

Evaluation of the Stepping Forward Project

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Commissioned by the College of Chinese Physical Culture



The project was evaluated by

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Executive Summary

The Project

The Stepping Forward Project used an innovative and challenging programme of holistic exercise. It developed the learning potential, health, fitness and life skills of young people and adults through a balanced mix of fun and training, which incorporated movement, dance and gymnastic-based exercise.

The Project commenced in October 2000 and ended in June 2002. Well-qualified Tutors facilitated the Project in various community-based organisations within East, West and North Yorkshire. It was funded through Government Office for Yorkshire and the Humber (GOYH) via European Social Fund Objective 3 funding.

The aim of the Project was to give disadvantaged individuals the opportunity to enter further education and employment. They included: a) people who lacked basic key skills and qualifications; b) people with mental and emotional barriers to learning; c) disaffected young people aged 14 – 16 and d) adults with physical disabilities.

The Evaluation

The evaluation is a summative individual impact assessment. It assessed the impact of the Project on the individual from the perspectives of the individual, her/his supervisor and the CPC Tutors, who delivered the course. The assessment used the substantial amount of data that were collected by the College of Chinese Physical Culture (CPC) as well as information gathered from the semi-structured interviews with the participants' supervisors and CPC Tutors, which were carried out by the evaluator.

The Outcomes

The Project has had a real and holistic impact on the participants' physical, emotional and mental development. This impact was observed by the participants, their supervisors and by the CPC Tutors. The evaluation focused on the impact that the Project had had on three main target groups: a) disaffected young people at a local High School, b) adults with physical/sensory impairments and c) South Asian adults.

Young People

The young people developed their skills to 'self-assess'. They made a significant and positive change of their personal attitude and behaviour. This change also had a positive impact on their other classes.

Adults with Physical Disabilities

The adults with physical disabilities made significant and positive changes in their physical, mental and emotional development.

South Asian Adults

The South Asian women made positive improvements with their English. The South Asian male elders became healthier and happier whilst participating in the Project.

Life Skills

The Project had a dramatic impact on the participants. It developed and enhanced their life skills such as their confidence and self-esteem, self-expression and creativity, interpersonal social and communication skills, increased reliability and commitment.

In addition to that, it fostered the development of a positive attitude as well as her/his problem solving and team-working skills.

Lifelong learning

More importantly, the participants of the Project learned how to process information. Processing information, understanding it, interpreting it, applying it and using one's knowledge is crucial for any individual to cope with the amount and flow of information in the twenty first century¹. It is an essential skill for 'lifelong learning'.

Knowing how to process information enables individuals to adapt to the rapid changes in their lifetime and in society as a whole (ibid.). Learning about a particular field of study can help people to access employment (ibid). However, it is the ability to process new information, which will help individuals to access opportunities of further education, training and employment (ibid.).

National Health and Social Policy Documents

In addition to lifelong learning, the Project has also achieved many recommendations and good practice guidelines that are stated in Government health and social policies. For example, the Project has achieved some of the recommendations in the following Government policy documents:

- Department of Education and Employment:
 - Freedom to Learn: May 2000
 - Breaking the Language Barrier: August 2000

- Department of Health:
 - NSF for Coronary Heart Disease: Standard One
 - NSF for Mental Health: Standard One
 - NSF for Older People: Standard Eight

The Project has had an impressive impact on the lives of those individuals who participated. It has also had a positive impact on those who work with and alongside the participants, e.g. their teachers, supervisors and Development Workers.

In brief, the Project

- ✓ was inclusive
- ✓ worked with and alongside other agencies
- ✓ was facilitated on-site. This ensured the learners had easy access and were in an appropriate environment
- ✓ had a flexible programme, which was client-centred
- ✓ developed practical skills such as counting skills
- ✓ was offered as a team-based exercise which ensured the participants interacted with others.

¹ www.sinclair.educ/information/Learning%20A.../processlearning.htmls, p. 1.

1. Introduction

This section gives the background of the Stepping Forward Project and the evaluation process.

1.1. Background of the Stepping Forward Project

The Stepping Forward Project used the fun and motivational learning activities of the College of Chinese Physical Culture (CPC) to attract young people and adults into lifelong learning.

CPC is an innovative and challenging programme of holistic exercise. It develops learning potential, health, fitness and life skills through a balanced mix of fun and training, which incorporates movement, dance and gymnastic-based exercise. This non-traditional programme develops the following range of skills and knowledge:

- confidence and self-esteem
- leadership skills
- self-expression and creativity
- social and communication skills
- positive attitude and outlook
- increased reliability and commitment
- problem solving
- team-working².

The Stepping Forward Project commenced on the 2nd October 2000 and ended on the 28th June 2002. It was delivered through three eighteen-week semesters in various community-based organisations in Leeds, Bradford, Wakefield, Hull, Goole and York, which included high schools, charities, community centres and statutory agencies. In total, 1,314 individuals participated in the Project³.

It was funded through the Government Office for Yorkshire and the Humber (GOYH) via the European Social Fund (ESF) Objective 3 funding⁴.

