

Active Citizenship and English (ACE) project

Year 1

Impact assessment



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Introduction

Active Citizenship and English (ACE) is a two-year European Integration Fund (EIF) project which aims to use a range of innovative approaches to teaching and learning to support the successful integration of Third Country National (NON-EU NATIONAL) women. Led by Learning Unlimited, it is delivered in partnership with Blackfriars Settlement (BS), Working Men's College (WMC) and the Institute of Education (IoE). Year 1 ran from September 2013 to July 2014.

ACE extends and adds value to the successful model of supporting integration developed through the 3 year EIF funded *Welcome to the UK* project, also led by Learning Unlimited. The overarching objective is to support the successful integration of non-EU national women into the UK through a contextualised, integration-focused programme of direct teaching, events and trips; capacity building training for teachers and volunteer befrienders; volunteer befriender support for the main target group; materials development; research and dissemination.

The project aims to:

- make a demonstrable positive impact on the successful integration of non-EU national women to the UK through:
 - direct teaching
 - capacity building training for teachers, trainers and volunteer befrienders
 - materials development and research
- develop models of good practice in:
 - teaching, learning, training, support, capacity building and materials development
 - the exchange of experience, good practice and information
 - promoting cross-cultural understanding, interaction and co-operation through befriending, capacity building training, work placements and volunteering
 - using a range of innovative approaches to teaching, learning, training and materials development, specifically tailored to local needs
- develop a sustainable model of good practice, teaching and training materials which can be shared with other providers and programmes replicated elsewhere in the UK
- establish a strong research base and assess and evaluate the impact and value of this integration programme
- build on and receive added value from the expertise, knowledge and models of good practice developed through the previous EIF project, *Welcome to the UK*

This project specifically addresses the needs of non-EU national women by:

- addressing capacity issues in respect of language and literacy learning
- developing processes and programmes that help new migrants in general and specific targeted groups of disadvantaged migrants to become full and active members of UK society
- enabling newly arrived non-EU national women to work towards fulfilling the criteria for citizenship,
- developing programmes that provide opportunities for non-EU national women and members of the receiving society to interact with each other through voluntary and community activity and befriending.

There are 5 main project objectives with related strands of activity and targets over two years:

1. Active Citizenship and English (ACE) programme

Engage and support **216** eligible TCN women on free, graded programmes which support them in:

- developing ESOL, literacy and citizenship skills and working towards fulfilling the criteria for citizenship on free, graded contextualised integration programmes
- accessing a bolt-on taster and short course programme developing additional relevant skills including numeracy, IT, employability (including CV and interview skills), Preparing for the Life in the UK test (E3+) and Preparing for volunteering
- achieving qualifications (where appropriate)
- progressing to further learning, training and volunteering, including supported volunteering placement opportunities for learners with E3+ English language skills
- meeting travel costs
- accessing childcare (up to 48 places per week)
- getting support from a volunteer befriender
- going on visits, trips and events to support integration

2. Befriending

Train and support **60** volunteer befrienders to support **216** TCN women:

- Recruitment and training of volunteer befrienders at both partner settings (WMC and BS)
- Optional practitioner researcher training for both volunteer befriender groups as well (as for some returned volunteers from Preparing for life in the UK programme in Bangladesh)
- Specialist research support
- Free full DBS checks
- Termly *Keeping in touch* (KIT) meetings for volunteer befrienders
- Local awareness-raising for community input and support
- Befriender and learner matching
- On-going befriending support for 1-3 ACE participants for each volunteer befriender

3. Opportunities to engage with local people, local communities, and local support and facilities

Build links for TCN women engaged on the ACE programme with the local community through:

- interaction with **60** volunteer befrienders
- **26** trips, events and workshops for learners and befrienders including half term workshops linked to integration themes, the local community, local services and support
- undertaking volunteering (**50** TCNs)

4. Capacity building training and support

Provide free/subsidised capacity building support for *staff from FE colleges, Local Authorities, community and voluntary organisations working with non-EU national women and local organisations offering volunteering placements* and share good practice on developing and running innovative integration and active citizenship programmes through:

- *Teaching basic literacy to ESOL learners* capacity building training (**48** ESOL teachers)
- **6** CPD workshops (**60** participants) including Supporting non-EU national women on volunteering placements; Language and literacy awareness for front line workers and Setting up and running Active Citizenship and English and Volunteer programmes
- **2** dissemination events (**100+** attendees) which promote awareness raising, skills development and support ESOL professionals, partners and stakeholders who are working with non-EU nationals who are planning to settle in the UK.
- production and distribution of 'Literacy for active citizenship materials'
- updates and 'Literacy for active citizenship' materials via **5** European / ESOL networks

5. Add value to the skills and experience of TCNs and volunteers

The ACE project will provide added value for through :

- training and supporting for 20 volunteers as 'practitioner researchers' collecting impact assessment data from TCNs on 'befriending'
- engaging befrienders and learners in a 'Literacy for active citizenship' project - developing and piloting graded readers with supporting activities) to supplement the *Welcome to the UK* materials toolkit.

Approach

This report comprises findings for Year 1 of the two-year ACE project. The aim was to carry out a rigorous but supportive and formative evaluation across all strands of the project. To this end, the project has been evaluated through:

- interviews, discussions and focus groups with key members of staff and beneficiaries
- attending project-related events and meetings throughout the year including half term events, trips and advisory group meetings
- data collection using evaluations and feedback from ACE courses, volunteer training, CPD training and events such as half term events and the end of year dissemination event.

In our evaluation of the extent to which the project attains its prime objective, we have used the EU basic principle that *'integration is a dynamic, two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents of Member States'* and have taken into account both the personal and the social aspects of integration stressed by project participants. We believe that integration is a dynamic process which may take a long time, with a number of stages in that process. We see cross-cultural understanding as an essential pre-requisite for this two-way process and we found that all the strands of the project supported this in different ways.

