

## Volunteering as a path to employability



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**December 2010**

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# 1. Introduction

This research has been conducted for the Volunteering Team at Toynbee Hall to outline whether the department could develop a project that would support unemployed people to volunteer while building skills to move towards employment. This report seeks to establish what projects already exist within the borough of Tower Hamlets, which groups would most benefit from such a project and whether Toynbee Hall has the capacity to deliver an employability project in light of the coalition government's policies and funding of the 'Work Programme' and volunteering as a route to employment.

Tower Hamlets is a borough with two jobs for every economically active person<sup>1</sup>, yet at 14.5%<sup>2</sup> it has one of the highest percentages of unemployed people in the country. The situation of worklessness and employability in Tower Hamlets is complex. The reasons for the high levels of unemployment and economic inactivity in this borough are multiple. They include; lack of skills and relevant skills, many people in Tower Hamlets experience multiple deprivation and there are many interlinked barriers to finding work.

Because of the high levels of unemployment and people in low-skilled jobs in Tower Hamlets, employability is a key concern. A definition of the concept can be found from the Department for Education and Employment; 'Employability is about having the capability to gain initial employment, maintain employment and obtain new employment if required'<sup>3</sup>.

In the process of this research I consulted a group of people to help me explore certain topics. These people included:

## Externally

- Rihaz Pathan – Job Centre Plus (JCP) – Local Partnerships Manager

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<sup>1</sup>London Borough of Tower Hamlets (LBTH), "Tower Hamlets Employment Strategy: Getting Neighbourhoods Working", accessed on 5/10/10, 263  
[http://moderngov.towerhamlets.gov.uk/Published/C00000320/M00002542/AI00018021/\\$THEmploymentStrategyAppxBCAB140108.docA.ps.pdf](http://moderngov.towerhamlets.gov.uk/Published/C00000320/M00002542/AI00018021/$THEmploymentStrategyAppxBCAB140108.docA.ps.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Office For National Statistics (ONS), accessed on the 5/10/10.  
<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?id=1606>,

<sup>3</sup> J Hillage and E Pollard, *Employability: developing a framework for policy analysis*, Research Report RR85, Department for Education and Employment, November 1998, accessed on 1/11/10  
<http://www.employment-studies.co.uk/pubs/summary.php?id=emplblty>

- Marian Jeffrey – Tower Hamlets Volunteer Centre – Volunteer Brokerage Manager
- Darren Wolf – City Gateway – Director of Strategy, Development and Performance
- Emma Louise-Sylvester – The Bromley by Bow Centre – member of the Employment Team
- Ruhul Islam – NVQ assessor
- Tara Khanom – Lincoln and Mile End children's centres - Employment Skills Coordinator
- Nazmin Yeahia – Tower Hamlets Council – Governance Officer
- Pablo Perez – Tower Hamlets Council – Access to Employment Officer
- I attended an event on the 'Work Programme' run by Steve Kerr from the London Voluntary Services Council (LSVC).

### **Internally**

- Magdalena Nikolova - Volunteering and Engagement Manager
- Beverly Russell – Fundraising Manager
- Luanna Watson – Deesha Coordinator
- Case Study Respondents
- Survey of Toynbee Hall Service Users

## **2. Employment projects in Tower Hamlets**

The provision of employability programmes in Tower Hamlets is extensive. I began my research by compiling a list of local organisations that offer an employability aspect to their work. The list is attached to this report, it does not list every project but it is an accurate representation of the kinds of projects running in the borough of Tower Hamlets.

### **Existing projects**

It is easiest to imagine employability project providers in Tower Hamlets in three broad groups: voluntary and community organisations; companies who offer specific training and have service level agreements with either the Job Centre Plus (JCP) or an organisation; and finally organisations and companies who are not based in Tower Hamlets, but whose remit includes this borough.

There are 50+ organisations in Tower Hamlets that offer an employability aspect to their work. Most of these organisations provide Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG), which is usually followed by some training.

There is no defined structure of training offered to improve employability skills, different organisations and companies use alternative packages of training and support to improve employability skills, this largely depends on the aim of the organisation and the context of their service users' needs. I have focused on a few of the most common packages of training in the borough.

### **Basic training**

The basic training for people who are long term unemployed focuses on preparing people for the working world. The most popular workshops I found when researching focused on CV writing, interview skills and job search skills. Projects tend also to work on self-esteem and confidence building through basic training.

