

Women Into Work: Moving On

Internal Evaluation Report

Education Training and Employment Brokerage

A Red Kite Learning Project

July 2007

Dr Katherine Wilkinson and Caroline O'Keeffe

Executive Summary

Background

In 2001, SOVA and partners came together to secure funding from the European Social Fund EQUAL programme for the Development Partnership (DP) called Women Into Work. In EQUAL Round 1 the partnership was commissioned to work towards combating discrimination and inequality experienced by women facing disadvantage, particularly as a result of their contact with the Criminal Justice System. The ultimate goal of the programme, lasting until November 2005, was to ensure that these women could work towards gaining access to and sustaining appropriate employment, training or education. An extensive peer research project was undertaken so as to identify the support needs of disadvantaged women and, based on the findings, seven Pilot Projects were commissioned to provide such support.

Members of the this Development Partnership, along with a number of new partners, used the research and piloting work carried out during EQUAL Round 1 to identify further innovative approaches for development and testing under EQUAL Round 2. It was proposed that these approaches would continue to increase the employability and empowerment of women disadvantaged in the labour market in line with the work started by the Women into Work programme during Round 1. Money was accordingly secured from Equal to carry this work forward into Round 2.

The new Development Partnership was called Women into Work: Moving On and fell under the remit of Theme A of the EQUAL funding stream - 'Barriers to Employment'. Its key objective has been to pilot innovative and holistic support packages to enable disadvantaged women to move from disempowerment to empowerment in the labour market.

EQUAL programmes are organised and funded in three separate phases:

- Action 1 - the set-up phase
- Action 2 - the delivery phase, during which joint or complementary initiatives or activities are developed in the UK and in Europe

- Action 3 - mainstreaming policies and disseminating successful initiatives

All three phases are expected to incorporate the five Equal principles of

- Innovation
- Empowerment
- Equal Opportunities
- Transnational Co-operation
- Dissemination and Mainstreaming

This Evaluation

This report is an evaluation of Red Kite Learning's Education Training and Employment (ETE) Brokerage, which is one of seven pilot projects commissioned to run during Action 2. Action 2 was originally due to run from 1 July 2005 to December 2006, but in practice has run from January 2006 to May 2007, with a further extension for the project until June 2007.

Red Kite Learning took the opportunity of this Equal funding to extend their existing provision and tailor it specifically at disadvantaged and hard to reach women by designing an outreach programme offering:

- Information, advice and guidance around employment, training and education
- Skills for Life training leading to accredited NQV qualifications in literacy and numeracy
- Job brokerage services

This evaluation will assess the project processes, performance against key outcome targets and the extent to which the five leading Equal principles have been incorporated into the project work.

Summary of Evaluation Findings

This evaluation has shown that the ETE Brokerage Service is a credible provision that offers a holistic employment orientated experience. It has developed excellent partnership links with a variety of relevant local agencies. It has, however, suffered a negative impact from the reduced timescales in Action 2.

The project's success at forming links with other agencies working with disadvantaged women has provided easy access to a pool of potential referrals, however the short time scales in which the service has to work with these women has affected the project's attempts to meet beneficiary targets.

The project has worked to empower women by providing information, offering support and enabling women to overcome a variety of personal and educational experience barriers. The project has taken an empowering approach, has been innovative in terms of its being a women's only service and has been strong in relation to the further Equal principles of transnational work, mainstreaming and dissemination and Equal Opportunities.

Key Strengths

- In response to the withdrawal of original partner pledged to provide referrals and premises, Red Kite Learning Team quickly developed more localised partnerships to promote and host the service
- Responding to a series of key delivery and management staff changes the ETE Brokerage Service Team managed to minimise any potential disruption
- The team have successfully accessed the core hard-to-reach target group the service was designed to engage through their development of excellent partnerships with local programmes already working with this target group of women
- The beneficiaries of this project reported feeling more confident in their attempts to secure employment and training
- The beneficiaries responded well to the holistic nature of this ETE Brokerage Programme's empowering practices
- ETE Management and delivery staff are committed to ensuring the
- learning from this programme is mainstreamed organisationally within RKL

Difficulties or Barriers

- Original partnership could not deliver on premises and referrals pledged in original tender document

- Core ETE Brokerage Service Team staff underwent a series of staff changes during the funding period of the project
- Barriers to wholly holistic working practices with the target group were identified as the project having such a large number of women to fulfill their contractual obligations
- Further, some involved with the project felt that the extensive paperwork that had to be filled out, for funders of the project, proved dis-empowering and overtly time-consuming
- The target numbers of women staff had to see in order to fulfil their contractual obligations proved a barrier to providing a truly holistic service

Items to Consider for Future Projects

The positive outcomes recorded in the main part of this report can be built on and it is hoped the following recommendations will contribute to the continued success of the ETE Brokerage initiative and/or any potential replication:

- The enthusiastic and committed ETE Brokerage staff team must be commended for all their hard work and congratulated for their effective handling of potentially disruptive start-up issues. These staff members experiences could also be used for illustrative purposes when designing any future services
- The excellent local partnerships initiated through this programme need to be maintained, as potentially beneficial relationships for RKL after the funding period
- Further, this project's successful access to hard-to-reach women may be used as a model for future projects aiming to work with this target group
- The success of engaging disadvantaged women in Basic Skills Training and CV writing/ Interview techniques workshops may be incorporated into RKL's organisational practice
- The holistic nature of this ETE Brokerage Programme's empowering practices has successfully re-engaged many women with ETE. Again, this could form the basis of an effective model for future RKL programme practice

- In future project proposals RKL may reflect their learning throughout the project delivery phase by ensuring any future projects of this type of work with smaller numbers of women, thus ensuring a truly holistic and intensive support package
- A review of the appropriateness of systems of paperwork may ensure that initial ETE Brokerage meetings prove empowering and less time-consuming
- As an organisation, RKL must ensure that the learning from this women-only service is mainstreamed throughout the organisation

Executive Summary	2
-------------------	---

CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

1.0	Background to Women into Work: Moving On	9
1.1	Start up Issues and Problems	11

CHAPTER 2 -THE EVALUATION

2.0	The Evaluation Structure	13
2.1	Overall Aim of the Internal Evaluation	13
2.2	Objectives of the Internal Evaluation	13
2.3	Type of Evaluation	14
2.4	Evaluation Questions	14
2.5	Empowering Evaluation Strategies	16
2.6	Methodology	16
2.7	Fieldwork Conducted	17

