

Total Support for the VCS in Devon!

We are delighted to have been awarded 3 years funding from the BIG Lottery under their BASIS2 funding stream to deliver our Total Support Project across Devon. BASIS2 funding is available to voluntary sector infrastructure organisations to support the voluntary and community sector (VCS). The success of this application further confirms Devon Consortium's successful role in ensuring the delivery of high quality, co-ordinated and sustainable support for Devon's voluntary sector.

It has been agreed that DACVS (with Teignbridge CVS as the lead agency) will deliver both strands of the project. This is still subject to formal confirmation of the BIG Lottery. Further information will be issued shortly.

The Total Support Project was developed in response to identified need. It will do what it says – aim to meet the Total Support needs of frontline organisations in the VCS across Devon. The project has two strands, both targeting rural areas:

Frontline Support – aims to ensure that capacity building support effectively reaches frontline VCS organisations. The intention is to create an environment where VCS organisations can deliver key services creatively and cost-effectively, using appropriate technology, sharing resources and benefiting from good practice models. We will focus on self-help potential and mutual support to create sustainable outcomes. The impact will be that frontline organisations are well positioned to

participate in the delivery of valuable local services and can access commissioning and procurement opportunities.

Rural Volunteering – aims to provide opportunities for individuals to actively engage in community life, to build stronger communities and reduce social exclusion. The key focus will be the deep rural parishes. Developing community capacity and volunteering is disproportionately important in rural areas due to key factors including social exclusion, isolation, poor transport links, rural poverty and racism. Traditional models of support currently available to individuals considering volunteering need to evolve and adapt in rural areas. This strand seeks to ensure that individuals know their options for becoming involved in community life. We want to use the dynamism and energy of individuals within the community and the strength of community-led planning in Devon to support this strand.

Project activities are likely to include:

- One-to-one 'health checks' for frontline organisations
- Delivery of identified capacity building support through tailored projects
- Developing a proactive strategy for 'reaching out' to organisations using significant numbers of volunteers, but who don't yet seek support and guidance from infrastructure organisations
- Understanding and enhancing the community action and engagement and volunteer potential of community-led planning in market towns and villages

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Voluntary & Community Sector Assembly

The Devon Consortium was delighted by the success of the first ever Voluntary and Community Sector Assembly held in Devon. Over 100 voluntary and community organisations came to listen, network, engage and have their voices heard at the event in February. A big thank you to those organisations for taking the time to attend and for sharing their experiences and perspectives.

We are looking to hold another VCS Assembly in early 2010.

If you have any ideas for next year's event next year please contact us.

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- Benchmarking survey of the VCS to create a robust picture of the 'state of the nation' – strengths / gaps / concerns
- Review of working practices amongst infrastructure services, focusing on better understanding of existing capacity and gaps for providing 'total support' to frontline organisations, with the aim of improving and consolidating good practice
- Promotion of peer support as a reinforcing means of sharing / promoting good practice
- Networking events, relevant to the training and development needs of organisations and voluntary groups, and those with a voice within their community
- Promotional 'roadshow' of the project and its outcomes to promote learning and best practice
- Bespoke training and development programme, which considers issues of accreditation, covering topics such as social enterprise, commissioning, procurement, sustainable funding etc. We are thrilled to have this opportunity to develop infrastructure support for the VCS in Devon.

The Consortium will do its utmost to make sure that the Total Support Project really does reach the parts of the VCS that other projects don't reach. Watch this space as we focus on the intended project outcomes and the best means of project delivery. Contact developmentworker@devonconsortium.net for more details.

'Real Help for Communities: Modernisation Fund' 2009/10

This is a new Government funding programme from Capacity Builders. Bursaries are available from June to August 2009 and larger grants thereafter – all to provide professional support for collaboration and merger within the third sector.

The aim of the 'Real Help for Communities Modernisation Fund' is to help viable third sector organisations be more resilient to the impact of the economic downturn. It is focused on those organisations that are providing services to those worst hit by the recession. The grants will pay for professional support for organisations to help them increase their impact and become more resilient, particularly through working more closely with others (eg. investigating collaboration and merger).