A broad view has been taken of how the different strands of the project fit together as well as looking at the success of the individual parts. We have listed what we consider to be the key strengths and key challenges, with examples, rather than give an exhaustive account.

Methodology

The evaluation plan was developed using the five main strands of the project as the framework. This report follows the same format. The evaluation has been informed by a mixture of quantitative and qualitative data, as follows.

- desk research involving reading original papers, progress reports, participant evaluations from the different elements of the project, and the managers' and research reports.
- focus groups with learners, befrienders, teachers and other representatives from partners (WMC, BS and IoE)
- questionnaires to capacity building course participants (including TBLEL participants) to gauge impact
- feedback from half term events
- feedback from the Year 1 dissemination events

Additional data was collected by volunteer befrienders and the IoE research team as part of the practitioner research strand research looking at the impact of the befriender role in relation to the early experiences of newly arrived migrants in the UK.

Assessment of project objectives

In this section, we consider how far the project has met its overarching objective of supporting the successful integration of non-EU national women into the UK through a contextualised, integration-focused programme of direct teaching, capacity building training for teachers and volunteers, materials development and research in Year 1. Taking each strand in turn, we consider how well it has met its objectives, the strengths to build on and areas for development in Year 2. This will inform project planning for Year 2.

<p style="text-align: center;">STRAND 1: Active Citizenship and English (ACE) programme</p> 	
Year 1 objectives	Achievements
108 women to receive an initial skills assessment and interview and enrol onto an ACE course. All completers to receive a copy of 'Life in the UK' handbook.	140 TCN eligible women were interviewed and assessed and enrolled onto ACE courses. 107 eligible TCN women completed one or more ACE courses. All 'completers' ¹ received a copy of the 'Life in the UK' handbook.
8 graded <i>Active Citizenship and English</i> courses (two sessions per week), Entry 1 to Level 1	24 termly ACE courses took place, two sessions per week, from E1 ESOL Literacy/Beginners to Level 1 (<i>n.b. these were changed from eight one year courses to three termly short courses for each group</i>)
80 learners to gain internal/external accreditation	107 learners gained internal accreditation and of these learners have been entered for external ESOL exams (awaiting results)
12 bolt-on short courses and taster programme modules	12 short courses and taster sessions took place, including: baking, CV writing, Life in the UK, yoga, cake decorating, ESOL exam practice
Evidence	ACE Year 1 learner evaluations and class focus groups' feedback: WMC total no. evaluations= 46 (ACE3 = 8, ACE2 = 18, ACE1 = 12, ACE Lit = 8) BFS total no. evaluations= 34 (ACE1 = 10, ACE2 = 11, ACE 3 = 13, ACE Lit = 10)
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The vast majority were overwhelmingly positive about their course, their teacher, the centre and support they had received, and they intended to continue with Year 2: <i>'everything is good'</i>

¹ In agreement with the Home Office:

- the original number of courses was modified from 8 year-long ACE courses (4 at each centre), to 24 termly courses
- completers are learners who have attended a minimum of 80% of one or more termly ACE courses

	<p><i>'I got so many opportunities from this course so please continue!!'</i></p> <p><i>'it's very friendly my class'</i></p> <p><i>'this class help me in my life'</i></p> <p><i>'My teacher is a brilliant teacher. I like her teaching style very much. She always encourage[d] students to do the best [and praises them]'</i>.</p> <p><i>'Before I never open my mouth in English, now I try to speak and listen. I've more confident.'</i></p> <p><i>'In my country I already studied English but I couldn't speak. When I start class here, I start speaking in front of the class ... [now] I can communicate out of my home ... I know a lot of vocabulary ... I really appreciate this course.'</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of the learners at WMC agreed or agreed strongly that the project had <i>'helped me feel part of the UK'</i> • Reimbursement of travel costs and free childcare was crucial. Several learners said their husbands couldn't afford to pay course fees, childcare or travel costs; without this, they would not be able to attend the course: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>'if there is no childcare I can't be here'</i> <i>'covering transport fees and class trips help me a lot'</i> <i>'the most important thing for me is they pay my transport costs ... or I cannot come'</i> <i>'I can learn because they look after my children'</i>
<p>Areas for development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunities at WMC for learners to use computers as part of their classes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>'My class doesn't have computers. I use only in library. Then I don't know how to use computers.'</i> <i>'We need computer in our class'.</i>
<p>Action points for Year 2</p>	<p>Marketing and publicity</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Training and briefing for reception staff at each centre before enrolment starts BFS need to extend to wider area in south, south-east, west London Ask how existing and new learners how they found out about ACE courses at each centre <p>Enrolment and recruitment</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Writing assessment section on form needs to be longer for higher level sts <p>ACE course content and delivery</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure comprehensive induction programme for each group covers all aspects of ACE offer and support as well as expectations around attendance and punctuality ACE tutors to build finding out about events, trips, befriender support etc into classroom language learning Aim to ensure all classes to have some lessons in classrooms with computers and/or provide additional IT short courses ACE tutors to explore ways of sharing ideas, activities and resources. <p>Tasters and short courses</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Run taster/short course programme form beginning of academic year Include Basic literacy, Preparing for Preparing for volunteering, Preparing for the life in the UK test and Preparing for ESOL exams short courses at each centre

