

Westway Development Trust

Introduction

Westway Development Trust (formally North Kensington Amenity Trust) has been actively supporting supplementary education in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea since 1995. The Trust's formation in 1971, in partnership with the local authority, was the result of a four-year campaign by local residents who protested at the building of a motorway flyover, which today speeds cars in and out of London city centre over the people of North Kensington. Its construction in the late 1960s brought noise, damage and disruption to a community already contending with economic hardship.

The Trust began life with a Council grant of £25,000 and a commitment to ensure that the strip of land under the motorway should be used for community benefit with the 23 acres to be held in trust for local people to determine its use. A fifth of the land accommodates commercial developments which fund a diverse range of charitable activities, including landscaped gardens, charity offices, sports and fitness centres and social clubs. A primary objective for the Trust was to improve education.

Its Education Department, managed by Val Patterson since 2007, runs a Supplementary Schools' programme. It also provides parenting skills' courses and ESOL support for adults, after-school activities and holiday programmes for children and young people, and education grants for individuals and groups.

Today Westway Development Trust is a company limited by guarantee and registered charity with an annual turnover of over £6 million and assets estimated at over £20 million.

How the Supplementary Schools' programme began

Westway Development Trust first started actively working with supplementary schools when their core funding came to an end in the mid-1990s and it emerged that there was no clear exit strategy or continuity plan. The Trust already worked with various migrant communities, and staff were aware of the activities run by supplementary schools. Jonnie Beverley, Community Development Director at that time, remembers being impressed by the amount of time invested by communities into supplementary education and the quality and variety of provision available to children, both in terms of supporting the mainstream school curriculum and celebrating cultural heritage.

He therefore brought together as many supplementary schools from the North Kensington area as possible, and this formed the basis of the consortium that was set up in 1995.

After various consultations and discussions, he began to fundraise for an initial three-year programme. He recognised that these supplementary schools needed the support of someone who could coordinate their activities and understood the systems, rules and legislation with regard to safeguarding of children, health and safety and data protection. First, the consortium needed to clarify the extent of each supplementary school's activities and their capacity as organisations. The Trust therefore engaged an external consultant to visit and write up a report on each of the schools. This enabled them to devise a clear and fair system for distributing funding and setting expectations for each school, based on the numbers of children they were able to support and types of activities.

In 1998, the Trust managed to secure £575,000 funding for three years to support 11 supplementary schools. The funding also provided for a resource centre that could be used as premises for the schools and their activities. The funding mainly came from the National Lottery and the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. The Trust itself contributed some match funding which funded a Coordinator post based at the Trust.

A consortium approach

The consortium approach adopted by Westway Development Trust is founded on the principle that it can use its resources, including the experience and expertise of the Director of Education, Val Patterson, to support the sustainability of supplementary education in the borough. The Trust is able to secure funding and other resources that small supplementary schools might not be able to access themselves, enabling them to remain financially stable.

Today the consortium is made up of 21 supplementary schools which deliver a range of after-school and Saturday classes for over one thousand 5–19 year olds. Classes are categorised into three broad areas:

- Support for the core curriculum,
- Home language teaching, and
- Sport and leisure.

The schools are typically run by parents on a voluntary basis, and sessions take place either at a local mainstream school, community centre or at the resource centre which is made available to the supplementary schools that find it difficult to access other premises.

The Trust leads the consortium and is specifically responsible for ensuring the quality of education provided by its members. It does this through session observations, providing guidance and a checklist to ensure that schools meet all health and safety, safeguarding and insurance requirements, organising bi-monthly meetings to share good practice and communicate information consistently across the partnership, and through organising a rich programme of training for the schools to support their governance, sustainability and high quality teaching and learning.

Val applies for funding and along with a part-time administrator, carries out monitoring and reporting to funders on behalf of consortium members, ensuring that the monitoring requirements for supplementary schools are as simple as possible. They also make bulk purchases of stationery and other resources resulting in cost savings across the partnership.