Daren Wolf, from City Gateway attributes their success as an organisation to their understanding that many of their service users are starting from a very low base. He explained that City Gateway is not put off from working with people starting from here. Their projects begin with women getting used to being in the learning environment. Recognition of people's needs and focus on basic skills is

relevant in Tower Hamlets as many people are starting from a low base, with 15.2% of the population having no qualifications compared to London's average 11.8%<sup>4</sup>

\* City Gateway is an organisation that provides projects for women and people aged 19-24 who are Not in Education or Training (NEET). These projects are run in four stages, connect, engage, train and work. This organisation sees building employability skills as a long-term process for service users and their aim is to move them towards employment.

### English as a Second Language

A significant proportion of people who are unemployed in Tower Hamlets must first complete English as a Second Language (ESOL) training before any other training or employment. The Deesha project at Toynbee Hall forms part of the ESOL provision for the borough, although only a small percentage. This year there have been significant cuts in ESOL in Tower Hamlets.

### Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships allow a person to work towards a work based learning qualification. This can be a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) 2, Key Skills or a Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) qualification. Apprenticeship training is not relevant to the volunteering team as this would not be raising skills through volunteering as apprentices are paid at least the minimum wage.<sup>5</sup>

### Organisations similar to Toynbee Hall

Some of the organisations offering employability projects are similar to Toynbee Hall, including the Arbour Centre; the Limehouse Project; and the Bromley by Bow Centre. I researched what these three organisations offer as a guideline for the kinds of things that Toynbee Hall could offer in terms of employability.

The Limehouse Project, Bromley by Bow Centre and the Arbour Centre all offer ESOL training. As well as this, I found that they have all provided accredited training for the long-term unemployed. **The Limehouse Project** provides IAG services for employment and training. The only training they provide is a

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<sup>4</sup> Statistics from Nomis, Qualifications from Jan 2009 – Dec 2009, accessed on the 12/10/10, <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/2038431871/report.aspx#tabquals>

<sup>5</sup> For more information on apprenticeships go to <http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk/>

childcare NVQ course and ESOL. It seems as though the Childcare NVQ is the only accredited training offered by this organisation as it is the only one I was informed was running when I called. Their website is under construction and there is no information about employment and training.

**The Bromley by Bow Centre** offers courses and training for people who live in the Bow area. They have a dedicated employment department, which primarily provides IAG and then refers job seekers on to the training courses provided by the centre and those provided at other centres. This training includes basic training as outlined above and accreditation such as NVQs. The Bromley by Bow centre has a whole network of projects that relate to employability and training as it is embedded in their work. This is a reflection of the fact that have been delivering projects around employability and training for over 10 years.

**The Arbour Centre** has previously offered a National Open College Network (NOCN) qualification in 'Preparation for Work'. It is now however, stated on their website that they're not offering any employability training at this time. A colleague from Toynbee Hall called to check which projects they were running and she was informed to check the website.

### Job Centre Plus

As well as these direct projects there are third party companies and organisations that offer training through the JCP - examples include Striding Out<sup>6</sup> and Fit for Work. These companies offer services such as consultancy, business development, career development and training. These services are available to anyone at a price, however their services are free for Job Seekers who are referred by the JCP.

The Job Centre has agreements with bodies such as these to offer a certain level of training and advice to the job seekers referred. Rihaz Pathan from the JCP confirmed that City Job Centre Plus does have Service Level Agreements (SLAs) with training organisations and companies but he declined to name them.

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<sup>6</sup> For more information on services offered by Striding Out go to <http://www.stridingout.co.uk/>

### **3. Gaps in the provision of projects**

There are no obvious gaps in the provision of employability programmes in Tower Hamlets. Gaps can be defined as a group being excluded from employability projects or projects that are not offering a high quality of service. I worked to identify gaps through the list of organisations I compiled and in consultation with members of staff from the Job Centre Plus, City Gateway, the Lincoln Children's centre, the Volunteer Centre Tower Hamlets, The Bromley by Bow Centre and from case studies with some job seekers.

#### Findings

From these conversations it appears that there may be some groups who are partially overlooked in terms of employability in this borough. These groups include, but are not exclusive to: people with mental health conditions, ex-drug and alcohol addicted people, ex offenders, people with disabilities, lone parents and people who don't speak English. There are projects for all of these groups but due to recent funding cuts these projects may be scaling back. It is not clear which projects exactly will be losing funding yet, but this, I would imagine will become clear in the coming months.