STRAND 2: Befriending		
Objectives		Achievements
2 befriender training courses to be developed and run		3 befriender training courses ran (1 for befrienders at BS and 2 for WMC)
30 local women to be recruited and trained as volunteer befrienders		42 women participated in befriender training courses
30 volunteer befrienders to be matched with, and offer support to, up to 90 ACE learners		40 volunteer befrienders supported 48 ACE learners individually and additional learners benefitted from befriender input and support at events and on trips and events.
Volunteer befrienders to be given on-going support		Befriender co-ordinator offered on-going support by phone, email and text messages
Termly <i>Keeping in touch</i> (KIT) meetings for volunteer befrienders/mentors		Termly KIT meetings were held for the volunteer befrienders
Evidence	ACE Year 1 LU focus group (befriender trainer, supporter, administrator) and written notes/ feedback	
Strengths	<p>Befriender recruitment and training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall, marketing, publicity and training all went well. An interesting and diverse group of volunteers applied. Using the Volunteer Centre Camden website was a particularly successful way of recruiting volunteers. <p>Befriender support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support from LU/befriender supporter was very good – prompt response to emails, texts, phone calls, etc. Befrienders were well supported through KIT meetings, easy access to support person and prompt response to queries. Meetings gave support for log book entries and clarified what support was needed. Learner/befriender matching and support worked very well in some instances; less so in others. Personal introductions at centres helped facilitate befriending. <p>Befriending</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting learners enabled befrienders to make new friends from different cultures, learn some new skills and help learners with their English. The relationship improved as they got to know each other. Much feedback on befrienders was very positive. One learner, for example, was very happy to have a befriender who she could speak to on Skype every week <i>‘having a befriender helps us speak’</i>. Others said, for example,; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>‘befriender is very good for us ... I like that’</i> <i>‘the best part of the course for me was the befriender ... she’s become my friend ... [I’m] more confident’</i> <i>‘my befriender calls me three times a week’</i> 	

<p>Areas for development</p>	<p>Befriender recruitment and training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The befriending strand got off to a slow start initially at WMC with very few applicants. Following further marketing and recruitment, a second training course was run later in the year. • The training could be more creative, e.g. make a poster or resource about befriending. It would be useful to have a training session after the initial meeting with the learner. <p>Befriender support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Befriender expenses were not always sufficient and befrienders were not always sure of what additional support was available to them from the befriender supporter. <p>Befriending</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some befrienders did not respond to contact from the befriender supporter. • Some learners didn't return phone calls or respond to contact from their befrienders which, in some cases, was because they had dropped out of the ACE course. It is important for centres to notify LU/befriender supporter of attendance issues. • ACE teachers need to be more involved in ensuring learners understand the purpose of befriending and in encouraging befriender participation in trips, visits and events. • Not every learner who wanted a befriender had one • Some learners were unclear about befriending and what to expect • Some feedback on befriending was mixed/less positive, e.g. in ACE 2 WMC, 4 learners agreed that their befriender was helpful, 3 were not sure and 2 disagreed • In some cases, there were difficulties with contacting the learner who didn't always respond to messages. Occasionally, the learner phoned their befriender at unsuitable times.
<p>Action points for Year 2</p>	<p>Befriender recruitment and training</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Target the marketing and publicity to a wider range of partners and stakeholders, start recruiting earlier and have a clear timetable for recruitment, mailings, etc. Use case studies to support recruitment. b. Establish contact with universities and attend volunteer fairs c. Flyers should specify women only and that daytime availability Mon. – Fri. is essential d. Add question about spoken fluency and applicant's level of English on application form e. Add items to training course to include scenarios with (a) befriender being rejected and (b) supporting learners volunteering f. Identify befrienders from Year 1 for each venue to come to Year 2 'top up' training g. Consider some befrienders doing the TBLEL (Teaching Basic literacy to ESOL learners) course and offering 1:1 literacy support in class h. Have a training session after the initial meeting with the learner <p>Befriender support</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Consider setting up an online forum or Facebook page for befrienders, especially as not everyone can get to KIT meetings j. Check whether it is possible to increase the amount of expenses that can be claimed k. Provide a list of supporting documents for befrienders, reinforced at KIT sessions

	<p>Befriending</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> l. Try to arrange a befriender for all those who want one. m. Build 'befriending' into class induction and ensure that learners and bendifenders have realistic expectations. n. Create a learner contract, which clearly sets out the learner's commitment, to include suitable times to contact their befriender and the importance of informing them if they can't make a pre-arranged meeting, returning phone calls etc. o. Identify where befriending isn't happening and follow it up promptly p. Involve ACE teachers more – incorporate befriending into induction and encourage class visits by bendifenders to explain their role. q. Look into setting up a lunchtime 'conversation club' at each centre for bendifenders and learners to meet one another for the first time in an informal, friendly setting.
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<p>STRAND 3: Opportunities to engage with local people, local communities, and local support and facilities</p>	
	
Objectives	Achievements
Interaction with 30 volunteer bendifenders	40 volunteer bendifenders provided 1:1 support for 48 learners. In addition they supported class trips, participated in half term and other events including the end of year progression and celebration events and trip to Kew Gardens.
13 visits, trips and events to support integration	28 visits, trips and events took support place included the Houses of Parliament, Christmas market, Libraries, Tate Modern, local supermarket. 6 half-term events were held on citizenship, local community, and progression. An end of year trip to Kew Gardens was attended by over 100 learners and their families and volunteer bendifenders from both delivery sites.
25 women to undertake supported volunteering placement opportunities	31 ACE learners took up a volunteering opportunity supported on their volunteering placements by LU, WMC, BS and the volunteer centres
Evidence	31 ACE Year 1 befriender evaluations and 2 befriender focus groups' feedback

