses and stimulates locally based economic activity by providing a range of intensive help for start-ups, micro firms and SMEs.

OPNHE has also developed extensive networks with all sectors, in particular the private sector, which is an active partner and thus contributes to the economic regeneration of the area.

Financial

OPNHE is committed to researching and utilising income from a wide variety of sources. Currently OPNHE's grant income includes the Single Regeneration Budget, ESF Objective 3 and ERDF Objective 2. However, grants are not a long-term answer to sustainability. Thus, OPNHE is committed to developing sustainable sources of income. The company took the decision to move into property and contractual income. The issue of charity registration is also currently under review.

Social and Economic

OPNHE helps the social inclusion of the residents of its target area by improving their employability through intensive support and guidance and quality, user-friendly training. Moreover, OPNHE's activities are aimed at raising self-esteem and aspirations as well as skills and employment levels thus aiding social inclusion. OPNHE is furthermore committed to equal opportunities for all and no individual is treated less favourably. All projects are available to men and women, regardless of age, race, sexuality or disability.

Cultural

OPNHE's services reduce the need for travel in the target group. Most of the target group are within walking distance of OPNHE whilst others tend to use bicycles, thus contributing to a push towards 'greener' forms of transport. Through the use of ICT instead of a paper-based system OPNHE also contributes to the careful use of natural resources whilst improving the ICT skills of the target group.

LESSONS LEARNED

OPNHE is a large, well-established organisation with a management team that has extensive experience of project and financial management and committed employees. In order to address the problems in its target area it developed an integrated approach, which combines employment, training, business and community services. By doing this, OPNHE is more sustainable than projects based around single activities. It has proved that, when the structure is set up correctly, such an option can be very successful and deliver quality jobs.

During all these years, it furthermore became clear the 3rd sector organisations like OPNHE are closer to the real needs of the resident population than any other form of organisation and that local employment development by the 3rd sector is a viable option. Also, unit costs for 3rd sector action are generally lower than the Public sector. OPNHE thinks that the true way to sustainable community development is based on economic improvements and can only be achieved by listening to the real needs of the residents.

It is also of advantage to be represented on most of the local policy-making bodies for Community Economic and Employment Development to actively influence policy actions in this field. Furthermore, national and transnational partnerships are a very good way to constantly develop innovative and economically beneficial projects and exchange experience and know-how.

However, as there is no core funding as such, all the services OPNHE provides are dependent upon grant funding. Most of the funding is bid for and each project has to contribute to core costs, such as personnel and financial administration. Consequently, cash flow presents the most significant problem and many banks tend to have problems with organisations like OPNHE as they do not have real assets and do not trade. OPNHE is therefore actively seeking to diversify its funding base in order to consolidate its position.

TRANSFERABILITY

OPNHE is a partner organisation in Partners for Jobs, a partnership of local residents and all the major agencies in the city that have a role in the economic development of northern Hull. Established in 1994 it works with local people to overcome barriers to employment, to make the most of joint resources and to avoid a wasteful duplication of effort. There is a constant liaison and exchange of expertise between the member agencies.

OPNHE is a member in the LEDA Partenariat Association whose main objectives are to promote the exchange of experience and knowledge between practitioners and experts in the field of local employment development, and to support transnational networking. In order to achieve this, the LEDA Partenariat organises conferences, seminars and pilot actions with the contribution of its members.

Since 1996 OPNHE also takes part actively in Employment Week in Brussels, Belgium, an annual conference and exhibition focusing on employment issues. The participation in this European event is of substantial value for the company as the vivid exchange of ideas and information helps OPNHE to develop new partnerships and projects and secure European and National Funding to the advantage of the local economy.

In 1997, OPNHE organised the international conference 'Networking for the Creation of New Jobs' which provided an opportunity for organisations from the UK and Europe to share best practice and develop a network of initiatives. The conference was a great success and OPNHE's experience was an encouragement to all community-based organisations not to be bound by the constraints that convention may place upon them.

In 1998/1999 OPNHE worked with partners in Sweden and Spain in the QP project (Quality & Professionalism) to develop a guide to best practice. Supported by the European Commission 'Third System and Employment Pilot Action', this project aimed at providing a tool for Third Sector organisations to assess and improve their levels of quality and professionalism.

Key Dates

1989 OPNHE registered as a company (29 September)

Annual budget of Pound 60,000.

1993 Completion of OPNHE Centre and 16 Managed Workspaces

1995 Completion of Flying Start Training Centre

1000th resident placed into employment

International Conference "Networking for the Creation of New Jobs"

2000 1000th resident placed into training

2001 6000th resident placed into employment

Annual expenditure surpasses pound 2, 000,0

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Type of Organization: Community-based organisation (CBO)

Nominating Organization

O.P.N.H.E.
(As Above)

Partners

Kingston-upon-Hull City Council
Mr. Steven Bayes
Guildhall
Alfred Gelder Street
HU1 2AA
United Kingdom

Tel:44 1482 615066

Type of Organization: Local Authority

Type of Partner Support: Political Support

Partners for Jobs
Mr. Jon Howard
504 Inglemire Lane
Kingston-Upon-Hull
HU6 8JL
United Kingdom

Tel:44 1482 801463

Type of Organization: Non-governmental organisation (NGO)

Type of Partner Support: Financial Support

Financial Profile

Year	Total budget US\$	Partner A:SRB%	Partner B.ESF%	Partner C. ERDF%
2001	2,736,000	19	28	17.5
2000	2,626,000	19	28	17.5
1999	2,137,000	19	28	17.5

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