1.2. Aim of the Stepping Forward Project

The two main aims of the Stepping Forward Project were to:

- give disadvantaged individuals the opportunity to enter further education and employment by using innovative activities in order to:
 - address and change any barriers to learning such as a negative attitude
 - develop effective interpersonal skills such as team-working
 - how to stimulate process learning and self reflect
- support and motivate disadvantaged individuals by:
 - contributing towards their childcare and travel costs
 - working with and alongside colleagues to ensure the development of the participants was sustainable
 - presenting them with a qualification, which gives them a sense of achievement and satisfaction⁵.

²This information was gathered from the marketing materials of the Stepping Forward Project for Adults and Young People.

³Refer to Appendix 1 to view the range of organisations that were involved in the Project.

⁴ESF Objective 3: Policy Field 3 – Lifelong Learning; Measure 1: Promote wider access to lifelong learning for more people.

⁵This information was gathered from the ESF Objective 3 Bid of the Stepping Forward Project.

The Stepping Forward Project targeted the following disadvantaged individuals:

- unemployed and employed people who lack basic key skills and qualifications
- people facing barriers to learning such as earning low incomes
- disaffected young people aged 14 – 16
- actual or potential labour market returners whose experience of learning is not recent
- adults in transition from learning to work

1.3. Aim of the Evaluation

The evaluation is a summative individual impact assessment, i.e. it assesses the impact of the Project on the individual from the perspectives of the:

- a) participant
- b) her/his supervisor such as her/his teacher
- c) CPC Tutor delivering the course.

The assessment is based on the substantial amount of qualitative data that were collected by the College of CPC, which includes:

- **Project questionnaires** that were developed by the CPC to demonstrate change in soft outcomes. They were either completed by the participants or by the CPC Tutor
- **post-Project statements** from the participants, teachers, observers, workers and CPC tutors
- **semi-structured interviews** with colleagues and CPC staff.

The evaluation focuses on the two main target groups: Young People and Adults.

Details of the impact that the Project had on young people are found in Section 2 of this report. The impact on Adults is explained in more detail in Section 3 of this report.

Please note that the evaluation does not set out to quantify or qualify the effectiveness of the Project in terms of the management or organisation of the College of CPC. In addition, it does not evaluate the sustainable development of the Project. As stated earlier, the evaluation focuses on the participant of the Stepping Forward Project and the impact that it has had on her/his physical, mental and emotional development.

2. Young People

The Stepping Forward Project for Young People was aimed at 14 – 16 year olds with low academic achievements and those who lacked basic interpersonal skills. The target group included young people who are either not attending school regularly or cannot gain access to training or further education.

The Project sought to engage and motivate young people to increase their opportunities and progression into education, training or employment.

2.1. Airedale High School

Airedale High School is one of the eight schools that participated in the Project. It is situated in the former mining community of Airedale, which is on the outskirts of Castleford, West Yorkshire.

1, 089 young people aged 11 – 16 attend the school. In 2001, the percentage of pupils gaining GSCE A* - C was only 32% and there were 272 pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN)⁶.

On the 11th October 1999, an OFSTED inspection was carried out in the school. The inspectors reported that the school's "standards are below average in literacy, numeracy and information technology throughout the school" (p. 8). Their statement reflects the following local social indicators⁷:

Education Statistics 1998	Castleford Glasshoughton Ward	Wakefield MD
% population with very low/low literacy skills	18.5%	17.4%
% population with low numeracy skills	26.3%	23.8%

In addition, the Ward of Castleford Glasshoughton has a population that has a high female unemployment rate (2.8%) compared to Wakefield Metropolitan District (2.3%)⁸.

2.1.1. Participants' Perspectives

78 young people aged 14-16 participated in the Stepping Forward Project. 60 of these young people gained accreditation. They were identified as being "disaffected and underachieving Year 10 students" by the teaching staff⁹.

Each young person completed a CPC Stepping Forward Project Beneficiary Questionnaire (see Appendix 2)¹⁰. S/he scored each question in black/blue ink before s/he started the Project and used the same questionnaire to score each question in red ink at the end of the Project. The scoring technique helped the young person to assess her/his learning. This method also enabled the evaluator to 'see' any positive or negative change.

Twelve of the above twenty-one questionnaires were not completed at the end of the Project. Out of the three girls and six boys who did complete their questionnaires, only 2 boys and 1 girl marked the same score for all of the 23 questions (33%).

⁶ In 2001, there were 28 pupils with SEN statements and 244 without SEN statements.

⁷ These figures have been gathered from the website: www.wakefield.gov.uk.

⁸ This figure is an estimated claimant count, which is from the same source as above.

⁹ The evaluation focuses on one group of 21 participants. The group comprises nine girls and eleven boys. One young person did not reveal his/her gender.

¹⁰ Please note that this approach was abandoned after the first semester. The College of CPC felt that the questionnaires were too intrusive and intimidating to students with basic skills needs.

As regards the 8 remaining young people:

- a) 2 boys and 1 girl had made two significant changes
- b) 1 boy had made four significant changes
- c) 1 boy had made fifteen significant changes
- d) 1 girl had made twenty significant changes¹¹.

