

Project title: Eccles Community Health Event

Length/time taken: Three months

Overall purpose (why is your organisation involved in this project?): Recognising that the core part of the BA Festival of Science, being based at a university, would inhibit some people from attending, the overall purpose of this project was to run an event that reached members of BME groups in the Salford area

Aims:

- To link with a community based organisation that had regular contact with members of BME groups
- To run an event that was specifically targeted to the needs of an ethnic minority group
- To run an event that provided information on an issues involving science of relevance to the selected ethnic groups
- To highlight the role that science plays in society
- To learn from this event how to better target future events to BME groups

Project description (including target audience):

Target audience – Women from Urdu, Bengali, Arabic and Kurdish speaking communities in Eccles.

The BA held its first event specifically targeted at ethnic communities, in Eccles, Salford, on 18 September 2003 to tie in with the BA Festival of Science visiting Salford University that year. Rather than adapt current events to attract a more ethnic audience the project aimed to make contact with a local community group and work with them in order to determine what issues they were interested in discussing and how they wanted to discuss them.

During a period of three months before the event the BA worked with the Eccles branch of the Salford Link Project, a voluntary organisation providing links between the Urdu, Bengali, Arabic and Kurdish speaking communities and statutory and voluntary organisations across the city. In response to suggestions from staff at the Link Project and the perceived need for health information for the people in the locality it was decided that the event should focus on stroke, diabetes and heart disease.

A community centre in Eccles was identified as an appropriate venue. This community centre was currently being used during the day by women from a variety of ethnic backgrounds as a drop in centre where they could meet friends, get help from translation services, take English lessons, and learn IT skills. The centre had already been identified as a place where people could go to receive information relevant to their lives so the event fitted into their schedule easily. Rather than seek out a new audience the community centre already had a core of visitors who attended daily so felt comfortable being there.

After discussions with those working at the community centre it was decided that the event should take place over lunchtime and that food should be offered (which was catered by some of the attendees at the event).

The event was translated into Urdu, Bengali, Arabic and Kurdish by interpreters from the local community.

Avni Vyas, a research dietician from the University of Manchester and Jane Lewis from the Salford Stroke Association, gave short presentations taking questions as they arose. In order to ensure maximum discussion, the speakers paused every few sentences to give the interpreters time to translate and interact with their groups. The two speakers gave informal presentations and by the end they had each built a rapport with the audience. The participants had many questions and comments and there was a lot of audience discussion. After the event attendees had the opportunity to approach the speakers with any questions they wanted to ask in private. They could also have a waist hip ratio measurement or BMI (body mass index) calculation done to see whether they ought to change their eating and exercise habits in order to be healthier. Both speakers were local and were keen to be involved in similar events with the Link project.

Information for participants to take away and share with their family and friends was also provided in appropriate languages.

The event attracted an audience of 60 people, primarily women.

Outcomes

- Attendees of the community centre were able to receive health information relevant to them in an accessible format and share this knowledge with friends and family.
- Having worked on one event looking at issues involving science, staff at the community centre were more confident to run similar events independently in the future.
- Scientific organisations were networked with the Salford Link project for future projects.
- The messages of the festival were communicated to a wider and more diverse audience.
- After hearing about the benefits of moderate exercise some of the attendees decided to start up a walking group so that they could exercise together safely

Follow-on activities from this project:

As the festival was only in Salford for one year the BA have not been involved in any follow on activities in Eccles. The speakers were keen to participate in similar events at the community centre and have remained in contact.

Key barriers and how were they overcome:

Lack of market intelligence

Admitting at the beginning of the project that we did not know where to start was key to its success, we knew little about the ethnic communities in the Salford area but believed that we could offer something of interest. Although it took time and effort to make contact with the Salford Link project and staff at the Eccles community centre this allowed us to develop a better relationship with them and gave us time to understand the needs of the community better, to learn more about what they wanted. The BA was able to help

staff at the community centre deal with health issues affecting their members by using their knowledge of the community to shape the event and frame the issues. For this project the way to overcome the barrier of lacking market intelligence was simply to recognise it and to find someone to work with who could help. Building a mutually beneficial relationship meant that both parties could take ownership of the event and make it a success.

Current representation of science

One of the key barriers faced when contacting organisations to work with was how they viewed science. Many organisations felt that science was not something that their members would be interested in covering. Their first thoughts were that the topic would be inaccessible and irrelevant for their community. By introducing the area in terms of issues such as health or the environment they were more interested to get involved. Taking time to stress that the event would be a chance for their members to get access to information relevant to them and to express their views on subjects that affected their lives helped to see how issues involving science were relevant to them.

Evaluation method:

No formal evaluation was carried out on the event. Information was received during informal chats after the event with speakers, organisers and about 10 of the participants.

Participants indicated that they were pleased to have taken part and had found the event very informative. They were glad that the event had been provided specially for them and targeted to their needs. Their experiences of accessing health information had not been particularly positive in the past and so the event offered information on a new area for them.

Presenters found it to be an incredibly worthwhile experience, one had tried to offer her service as a speaker to BME groups before but had been faced with many barriers. By participating in the event she had made contacts and learnt the best ways to offer information and was inspired to try again.

Tips and lessons learnt:

Do not underestimate how long it can take to build relationships with organisations. Know what you can offer and work with communities, using their knowledge, to make sure the project delivers what they want.

Don't assume. Just because you have covered a topic many times and feel that there is nowhere new to go your chosen audience may still be interested. They may not have been able to access information on the topic before.

Money talks. You may not be able to offer payment for all areas but make sure that you use local people if you are paying for services. Catering and translators were provided by the local community for this event, using and valuing the communities skills really helped to get people involved in the project.

Budget (including staff time)

Less than 5K	5-10K	10-20K	20-50K	50K+
✓	□	□	□	□

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For health literature in different languages see - <http://www.mhcs.health.nsw.gov.au/>