<p>Strengths</p>	<p>Opportunities to actively engage with the local community</p> <p>92% of all learners agreed or agreed strongly that they were ‘more confident about living in the UK’. This was closely linked to increased levels of confidence in speaking English, feelings of ‘belonging’ – being part of a community - and greater awareness of British culture:</p> <p><i>‘I can alone shopping and hospital’</i> <i>‘can now speak to GP, neighbours, my children’s school’</i> <i>‘this course built up my confidence then I can try to look for a job in the UK’</i> <i>‘most important for me is I can know more about the culture of the UK’</i> <i>‘The most important part of the project for me is integration - I really feel part of the community ... I’ve made new friends ... I can practise my English ’</i> <i>‘it has boosted my confidence’</i> <i>‘I feel more confident ... go to the doctor, go shopping’</i> <i>‘helps us be part of this country because this is a big opportunity for all of us’</i></p> <p>Interaction with volunteer befrienders</p> <p>40 volunteer befrienders provided a wide range of input and support during the year. In addition to 1:1 support for individual learners they were matched with, they supported class trips, and participated in half term and other events including the end of year progression and celebration events and the trip to Kew Gardens.</p> <p>Trips, events and workshops</p> <p>There was very positive feedback on trips and visits, especially the end of year trip to Kew Gardens:</p> <p><i>‘Kew Gardens was very beautiful ... another world’</i> <i>‘very special, beautiful place ... I found out [about] lots of trees, flowers .. fresh air ... I enjoyed it’</i> <i>‘I can know new places, before I can’t’</i> <i>‘trips were amazing ... part of British culture’.</i></p> <p>In addition, learners valued the wide-ranging opportunities to meet and interact with representatives of over 17 organisations which participated in the half term and other events during the year. These included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the Home Office, DWP, local councillors and Frank Dobson MP - Southwark and Camden Family Information Services, local libraries, advice centres and volunteering agencies - the British Museum and October Gallery - charities such as Trinity Hospice - other training and education organisations such as WEA and the Mary Ward Centre. <p>Learners undertaking volunteering</p> <p>With support from LU and the local volunteer centre, some higher level learners with professional career experience in their own country managed to find very worthwhile and rewarding opportunities, including one with English Heritage, three with Latin America House (in IT training and marketing) and another in a nursery: ‘I started to volunteer in a nursery ... I love it’. Others volunteered at college events, manning stalls and helping with administrative tasks.</p>
<p>Areas for development</p>	<p>Learners undertaking volunteering</p> <p>More volunteering opportunities were needed, particularly for ACE 2 learners. Not everyone who wanted to volunteer was able to find an opportunity.</p>

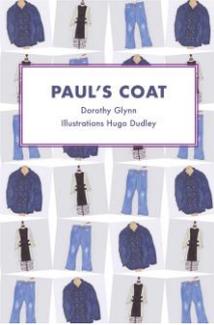
<p>Action points for Year 2</p>	<p>Opportunities to actively engage with the local community</p> <p>a. Build bridges between tasters/short courses and integration, e.g. cake decorating and selling cakes; exercise class – give info about other exercise classes in area</p> <p>Trips, events and workshops</p> <p>b. Consider running some events with contribution and input from one just one main visiting organisation rather than many stall holders</p> <p>Learners undertaking volunteering</p> <p>c. Investigate ways of offering a wider range of volunteering opportunities and/or work placements for learners.</p>
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<p>STRAND 4: Capacity building training and support</p>	
<p>Objectives</p>	<p>Achievements</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 24 ESOL teachers to be trained in teaching basic literacy to ESOL learners (TBLEL) 	<p>28 teachers/trainers participated in the two 'Teaching Basic Literacy to ESOL learners' courses</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 free CPD workshops for 30 participants to be held on developing innovative programmes that address the diverse needs of the target group and support integration and active citizenship 	<p>38 participants attended 3 ACE CPD workshops:</p> <p>Workshop 1: <i>Language/ Literacy awareness for front line workers</i> (11 participants)</p> <p>Workshop 2: <i>Introduction to teaching basic literacy to ESOL learners</i> for ESOL teachers (19 participants)</p> <p>Workshop 3: <i>Developing innovative EIF projects</i> (8 participants)</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One free ACE dissemination events to promote awareness raising, skills development and support for Third Country Nationals who are planning to settle in the UK. 	<p>Successful dissemination event took place on 6th June 2014 attended by 55 ESOL professionals including partners, workshop leaders and stakeholders.</p>
<p>Evidence</p>	<p>TBLEL course: Participants' evaluations and focus groups' feedback (Total no. evaluations returned = 20)</p> <p>CPD workshops: Participant evaluations</p> <p>Dissemination event: Participant evaluations</p>
<p>Strengths</p>	<p>TBLEL course:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall, 100% of participants rated the training course as 'excellent' or 'good'. Comments made included: <i>'The most useful training I have ever attended since completing my MA'</i> <i>'This was a fantastic course!'</i> <i>'A very enlightening and interesting course that questioned previously held views of what is literacy.'</i> <i>'it was very engaging and useful, and thought provoking.'</i> <i>'really, really useful, good resources ideas and it was also good to be around/meet other teachers and learn from them and their experience, and also sharing resource ideas.'</i> <i>' This course has helped me approach my teaching in a different way which has had positive results! It is about the right length and very practical in that we can put ideas into practice straight away.'</i> • Most commented that the practical sessions were the most useful: teaching strategies and how to prepare resources <p>CPD workshops:</p> <p>The CPD workshops were well-organised and gave participants a better cultural awareness and greater ability to overcome language barriers and work with or support .</p> <p>Workshop 1: 100% rated workshop as 'Excellent' or 'Good'. Comments included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>'All aspects were excellent. I find it very useful.'</i> - <i>'Excellent information on filling in forms and ... ESOL'</i> - <i>'better understanding of the difficulty people may have writing in a different language'</i> - <i>'communicate more effectively with non-English speaking clients'</i> <p>Workshop 2: 100% rated workshop as 'Excellent' or 'Good'. Comments included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>'lots of useful practical ideas ... that I'll start using straight away!'</i> - <i>'Seeing the video was very useful'</i> - <i>'I will have more confidence ... and try new ideas.'</i> - <i>'really enjoyed it'</i> - <i>'I will use what I have learned and apply it accordingly'</i> - <i>'interact more effectively'</i> - <i>'I have gained a lot of important information'</i> - <i>'.. help me to communicate with a third country national'</i> - <i>'I have learned not to make assumptions ..'</i> - <i>'excellent facilitators'</i>