CHAPTER 3 -THE PROJECT

3.0	Project Information/Details	18
3.1	Rationale	18
3.2	Objectives	19
3.3	Partners	19
3.4	Management/Project Structure	19
3.5	Target Group	20

CHAPTER 4 -TARGETS AND OUTPUTS

4.0	Contract Targets	23
-----	------------------	----

CHAPTER 5 - DECONSTRUCTING THE PROJCT PROCESS

5.0	Tender document amendments	24
5.1	Mapping Project Activity	26
5.2	Recruitment	28

5.3	Engagement	33
5.4	Barriers to engagement	38
5.5	Equal Principles	40
5.6	Empowerment	40
5.7	Innovation	45
5.8	Mainstreaming and dissemination	46
5.9	Brief Discussion of Other Equal Principles	47

CHAPTER 6 -CONCLUSION

6.0	Summary of results	48
6.1	Key strengths	48
6.2	Difficulties or barriers	49
6.3	Items to consider for future projects	49

APPENDICIES

Appendix A: Work plan results	51
-------------------------------	----

CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background and Introduction to Women into Work: Moving On

In 2001, SOVA and partners¹ came together to secure funding from the European Social Fund EQUAL programme for the Development Partnership (DP) called Women Into Work. In EQUAL Round 1 the partnership was commissioned to work towards combating discrimination and inequality experienced by women facing disadvantage, particularly as a result of their contact with the Criminal Justice System. The ultimate goal of the programme, lasting until November 2005, was to ensure that these women could work towards gaining access to and sustaining appropriate employment, training or education. In order to achieve this goal an extensive peer research project was undertaken² in order to identify the support needs of disadvantaged women and based on the findings, five Pilot Projects were commissioned³ in order to achieve this goal.

Members of the this Development Partnership, along with a number of new partners⁴ used the research and piloting work carried out during EQUAL Round 1 to identify further innovative approaches for development and testing under EQUAL Round 2. It was proposed that these approaches would continue to increase the employability and empowerment of women disadvantaged in the labour market in line with the work started by the Women into Work programme during Round 1.

¹ Addaction, CAST (Creative and Supportive Trust), Department for Education and Skills (Offender Learning and Skills Unit), Home Office (Women's Policy Team), Job Centre Plus, London Probation Area, NACRO, National Probation Directorate, Prince's Trust, Prison Service, Sheffield Hallam University, Stonham Housing Association

² O'Keeffe, C. (2003) *Moving Mountains: Identifying and Addressing Barriers to Employment, Training and Education from the Voices of Women (Ex)Offenders*. SHU Press.

³ 'The Network Club' - Creative and Supportive Trust
Creative Business Pilot - London College of Communications and HMP East Sutton Park
'Going Straight to Work' - NACRO
'Norfolk Women into Employment and Training' - Women's Employment Training and Enterprise Unit
'Peer Mentoring Support and Resettlement Pilot' - SOVA

⁴ Business In Prisons, CAST, Incredit Ltd, NACRO, NOMS, Positively Women, Prison Service, Red Kite Learning, Sheffield Hallam University, Southside Partnership, SOVA, Stonham Housing, Tribal Education (Cambridge Training and Development Ltd), West Yorkshire Family Mediation Service.

Thus in June 2004, SOVA on behalf of the Women Into Work (WiW) Development Partnership bid for and subsequently secured additional monies from EQUAL Round 2 in order to build on the successes of the partnership work already achieved and to expand activities with new partners. The new Development Partnership was called Women into Work: Moving On and fell under the remit of Theme A of the EQUAL funding stream - 'Barriers to Employment'.

The key objective of Women into Work: Moving On was to pilot innovative and holistic support packages to enable disadvantaged women to move from disempowerment to empowerment in the labour market. The target group included women:

- in contact with the CJS/on resettlement from prison
- involved in the sex industry
- experiencing homelessness
- with health issues
- subject to domestic violence or abuse
- from ethnic minority groups.

EQUAL programmes are organised and funded in three separate phases:

- Action1 - the set-up phase
- Action 2 - the delivery phase, during which joint or complementary initiatives or activities are developed in the UK and in Europe
- Action 3 - mainstreaming policies and disseminating successful initiatives.

Additionally, EQUAL programmes have five leading principles which are incorporated throughout Actions 1,2 and 3. These are:

- Innovation
- Empowerment
- Equal Opportunities
- Transnational Co-operation
- Dissemination and Mainstreaming

Action One of the programme has been evaluated elsewhere. During Action Two proposals for innovative Pilot Projects were sought through the tendering and commissioning process through which new delivery models could promote access to the labour market for groups of women who are traditionally excluded or discriminated against. As a result of the due tendering and commissioning process seven Pilot Projects were set up under Women Into Work: Moving On.

This reports provides an evaluation of one of these Pilot Projects – ‘Designs from Inside’.

1.1 Start up Issues and Problems

It is important to note that during the first phase of the evaluation of Action 2 there have been some major changes to the Moving On Programme. These changes have obviously had implications for progress with the programme. The background for these changes is described below.

During Action 1 of Women into Work: Moving On the partnership sought clarification from ECOTEC (the GB Equal Support Unit) that the large proportion of match funding in kind committed by one partner was eligible. This was agreed in principle, and the Development Partnership Agreement (DPA) was approved, but SOVA, the lead DP organisation, still felt uncertain about the extent to which some of the proposed match activity fit with the DPA objectives and within the work plan. At the start of Action 2, in conjunction with the main match funding partner, SOVA reviewed and restructured the planned match activity, eliminating that which was not suitable. This was a lengthy exercise and resulted in a reduction in the overall budget of the DPA, with attempts to source other match funding being unsuccessful. A Significant Change was submitted to the DWP via ECOTEC and a revised DPA was approved. Some of the key impacts have included the disbandment of the Beneficiary Support Forum in its original framework along with a reduction in the overall size and scope of the programme. For example, not all partners were providing their own match funding and so some could not be allocated Equal ESF funding as originally intended. These changes

inevitably had a negative impact on some members and delayed the start-up of some pilot projects service delivery.