Their results are given in more detail below.

a) Two Significant Changes

None of the three young people scored the same questions. Having completed the Project, the girl felt that she:

- had made a very significant positive change (+9) as regards getting on with the teachers
- felt that she did not allow other people to influence her as much (-5).

One boy felt that he:

- did not find it easy to understand other people's views (-2)
- did not feel he reached agreements with others (-3)

The other boy stated that he:

- did not have as much choice as he thought in his life (-1)
- did not find it as easy staying on task (-1).

b) Four Significant Changes

The boy who had made four changes since completing the Project stated that he:

- was happier with his relationships with other pupils (+2)
- felt that he got on better with the teachers at school (+1)
- did not have as much choice as he thought in his life (-1)
- found it easier to stay on task (+2).

c) Fifteen Significant Changes

The boy who had made fifteen significant changes since completing the Project stated that he:

- was less happy with things at school (-1)
- was happier with his relationships with other pupils (+1)
- felt he got on better with the teachers at school (+2)
- felt it was easier to learn things at school (+2)
- valued the skills that he had more than before (+2)
- had more choice in his life (+1)
- was happier with his reading and writing (+2)
- felt that he was at risk of giving up on things (+1)
- was less happy about working with others (-1)
- was more confident about the future (+1)
- felt it was easier to stay on task (+1)
- felt it was easier to understand someone's else's view (+1)
- reached agreements with others better than before (+1)
- enjoyed learning new things more than before (+1)
- accepted feedback from others more than before (+1).

¹¹ A significant change is a post-Project score that is marked either below or above their initial (pre-Project) score.

d) Twenty Significant Changes

The girl who had made twenty significant changes since completing the Project stated that she:

- was significantly less happy with things at school (-5)
- was happier with relationships with other pupils (+1)
- felt she got on better with the teachers at school (+1)
- thought it was less easy for her to learn things in school (-3)
- didn't value the skills that she has as much as before (-3)
- was more aware she let other people influence her more (+1)
- had more choice in her life than before (+1)
- was happier with her reading and writing (+1)
- was more aware she was at risk of giving up on things (+5)
- was happier working with other people (+1)
- found it significantly less easy to stay on task (-7)
- found it easier to understand someone else's view (+1)
- didn't enjoy learning new things as much as before (-4)
- didn't accept feedback from others as much as before (-2)

In addition to that, having completed the Project, she was aware that the following people had an influence on her decisions:

- her parents/carers (+1)
- other family members (-3)
- her friends (+2)
- careers teachers (+3)
- somebody who is already in work (-2)
- something she has seen on television/radio/newspaper (-1)

Another boy wrote:

"I think the CPC is brilliant because when I started the course straight away I learnt things that I did not know and we have had two very good instructors and also I've become fitter. I hope we have more things like this in the future"

It is clear that the above young people have developed their skills to 'self-assess'. By completing the Beneficiary Questionnaires, they have assessed their a) self-performance, b) emotional development, c) self-development and d) skill development¹².

Developing self-assessment skills is critical for students to become "self-growers"¹³. Self-growers:

- identify their strengths and build on them
- pinpoint areas for self improvement and work on improving them
- have insights, which will help to improve their future performance (ibid.).

Self-growers do not require others such as teachers or supervisors to motivate them. They are confident individuals, who have good self-esteem and can process information effectively. Refer to Section 4.3: Lifelong Learning for more details.

¹² www.sinclair.educ/information/process_learning/L.../the_learningassessmentjournal.html, p. 1.

¹³ www.sinclair.educ/informatio.../assessmentquestionsforguidediscoveryactivities.html, p. 2.

2.1.2. Teachers' Perspectives

The Head of Dance at the Airedale High School observed the progress of the students over the three eighteen-week semesters. He made the following observations on the participants¹⁴:

- **Initial concern that the students would not co-operate with the CPC Tutors**

"At the start of the project teaching staff had been concerned about the students behaviour and negative attitude. The students showed a lack of motivation and interest towards school studies, often becoming disruptive in lessons with little respect for peer group members, teachers and authority."

- **A noticeable and positive change in the students' attitude and behaviour**

"The students initially approached the Stepping Forward Project quite negatively with a degree of reluctance and cynicism – making excuses for not participating. Week by week however it was possible to see the negativity disappearing and by the end of the course most of the students participated with a sense of enthusiasm. They showed much greater consideration and respect for each other and rather than resenting working together actually enjoyed it."

- **The positive change had an impact on the students' other classes**

"I teach one of the students who took part in the Stepping Forward Project for GCSE Dance. She started the Dance course with a very lethargic and uninterested attitude, often 'sitting out' of practical work and not completing assignments. I have noticed a definite improvement in her working attitude since she started the Stepping Forward Project. She is now actively participating in lessons and has met all her coursework deadlines"

"Teaching staff have particularly commented on the students approach to group or teamwork being far more positive"

"The students have gained a tremendous amount from their involvement in the project"

- **The Project supports the work of the teaching staff**

"The teaching staff and students are very appreciative of the work [the CPC Tutors] have achieved ... they developed an excellent rapport with the students making a positive impact on [the students'] development"

It is clear from the Teachers' perspectives that the students, teachers and school benefited from the Project. This viewpoint was supported by the participants (see 2.1.1.) and by the CPC Tutors (see below).