	<p>Workshop 3: Participants found the information on the ACE project and EIF funding very useful. Positive feedback was received and comments included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>'Excellent'</i> - <i>'Very interesting contributions about how to get money from the EU = our money'.</i> <p>Dissemination event:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback was very positive with 97.5% workshops being rated excellent or good and 100% of participants rated the event overall as excellent or good. Feedback highlighted the range of aspects to the event which participants found the most useful and why: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Be updated about research but also projects, resources/materials produced to help us deliver excellent projects.</i> - <i>Supporting integration was excellent gave lots of ideas to use with learners.</i> - <i>Encouraging to hear about a successful, creative project - how it happened, lessons learned, general principles that can be transferred to other ventures.</i> - <i>Finding out how befriending scheme was set up and worked. Excellent to meet befrienders</i> - <i>Workshops were both excellent, passionate and knowledgeable facilitators, practical examples.</i> - <i>It was useful to find out about the ACE project from those directly involved. In the p.m. session, the learning materials were excellent.</i> - <i>A highlight of my working life. Thank you very much</i>
<p>Areas for development</p>	<p>TBLEL course:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too long between sessions • A few participants commented on specific aspects that they would have liked more work on, e.g. phonics, differentiation and/or dyslexia. • One participant suggested including the use of mobile technology (tablets) <p>CPD workshops:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop 1 - one participant suggested a follow-up session would be useful and another would have liked more information on dyslexia. • Workshop 2 – several complaints that the session was not long enough; one would have liked more practical activities. <p>Dissemination event:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure programme for the day is as clear as possible in relation to describing what will be covered and who will be leading on workshops and aspects of the programme • Some feedback flagged up issues in relation to use of technology and event photography
<p>Action points for Year 2</p>	<p>TBLEL course:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Plan the course over a shorter time-frame (alternate weeks) b. Review the programme and look at ways of incorporating mobile technology <p>Dissemination event:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> c. Make sure directions and map to venue are clear d. 7b. Ensure photography is not too obtrusive or disruptive e. 7c. Ensure workshop leaders have support if required regarding use of technology

<p style="text-align: center;">STRAND 5: Add value to the skills and experience of TCNs and volunteers</p>	
<p>Objectives</p>	<p>Achievements</p>
<p>Training and specialist research support for 12 EIF project volunteers as practitioner researchers (Data to be collected by trained volunteers on the ACE project, or volunteers who previously volunteered in Bangladesh as part of the <i>Welcome to the UK</i> project)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13 volunteers involved; 12 ACE project volunteer befrienders trained and supported plus 1 British Bangladeshi who previously volunteered in Bangladesh as part of the <i>Welcome to the UK</i> project received 1:1 training and support. • Rich data emerging from practitioner research process on the impact of volunteers in supporting the integration of non-EU national women. <i>(Please see Appendix 1 for IoE interim report on practitioner research strand).</i>
<p>The development and piloting of topic-based ‘Literacy for active citizenship’ readers and supporting activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13 volunteer befrienders were involved in the project in Year 1 • 6 different stories were written and illustrated, with both an easy (Entry 1 beginner reader writer) and Entry 2 version • Supplementary activities were developed for each story • Design template for series developed
<p>Evidence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practitioner research team meeting discussion notes • Feedback from befrienders involved in both strands – practitioner research and literacy • Feedback from literacy project lead
<p>Strengths</p>	<p>Practitioner research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Befrienders engaged well with the research • Befriender training days have been effective in preparing the befrienders for each stage of the research • Befriender training days have also generated rich data • Befrienders have recorded a lot of data in their logs • Befrienders are confident to carry out semi-structured interviews • The research team have worked well to develop the training programme and are working collaboratively on producing the interim report. <i>(Please see Appendix 1 for IoE interim report on practitioner research strand).</i> <p>Literacy project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of publications were written, covering a range of topics, through which the befrienders involved developed writing and editing skills

<p>Areas for development</p>	<p>Practitioner research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The research was slow getting started. The first training day took place late November and befrienders began to gather data from the informal interview from January. • For some pairs, more time was needed for the friend/befriender relationship to become established before getting consent to take part in the research. • Communication by email has been poor. Face to face catch-up meetings proved more effective. <p>Literacy project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve/ encourage befrienders and learners to work together on the project using learners’ own stories as a basis for the books. • Ensure ACE teachers know about the project so they can encourage learners to get involved.
<p>Action points for Year 2</p>	<p>Practitioner research:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Aim to start working with the new befrienders from September. b. Plan more face-to-face meetings for the Befrienders – both for research training and data gathering. c. Build in team time for data analysis and final report writing. <p>Literacy project:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> d. Ensure ACE teachers know about the ‘Literacy project’

In conclusion, Year 1 of the ACE project was extremely successful with all the main targets and milestones being achieved. Regular contact and meetings with partners, ACE tutors and the advisory group combined with the process of evaluating each strand and consulting with all the main beneficiaries and stakeholders has helped to flag up key action to address in Year 2, where feasible.

APPENDIX 1



Active Citizenship and English Befriender research Interim report

Prepared for *Learning Unlimited* by the *National Research and Development Centre for adult literacy and numeracy, Institute of Education, University of London*

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Contents

Interim report on befriender research	18
Introduction	18
Background / rationale	18
Befriending.....	18
Practitioner researchers	19
The research design	19
The process	20
Methods of data collection	21
Initial findings.....	21
Challenges to the research process	22
Next steps	22
References	23
Appendix 1 Page from the Befriender log.....	24
Appendix 2 Page from the BR log.....	25
Appendix 3 Structured interview questions.....	26
Appendix 4 Semi-structured interview prompts.....	28
Appendix 5 Case studies	30
ACE case study 1	30
ACE case study 2	30
ACE case study 3	31

Interim report on befriender research

Introduction

This is a report on the research strand of the Active Citizenship and English (ACE) European Integration Fund project. The overall project is led by Learning Unlimited, with the research carried out by the National Research and Development Centre, NRDC, based at the Institute of Education. This report has been produced by the NRDC research team to detail the progress made during year one of this two-year project. It outlines the process of carrying out the research, including recruitment to the project, data collection and initial findings. Finally it identifies planned developments for year two of the project.

