

Needs Analysis – Findings

Introduction

A study was undertaken to assess what the development needs were of the Black and Minority Ethnic Voluntary and Community Sector in the East Midlands. The survey also looked at what infrastructure support they were currently receiving from mainstream (non-specialist) infrastructure support organisations. The survey aimed to focus Voice's limited resources on the top priorities for the groups in the East Midlands.

Methodology

Surveys were undertaken on a limited face-to-face basis, by telephone interview and posted to Voice's members. This covered all of the counties: Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, and Nottinghamshire. A total of 19 surveys were returned and the groups that returned the survey included regional organisations, smaller front-line organisations, and other infrastructure organisations.

The questionnaire used can be found at the end of the preliminary report. It included questions, such as, the greatest need for the groups, whether the group offered infrastructure support to others, what support was received from and given to mainstream infrastructure groups, whether they felt represented at regional level, a self-assessment and a prioritisation of the main needs for their organisation and what their main training needs were. There was also area to give comments or other needs.

Greatest need for BME VCS

Funding was raised by a large number of respondents, 9 in total mentioned the need for sustainable long term funding. This confirmed previous research undertaken by Voice, *Mapping the BME VCS in the East Midlands* (2002).

Other needs that were mentioned were marketing, networking, governance and dealing with conflicting groups.

Infrastructure

Fifteen of the respondents offered infrastructure support to other organisations. Four did not.

Of those 15, 11 groups stated they did not have enough capacity to support those that needed their help.

Generic Infrastructure Support

Amount of Support

There were very few groups that received substantial support from generic infrastructure groups. Only 2 reported receiving a lot of support and 6 received some support. Eleven received a little or none at all.

Quality of Support

Groups had a number of comments on the type of service they received and issues they had had accessing the provision. Two groups stated that there was limited capacity from mainstream organisations to undertake outreach work or 1 to 1 support of organisations which was what was required. Two groups stated that there was limited contact with their groups, one stating a "need to connect with them so they know us and we find out how they can help us." Two groups mentioned the need for funding support. One group reported that mainstream organisations often bid for specialist BME funding, without consulting or involving BME organisations. Another respondent stated that "they felt they were being looked down upon" by mainstream organisations.

Support given to Generic Infrastructure

Groups did offer a range of support to generic infrastructure support. A majority, 14, offered help to mainstream organisation to network with BME VCS. Training and consultation both had 9 groups offering these services to mainstream infrastructure.

Regional Representation

Ten groups felt that they were represented regionally through a number of different avenues, including Voice. However, 6 answered that they did not feel represented and 3 felt unable to comment. Others that did say they were represented stated that it was not strong and that often groups representing them were not focussed on the areas they believed were important.

Needs Analysis

Areas of strength / weakness

There was not a great spread in the averages scored for the areas of strength / weakness. The average for all responses was 2.9 on a scale of 0 to 5.

The greatest strengths for the organisations was organisational management (with an average score of 3.4), followed by Governance (with an average score of 3.3).

The lowest scorings were information on policy developments / changes and publicity and marketing (both with an average score of 2.5). The following lowest score was developing contracts / commissioning opportunities (with an average score of 2.6).

Key areas of development support

The top areas that were noted by the respondents were 'information on News...' with 11 identifying it as a priority, 'networking with similar organisations...' with 10 groups selecting it. The next highest response scoring 9 was 'developing funding applications.' And, finally 'developing contracts / commissioning opportunities' scored 7.

Training Needs

The training needs identified through this survey were training on funding (12), commissioning (8) and marketing (7). Policy and Governance had 4 groups request it.

Comments

Eight groups identified funding (small grants scheme, core funding, commissioning) again as development need that Voice could assist with.

Other comments received were more 1 to 1 development support, networking, supporting organisations' marketing, policy development and supporting community venues.

Conclusions

This study is not large enough to draw out conclusive evidence of need. However, it can be used to get an approximation of the needs of Voice's members.

Most people felt they were represented at regional level. However, a number did not and therefore Voice's role at a regional level needs to be emphasised, ensuring that stakeholders understand what that role is and feel able to feed into Voice's work.

The research has confirmed that the majority of BME VCS do not feel they can access the support they need from mainstream infrastructure.

Funding was still a major concern for groups, reconfirming Voice's earlier research.

Information was also deemed as a major shortfall. Groups would like more and better information on news, funding and policy developments.

Networking was also seen as an important area of development for groups.

Voice could also undertake / run training course for their members. Areas that this research highlighted were funding, commissioning and marketing.

Steps Taken so far...

Information

Information provision has been improved:

- Fortnightly e-alerts being sent out, http://www.voice-em.org.uk/news_events/index.asp
- Monthly policy e-alerts have also been distributed, <http://www.voice-em.org.uk/research/policy.asp>
- Policy Briefings created on a number of policy areas, <http://www.voice-em.org.uk/research/policy.asp>
- Newsletter circulated, http://www.voice-em.org.uk/news_events/index.asp

Training

Funding has been held on Big Lottery funding throughout the region.

Consultation

Fed into a range of consultations, nationally and regionally. <http://www.voice-em.org.uk/research/research.asp>

Voice East Midlands Survey

1. What do you think is the most pressing need for the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) groups in your community?					
2. Does your organisation support other VCS groups?		Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>If yes, do you have enough capacity to support these groups?</i>		Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Comments</i>					
3. Have you received support from generic infrastructure organisations? (Voluntary Action Centres, CVS, etc)		A lot	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some	<input type="checkbox"/>
		A little	<input type="checkbox"/>	None at all	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Comments</i>					
<i>If you answered some, a little or none: what would help you get better support from mainstream infrastructure organisations?</i>					
4. What support to do you give mainstream organisations?		Best Practice	<input type="checkbox"/>	Consultation	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Training	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tools / Resources	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Equality & Diversity	<input type="checkbox"/>	Networking	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other support (<i>please specify</i>)					
5. Do you feel you are represented at a regional strategic level? (<i>Through infrastructure consortiums, regional networks etc</i>)					
		Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Comments</i>					
6. How strong is your organisation at the following points? <i>On a scale from 0 to 5. 5 is doing very well, 0 is not doing this at all.</i>					
		Knowledge of News, Funding, Training, Conferences			
		Knowledge of policy developments / changes			
		Networking with other similar organisations to share best practice, experiences, etc			

	Engagement with public sector groups				
	Publicity and marketing				
	Monitoring and evaluation				
	Developing funding applications				
	Developing contracts / commissioning opportunities				
	Governance: charitable status, management / trustee board etc				
	Organisational management: policies, quality standards, etc				
7. What are the top three needs for your organisation? <i>Please label 1 to 3.</i>					
	Information on News, Funding, Training, Conferences				
	Information on policy developments / changes				
	Networking with other similar organisations to share best practice, experiences, etc				
	Engagement with public sector groups				
	Support with your organisations' publicity and marketing				
	Advice on monitoring and evaluation				
	Developing funding applications				
	Developing contracts / commissioning opportunities				
	Support with governance: charitable status, registered company, management / trustee board etc				
	Support with organisational management: policies, quality standards, etc				
	Other				
	Please Specify:				
8. What types of training does your organisation require? <i>Tick all that apply.</i>					
Funding	<input type="checkbox"/>	Commissioning	<input type="checkbox"/>	Marketing	<input type="checkbox"/>
Policy	<input type="checkbox"/>	Governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	Management	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	Please Specify:			
9. Are there any other development help that Voice East Midlands could support you with?					
10. Any other comments / suggestions?					

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.
If you would like to include your details, please enter them below:

Organisation:				
Name:				
Address:				
Telephone:			Email:	