CHAPTER 2 -THE EVALUATION

2.0 The Evaluation Structure

Two evaluations in relation to Women into Work: Moving On were commissioned, the External Evaluation and the Internal Evaluation. The External Evaluation (conducted by the Centre for Public Policy at Northumbria University) was designed to examine the *overall effectiveness* of the WIW:MO Development Partnership (DP) and whether the partnership achieved its *strategic objectives*. The Internal Evaluation (as detailed in this report) was designed to examine the *specific achievements* of Pilot Projects and whether they have achieved their *performance objectives*. The performance objectives, which here are taken to mean bidding and clarification documents included in this report as an activity work plan which contains the extent to which this project has met its contract schedule obligations (see Appendix A). So, in summary, the External Evaluation was concerned with the '*overarching strategic goals*' of the WIW:MO Development Partnership whereas the Internal Evaluation was concerned with the '*nuts and bolts*' of Pilot Project activity.

2.1 Overall Aim of the Internal Evaluation

- To provide a rigorous and 'user friendly' assessment of the extent to which Women into Work: Moving On projects have met their objectives (incorporating the Equal principles of innovation and empowerment)⁵

2.2 Objectives of the Internal Evaluation

- To provide information on the progress made towards objectives as outlined in Service Specific Contract Schedules
- To identify what worked well and what did not work so well (in terms of both what was done (outputs) and how it was done (processes))

⁵ The other EQUAL principles of equal opportunities, transnational co-operation and dissemination and mainstreaming are explored in the External Evaluation being conducted by Northumbria University

- To provide information on the extent to which Pilot Projects have met the needs of the target group
- To recommend improvements to working practices with disadvantaged women and outline models of good practice thus assisting with mainstreaming and dissemination.

In addition to the above a key objective of the evaluation was to respond to the specific questions around holistic working which were outlined in the evaluation specification.

2.3 Type of Evaluation

The evaluation incorporated both formative⁶ and summative⁷ elements. The formative element employed mainly qualitative methods and involved a process evaluation which allowed for an understanding of the critical factors and mechanisms that shaped the delivery and outcomes of the Women Into Work: Moving On Pilot Projects. The process evaluation was valuable in helping to understand what worked, for whom and why.

The summative element employed mainly quantitative methods in order to assess the outcomes of projects. This part of the evaluation is concerned with the projects overall effectiveness.

The evaluation was conducted in consultation and co-operation with the Women into Work: Moving On DP. In particular, the WIW:MO DP were responsible for monitoring beneficiary information.

2.4 Evaluation Questions

The formative element of the evaluation focussed upon the following questions:

⁶ A type of process evaluation for the purpose of new programmes or services that focuses on collecting data on programme operations

⁷ A type of outcome evaluation that assesses the results or outcomes of a program. This type of evaluation is concerned with a program's overall effectiveness

- What have been the main successes of Pilot Projects?
- What have been the main problems encountered by Pilot Projects? What steps have been taken to address such problems?
- What are the organisational processes which have supported/hindered achievement of Pilot Project objectives?
- To what extent have worked in partnership with already established services? To what extent/how is partnership working kept high on the agenda – what level/type of dialogue is achieved?
- To what extent were beneficiaries able to contribute to the design of the work programmes and products? To what extent has a sense of ownership of projects been achieved among beneficiaries?
- In what ways have Pilot Projects benefited the target group?
- In what ways has women's quality of life improved as a result of involvement in Pilot Projects?

In addition the following questions were addressed, specifically around holistic working practices:

- How did projects define/understand the term 'holistic approach'?
- To what extent was an holistic approach to the needs of disadvantaged women adopted by Pilot Projects?
- What factors need to be in place to facilitate a truly holistic approach (i.e. appropriate referral systems, shared agendas, building effective partnership building, peer approaches)
- To what extent does an holistic approach increase employability?

The summative element of the evaluation focussed upon the following questions:

- What are the primary activities which the projects have been engaged in?

- Have the projects met their targets of beneficiaries engaged? Did the Pilot Projects attract a range of beneficiaries?
- How many women have entered Education /Training/Employment as a result of their involvement in the Pilot Project?
- What level of 'drop out' have the Pilot Projects encountered?

2.5 Empowering Evaluation Strategies

In line with the ethos of all EQUAL work Evaluation staff conducted an evaluation which was as empowering for participants as possible and aimed at improving practice and fostering self determination of participants. In adopting this approach to evaluating strategies, it was possible to empower individual beneficiaries to self identify and assess the quality of their own experience of the project. In line with the ethos of the EQUAL programme, this evaluation recognises the value of 'soft outcomes' (i.e. increases in beneficiaries self confidence, self esteem, motivation etc) as well as 'hard outcomes' (i.e. achieving qualifications and getting into work).

2.6 Methodology

As previously mentioned, the evaluation included both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. These included the following:-

- Analysis of project documentation including:
 - Minutes/Notes of meetings
 - Terms of Reference
 - Recruitment/publicity material
 - Training materials
 - Documents/diagrams relating to project structure
 - Reports relating to issues/progress so far
 - Any other documents which reflect work conducted

The following information sources were also used:

- Pilot Project progress reports
- Analysis of beneficiary records
- Observation of Pilot Project activities

- Analysis of data collected from Registration, Destination and Soft Outcomes forms
- *[Others where appropriate]*

2.7 Fieldwork Conducted

In addition, in depth semi structured interviews with key stakeholders were conducted, as detailed below:

Project Role	No. of Interviews	Timepoint
Project Manager	2	May 2006, September 2006, March 2007
Basic Skills Tutor	1	March 2007
Employment Training and Education Advisors	4	May 2006, September 2006, March 2007
Beneficiaries	15	May 2006, September 2006, March 2007

CHAPTER 3 - THE PROJECT

3.0 Project Information/Details

Project Title: Education Training and Employment Brokerage Service
(ETE Brokerage Service)

Timescales: January 2006 to May 2007 (contract extension to June 2007)

Location: London

Funds allocated to Project: £181,359 (ESF cash allocation £135,089)

Red Kite Learning is a social enterprise organisation that believes in equipping people with the knowledge and skills to fulfil their potential. Red Kite Learning took the opportunity of this Equal funding to extend their existing provision and tailor it specifically at disadvantaged and hard to reach women by designing an outreach programme offering:

1. Information, advice and guidance around employment, training and education
2. Skills for Life training leading to accredited NQV qualifications in literacy and numeracy
3. Job brokerage services

3.1 Rationale

The aim of this Red Kite Learning pilot project was to provide employment, training and education (ETE) brokerage support and access to vulnerable and disadvantaged women. The support was designed to take the form of web based resources including a web site with interactive employment and training resources utilising interactive and user involvement resources.