#### Case Studies

Through interviewing people who are or have been unemployed in the borough in the last few months, I found that many of the services they had come in to contact with were not of a very high standard and were not suitable for their needs. One example given concerning a project for young people Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET) was that 'it was more like a youth club than training centre'. Another participant in a case study explained to me that one of the third party training and advice providers she was referred to by the JCP sent her a job opportunity in a sex shop which actually caused her offence.

I did three in depth interviews with people who had been unemployed for over two months to identify the barriers to employment and the quality of the services they had received. They shared the opinion that the Job Centre wasn't always very helpful in signposting them to training and volunteering opportunities. One of the participants couldn't get any training through the Job Centre and took the initiative to organise and pay for an NVQ herself.

The participants also expressed some confusion over whether you can volunteer while on Job Seeker's Allowance (JSA) as they had been told different things from different members of staff at the JCP. This highlights the importance of offering IAG in any employability project in order to ensure that service users have access to correct information on the training available and how this might affect their benefits.

On the subject of barriers to employment, there were some common themes from the case study respondents. I asked these two questions to gauge barriers to employment in the borough: do you feel that you can achieve your goals/get suitable employment in Tower Hamlets and what, if anything is holding you back from this? One respondent felt that not having a degree was letting her down and believed that a degree would help her to obtain work in her desired field. She also said that all of the jobs she had applied for required experience, but that getting good volunteering experience can be very difficult.

Another respondent who has a degree also cited experience as a barrier. She believes that she has enough experience to get many of the jobs she has applied for, however common feedback from job applications is that she doesn't have enough experience.

All of the case study respondents claimed that feedback from job applications and interviews was not constructive and in many cases non-existent. They expressed concern about the lack of feedback because there was no way to know what they needed to change about their CVs, applications or interview skills. They all said that some training on Interview skills would be desirable.

### Funding cuts

There will be gaps in the provision due to funding cuts in the near future. It is not yet clear which organisations will suffer most in the current climate. The Bromley by Bow Centre has lost some funding in its employment department. I was informed that they have lost three advisors and that their NVQs are limited at the moment due to the cuts. This, along with the new proposals for the work programme, which I will outline later suggest that many of the projects running in Tower Hamlets at the moment will have to scale back their services.

## 4. Groups vulnerable to worklessness and unemployment

As measured by the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) Tower Hamlets is the third most deprived council in England and the second in London.<sup>7</sup> Many residents of Tower Hamlets are vulnerable to worklessness. Worklessness includes the unemployed and people without a job who aren't actively seeking work but who claim benefits such as income support or incapacity benefits. These vulnerable groups include, but are not restricted to; women, people who don't speak English, people with no formal training (or training in the UK), young people who NEET, people from the Black and Minority Ethnic community (BME), people with mental health conditions, people with disabilities and finally local graduates.

I will consider women, those who don't speak English, lone parents, graduates and the people who are most in need of a project in the Spitalfields and Banglatown area. Much is already being done in the borough of Tower Hamlets for young people who are NEET, so this group is not included.

### Women

Women in Tower Hamlets are at a high risk of experiencing worklessness and unemployment. The number of women unemployed in this borough is 13.9%<sup>8</sup>, however this is taken as a percentage of economically active women. In Tower Hamlets 41.2%<sup>9</sup> of women are considered to be economically inactive (meaning people who are either not looking for work or are unavailable to start work). Many of these women could be students, have a long term illness or be caring for others in the home. However 35.6% of these women state that they do not want a job. No explanations are given for the high levels of economically inactive people and people who do not want a job in Tower Hamlets. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) admits that they need to ask more questions in order to identify why people are economically inactive not just in Tower Hamlets, but on a national level.

### People who don't speak English

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<sup>7</sup> London Borough of Tower Hamlets, Health and Wellbeing in Tower Hamlets: Joint Strategic Need Assessment, (2009) 26

<sup>8</sup> statistics from Nomis, accessed on 16/10/10

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/2038431871/report.aspx#tabrespop>

<sup>9</sup> ibid.

People who do not speak English are also more likely to be unemployed in the borough. This was outlined in interviews with members of staff from the Lincoln Children's centre and the JCP. ESOL is essential in Tower Hamlets to empower residents to develop their language skills and obtain training and employment. The Council's 'Prosperous Community Plan' places much importance on lifelong learning and projects for an increase of 8% for ESOL level 1 graduates for the period 2009-11<sup>10</sup> but as I outlined earlier, funding for ESOL is being heavily cut in the borough, which makes this group even more vulnerable.