2.1.3. CPC Tutors' Perspectives

The CPC Tutors completed a Stepping Forward Evaluation and Feedback form as part of the overall evaluation process. They were also well prepared to work with young people.

Prior to starting the Project in the Airedale High School, the three CPC Tutors received training sessions from the College of CPC on 'Child Protection' and 'Tools for Delivering CPC to Young People'. They also gained experience by assisting other CPC Tutors prior to running their own classes.

¹⁴ Unpublished document dated 8th September 2001.

The CPC Tutors kept personal diaries to reflect on the experience of each class and to 'jot down' any comments made by the students. Some of the comments that were made to one CPC Tutor included:

CPC Tutor: *"I look forward to coming here each week ..."*

Students: *"Yeah! So do we!"*
" Yeah! Its well cool this CPC"

One of the CPC Tutors makes the following observation on his class at Airedale High School:

- **Valuable Feedback comes from Observing**

"Much of the other feedback comes from observing the young peoples' behaviour over the weeks".

- **A Positive Change in the Students' Attitude and Behaviour**

"There [are] definite improvements in confidence both verbally (offering increasingly sensible responses to questions) and in getting involved in the exercises as well as working together as a team, responding to instructions and being respectful towards the teacher".

- **The Project was very much valued by Members of the Teaching Staff**

The CPC Tutor explains how a teacher at Airedale High School valued the course. The Teacher's response was: *"[The CPC Tutors] are coming in each week and I am seeing the kids enjoying it, responding well and improving each week"*

- **The Students Enjoyed the Task of Self-Assessment**

"The young people seem to enjoy filling in the forms! Especially the [Beneficiary Questionnaires]"

However, he was aware that *"...not all will be able to or confident completing forms, even down to signing the timesheets".*

The CPC Tutor also felt that particular ideas worked well with particular genders. His comments included:

"Choreographed movements to music – for girls in particular

"Crash mats with spring boards – not all girls got involved though

"Team games – e.g. bridge football, rolling races, dodge ball in cross and scissor, scarecrow tig

"The Dance – particularly good for girls".

As regards the CPC Tutor's perspective, it is clear that the students had made positive changes in their attitude to the Project as well as their behaviour. These changes were supported by the comments that were received from the students and the teaching staff within the school.

3. Adults

The Stepping Forward Project for Adults was aimed at all adults over 16 years of age, who may not have had the opportunity to access activities which lead to qualifications or develop basic key skills. This would include those individuals who are unwaged, on a low income, or those who have faced barriers to learning.

This evaluation focuses on two particular target groups that were involved in the Stepping Forward Project. They reflect the diversity of the Project's target groups and are as follows:

- adults with physical disabilities at the Clifford Brooke Centre
- South Asian Women and Men.

Each target group is a sub-section of this report.

3.1. Adults with Physical Disabilities

The Clifford Brooke Resource Centre is based in Roundhay, Leeds. It is a resource centre for adults aged 30 – 65 who have a physical/sensory impairment. Leeds City Council Department of Social Services funds the centre.

The Clifford Brooke Resource Centre has three separate units, which are as follows:

- **Respite Unit** provides long-term support whilst offering support to the carer
- **Rehabilitation Unit** offers a specific short-term programme to improve independence
- **Resource Unit** provides a range of open and closed courses that are offered by further education colleges¹⁵.

It also offers provides access to a range of information, advice and other services.

The College of Chinese Physical Culture (CPC) facilitated a Stepping Forward Project in the Resource Unit. The participants of the Project included 9 adults: 7 females and 2 males.

3.1.1. Participants' Perspectives

Many participants were unable to complete a questionnaire because of their disabilities. Therefore, the College of CPC developed a Stepping Forward Project: Adults Soft Outcomes Questionnaire (see Appendix 3). The staff of the Clifford Brooke Resource Centre – in collaboration with the participant - completed the questionnaire at the end of the Project. The results of the questionnaires are given below.

- **All the Participants improved in their development**

All of the nine participants had made at least ten positive changes in her/his development by the end of the Project. Not one person made a negative change.

¹⁵ Voluntary Action – Leeds (1999) Directory of Voluntary Community Groups in Leeds, p. 41.

The actual number of positive changes that were made by the participants is as follows:

Gender	Number of Positive Changes Made out of a Potential 33
Female	10
Female	11
Female	12
Female	16
Male	22
Female	26
Male	28
Female	29
Female	32
Average No. of Changes	21

• **All nine participants made the following four positive changes:**

- Adapts easily to change
- Understands/follows complex instructions
- Interacts appropriately with the teacher/supervisor
- Can stay on task.

• **Eight of the nine participants made the following four positive changes:**

- initiates conversations with others
- uses appropriate language in working relations with others
- stays on task when working in a group
- displays a level of confidence.