Background / rationale

This study forms part of a UK Border Agency funded project to support the integration of newly arrived third country nationals. The migrants selected are offered a range of educational provision provided by two partner organisations in London. They are also assigned a befriender, who acts as their main point of contact to answer questions, advise and generally help them to get used to their new environment and make the most of the opportunities that are on offer. The objective of our study is to understand the befriender role in relation to the early experiences of newly arrived migrants in the UK. The research outlined here focuses on the concept and practice of befriending and explores this through the eyes and ears of the benders and their 'friends', the befriended. This is a project within a larger project, representing participatory research with benders.

Befriending

Befriending is related to, but different from volunteering. Both are proactive activities, entailing commitment in time and effort, for the benefit of a person, a group or an organisation (Wilson 2000). Dean and Goodlad (1998: 5) define befriending as:

A relationship between two or more individuals which is initiated, supported and monitored by an agency that has defined one or more parties as likely to benefit. Ideally, the relationship is non-judgmental, mutual and purposeful, and there is a commitment over time.

There is a certain artificiality to befriending as the relationship is engineered externally rather than arising naturally through mutual choice. However, it has been found to be effective, in a range of contexts, in compensating for a lack of social support for vulnerable individuals in the community. Mavropoulou & Avramidis (2012) cite a number of supporting studies

... befriending schemes in the UK (Buckinghamshire, Wales, London) and in Australia have been reported as beneficial to elderly isolated people (Andrews et al. 2003; Bullock and Osborne 1999; Pennington and Knight 2008); to persons with chronic mental illness (Bradshaw and Haddock 1998); to new mothers (Taggart, Short and Barclay 2000); to

mothers residing in deprived areas (Gray 2009); to families experiencing stress (Parrott, Buchanan and Williams 2006) and to parents of vulnerable groups (i.e., with cystic fibrosis) (MacDonald and Greggans 2010).

Practitioner researchers

For this study, the IoE research team train and work with a team of befriender researchers, from among the new group of befrienders in the wider ACE project. The selected befrienders work as practitioner researchers, collecting and analysing data as a part of their work with their friend.

The practitioner research model has been used extensively, particularly with teachers and social workers. It is a developmental model that seeks understanding and development of practice rather than to prove or disprove a theory. It has two main outcomes. Firstly, it provides detailed and insightful understanding of the issues faced by the practitioner; this understanding can be generalised and is of use to others in similar situations and to policy makers designing interventions. Secondly, it contributes to the professional development of the practitioner researchers themselves, increasing their awareness of the impact of their actions, thus improving their effectiveness. In this case the practitioner researchers will be the befrienders and the focus of their enquiry will be the work they carry out as befrienders.

NRDC has worked with practitioner researchers since it was established in 2002, in particular through its Practitioner-led Research Initiative which enabled small groups of practitioners to carry out nine month research projects, co-ordinated by NRDC academics (Hamilton et al., 2007). As part of this study the NRDC team train the befrienders as practitioner researchers, provide mentoring support for them, analyse the data (with them) and encourage their contribution to report writing.

The research design

Our research aim is to understand the befriender role in relation to the early experiences of newly arrived migrants in the UK. We are interested in how people experience the role of befriender and friend and how it has impacted on their experiences as newly arrived migrants. Our research design is qualitative, we are not working with large numbers and we are not trying to measure impact but are aiming for rich descriptions of the befriending role. This is an exploratory study; we are not testing an existing idea of the nature of the role. Our aim is to explore the nature of the befriending role from the inside, from the perspectives of the friends and befrienders, and its potential impact. No assumptions are made about assimilation or integration but we are investigating the perceptions and feelings of the participants. This is participatory research in which we train a subgroup of befrienders to be befriender researchers, our role has been to train and mentor the befriender-researchers.

For clarity and consistency, we use the following terms for the participants in this study:

Friends (Fs) - the migrant women who are being befriended

Befrienders (Bs) – the volunteers in the wider project who are acting as befrienders

Befriender-researchers (BRs) – those befrienders who volunteered to take part in this research study

Research mentors (RMs) – the NRDC team leading the research design and supporting the BRs.

The process

We aimed to recruit 12 BRs in the first year of the project. One of the research team attended befriender training which was taking place for all new befrienders, to ask for volunteers to take part in the research. It was made clear to potential BRs that there would be a distinction between their role as Bs and their role as BRs. The original aim was to recruit 6 BRs from each ACE centre (Blackfriars and Working Men's College) but in fact all 12 of the BRs were recruited from Blackfriars.

An initial training day took place on 29 November at which the nature of the project, the nature of the role of researcher and the research aims were introduced. Time was spent discussing ethical considerations, including the consent process and paperwork. We introduced the notion of the dual role of being a befriender and a BR. We introduced the 12 BRs to two methods of data collection, the use of BR logs in addition to the logs they were already using, and an informal interview, discussed later in this report.

Each BR was matched to one of the RMs for mentoring and support with the research. The intention was that RMs and BRs would maintain contact through email and phone. In practice this was not successful so we introduced a catch – up day on 14 March for BRs to come together with the RMs. On this day the BRs took part in a focus group in which they discussed their progress and shared experiences and ideas

A second training day took place on 25 April which reinforced all of the above data collection methods. Another focus group was set up at which BRs talked through how the befriending and the research was going, and were able to air any issues. The research team checked the BR logs and collected and photocopied the notes from the informal interviews. The training on that day was mostly concerned with the next stage of data collection, the semi-structured interviews. The RMs talked through the processes of gaining consent and recording the interviews, (including becoming familiar with the relevant technology). The BRs role-played carrying out interviews. The BRs suggested some amendments to the interview questions and prompts, which were adopted.