3.2 Objectives

The objectives of the Red Kite Learning ETE Brokerage Service were as follows:

- To provide integrated 'female orientated' support in seeking employment including support with application forms, CV writing, interview techniques and job retention skills
- To improve the employability of women using Red Kite Learning's services
- To increase the self-confidence of women accessing support from Red Kite Learning
- To empower women to use ICT to improve their employability skills
- To create links and partnerships with other ETE providers
- To involve women in service provision of ETE- identified through individual support plans

3.3 Partners

In the original tender documentation this Red Kite Learning Project was partnered with Stonham who were to host and provide premises for Red Kite Learning to deliver ETE brokerage from. However, due to the restructuring of Stonham as an organisation during the life time of this pilot project, Red Kite learning turned to other local organisations to provide the outreach premises they required. These issues are covered in more detail in Chapter four.

3.4 Management/Project Structure

The structure put in place to deliver the project aims is as follows:

Project Manager

2 Employment Training and Education Advisors

Skills for Life Tutor

3.5 Target Group

The Red Kite Learning Pilot project aimed to target a wide range of vulnerable and disadvantaged women using Red Kite Learning services in London.

CHAPTER 4 -TARGETS AND OUTPUTS

4.0 Contract Targets

Targets	Contract targets	Target to date
Number of beneficiaries	180	150
Full time employed	10	7
Part time employed	16	1
Self employed	3	0
Voluntary Work	24	10
Further education, training	49	28
Government programmes. E.g. New Deal	3	2
Unemployment	50	14
Other (Please state) - Co-operatives	15	0
Not Known	10	9
Sub Total	180	71

Qualification Level		
Qualification below NVQ 1 (or equivalent)	10	4
NVQ 1 or equivalent	15	6
NVQ 2 or equivalent	0	1
NVQ 3 or equivalent	0	2
NVQ 4 or equivalent	0	0
NVQ 5 or equivalent	0	0
BTEC National Award	0	0
Other qualifications	155	2
Business Start Up Level	0	0
None	0	0
Sub Total	180	15

Output		
New/improved promotional methodologies (individuals and employers)	0	0

New empowerment/capacity building methodologies (individuals & employers)	0	0
New equal opportunity or positive action measures (individuals & employers)	0	0
New information and guidance services	1	0
New learning/training/materials and or toolkits	1	0
New learning/training programmes and curricula	0	0
New qualifications	0	0
New databases	0	0
New IT/ICT/multimedia	0	0
New networks created	0	0
New studies/policy/research reports	0	0
New business start ups	0	0
New business support materials/approaches	0	0
New approaches to work/life balance	0	0
Other (please state)	0	0
Sub Total	2	0

Transnational Activity		
On-line Communication	0	0
UK Sub group member	1	1
European Sub group member	0	0
Delivery of training/consultancy	0	0
Receiving training/consultancy	0	0
Worker exchange	0	0
Delivery of seminars/workshops	0	0
Sub Total	1	1

Jobs created	3	3
---------------------	----------	----------

<i>Jobs protected</i>	0	0
<i>Sub Total</i>	3	3

In the next chapter there also follows more detailed information on successes and also barriers to achievement which arose from in depth interviews with project staff. This data proved vital in understanding process issues and outlines the critical factors and mechanisms that shaped the delivery and outcomes of the Women into Work: Moving On Pilot Projects. The qualitative data collected and presented also provides evidence on the extent to which the themes were incorporated.

CHAPTER 4 - DECONSTRUCTING THE PROJCT PROCESS

This section draws upon a thematic framework analysis of interview data in order to explore further the process of project delivery, successes encountered, barriers and how these have been/have not been overcome. This analysis provides:

- a comprehensive mapping of issues uppermost in the minds of stakeholders as the project progressed
- evidence of good practice in the work of the programme and identification of where improvements could be made to encourage reflection on and re-conceptualisation of current thinking and practice

The issues identified are not grounded in arbitrary external judgments but are firmly grounded in the data collected during the course of the evaluation. Verbatim quotes are presented where relevant and appropriate.

4.0 Tender document amendments

The original tender document submitted for the ETE Brokerage Service underwent some significant changes for the reasons outlined above, changes which are overviewed briefly in this section of the report.

In the original tender documentation, the ETE Service was designed to empower women to improve their lives through the use of ICT. This objective was closely aligned with a further objective of helping women who have had contact with the Criminal Justice System to manage their own resettlement through the use of interactive services. This was to include the creation of interactive employment and training materials, an objective that was cut-down during project re-design discussions. However, the ETE Brokerage staff felt that this idea still underpinned the way they worked with the women receiving the service:

'Well that objective has survived to the extent that we do a lot of work on the computers with the women' (ETE Brokerage Advisor).

The ETE Advisory staff also reflect these original ideas by ensuring that any woman wanting to extend her skills on the computer are directed towards and appropriate course.

The objective of supporting women to feel confident in disclosing offences has remained and this is fulfilled as ETE Brokerage Advisors are reported to have supported women with the writing of disclosure letters with women and have 'sent them to workshops on it so they understand the law and to help women understand their rights and responsibilities' (ETE Brokerage Service Basic Skills Tutor).

A section in the original documentation outlining how the project intended to change employer's attitudes towards employing marginalised women was also dropped from the revised documents, but the Programme Manager felt that this objective was certainly being fulfilled by RKL organisationally:

'As an organisation RKL are continually pursuing that aim, none of the learning from this project will be lost-it will be mainstreamed vertically within the organisation' (ETE Brokerage Service Project Manager).

The objective of supporting women into employment or work placements through one to one or group support and provision of information support was also dropped in later documentation; however ETE Advisory staff felt this may have proven inappropriate for their target group in reality:

'Most of the women we see don't want to go on a work placement, most women want to find a job or they want to access training....I think it's rare that I would meet a woman who will want to go into volunteering or a work placement' (ETE Brokerage Service Advisor).

The objective of producing a reference pack on interview skills and CV writing remains unclear as RKL staff professed that although dropped in the later

documentation, as an organisation this task may be fulfilled, if deemed appropriate:

'We don't know yet if that would be appropriate. If someone needs help with their CV and they're coming to an organisation for it.....they need help from a person rather than from a reference pack' (ETE Brokerage Service Advisor).