• **Seven of the nine participants made the following seven positive changes:**

- understands/follows simple instructions
- can organise him/herself appropriately for the tasks in hand
- can work to the accepted standard of quality
- can complete a task in a given time
- has enthusiasm for regular attendance
- has enthusiasm for punctuality
- others seek out his/her friendship.

These soft outcomes demonstrate that the participants have gained valuable life skills such as self-confidence, self-esteem, flexibility and adaptability.

The staff also made the following comments about the participant on her/his respective questionnaire¹⁶:

"[A] has gained immensely in confidence allowing his personality to shine"

"[S] has gained confidence and has noticed health benefits"

"[I] has done well to work within a group as she has difficulties making herself understood which leads to frustration"

" [S] is enthusiastic and practises exercises at home"

"[N] made a positive contribution to the group despite having mobility difficulties. She joined in all the exercises, rarely complaining"

These statements show that the participants have gained a significant amount of self-confidence having been involved in the Project. A Resource Officer, who works in the Clifford Brooke Resource Centre, also observed the positive effects of the Project¹⁷.

3.1.2. Supervisor's Perspective

The Resource Officer explained what the CPC programme involved:

"The exercise programme provides a holistic approach to personal growth including physical, mental and emotional development by means of a well-structured and sequential course of exercises, which are related to individual needs"

He also made the following observations:

- **The Project was very popular with the participants**

"The courses are provided by qualified CCPC staff and have proved to be very popular at the Centre"

"The feedback on the courses from service users have been very positive"

- **Participants felt happier and healthier**

"Service users reported that the courses have helped them improve their physical fitness and breathing, develop their confidence and to gain an appreciation of other cultures and lifestyles"

- **Participants learnt valuable interpersonal skills**

"The course programme also helps participants to develop their group work skills and ability to work with others in a positive way and can enhance their skills in such areas as problem solving and decision-making"

- **The positive effects of the participants receiving a recognised qualification**

"The courses also lead to a recognised qualification which is important in providing people with a sense of achievement and developing their self-esteem. This can also enhance people's motivation to progress further in education, employment or voluntary work"

- **The Project was supported and valued by the staff**

"At the Clifford Brooke Resource Centre we have been very impressed by the CCPC courses and we are planning to continue with these courses in the future"

It is clear that the Project has had a positive impact on the a) participants' physical, mental and emotional development and b) the staff and school. The CPC Tutors also observed the impact of the Project on the participants.

¹⁶The names of the learners have been shortened to an initial. This is to protect their identities for confidentiality purposes.

¹⁷ Unpublished document: A Letter from the Resource Officer dated 18th July 2001.

3.1.3. CPC Tutors

The CPC Tutors completed a Stepping Forward Evaluation and Feedback form as part of the overall evaluation process. They were also well qualified to work with adults with physical disabilities. For example: one of the CPC Tutors is a Registered Nurse/ Health Visitor.

She made the following comments:

- **The Feedback was very positive**

"The feedback [from the beneficiaries] has been very positive..."

- **The Learners were committed to the Project**

"The attendance (bar ill health) has been good"

- **The Learners are very enthusiastic**

"The learners are very keen to continue with the course also after the eighteen weeks are complete"

- **The Project was supported by the staff of the Centre**

"Clifford Brooke have been very pleased with the course and the feedback questionnaire which they did themselves with the learners about the course was very good"

The CPC Tutor also recorded the following comments in her diary:

"[S] has said that she has more movement and flexibility in her shoulders and neck"

"[P] feels that his confidence has improved"

"[A] has gone from being quiet and withdrawn to laughing and communicating with the others in the group"

"[T] has benefited from the contact with the group and individually, it means a lot to him"

"[L] enjoys and looks forward to the classes"

"[K] enjoys the chi expressions, she finds them empowering"

"[D] now joins in on the 'counting' exercises, even though she finds it hard to articulate"

These comments confirm the impact of the Project as regards the participants' physical, mental and emotional development.

3.2. South Asian Adults

The Stepping Forward Project for Adults also targeted non-English speakers. It is accepted that South Asian adults who do not speak English are disadvantaged in accessing training, education and employment¹⁸.

The evaluation focused on South Asian adults who participated in the Project¹⁹. One target group is South Asian women in Bradford and Leeds. The other target group is South Asian male elders in Leeds. Each target group will be discussed separately.

¹⁸ DfEE (2000) Breaking the Language Barrier, DfEE publications, p. 18.

¹⁹ Due to the language barriers, the Development Worker of each group acted as an interpreter. No beneficiary questionnaires were completed. Independent persons, the Development Workers and the CPC Tutor made observations of the class. The evaluator carried out semi-structured telephone interviews with the above persons and collated the data that were collected by the College of CPC.

3.2.1. South Asian Women

Fifty-five South Asian women aged 16 – 70 participated in the Project: 34 were from Bradford and 21 were from Leeds.

An independent observer made the following comments on one of the classes and on the CPC Tutor:

- **The participants' English improved**

"Their English improved a lot ... [the CPC Tutor] reinforced the language all the time.