To minimise the possibility of bias in the semi-structured interviews, which could arise if the friend says things out of a wish to please the BR, the training included practice in searching for specific examples of how the contact with a BR had been helpful, with reasons. The BRs were also given suggestions for prompts to use in the interviews, and reminded to gear their information towards a third person who would be listening to the interview and would be unaware of things that the F and the BR might take for granted.

Informal catch-up with the BRs took place at two further events which were part of the wider ACE project. Two BRs were able to contribute to the research team's presentation at the ACE dissemination event on 6 June, and another two BRs were present for informal catch-up. Seven of the BRs were present at an ACE progression event on 26 June and met informally with one of the RMs.

Methods of data collection

To date, the following methods of data collection have been used:

- 1 Existing befriender logs which all befrienders have as part of their role
- 2 BR logs, intended as a complement to the B log to give us more information from BR-F meetings
- 3 Structured informal interviews to gather biographical detail of the friend. The questions were developed in collaboration with the BRs on the first training day on 29 November. The BRs were asked to suggest questions about what they would like to know about their friends. A proforma was drawn up containing the questions (see Appendix 3).and the BRs made notes on this form as they carried out the interviews.
- 4 Semi-structured interviews (20 – 30 minutes in length) are currently being audio recorded, and sent to us to transcribe. We will share the information from these at the next training day.
- 5 RM notes from the catch-up day and training day 2. These are the focus group transcripts from the BR feedback and discussions.
- 6 Planned data collection – RMs intend to interview a small number (up to 3) friends about their experiences of having a B.

Initial findings

These have not yet been fully collated but some tentative findings have emerged:

- The BR – F contacts have been largely electronic, a high proportion by text and Skype, and also by phone and Instant Messenger.
- Early impressions on who instigates the contact are that it is mostly the BRs, contact often taking place through the ESOL classes or at ACE events.
- Having someone who is there to check up on them, to send the odd text or Skype message, is just as important, early evidence suggests, as doing particular activities together
- BR – F activities reported included meeting in the friend's home or in a cafe, going to the park with their children, shopping for clothes, attending a hospital appointment, going to the library

The focus group notes include rich data about the nature of the meetings, for example,

- A BR attending a hospital appointment with her F reported the F wanted a neutral companion, not a family member
- Another BR reported giving help with coping with systems, for example using the library.

BRs reported that their Fs benefitted from advice, confidence building, unbiased support and help with systems. The advisory role was often related to the Life in the UK test, CVs and jobsearches. Confidence building was reported where the F was more able to go alone having gone somewhere with the BR.

Three case studies (Appendix 5) are drawn from an initial consideration of the data; these will be developed further next year.

Challenges to the research process

The time frame of setting up the BR-F pairings caused some difficulties as not all pairs were on the same time scale. The data collection had a staggered start. Some pairings did not work out, some went at different paces. In general, the BRs didn't broach the subject of research until they had got to know their friends and established a relationship of trust. This happened at different times, some took four to six weeks before introducing the research to their friends. Then, for some, gaining the F's consent was a challenge. Most of the friends wanted to discuss the issue of the research project with family or friends before consenting to take part, which took time. Some BRs didn't get consent with one friend, but gained the consent of a second friend. One friend did not want to be recorded. But most BRs did gain their friend's consent eventually; only one friend refused outright.

Some of the BRs experienced difficulties scheduling meetings with their friends. This was especially an issue if their own routine did not coincide with the friend's timetable, for example if they had different work or childcare schedules.

It should be noted that these challenges are not limitations to the research. They just mean that we need to rethink and make changes to our research schedule.

Next steps

We plan to continue the research cycle with a new round of BR recruits from September. We intend to focus further on possible effects of befriending on language development.

The RMs have decided to simplify the research paperwork for BRs by combining the BR log with the befriender log.

The RMs plan to undertake a literature review along the four themes of linguistic, cultural, practical and emotional effects of befriending.

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Appendix 1 Page from the Befriender log

Date				
Contact	met	phone call	email	text
What we did and/or talked about				
Any follow-up action? (tick when completed)				
Update				

Appendix 2 Page from the BR log

Date:
How did you talk to each other? (tick) • Face to face <input type="checkbox"/> email <input type="checkbox"/>
Who made the contact?
What was the reason for the contact? (tick) • Social <input type="checkbox"/> • Giving information <input type="checkbox"/> • Giving advice <input type="checkbox"/> • Accessing services <input type="checkbox"/> • Visiting somewhere together <input type="checkbox"/>
How long was the meeting? (if applicable)
Where did it take place? (if applicable)
What was the outcome of the contact?

Appendix 3 Structured interview questions

What have you found out about your friend?

Where does she come from?
What is her marital status?
Has she got children? Any details about the children?
Who lives in her home with her?
What languages does she speak?
What previous education has she had? To what level? At what age did she leave school/university?
Did she do any work before coming to the UK?
Does she work now?
What services does your friend already use?

Where or who does your friend ask for advice?
Does she talk to her neighbours? Does she talk to people at her children's school?
What does she want for the future?
What does she want to get from me (the befriender)?
Any other information you found out (continue on the back of the page if you need to)

Appendix 4 Semi-structured interview prompts

ACE Befriender research

Semi structured interview questions

Please ask your friend all the questions in **bold**. After each one there are some questions *in italics* for you to ask , or you can ask similar questions that you feel are appropriate, depending on what your friend has told you.