The Project Manager of the Service however feels that despite the start up issues outlined, the ETE Brokerage Service has forged many success:

'There have been delays, but we are really pleased because we've done some really good stuff around the skills for life training and accredited qualifications around numeracy and literacy so that's really good' (ETE Brokerage Service Project Manager).

As can be seen from the sections above, significant changes occurred between pilot project design and project delivery. The rest of this section will outline the activities undertaken by the ETE Brokerage Service and highlight both the key barriers and key strengths of this service provision.

5.1 Mapping Project Activity

As an organisation, Red Kite Learning are committed to assisting their target group to overcome barriers to accessing Education, training and employment. Red Kite Learning specialise in working with people who have been involved in the Criminal Justice System and provide their services in Probation Offices all over London. They are therefore well placed to provide the brokerage services outlined in the tender documentation. However, it is felt by RKL staff that the ESF funding enabled them to provide a more specific and innovative service in two significant ways:

'This ESF project is a little bit different to what other people are doing as part of Red Kite, because we're not restricted to Probation Offices which is quite liberating' (ETE Brokerage Service Advisor).

'We wanted to direct these funds to the women which were the most hard to reach. This is what the European money is here for and we're very keen that it gets used to actually tackle something real rather than just be given to the same people over and over again' (ETE Brokerage Service Advisor).

In the original tender documentation, Stonham had committed to providing both premises and referrals to the RKL outreach service. However, due to organisational restructuring, Stonham were unable to provide these services.

'It's going to take a bit of time and Stonham are not going to make up the bulk of our referrals now anyway- it's too late in the day. That's how I see it. Because also they're not really central London, quite a few of their resources are on the fringes anyway. So we had to act straight away' (ETE Brokerage Service Advisor).

RKL staff responded quickly to this potential setback and began to examine the potential of partnerships with more localised organisations.

'It always happens differently on the ground to how it appears on a piece of paper – and also for the people actually delivering the work.....it's a bit more real' (ETE Brokerage Service Advisor).

The subsequent partnerships RKL formed are discussed in more detailed in a later section.

The ETE Brokerage Service staff also underwent a series of staff change over's during the initial period of funding. The original Programme Manager went on Maternity Leave in January 2007, her replacement stayed with the Project for a short time. A further Programme Manager was recruited, however she too did not remain in post for any extended period and it was only on the return from maternity leave of the original Project Manager that the project management had any period of continuity. The original ETE Brokerage Service Advisor stayed with the project for only the first 3 months. However a new

Advisor was recruited and retained for the life time of the project. The number of Advisors on the ETE Service was increased to 2 in February 2007.

The ETE Brokerage staff team have successfully minimised the potential disruption to the service through the swift recruitment of motivated and enthusiastic staff that moved quickly to ensure the successful continuation of this outreach service. The original Project Manager had some initial contacts built up in terms of organisational premises where outreach work could be provided from, which the ETE Advisor then followed up:

'I came into post middle of February. My first month was a lot of planning, planning outreach locations, trying to establish what the best locations would be' (ETE Brokerage Service Advisor).

5.2 Recruitment

Having secured partnerships with local voluntary and statutory organisations, the ETE Service has built up an outreach programme which delivers ETE advice and guidance within existing project delivery locations, with organisations like the YMCA. This has ensured that the project has met its original objectives of accessing hard-to-reach women. As a result of the hard work of committed staff members, the ETE Service is currently provided at regular slots in the following outreach locations:

Red Kite Learning Waterloo Road Office, S. London
Kalayaan, Justice for Migrant Domestic Workers Premises
YMCA Hostel, Lamberth
Camden Women's Bail Hostel, Camden

Camden Women's Community Order Programme Premises, Camden

The Red Kite Learning offices in Waterloo Street are used for women who are referred from other projects, but find Waterloo Street easier to access. Many women also use this office within office hours to access the computer and internet suite located there.

The Kalayaan: Justice for Migrant Domestic Workers Premises are used to provide the service to women already attending the project and have forged good relations with this voluntary organisation.

The ETE Service has built on the existing excellent relations RKL have with Local Probation Services, however as the Service is specifically for women, the team have found that their referrals have started to come from Probation Offices all over London:

'I'm up in Camden two days a week working with the Camden Women's Resource Centre....it's a probation thing. In probation if someone's on licence or on an order they go on a certain amount of courses as part of that so a lot of the people involved in the criminal justice service are men and a lot of the courses aren't necessarily appropriate for women, they find that women don't have as good an outcome from courses if they're in with men...so this is the only place in London where the courses are run specifically for women....so women from probations all over London get referred there' (ETE Brokerage Service Advisor).

The ETE Service is also provided to an accommodation-based service the Probation service provides in Camden, which has sourced a more static set of referrals:

'Another is the women's probation hostel which is also in Camden, so again, doing the advice and guidance there. I'm based at the YMCA in Stockwell one day a week at the moment too' (ETE Brokerage Service Advisor).

At the YMCA in Lamberth, the ETE Brokerage Advisor visits women who live at the hostel, although some women attend these sessions who do not reside at the hostel, but find the location easier to access than the RKL Waterloo Road office. Further, often, where premises are provided for the ETE Brokerage Service, the organisation often allows RKL to deliver their service to women, other than the local organisation's service user group:

'We established with the YMCA manager that it would be ok to use the premises here and the priority was YMCA residents, but they very kindly agreed that we could have people from outside' (ETE Brokerage Service Basic Skills Tutor).

The ETE Brokerage service also has wider links with other organisations that may not be able to provide premises, but do encourage ETE Advisors to advertise their service at their centres. It was reported that each organisation had its own way of doing things, as:

'Each centre is different, so some-we only teach people that are on their books so I don't recruit my own students. But other places, I tend to have people staying quite a long time and I've had people here for months on end. But quite often they come and go quite quickly because things will pull them away, like family issues, and then they will come back and they can still carry on' (ETE Brokerage Service Basic Skills Tutor).

The service also has forged wider links with organisations working with very hard to hard-to-reach groups of women:

'I've made links with Hackney Open Doors which provide a drop in session for women with drug, alcohol problems who have a history

of sex work' (ETE Brokerage Service Advisor).

'I've made links also with women that have been sex trafficked from various countries that's called the Poppy Project and that service is pan London' (ETE Brokerage Service Advisor).