- **The CPC Tutor used fun and innovative techniques to teach English**

"[The CPC Tutor] repeated a simple word all the time and get them to copy, and then they can instruct each other"

"[She] promoted sharing and learning experience. She asked how to speak the instruction in Urdu and repeated once in Urdu, once in English. Then we all counted in Urdu and in English. It empowered them and make it fun, they all had a laugh"

- **The participants' life skills improved**

"[The participants] were more open and forthcoming...they were more confident...their attention span improved a lot"

- **The participants' interpersonal skills improved**

"Through partner and group work [the women] have developed an ability to relate to each other more closely. This is display[ed] in the way they communicate with [one] another as a member and as a group"

- **The participants enjoyed themselves**

"Using games, that they enjoyed, lifted their spirit[s] and kept them light-hearted. At the end of the session, the exercises were presented in a 30 minute Aerobic session. It was like a nice kiddies class, they laughed a lot"

- **The CPC Tutor was flexible in her approach**

"[The CPC Tutor] is a really good observer and she can feel when they start losing concentration and when they get tired"

"Changing the exercises frequently kept their interest"

It is clear that the South Asian women enjoyed their learning experience. The Project has provided them with a fun learning environment, which was also culturally sensitive. They also learnt English whilst at the same time undertaking some physical exercises.

3.2.2. South Asian Male Elders

A group of eleven men aged 55 –75 participated in the Project for eighteen weeks. They were all from the local Pakistani Muslim community in Beeston, Leeds.

Beeston is part of the Beeston and Holbeck Ward. It is an inner city urban community with a high ethnic minority population and is considered to be one of the most deprived areas in Leeds²⁰. The area has poor housing, high unemployment and high crime rates (ibid.). The population also has significantly high rates of coronary heart disease, lung cancer and one of the highest rates of emergency hospital admissions in Leeds (ibid.).

Research carried out on the South Asian male elders in Beeston identified that they suffered from insomnia, restlessness, anxiety and a lack of exercise²¹.

A male Development Worker from the South Leeds Elderly and Community Group organised the Stepping Forward Project to come to his group of South Asian male elders. He explained why he contacted the College of CPC:

“There are very few opportunities for South Asian male elders to access culturally appropriate physical activities. There are no local activities that they can access. The Stepping Forward Project was carried out in premises that we use locally so the men felt more comfortable. Also, the men would not be embarrassed, as they could not be ‘seen’ by other people. They could do the exercises together and not be overlooked”

He also made the following observations:

- **The participants enjoyed the Project and their CPC Tutor**

“They really enjoyed the Tai Chi classes. They enjoyed the physical exercise most of all”

“They liked [the CPC Tutor]. They thought she was very nice. She was very approachable”

- **The Project had positive health benefits**

“Many of them said that they slept better, were more mobile and generally felt better”

- **The participants wanted the course to continue**

“They were disappointed when the course stopped after the eighteen weeks. They wanted it to continue. It was a shame it had to end”

- **The learning was not sustained**

The Development Worker also explained that the men did not continue with the exercises when the semester had ended.

“The men didn’t keep up the exercises when the course had stopped. They need to attend classes. They are very passive”.

It is clear that the South Asian male elders benefited from the Project. They became healthier and happier whilst participating in it.

This Section has shown that the holistic approach of the Project has had a ‘holistic’ impact as regards the social and health development of the adults, who were involved in the Project. This impact meets many of the national health and social care policies (see next section).

²⁰ Unpublished document (2001) Hamara: A Healthy Living Centre in Beeston written by the South Leeds Elderly and Community Group.

²¹ Unpublished document (1999) The health needs of South Asian Elders written by South Leeds Elderly and Community Group in collaboration with Leeds Metropolitan University.

4. Conclusion

The Project has achieved its outputs for the European Social Fund and Learning Skills Council as well as achieving its aims and objectives. It is also evident from reading the case studies in Section 2 and 3 of this report that the Stepping Forward Project has been very successful as regards its soft management outcomes.

The Project has demonstrated that a significant number of participants have gained valuable life skills. They have become healthier and happier as well as transformed into more self-confident and self-reflective individuals.

Significantly, the Project meets a wide range of the Government's national health and social care policies.

4.1. Project achieves National Social Policy Guidelines

There are national policy guidelines that focus on the two main target groups of adults, which were identified in Section 3. Each target group is discussed separately.

4.1.1. National Policy Recommendations for Adults with Physical Disabilities

In September 1999, the Department of Education and Employment established a working group to look into the basic skill needs of adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities²².

As regards adults with physical disabilities, the working group recommended that:

"good practice which is promoted should centre around the inclusive approach to learning. This means making programmes of study directly relevant to the individuals' needs and priorities, building on a multi-agency framework, creating programmes and curricula which are flexible, providing the necessary access to resources, ensuring the pace of programmes meets the needs of those with physical disabilities, placing a high priority on the development of practical skills, and teaching basic skills in real life situations" (ibid., p.26).

The comments from the learners, supervisors and the CPC Tutors (see Section 3.1.) show that the Stepping Forward Project for Adults with Physical Disabilities meets the above recommendation.