### Lone Parents

Another group who are vulnerable to worklessness are lone parents. There are many lone parents claiming out of work benefits in Tower Hamlets and London, 2.7% and 2.4% of claimants respectively<sup>11</sup>. It has been found by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) firstly, that families with children are more likely to be low income households than those without children.<sup>12</sup> Further to this, lone parent families are more likely than families with two parents to live in 'low income and materially deprived' households. It was found that if the lone parent is working the household is less likely to be considered to have a low income.<sup>13</sup>

This is especially concerning when we consider the cuts the government are making to lone parents' benefits. Childcare is an issue for many lone parents when seeking work and may be an issue for them in attending employment training. For this reason workshops and IAG are provided in Children's Centres across the borough, some, such as the Lincoln and Burdett Children's Centre have a good reputation for the services offered to lone parents. These particular centres signpost to volunteer opportunities and run training for lone parents to guide them back to work<sup>14</sup>.

### Graduates

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<sup>10</sup> Tower Hamlets Council's Communication Unit, *Tower Hamlets' Community Plan, 2020 Vision Issue 01, 2008/09, 20*

<sup>11</sup> Statistics from Nomis, accessed on 16/10/10

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/2038431871/report.aspx#tabwab>

<sup>12</sup> Nick Adams, Alex Barton, Stephen Bray, George Johnson, Peter Metejic, *Households Below Average Income: An Analysis of the Income Distribution 1994/5 – 2008/9*, (Department for Work and Pensions: May 2010)8

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*,9

<sup>14</sup> Local Innovation Awards Scheme, The Lincoln and Burdett Children's Centre: Case Study, accessed on 27/09/2010, <http://www.localinnovation.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pageld=17448881>

Finally it is worth mentioning Tower Hamlets' graduates as being a vulnerable group in many ways. It is believed by Tower Hamlets Council that there is a high level of unemployment for this group, however there are no statistics as this data is currently not collected<sup>15</sup>. ELBA and the council both run projects to try and combat graduate unemployment in TH. These focus on offering placements for graduates with corporate partners in order to build their work skills.

### Local data

In order to see who is most in need of an employability project in the local area I have consulted statistics for Spitalfields and Banglatown from the ONS. There are a large numbers of people with no qualifications in this area. In total the neighborhood statistics page states that there are 6,156 people in this ward. Out of these, 2,174<sup>16</sup> have no qualifications. There is also a slightly higher JSA claimant count in this ward than in Tower Hamlets as a whole, at 7.4% compared with 5.5%<sup>17</sup>. The other groups who are vulnerable would be people who are long-term unemployed, which is 32.58% of total unemployed people and people who have never had a job which is 14.03%<sup>18</sup>. These figures for Spitalfields and Banglatown are not significantly higher than those for Tower Hamlets on the whole.

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<sup>15</sup> London Borough of Tower Hamlets, *Graduate Unemployment: Report on the Transition from Education to Employment*, Scrutiny Working Group, (LBTH: 2007) 8

<sup>16</sup> Statistics from the ONS, Neighborhood Statistics for Spitalfields and Baglatown, accessed on 7/11/10

<http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/LeadTableView.do?a=3&b=6174093&c=E1+6LS&d=14&e=5&g=346942&i=1001x1003x1004&m=0&r=0&s=1289231647343&enc=1&dsFamilyId=103>

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/LeadTableView.do?a=3&b=6174093&c=E1+6LS&d=14&e=4&g=346942&i=1001x1003x1004&m=0&r=0&s=1289231120953&enc=1&dsFamilyId=2221>

<sup>18</sup> Ibid

## 5. Improving employability through volunteering

Toynbee Hall has a proven track record of providing high quality volunteering opportunities to its volunteers. Toynbee Hall offers volunteering placements to on average 400 people each year, however we recognise that we could do more to attract volunteers who are starting from a lower skills base, and who would benefit by receiving in depth training in their roles combined with work experience. The Volunteering Team at Toynbee Hall is well placed to offer a service to the local community by providing volunteering placements with an emphasis on learning and development.

### Evidence to support improved employability skills through volunteering

Evidence provided by the Institute of Volunteer Research (IVR) says that while there is no direct/causal link between volunteering and gaining employment, the skills developed through volunteering make people more employable. The benefits gained by volunteers have been researched and include an increase in confidence, gaining vital work experience, skills and training.<sup>19</sup> In fact in a survey by Hirst, 88% of people surveyed thought that volunteering would help them get a job<sup>20</sup>. While volunteers feel that any volunteering will benefit them in getting a job, there is evidence that employers feel that only volunteering specific to their sector is important.<sup>21</sup> Hirst found in a report in 2000 that those people who volunteered to improve their employability skills were less likely to return to the JSA register<sup>22</sup>.