'We also get referrals from links I have with Broadway Housing who have a hostel in West London, they get sent to the Waterloo Road Office. We have referrals from Northcote house, which is a hostel literally next door to the Waterloo Road Office. They work with young girls that just live there on a temporary basis until they're moved into their own accommodation and I get quite a lot of referrals from there' (ETE Brokerage Service Advisor).

Additionally, as the service has bedded-in it is becoming apparent that the service is being promoted by-word-of-mouth by the women who have accessed the service and have also recommended it friends and family:

'We get referrals from friends and family, you know sisters and mothers of women I have already seen' (ETE Brokerage Service Advisor).

The project planning stages of this ETE Brokerage Service was specifically focussed on accessing hard-to-reach women, the staff saw their advertising and service promotion plans as reflecting these objectives by:

'Targeting the right organisations, I'm pretty involved with women's issues, which is why I took this job....its my passion. So I don't find it difficult to reach those women' (ETE Brokerage Service Advisor).

Once the local organisations had been consulted and had agreed to host or in some cases refer women to the ETE Brokerage Service, the ETE Advisors set about advertising the outreach service:

'I prepared posters, leaflets things like that. And then it was just a case of going out to organisations who we thought would benefit from it and making contact with them and seeing what was feasible in terms of delivering this project...whether the women would be able to travel to a location or whether it would be better for me to go to them' (ETE Brokerage Service Advisor).

These advertising and promotional choices worked well as women reported hearing about the service from a variety of sources:

'I got to know about Red Kite learning from my husband who saw a poster at the Job Centre' (Beneficiary).

'I got referred from victim support' (Beneficiary).

'Probation referred me' (Beneficiary).

'It was advertised here at the Women's Centre and I wanted to make a CV' (Beneficiary).

'I read a leaflet and I read it and I was so happy because they help you do applications to get a job' (Beneficiary).

'I heard about it through probation, I was on a course for people with offending behaviour relating to drugs or alcohol we were talking about it in class one day and they said perhaps you'd like to speak to someone from Red Kite so I did' (Beneficiary).

'I just waited until after we'd had our session at the Centre and had a chat with her and made an appointment and I've been flying with her ever since' (Beneficiary).

It is clear that the hard work and enthusiasm of the ETE Brokerage staff team has set up a range of beneficial links with local organisations who have access to these hard-to-reach target group. Indeed, it is these types of organisational

relationships that will be utilised and exploited for the betterment of this target group well beyond the life time of the ETE Brokerage Advice Service.

5. 3 Engagement

The ETE Brokerage Service Project employs a full time Basic Skills tutor, who works 'four days in outreach actually at centres teaching people and one day a week at the Red Kite offices at Waterloo Street' (ETE Brokerage Service Basic Skills Tutor). The Basic Skills tutor sees her role as following on from the ETE Advisor's role:

'The Employment Training and Education Advisor will be interviewing students and assessing their needs. My work will all depend on who the students are and what their needs are' (ETE Brokerage Service Basic Skills Tutor).

The ETE Brokerage Service Advisors also reflected their integrated and joined-up approach to the Skills to Life Training:

'We look at previous skills and experience how their literacy and numeracy is and how confident they feel about it. We go onto an agreed action plan together so we have a long term goal which could be to: learn computers or whatever and then we have three small goals very short term manageable goals they can achieve in a short space of time so we give a goal and an action date and then as soon as they've achieved it we sign it off and go onto the next one' (ETE Brokerage Service Advisor).

The holistic approach taken by the ETE Brokerage however, is described as liberating the Basic Skills tutor to be more involved in the service delivery process.

'There's a lot of scope in the job description. Normally when you're teaching-you don't have much to do with the next bit, like when people are getting jobs. Having that follow up and to be involved

with the whole process is great. A lot can be lost through these entities being wholly separate. I really like a holistic approach' (ETE Brokerage Service Basic Skills Tutor).

'The classroom does sometimes become a kind of therapy, you start chatting about things' (ETE Brokerage Service Basic Skills Tutor).

The Skills for Life tutor delivers training from the Basic Skills Agency. It is a basic package of united learning that can be covered over a variety of time periods. However, the Tutor was quite clear about the flexible and adaptive nature of the training she provides:

'There is a definite syllabus and there are materials provided, however these are just suggestions as to what might be used. These materials are free of charge but they are in some ways a little bit limited, so I try to pad that out. What I try to do it to fit it to their exact needs, especially with maths for instance you know fractions inside out but you can't do percentages, you know when you teach a huge group some might have to do fractions again, but with these guys if they're fine with something I don't waste time we go and do something else' (ETE Brokerage Service Basic Skills Tutor).

In this way, the tutor describes the Skills for Life training as 'a framework to adapt to the needs of each individual. They take the exam as soon as they are ready to take it, it's a very relaxed atmosphere' (ETE Brokerage Service Basic Skills Tutor).

The Skills for Life training provided by the ETE Brokerage Service, on successful completion is rewarded with an Entry Level Certificate from the Basic Skills Agency. It was reported that this was often treated as an incentive to many women attending the training:

'Some of the people I teach whether they are the migrant workers you know they've never been to school in their lives not even in their own country so its just extraordinary so it's a really good thing for

them' (ETE Brokerage Service Basic Skills Tutor).

The ETE Brokerage Service, having secured host premises, seeks to recruit disadvantaged women with whom the Brokerage Service Advisor can work intensively with, with the view to aiding their access to employment. However, as the following quotes illustrate, the Project's objective of providing a holistic support service, often involves supporting women with other issues, besides directly employment related ones:

'We all try and do the most that we can, but it's not cut and dried about employment, it can be helping someone get formal identification or helping someone to look through a hostel directory to get a home or it's about childcare. It's about all of those things' (ETE Brokerage Service Advisor).

'A lot of women come to me with things about possibly wanting to get hold of things, like a national insurance number. So we'll do the application for that. Also helping them by showing them how to use the bidding system on council properties is really important' (ETE Brokerage Service Advisor).

The ETE Brokerage Advisor makes an appointment time with new recruits to the service and they fill out an Individual Support Plan together (See Appendix?). However, these meetings are according to the ETE Brokerage Advisor, often more about ascertaining where the women are 'coming from' in terms of their life histories:

'When I meet someone for the first time we'll sit down and to advise or guide someone in the right direction you need to know a bit about 'their' story. There's no point in getting somebody into a training course getting them a job if completely doesn't suite their lifestyle its got to be appropriate to the individual' (ETE Brokerage Service Advisor).