This approach provides income for smaller supplementary schools that would have difficulty operating without this support. For example, Azza Supplementary School has been part of the Trust's supplementary school consortium since 2005. It supports around 90 students aged 6–16 with Arabic language and cultural classes, English as an additional language and core curriculum subjects. Mona Deyab has been the Coordinator of Azza Supplementary School since 2012 having started as a Teacher and Deputy Coordinator in 2006. Two teachers deliver English and maths classes and six teachers, who qualified in their native countries, deliver language and cultural classes. Azza needs an income of around £6,500 to sustain its operations and begin paying the community teachers who currently work on a voluntary basis. It receives 60% of this income from the consortium which also funded Azza to achieve Bronze and Silver Awards from the National Resource Centre for Supplementary Education.

Mona has been trying to generate the remaining money through parents' contributions, but many cannot afford the £30 per term suggested payment. She is now trying to apply for grants but is currently having difficulties although she has support from Val who is a referee for applications and will proof-read them before submission.

Val sees 'fitting in where I can' as fundamental to her role, and this brings variety to the range of ways in which she supports consortium members. This can be anything from acting as a referee for a fundraising bid, troubleshooting any issues that the schools might be having with mainstream school partners or even, in one case, delivering the English classes herself for one particular supplementary school!

The level of flexibility that Val brings to her post is a deliberate choice in order to ensure that the members feel a genuine sense of ownership over the consortium's overall objectives, support the start-up of new schools and ensure that the Trust's role is as responsive and purposeful to its members as it can be. This flexibility has led to the development of new areas of work, such as the Strengthening Families programme. This started with the training of two member supplementary schools who have gone on to deliver parenting sessions for men in the Somali community.

There are challenges that go along with this approach. Val has been keen to support the start-up of new supplementary schools and new pilot projects but these have not always gone to plan. As criteria for membership of the consortium were much stricter under her predecessor, Val thinks that some of the existing members saw this as a sign of their quality and were not collectively welcoming of new schools that were less developed or experienced. On occasions, relationships across the consortium were strained when pilots did not always work out. Other challenges include gathering accurate and prompt data from the member schools, which can cause problems for reporting to funders.

Finances

Westway Development Trust receives £25,000 from John Lyon's Charity for the support of 14 of the consortium's 21 supplementary schools. In addition Val has secured a further £95,000 for 4 years from the local authority, £20,000 of which goes towards the running costs of the resource centre which hosts six supplementary schools, an annual training programme for all members of the consortium and stationery and other educational resources purchased in bulk so that the unit costs are much smaller.

A further £10,000 funds a part-time administrator whose role is concerned with data collection and coordination of the consortium. The remaining £65,000 goes directly to the supplementary schools and is distributed based on a calculation of the cost of delivering one hour's tuition for each child.

| Financial Year | Income | Expenditure |
|----------------|----------|-------------|
| 2010-11 | £126,328 | £131,393 |
| 2011-12 | £126,960 | £155,942 |
| 2012-13 | £134,126 | £137,010 |

*Note: these figures are for the Supplementary Schools' Programme only.

The Trust also subsidises some of the costs associated with the supplementary education programme through surpluses in other areas of its work and income generated through its business activities. The Director of Education's salary is paid for in this way. As she manages the supplementary school work (along with the Trust's other educational activities), this is an important financial contribution.

What next for Westway Development Trust?

Val is keen to raise funds for a full-time English/maths teacher to be employed by the Trust and support several schools in the partnership. This would enable the consortium to attract a high quality member of staff, who might not apply for a four or five hour post in one supplementary school. She also thinks that a shared volunteer coordinator could recruit, train and support more parents to get involved with supplementary education in the borough while still retaining a high quality of delivery.

The council clearly values supplementary education, and the sustainability of the provision relies on this. The council and John Lyon's Charity could not fund many of the consortium's smaller supplementary schools directly because they do not meet their commissioning or funding requirements. This means that the Trust's input and coordination is critical for their education provision to continue. However, larger supplementary schools, or those that wish to expand to meet increasing demand, are prevented from directly applying for grants or contracts from the consortium's main funders.

The administrator's role is very important as she is able to collate data and enable the Trust to provide a detailed accurate report on the significant level of support provided by supplementary schools and the extent of hardship faced by many of their beneficiaries. Supporting the integration of migrants and refugees into UK society is likely to remain a key priority for the Government and as long as The Trust can continue to demonstrate the quality and impact of its work, supplementary education in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea looks set to continue.

<http://www.westway.org/>