### Tensions between volunteering and employability

In order for volunteer activity to be useful in terms of increasing employability skills, it must be focussed on the personal development of the volunteer and they must be supported in their post. The European Volunteer centre suggests having clear development plans for volunteers ensuring that they work towards specific skills and competencies being achieved over a certain period to improve their skills in a meaningful way. This must be done on a case-by-case basis, because everyone has different goals.<sup>23</sup> Toynbee Hall already focuses on the personal development of its volunteers, but more could be done. The volunteering team is running training in volunteer management this month, part

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<sup>19</sup> Colin Rochester, *A Gateway to Work: the role of Volunteer Centres in supporting the link between volunteering and employability* (Institute for Volunteering Research, 2009), 7

<sup>20</sup> Matthew Hill, *Volunteering and Employment :What is the Link for Unemployed Volunteers?*, Research Bulletin, (Institute for Volunteer Research: 2009), 2

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Andy Hirst, *Links between Volunteering and Employability*, Department for Education and Skills, (Cambridge Policy Consultants:2000), ix

<sup>23</sup> Petra Granholm, Markus Held, *Volunteering as a route (back) to employment* (European Volunteer Centre: 2007), 8

of the aim of these sessions will be to emphasise the importance of personal development plans for volunteers.

The European Volunteer Centre also suggests that volunteers do not become embedded in their roles; they must be able to move into employment and not become too attached to their volunteer role, meaning that a volunteering and employability project must be for a specific and finite period of time. It is also important to stress that someone's volunteering experience should not become completely focussed on increasing employability skills but also on giving back and strengthening the community.

## **6. Enhancing personal development through accreditation**

If Toynbee Hall is to offer training and employability skills through volunteering, accreditation is a good way for it to be recognised by the outside world. There are many different ways to recognise the achievements of volunteers, ranging from the very informal, being a certificate of achievement, to accrediting volunteers with nationally recognised qualifications.

### **Qualifications and Credit Framework**

There is a new framework in the UK for accrediting and building qualifications, the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF). This is designed to streamline all qualifications into levels and units so that you would find for example, GCSEs at level 3 and a PhD at level 8. For more information the QCDA website is very useful and explains how the new system works<sup>24</sup>. This system is designed to make it easier to accredit informal training and employers are working with the QCF to accredit their training. In practice this is not particularly useful for Toynbee Hall as it is designed for the large employers in the UK, but it does suggest that qualifications are becoming more flexible and informal learning is being recognised. It is not entirely clear what this will mean for qualifications in the UK now, but this should become clearer soon.

### **Options for accreditation**

#### **Toynbee Hall Employability Skills Certificate**

There are various options open to Toynbee Hall in terms of the accreditation of volunteering. The most simple and least expensive option would be to offer a certificate detailing the achievements of the volunteer and how long they spent at Toynbee Hall.

The volunteering team would offer volunteering opportunities to people looking to enhance their employability skills. This project would consist of training and voluntary work experience within Toynbee Hall. There would be different services that people could gain experience in and these would be role specific areas in the services that Toynbee Hall runs. Toynbee Hall has neither the space nor resources to provide training for such a project; therefore we would need to work in partnership with other organisations to offer this. One option would be to

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<sup>24</sup> <http://www.acda.gov.uk/qualifications/acf/4926.aspx>.

approach our corporate partners and see whether they could provide either rooms for the training or the actual training itself.

The shortfall of this idea is that a certificate of achievement for volunteers would not be an accreditation. It may not be recognised by employers. Having said this, from the case-study interviews conducted, we established that this would definitely be beneficial to volunteers, because of the reputation that Toynbee Hall has in Tower Hamlets. They said that they would be staying in Tower Hamlets for work.

### National Vocational Qualifications

Another popular method of accreditation is to offer National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs). The volunteering team could set up a project which would offer training and accreditation in an NVQ along with practical voluntary work experience in Toynbee's services.

The subjects that we could feasibly offer would be administration, customer services, information advice and guidance, health and social care and youth work. In order to offer this service Toynbee has two options, to become an NVQ centre, or to work in partnership with an external training provider.