Once the appropriate needs of the individual women are identified, the ETE Brokerage Advisors described their subsequent role as:

'It's my job is to break down any barriers or obstacles they meet' (ETE Brokerage Service Advisor).

'For me it means building up a relationship with someone where you have trust and you have a rapport with them so that they feel comfortable enough with you to tell you about all of the surrounding needs other than this one which they've been signposted here for, because there will be other support needs and then for me it's being able to...for me it would involve counselling and dealing with whatever issues' (ETE Brokerage Service Advisor).

However, ETE Advisors were keen to ensure they supported women to make their own decisions and not 'do everything for them':

'This support is there until they're ready to, you know fly the nest sort of, and there's no pushing it, they need to be strong enough to do things by themselves eventually' (ETE Brokerage Service Advisor).

A further element of this ETE Brokerage Service is that the Project has a budget or 'pot' from which it can draw down funding for individual women to support their efforts financially.

'Basically what we try to do with our programmes is to make sure there is an amount for beneficiary costs. Like having a BT line put in, we've funded driving lessons, but we have to justify that in each case. So the 'pot' is used flexibly, its judged on one-by-one basis and its about managing expectations and remaining fair in terms of their end objectives, but remaining flexible' (ETE Brokerage Service Project Manager).

This grant 'pot' was most frequently used to pay for transportation and

childcare costs for attending their meetings with the ETE Brokerage Advisor and attending job interviews and often-training courses or college. However, the uses to which this budget has been put are as varied and individual as the women's needs entering the service:

'One lady needed to be able to drive as part of getting the job she wanted, so we provided support and training for the Theory test and helped her pay for it too' (ETE Brokerage Service Advisor).

Initial meetings with clients have often involved these women's first experience of IT:

'So first of all I'll set up an e-mail account for the women from day one and show them how easy it is and I'll e-mail them their first email and we'll have a little banter together on e-mail and then we'll apply for jobs in the same way' (ETE Brokerage Service Advisor).

Many of the women accessing the ETE Service spoke of their initial terror and subsequent delight at being introduced to IT (see later section). The ETE Advisors reported the essential nature of these experiences for women wanting to access employment:

'While doing this job I've realise that IT skills are so essential for these women. IT skills are essential when looking for jobs, employers do not want you phoning and writing letter-they do it all on e-mail' (ETE Brokerage Service Advisor).

The ETE Brokerage Service team have made excellent efforts to ensure that the individual women are involved in the ETE Brokerage service provision. This begins as the ETE Advisors and the individual women fill in their Learning Support Plans together.

'The women come in and they have a need and come to have that specific need met and that's where I come in' (ETE Brokerage Service Advisor).

Here, the staff team demonstrate their commitment to their Service being as holistic as possible:

'We're dealing with people here, they don't just have one aim when they come and see me, the barriers that they face could be lack of confidence, they could be practical like a lack of money...so you cannot help but deal with all of those issues because it's all part of the same thing' (ETE Brokerage Service Advisor).

5.4 Barriers to Engagement

It was felt by some staff members working on the ETE Brokerage Service that the agreed project targets had turned out to be a significant barrier to the holistic-style working practices they had hoped to deliver through the project:

'We have to make sure we have new women coming in every month, about 10 to 12 women per month so we have to ensure we have our referral sources so we have to be out and about' (ETE Brokerage Service Advisor).

Some ETE Advisors felt that, given lower target numbers they could have worked more closely, over a longer period of time with these women and made a longer term difference to their lives:

'If the target was less for this project...it's 100 women which is... ridiculous, it's absurd. It's sad because if it was that little bit less there would be a lot more quality of service and I'd be freed up a lot more to provide that. For example, for the clients that I am working with....most of them have been involved in the criminal justice system...a lot of them are long term unemployed. In fact loads of them have never had a job and they're in their forties- you cannot deliver a service which is going to benefit those women in two months...you can't. In fact you're almost like getting their hopes up to leave them in the lurch' (ETE Brokerage Service Advisor).

Project workers also felt that the associated paperwork they had to complete with each beneficiary often put the women off accessing the service. The complicated paperwork also put pressure on what was often the first session with the beneficiary.

'This has to be filled in 3 times with each person that we see. Each person will probably be in the project for about 2 months. So it's not about the workload for me it's about the appropriateness' (ETE Brokerage Advisor).

'How can you ask someone who doesn't speak English to fill this out? SOVA recommend that you use a full session to fill this out. If someone is coming to you to try and find a job they do not want to spend an hour filling this out....I am embarrassed frankly to give this to them' (ETE Brokerage Service Advisor).

The often infrequent attendance at sessions with the ETE Advisor, which can often be a result of the target group's often chaotic lives also proved difficult for Advisors to keep up with the demands of the paperwork:

'Every time I see a woman they want me to fill out this form with a beneficiary number, put down how many hours I've done with them and have their signature at the end of every month, but they might have gone by then....which means I can't claim for them. Then I need to do the sheet again, I have to get a new set of signatures...it's a nightmare. I'm talking to SOVA about what to do about that because to just submit our own documents would be so much easier' (ETE Brokerage Service Advisor).

Despite the ETE Brokerage staff's best efforts, keeping up with essential paperwork has often proved difficult. These issues raise questions concerning the appropriateness of these systems of data collection in projects where the target group represent some of the most vulnerable and often extremely chaotic life style groups in society.

5.5 Equal Principles

A specific requirement of the Equal projects is the incorporation of the Equal principles into project design and implementation, these principles being:

- empowerment
- innovation
- mainstreaming and dissemination
- partnership working
- trans-national co-operation
- equal opportunities

The two principles most significant for these evaluations are empowerment and innovation. However, this section provides an overview of the activities of the ETE Brokerage Service that fit under all the principles listed above.

5.6 Empowerment

The Equal principle of empowerment was an overall objective of the ETE Brokerage Service which is designed to empower the women they work with. The women accessing the Brokerage Service all reported that their first contact with the service as positive:

'[The Advisor] is a good communicator and she's very friendly. Very welcoming, it's very, very important. That first impression really matters because that will make you want to come back. She's very friendly, she's very good, very clear' (Beneficiary).

Many of the women reported that for them it was wonderful to have someone being interested in listening to them, as women, mothers and workers- often something they'd not had any previous experience of:

'She wanted to know about me and what I could do, then she wanted to know what I wanted to do. Then she came back and gave me loads of information relating to what I'd said- she'd listened!' (Beneficiary).