In brief, the Project

- ✓ is inclusive
- ✓ works with and alongside other agencies
- ✓ is facilitated on-site. This ensures the learners have easy access and are in an appropriate environment
- ✓ has flexible programmes that are client-centred
- ✓ develops practical skills such as physical exercises for easier movements and counting skills
- ✓ is offered as a team-based exercise which ensures the participants interact with others.

²² DfEE (2000) Freedom to Learn, DfEE publications, p.1.

4.1.2. National Policy Guidelines for the Minority Ethnic Community

In August 2000, the working group on English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) published the report: "Breaking the Language Barriers". The report states:

"...the needs of adults who, because it is not their first language, need to develop skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing in English

"...all the evidence suggests that lack of fluency in English is a very significant factor in poverty and under-achievement in many minority ethnic communities, and a major barrier to employment and workplace opportunities and further and higher education" (p.1).

The working group also stated that:

"ESOL students need to develop many language skills including pronunciation, speaking, listening, learning new vocabulary and understanding and using grammar and syntax" (p. 28).

The case study of the South Asian women demonstrated that the Project introduced them to many language skills. For example, they:

- ✓ learnt new words in a fun environment
- ✓ learnt to pronounce unfamiliar words
- ✓ had the opportunity to speak and practise those words
- ✓ learnt to listen effectively.

The Project has provided an ideal 'first step' to learn and practise English. In addition, the Project is community-based. Therefore, it targets the audiences that are termed as being "hard to reach"²³ (p.53). In addition to that, the Project also meets the needs of national health policies.

4.2. Project achieves National Health Policy Guidelines

The Project uses movement, dance and gymnastic exercise to improve health and well-being. Consequently, it meets the following standards in the National Service Frameworks (NSFs):

4.2.1. Coronary Heart Disease

The NSF for Coronary Heart Disease Standard One states:

"The NHS and partner agencies should develop, implement and monitor policies that reduce the prevalence of coronary risk factors in the population, and reduce in risks in developing heart disease" (p.17)

The Project focuses on the following factors, which are known to be more at risk in developing heart disease. They include individuals who:

- do not exercise
- suffer stress and anxiety
- are unemployed or come from the manual classes
- live in the North of the country
- are from the Indian subcontinent (ibid., p.7)

²³ Moser, C. (1999) A Fresh Start: improving literacy and numeracy, DfES publications.

4.2.2. Mental Health

The NSF for Mental Health Standard One states:

“Health and social services should a) promote mental health for all, working with individuals and communities and b) combat discrimination against individuals and groups with mental health problems, and promote their social inclusion”

The comments that were made by the participants – young and old – in Sections 2 and 3 of this report demonstrate that the Project has had a positive impact on their mental attitude.

In addition to that, the Project has worked with mental health service users. They have facilitated the Project in Day Care Centres, which are run by the Department of Social Services.

For example: The Project went into the Stocks Hill Day Centre in Armley, Leeds. It is a centre that provides training, support and advice to registered mental health users.

4.2.3. Older People

The NSF for Older People Standard Eight states:

“To extend the healthy life expectancy of older people”

The Project has worked with a significant number of persons over 55. The older participants’ statements demonstrate that the Project has had a positive impact on their health.

For example: the South Asian male elders aged 55 – 75 said that they slept better and felt better generally whilst in the Project.

4.3. Lifelong Learning

Furthermore, the participants of the Project have learned how to process information.

Processing information, understanding it, interpreting it, applying it and using one’s knowledge is crucial for any individual to cope with the amount and flow of information in the twenty-first century²⁴. It is an essential skill for ‘lifelong learning’.

Knowing how to process information will enable individuals to adapt to the rapid changes in their lifetime and in society as a whole (ibid.). Learning about a particular field of study can help people to access employment (ibid). However, it is the ability to process new information, which will keep individuals employed and enable them to move up the career ladder (ibid.).

²⁴ www.sinclair.educ/information/Learning%20A.../processlearning.htmls, p. 1.

The College of Chinese Physical Culture (CPC) uses a non-traditional programme that enables individuals 'to process information for themselves - by themselves'. The method used by CPC also teaches individuals how to:

- participate in team activities
- take risks
- interact with others
- write personal journals
- reflect on their learning
- observe their peers' learning
- make connections
- respect diversity
- identify areas for self improvement and self-development (ibid, p.2).

Skills in learning 'how to process information' are critical for people who want to be employable. Employers demand that their employees:

- think critically
- solve problems
- work in teams
- communicate effectively (ibid.).

These skills are also essential if an individual wants to access further education. An individual who can process information will be an effective student. S/he will be able to actively process information – to think about it, interpret it, apply it, and transfer it into new situations – rather than passively absorb it (ibid.).

The Project has had a positive impact on people's lives. It offered a holistic programme that enhanced the physical, mental and emotional development of individuals in a fun 'learning' environment. The impact has also been 'holistic'.

The participants said that they felt healthier and happier: physically, mentally and emotionally. Their teachers, supervisors and CPC Tutors also observed these changes.