**Becoming an NVQ centre** would be an attractive option for Toynbee Hall, as well as saving the costs of external providers, using your own managers and supervisors as assessors encourages them to take a greater role in managing the performance of their subordinates. However this requires one assessor for every six NVQ candidates and one internal verifier for every ten assessors, as well as a centre co-ordinator to manage the registration of NVQ candidates and to request certificates, a role which can be undertaken by the internal verifier

The process for becoming a provider is as follows:

1. Select technically competent individuals to cover the necessary roles in the NVQ process.
2. Prepare a submission to the awarding body for your company to be **approved** as an NVQ centre. Different subjects have different awarding bodies.
3. You will need to demonstrate that you have the required resources, structure and quality systems.
4. The awarding body will provide a guidance pack on becoming an approved NVQ centre.

5. The awarding body may charge an approval fee as well as charging for pre-approval advice.

NB: there is a multiplicity of different awarding bodies depending on subject. The QCA website provides information on awarding bodies<sup>25</sup>.

### **External providers**

It would be more feasible for volunteers to register with an existing local provider and use their volunteering role at Toynbee Hall as the practical component of the course. This raises the issue of how this would be funded. Further research is needed to ascertain possible sources of funding to enable volunteers to gain NVQ qualifications. The cost varies from one provider to another. There may be grants available from the local Learning and Skills Council. College based NVQs may even be free for some learners. Tower Hamlets College offers a number of Level 1 courses which may be suitable for Toynbee Hall Volunteers<sup>26</sup>. These are free for people who are under 19. People over 19 may be eligible for an Adult Learner Grant. For people on benefits there are no tuition fees, although a registration fee must be paid. For people on low income there is financial support available from the college.

### **Barriers**

There are barriers to offering NVQ qualifications at Toynbee Hall. One is the fact that we don't have the space and training rooms to offer NVQ training. We would need a computer room and classrooms to run high quality training for project participants. The cost of running an NVQ can be £2-3000 per student per year, this depends on the course. We would need to secure funding for this training and employ someone to run the project.

### National Open College Network

The National Open College Network (NOCN) also offers qualifications that would be suitable for volunteers on an employability project. The NOCN have qualifications in employability skills, developing employment skills, getting on at work and functional skills (basic literacy, numeracy and ICT). These qualifications

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<sup>25</sup> <http://www.qca.org.uk/>

<sup>26</sup> [http://www.tower.ac.uk/level\\_1\\_courses](http://www.tower.ac.uk/level_1_courses)

are very informal and flexible, so are suited to those starting from a low skills base.

The process of becoming a recognised NOCN centre is split into 8 stages;

1. Enquiry – an organisation enquires about joining NOCN and receive a leaflet to read, which I have.
2. Telephone Interview – answer some basic questions and NOCN decide whether we can progress to the next stage
3. Introduction Session – two hour introduction session
4. Application registration – if we decide to go ahead we return the 'application registration form
5. Portfolio preparation – we pay the £300 application fee and complete a portfolio of supporting information – NOCN decides whether we can progress to the next stage
6. Curriculum planning meeting – meeting with a manager of our region to discuss the courses we wish to offer
7. Centre Visit – centre visited by NOCN and a quality reviewer NOCN decides whether we can progress to the next stage.
8. Formal Notification – formal notification of our centre status is received.

In order to do this we would need to prove our ability as an organisation to offer NOCN qualifications. It is stated as desirable in the documents provided to me that we have experience in delivering formal learning events as an organisation. While accreditation with the NOCN would be less expensive than NVQs it would still require funding and someone to run the project. Another drawback of the NOCN is that it is less well-recognised than NVQs.

#### Certificate in interpersonal skills for volunteers

This accreditation is run by the University of Lampeter. Volunteers are assessed by correspondence and there are no exams. It runs for 30 weeks and volunteers will gain useful interpersonal skills. <sup>27</sup> The modules include assertiveness, confidentiality,

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<sup>27</sup> <http://www.volstudy.ac.uk/programme/modules/1VOL0140.html>

presentations and communication. The qualification takes two terms to complete and is done alongside volunteering.

### Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network

ASDAN offer two qualifications suitable for Toynbee volunteers; community involvement and volunteering award and certificate in community volunteering. These seem to be particularly appropriate for Toynbee Hall as we are a community organisation and volunteers would be working within our important community services. These qualifications teach skills such as dealing with meetings and personal development.<sup>28</sup>

The qualifications from ASDAN are unit based and there is a wide choice of units available at each level. Each unit is credit rated; a credit is equivalent to 10 hours notional learning time (not necessarily contact time with a tutor/supervisor). Candidates produce a portfolio of evidence which is internally assessed and externally moderated.