Remember that this interview will be useful to the whole research team so don't be afraid to get your friend to describe events that you both experienced. For example, even though you both went to the library together, still ask her to talk about it.

To get your friend to say more, you can say *what else? why? or tell me more about that?*

1. Tell me about having a befriender

Has it been positive?

Do you feel any different about living in London?

Do you do things that you didn't do before having a befriender? What sort of things?

2. What have we done together? Or talked about how to do?

Tell me about it.

3. What has been the most helpful?

Why?

Did it help you understand life in the UK?

Did it give you more confidence?

Did it change the way you felt?

Did it help you to improve your English?

4 What is difficult about (insert the situation where they were helped)?

In terms of language?

In terms of understanding the system?

In terms of self confidence?

5 When do you use spoken English?

Has this changed over the last x months?

6 When do you use written English?

Has this changed over the last x months?

7 Has being befriended helped you with your English?

How?

Why?

Can you give some examples of when you use English?

Appendix 5 Case studies

All participants have been anonymised.

ACE case study 1

MS, the friend, is a married woman from East Africa. She lives in London with her husband and children and speaks two African languages and German. She lived in Switzerland before coming to London. She has completed high school and worked in Switzerland (and maybe also in Africa) as a cake baker. She uses the bus and underground, doesn't talk to her neighbours or people at her children's school. She wants to develop her English so she can get a job here in a bakery. She is optimistic about the future. A, the Befriender, is from North Africa. They come from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. They both attend ESOL classes at Blackfriars.

Their friendship started in October 2013 with a phone call about when and where they could meet. They met first in late November 2013, in Peckham Library after an attempted meeting the week before, when MS cancelled. In the library they talked about MS' goals (to work in a bakery). Between this time and the present, they have had regular contact, a combination of short telephone conversations, texts, one email and face-to-face meetings. A initiated almost all of this contact (though on a few occasions this is not recorded).

Face to face meetings were at Peckham Library (twice- to talk about job and course searches), Elephant and Castle shopping centre and café (once- to practise English, talk about a group trip to the Geoffrey Museum and prepare for a job interview MS had), at MS' home (once) and at a Blackfriars event (once). The Blackfriars event was to prepare for the Citizenship Test. There may have been more meetings as there are gaps in recording. They often try to meet but other obligations (like visits from the council or trips to the job centre) mean that these are sometimes cancelled.

Telephone calls or texts were to check if MS is OK, to talk about particular issues (such as homework or MS' progress at the job centre) and to give seasonal greetings (for example at Christmas, New Year and Easter). They also once spoke about allergies. The email was so that A could send MS a web link to look for jobs.

Their contact seems to be a mixture of social/emotional support and practical help.

ACE case study 2

MC came to the UK from West Africa about 3 years ago. She completed primary and secondary education in Africa, gaining certification in French, her first language. She is currently studying on an L2 childcare course at Blackfriars, supported by her E3 ESOL class. There was no one reason why she chose to be a befriender ; her motivation related both to personal development and to supporting others. This was the first time she had taken a befriending role.

Her friend comes from a completely different linguistic and cultural background, although they have similar aged children, which seems to have been a significant factor in cementing the friendship. Her friend attends an E2 ESOL class in the same education centre.

They met for the first time in October 2013 and have kept in regular contact since then. In most cases it is MC who initiates the contact, but her friend often then gets back to her. They make contact every few days, mainly by text because her friend is working and can't answer the phone at work.

They have met face to face a number of times, once in the playgroup which both their children attend, but also sometimes for tea at a local cafe. After about a month, they started to meet at the home of the friend. The friend is not so keen to go to MC's house because she is nervous about the area, but meetings at the friend's home work well as their children can play together.

Their meetings are often purely social affairs, catching up on family life, but MC has also helped her friend with forms and, when her friend showed interest in preparing for the Life in the UK test, MC suggested they go to the library together to look it up. She has also recommended websites to support her with this and they have done Internet research together. They plan to go out more together in the summer.

MC says she enjoys exchanging information with her friend, who also seems to value receiving texts from MC.

ACE case study 3

The friend, S, is from the Indian sub-continent. She lives in London with her husband and five year old son. As well as her first language, she understands two other Indian languages and can read Arabic. She attended school in her home country for five years, followed by four years at Arabic school. S uses public transport in London, bus, underground, overground train, and accesses services including the NHS hospital, school, libraries, local council, leisure centre. She chats to her neighbours when gardening, goes to the park with people from India and Pakistan, and talks to people at her child's school. She wants to settle in the UK, she is working towards the Life in the UK Test. In future she wants to work in childcare. T, the befriender, comes from North Africa and has been in the UK between 2 and 4 years. She speaks three languages, including Arabic, although she does not regard Arabic as her main language. Her main language background is different from S's and they come from different cultural backgrounds. Both S and T attend ESOL classes at a community centre in London.

S and T met for the first time in October 2013 and continued meeting on a more or less weekly basis. Early meetings were by phone or Skype and initiated by T. The purpose of these exchanges was largely for T to give advice or information about resources for developing English. Phone or Skype meetings lasted from five minutes to forty five minutes. T contacted S twice by text. In December they met at the community centre and talked about T's befriending role. Following this, S began to initiate the meetings sometimes and T reported S was more confident in the

friendship. S continued to initiate meetings, asking for advice about ESOL resources. T gave advice about freely available resources on the internet to support developing English and preparation for the Life in the UK test. S and T had face to face meetings when they went to local libraries, T helped S to find children's books for her son in her first language, and other easy to read English story books. She also accompanied S to a hospital appointment, travelling with her on the bus and helping her find her way at the hospital. The friendship also developed on a social level, with S asking T for fish recipes and they discussed spices. T continued to give support for S's developing English and preparation for the Life in the UK test, often directing her towards useful websites during Skype exchanges. She also helped S with homework from her ESOL class. T reported S enjoyed reading the books.