Appendix 1:

Appendix 1: Information Sources

Airedale High School: Castleford

2 Project Evaluations: CPC Tutors	2
1 Overall Project Evaluation: Teacher	1
21 Beneficiary Questionnaires	21
1 Overall Project Statement: Student	1

Allerton Grange School: Leeds

1 Learning Mentor Review	1
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Agnes Stewart High School: Leeds

1 Overall Project Evaluation: CPC Tutor	1
2 Project Evaluations: Teachers	2
8 Student Diaries	8
1 CPC Tutor Diary	1

Asian Women's Group: Bradford

1 Overall Project Statement: CPC Tutor	1
22 Beneficiary Questionnaires	22

Bangladeshi Community Women's Group: Area Unknown

1 CPC Stepping Forward Evaluation & Feedback Form	1
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Belle View Boys School: Bradford

1 Overall Project Evaluation: Teacher	1
2 Overall Project Evaluations: Student	2

Bridlington: Groups Not All Identified

1 Newspaper Clipping	1
1 Students Comments: Semester One	1
1 Overall Project Statement (Semester Two): CPC Tutor	1
8 Overall Project Statements (Semester Two): Students	8
22 Beneficiary Questionnaires	22

Clifford Brooke Resource Centre: Leeds

1 Project Evaluation: CPC Tutor	1
1 Overall Project Evaluation: Resource Officer	1
9 Beneficiary Questionnaires	9

Cockburn High School: Leeds

1 Project Evaluation: Pupil Support	1
1 CPC Tutor Diary	1
10 Student Diaries	10
7 Beneficiary Questionnaires	7

East Leeds Family Learning Centre: Leeds

1 CPC Feedback Questionnaire	1
2 Overall Project Statements: Teachers	2

Information Sources continued...**Goole**

1 Overall Project Statement (Semester One): CPC Tutor 1

Hull

1 Overall Project Statement (Semester One): CPC Tutor 1
21 Beneficiary Questionnaires 21

Intake High School: Leeds

2 Overall Project Statements (Titles Unknown) 2
1 CPC Tutor Diary 1

Newsome High School: Huddersfield

1 Confirmation Letter 1
3 Beneficiary Questionnaires 3

Rodillian School: Wakefield

1 Learning Mentor Review 1
14 Student H-diagrams 14

South Leeds Temple in Beeston: Leeds

1 Semi-structured face-to-face Interview: Development Worker 1

Thornhill High School: Area Unknown

1 Overall H-Diagram Analysis 1
7 Beneficiary Questionnaires 7

York: Burton Stone Community Centre

7 Beneficiary Questionnaires 7

Areas Unknown / Sources Unknown

1 Case Study 1
1 Course Evaluation 1
1 Beneficiary Questionnaires 1
12 Overall Project Statements: Students 12
12 Student H-diagrams 12

TOTAL NUMBER OF INFORMATION SOURCES**219**

Appendix 5:

Appendix 5: Organisations that Participated in the Project

2nd Chance School, East Leeds Family Learning Centre: Leeds

Agnes Stewart C of E High School: Leeds

Airedale High School: Castleford

Aireborough Grammar School: Leeds

Allerton Grange High School: Leeds

All Hallows Church: Leeds

Amy Johnson High School: Hull

Archbishop Thurstan School: Hull

Asha Neighbourhood Project: Leeds

Bangladeshi Youth Organisation (BYO): Bradford

Belle View Boys School: Bradford

Belle View Girls School: Bradford

Bradford Police Club: Bradford

Bramley Community Centre: Leeds

Burton Stone Community Centre: York

Carlton Bolling College: Bradford

Centre 88: Hull

CHIPY: Leeds

Clifford Brooke Resource Centre: Leeds

Cockburn High School: Leeds

Denis Healey Centre: Leeds

East Leeds Family Learning Centre: Leeds

Eastmoor Community Project: Wakefield

Farnley Park High School: Leeds

Grovehill Centre: Beverley

Hebden Vale Centre: Hebden Bridge

Horsforth High School: Leeds

Howden Clough High School: Birstall

Intake High School: Leeds

Jamaica Society: Leeds

Jubilee Hall: Wakefield

Lavender Lodge: Bridlington

Leeds Reach: Leeds

Mixenden Community Centre: Halifax

Newsome High School: Huddersfield

Osmondthorpe Centre: Leeds

Parklands Girls High School: Leeds

Primrose High School: Leeds

Rathbone Training Ltd.: Bradford

Raven Street Community Centre: Halifax

Rawcliffe Resource Centre: Goole

Rodillian School: Wakefield

Royds School: Leeds

St. George's Community Project: Wakefield

Scope in Calderdale: Halifax

Sir Henry Cooper School: Hull

South Leeds Temple: Leeds

Stockhill Day Centre: Leeds

Tang Hall: York

Thornhill High School: Area Unknown

Touchstone: Leeds

Tunstall Road Community Centre: Leeds

Vale Centre: Leeds

Woodsley Road Community Centre: Leeds

Wortley High School: Leeds

Wyke Manor Upper School: Bradford

Yorkshire Dance: Leeds

Youth Offending Team: Leeds