CVQ candidates achieve qualifications by gaining the required number of credits. Candidates need to achieve 8 credits for a full Award and 13 credits for the full Certificate, including the mandatory units. The Award in Volunteering at an Event is available at Level 1 and 2 and is a single unit qualification.<sup>29</sup>

The cost of these qualifications is as follows;

- £30 for generic tutor guidance
- £24.50 per candidate for levels 1 & 2
- £28 per candidate at level 3
- £250 + VAT annual centre fee (membership runs from the 1<sup>st</sup> of September to the 31<sup>st</sup> of August)

This is a very affordable qualification to run at Toynbee Hall.

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<sup>28</sup> <http://www.asdan.org.uk/>

<sup>29</sup> Information copied from the ASDAN website, accessed on 1/12/10  
<http://www.asdan.org.uk/CVQ>

## 7. Policy and funding environment

2011/12 is going to be a very difficult time in terms of funding for third sector organisations in the UK due to the coalition government's recent spending review and cuts to funding streams.

### Policy

The coalition government stresses the importance of volunteering in their vision of the 'Big Society'. The aim of the coalition is to 'encourage volunteering and involvement in social action'.<sup>30</sup> What then, in this sense, could be better than encouraging local people to volunteer at Toynbee Hall simultaneously gaining employment experience and training while 'giving back' to their own community and supporting the Big Society vision.

On a less ideological and more practical level, part of the new 'Work Programme', 'Work Together' encourages unemployed people to volunteer while they are looking for a job. This is because volunteer work is recognised to provide skills, enhance confidence and to open up a new network of contacts for the job seeker by the government. The government is removing any real or perceived barriers to people on JSA from volunteering. It needs to be made clear to Job Seekers that their JSA won't be affected by voluntary work as long as they are still available to take up a job at a week's notice, and an interview within 48 hours.<sup>31</sup>

The Work Programme is not due to be fully implemented until the summer of 2011. The government envisions voluntary organisations as having an important role to play in the work programme and in tackling worklessness.<sup>32</sup>

### Funding

While the government sees the importance of the voluntary sector in the 'Work Together' programme, sadly there has been no funding allocated for this

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<sup>30</sup>The Cabinet Office, *Building the Big Society* accessed on 10/11/10  
[www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/407789/building-big-society.pdf](http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/407789/building-big-society.pdf)

<sup>31</sup> Job Centre Plus, *Volunteering while unemployed helps others and can help you*, accessed on 20/10/10, <http://www.volunteering.org.uk/NR/rdonlyres/E9BB113C-352F-41ED-B28F-2F83FFA1B098/0/JSAL7.pdf>

<sup>32</sup> Chris Grayling, Progress towards the Work Programme, The Department for Work and Pensions, Written Ministerial Statement, 10/06/10

purpose.<sup>33</sup> The Department for Work and Pensions has cut and is reorganising many funding streams.

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) have outlined their programme of 'Skills for Sustainable Growth'<sup>34</sup>, which outlines the funding that will be offered for adult learning in the period 2012/13. Individuals aged 24+ who are unemployed and on active benefits, will receive full funding for 'Basic Skills' training, all other levels (2-4) will be fully funded for targeted groups with skills barriers to employment. Other adults who are not particularly disadvantaged in terms of education and skills will receive co-funding from the government for their training. In the funding guidelines from the Skills Funding Council (SFC) training organisations are mentioned alongside colleges which suggests that the SFC provide funding to organisations offering training as well as more formal educational institutes<sup>35</sup>.

The Working Neighbourhoods Fund (WNF), which sought to increase employment in some of the most deprived areas in the country, was cut in the spending review<sup>36</sup>.

I consulted the fundraising team at Toynbee Hall regarding funding available for a project focussing on volunteering and employability, it is their view that there is no such funding available in the foreseeable future.

### Work Programme Framework

I attended an event run by the London Voluntary Services Council on the 'Work Programme' on the 26<sup>th</sup> of November 2010. The main conclusion from the event was that the third sector should focus on what it specialises in and already has experience with in terms of offering services for welfare to work.