Eligibility

To be eligible, organisations must have turnover in the range of £150,000 to £750,000 and be delivering recession related services. This means wholly or primarily engaged in one or more of the following areas: Wellbeing and health, Advice, information and guidance, and Loss of income, training and skill.

Funding available

There will be two phases of funding:

- bursaries of £1,000 to cover the costs of at least two days professional support. This will be administered by a Local Delivery Agent *.
- followed by grants of up to £10,000 later in the year which we expect to be administered centrally.

Professional Support

A list of professional advisers is currently being drawn up, with the following capabilities.

- knowledge and experience of third sector organisational development
- experience of working with a collaboration focus
- the ability to facilitate open and frank discussion
- knowledge of differing business models
- experience of working with trustee boards
- specialist skills (legal, property, finance, human resources)

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More information: More details about the programme can be found on the CapacityBuilders website here: www.modernisationfund.org.uk/

More local information will be posted by local agencies and consortia as soon as available.

A local workshop for Plymouth, Torbay and Devon is being held at Dartington Hall, near Totnes on Monday 8th June.

This will include lunch at 12.30 and a workshop from 1.30 - 4.30pm. There is no charge for this event but spaces are limited. On the agenda will be how the recession may affect beneficiaries and local voluntary organisations, options for increasing impact or reach, reducing overheads or increasing income and where to access resources. We will discuss how working together through collaboration or merger may help, and how this programme might help, and then how to apply.

For further info contact Jay Talbot, Community Council of Devon, jay@devonrcc.org.uk

** Community Council of Devon (CCD) – the accountable body for Devon Consortium, is the 'Local Delivery Agent' for Plymouth, Torbay and Devon. CCD is working closely with Devon Consortium partners & especially with Plymouth Guild and Torbay Voluntary Service.*

The Consortium welcomes new Development Worker

The Devon Consortium said a fond farewell to Sara Bennett, Devon Consortium Development Worker, at the end of April. Sara has contributed massively to the work of the Devon Consortium and the Compact and will be much missed.

The Devon Consortium are delighted to welcome a new Development Worker, Chrissie Morris, who will begin work on Friday 15 May.

Chrissie will work 15 hours a week based at Exeter CVS on Mondays and Wednesdays.



Capacitybuilders News in Brief:

- A new **online self-assessment tool** to assess the resilience of organisations, produced by Centre for Charity Effectiveness at Cass Business School and funded by Capacitybuilders as part of the Modernisation Fund Grant Programme is now 'live' and accessible on the Modernisation Fund website: www.capacitybuilders.org.uk/content/ModernisationFund
- Capacitybuilders has invested over £1.4m through its **Capital Investment Programme**; enabling 61 resource centres across England to improve the level and accessibility of facilities and resources on offer to local third sector organisations. A wealth of frontline groups are already benefiting from more effective and sustainable support services including new ICT, multi-media and print equipment, flexible shared office, hot-desking facilities, training and meeting space and growing resource libraries.
- Finishing touches are being made to the new **Improving Support website** and by the time it goes live in late May / early June, all of Capacitybuilders' 200+ grant holders will feature in the site's members directory. Find out more at: <http://www.capacitybuilders.org.uk>

Collaboration, Partnership and Representation Programme Update

We have started running induction courses for voluntary and community sector representatives.

The first two runs of this happened in March and got very positive feedback.

Part of the course is based on the recent NAVCA work on 'Skilling Up For Stronger Voices'.

This is a guidebook for representation which seeks to improve skills and provide an audit for the way in which organisations support (or don't) their reps.

A project proposal was put forward to NAVCA to further trial the material in a local context.

This was successful and we now have finance to support representative development through a range of strategies, including action learning.

The project should get under way shortly and will run through until December.

For further detail please contact david.waddilove@exetercvs.org.uk.

Dates for your Diary:

Full Consortium 9.30 — 12.30pm	4 Jun
Real Help for Communities: Modernisation Fund 09/10 Workshop	8 June
Community Engagement Course	15 June
Representation Course — Skilling up for Stronger Voices	17 June
Representation Course — Skilling up for Stronger Voices	30 June
Diversity Reference Group Meeting	9 July
Compact Hub Meeting	21 July

Devon Consortium is funded by:



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