The 'Work Programme' in the UK will be delivered by the DWP through the Framework for the Provision of Employment Related Support Service (ERSS). The government will be purchasing **all** provision through this framework. Funding

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<sup>33</sup> Policy Briefing, *Get Britain Working*, (Volunteering England: November 2010)

<sup>34</sup> Found on the BIS website, accessed on the 14/11/10

<http://bis.gov.uk/news/topstories/2010/Nov/skills-for-sustainable-growth>

<sup>35</sup> Skills Funding Agency, *Adult Learner Responsive Funding Requirements*, (SFA: October 2010), 4 accessed on the 22/11/10

[http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/SFA/Adult\\_Learner\\_Responsive\\_Funding\\_Guidance\\_2010-11.pdf](http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/SFA/Adult_Learner_Responsive_Funding_Guidance_2010-11.pdf)

<sup>36</sup>Chancellor of the Exchequer, *Spending Review 2010*, (HM Treasury: 2010), 48

from the European Social Fund received by the DWP will also be allocated to the bodies on the framework. London will be split into two regions, East and West, each of which will deliver ERSS.

In the East region sixteen providers (primes) have been accepted on to the framework. These are; A4e, Atos Origin with Pinnacle People and Shaw Trust, Balfour Beatty workplace Remploy SPV, CDG, Eaga, Exemplas Ltd, G4S Care and justice Services, Ingeus SPV, Maximus Employment UK, Prospects Services, Reed in Partnership, Sarina Russo Job Access, Seetec, Serco, Skills Training UK and working Links. Fifteen of these organisations are for-profit and one is a charitable organisation (CDG). The government has not yet decided which of these sixteen primes will deliver the work programme within this region; it is likely that there will be as many as nine providers per region.

The aim of reform of the work programme is to provide tailored, personalised and outcome focused services to people needing support to get into work. A person can be involved and seeking services from the work programme for two years, and the government is specifically targeting those who are hard to reach. There will be higher funding for organisations and companies who work with these hardest to reach groups.

The 'Work Programme' is split into different initiatives. 'Work for Yourself' encourages unemployed people to start up enterprises after having been on JSA for 6 months. It allows them to claim JSA for three months and half of their JSA for a further three months. They will also be entitled to a business mentor and a business loan from the JCP. 'Work Together', as mentioned earlier is the programme which encourages unemployed people to volunteer. This comprises of a website on the DirectGov site which is managed by Do-IT. There will be no funding for this programme. Organisations' opportunities will be advertised through this site but they must find the funding for the volunteers themselves.

Unemployed people will set up 'Work Clubs' and they will run them. All people will need is a space and some marketing materials that can be accessed online to start up a club in which they will support each other, share contacts and network. According to the government these will spring up 'organically'. There are a few of these already in the UK that have been set up by Conservative Party MPs. There are more ideas in the pipeline but nothing is concrete yet. These include Service Academies that will offer work placements and Youth Action for Work, which will provide work placements for young people.

It is worth mentioning that these primes are still awaiting information from the government on the exact details and requirements of the 'Work Programme' and providing ERSS. These primes will sub-contract work to other companies and organisations. It is possible for the third sector to work with these primes in offering employment related support as subcontractors.

**How does the third sector fit in?** The third sector should play a big role in the work programme, especially as many third sector organisations currently provide services for unemployed people. There are broadly five services that the third sector could deliver to the primes: outreach, end to end services, intervention, access to employer's vacancies and in-work support. **Outreach** services would focus on targeting people who are alienated from the JCP, so organisations use their links with hard to reach groups in order to guide them to the 'Work Programme'.

A third sector organisation could work on an **end to end** basis delivering support to a specific group all the way into work. Organisations could also offer the primes **access to employer's vacancies** if they have a special relationship with local companies. Another way the third sector can be involved is through **intervention** services, these would be short services for specific problems like debt advice. The last way to be involved would be to offer **in-work support** for people who have entered work after taking part in the programme.

Offering services to the primes as a third sector organisation bears significant risks. It was advised at this event that organisations wishing to be involved in the 'Work Programme' must offer services which are established and that they have experience of running. This is especially important as funding will now be outcome based.

The expressions of interest to these companies have been up and running for over a month now (although primes were only listed by the DWP on the 25/11/10) and many organisations have filled in forms (some 40 pages in length) explaining what they can offer in getting people into work. If Toynbee Hall wishes to take part in offering services to unemployed people through this scheme we would need to have a project already set up to apply with the core funding from the project coming from somewhere else.

## **Survey results**

In order to get real understanding of the needs and interests of unemployed people from the local community we interviewed 44 people, who were either Toyndee Hall volunteers or service users.

88,6% of the people we interviewed were interested in training combined with volunteering. The majority were very interested in attending CV writing and interviewing skills workshops.

There was a high interest in NVQs and apprenticeships and most of the Deesha service users that were interviewed expressed interest in ESOL or Childcare qualification.

50% named transportation costs as main barrier to attending training and participating in volunteering and 18% named childcare cost.