'I've never had anyone who would sit and discuss these things with me

before' (Beneficiary).

The women reported that they truly appreciated the holistic nature of the Project as they saw, locating secure accommodation for example as a definite step towards accessing employment:

'She is helping with my accommodation- I am still in a bed and breakfast. I'd been in the respite home before that for a month because I'd taken an overdose, so its all been pretty horrid up till now really' (Beneficiary).

'Being involved with this has given purpose to my days its given me things to look forward to in my dark days. Just having [ETE Brokerage Advisor] on hand to phone me and to guide me and just to be there discussing problems or worries that I had, its just been of the utmost importance to me I would not have been able to do it without her' (Beneficiary).

'She's shown me how to bid for properties now over the computer. I've been so worried I'd end up on the street again. She's been there for me giving me guidance and allaying all my fears and giving me options I'd never thought of and I've got somebody who can guide me to someone to discuss if things are not right' (Beneficiary).

All the beneficiaries reported that the financial support from the ETE Project budget had had a significant impact on their choices:

'It costs loads for me to get to job interviews- I just couldn't do it without the travel costs being re-funded- its made the difference between going to job interviews and not quite frankly' (Beneficiary).

'I'm doing a holistic massage course and I needed two bath sheets and four towels. If Red Kite hadn't helped me get them I would have had to leave- I couldn't afford them' (Beneficiary).

'I've had help with money getting to and from college too- there's not an avenue that they haven't helped me with' (Beneficiary).

'They've paid for books for me for the course, they've paid for the exam, enrolment fees, everything basically' (Beneficiary).

Indeed, many beneficiaries reflected that accessing the Service had had a huge impact on what they believed they were capable of:

'She has just made everything an absolute breeze. I couldn't have managed so many things without her help- I didn't have the confidence to go and find things out for myself' (Beneficiary).

'This was something that I wanted to do in my head but actually doing it, you know getting up and doing it and not getting put off by lots of other stuff in your life- having somebody there doing that with you it was just a god-send' (Beneficiary).

'It has been brilliant, it's been an absolute emotional and mental lifesaver and that is the truth and that's not overstating the case by any means' (Beneficiary).

Beneficiaries reported that accessing the ETE Service had both inspired them and helped them to clarify what it was they wanted:

'It's completely changed me for the better in every possible way I sleep better because I've got someone to sit down and speak to about things, so I don't worry so much. I am so focussed now on where I want to go and I've got such a clear idea of the steps I need to take to get there' (Beneficiary).

'It's like having somebody behind you and mentoring you in a sense and it makes you have the confidence to think yes I can get up and do this. I've made a point of learning how to go onto the internet I wouldn't have done that it would have all been just thoughts my

head just running round but not applying myself' (Beneficiary).

'I went in with the intention of trying to get work in a health centre or something like that but now I'm thinking even broader now and thinking of setting up my own business' (Beneficiary).

'I've got a goal that I can move towards' (Beneficiary).

Once beneficiary reported their view that everyone should have access to a similar service:

'I actually feel a bit guilty, I know I shouldn't but I actually feel a bit guilty thinking I'm getting all this help I wish everybody else could have it too' (Beneficiary).

'I'm hoping to work either for myself because my friend has a hairdressers and she's got like an area in her shop that she said well I'd be interested in trying to convert that because it's a large space to set up my own massage room. Or I can find a small premises and go it alone' (Beneficiary).

All the beneficiaries reported the powerfully inclusive effect that accessing basic IT skills had had on their experiences of looking for work. Many of the women reported being very apprehensive about their first experience with a computer:

'I couldn't even work a computer before I came here' (Beneficiary).

'I've never touched a computer honestly and she said she would help me and she made me feel positive she would sit next to me and show me how to do things so she really helped me' (Beneficiary).

'She showed me how to go on the internet and its fantastic and I can find things out and another thing which is the biggest thing for me she sent me an e-mail address' (Beneficiary).

'I was trembling with fear when I first got on the computer, but she explained it to me and sat with me. Now I'm good at it' (Beneficiary).

The women all reported that they felt accessing the computer and internet facilities had made them feel more confident about accessing employment:

'We sent my CV over the computer to a job I want- its brilliant- I didn't know the computer would be so useful' (Beneficiary).

The ETE Brokerage staff reported that they felt accessing IT and internet services being embedded in the programme was very important as it provided the women with the opportunity to 'actually apply for jobs on line which gives them that extra sort of resource and they become equal to other people that are in that market already' (ETE Brokerage Service Advisor). Staff however ensure that women accessing IT resources can do so independent of the service:

'she showed me that in future if I'm not here you can do it like this so its really helpful and I now know how do it myself, on my own' (Beneficiary).

Beneficiaries also reported feeling empowered by accessing the Basic Skills and other training courses made available by RKL:

'I've been to a workshop in interview skills and CV writing. It was very useful it taught me how to present myself at interviews, make eye contact, body language' (Beneficiary).

Other reported that simply knowing the support is there has made them feel more empowered when thinking about employment:

46

'It's just the help and the support that I get all the time to know that someone kind of cares about where you're going or what you're doing or where you want to go so I would say its definitely the support it makes you feel encouraged and confident' (Beneficiary).

'I'm really confident now, I've learnt so much' (Beneficiary).

Many women however felt that even if they did manage to secure full time employment, they would still like to be able to access the ETE service for support:

'Finding employment might not be the end of it, I might still need some support' (Beneficiary).

'My ultimate goal would be to find employment but then still to have her here' (Beneficiary).

5.7 Innovation

ETE Brokerage Services are provided routinely by RKL as an organisation. Innovation is one of Equal's leading principles, however, this service is specifically for women. Project staff reflected their views on the most innovative element of the project:

'The opportunity to really explore that and really focus on women's issues and women only services so that's been great and we've made contact with other agencies we just wouldn't have done otherwise' (ETE Brokerage Service Project Manager).

'I think its our use of volunteers- they've been really involved in attending meetings and being a very active a part of the project being an advocate for project staff' (ETE Brokerage Service Project Manager).

'With the outreach stuff- as an organisation we have already done a lot of that, but the outreach to women is innovative so to do it well and to share goals with other agencies has been really new' (ETE Brokerage Service Project Manager).

The project beneficiaries described the project's most innovative functions by comparing them with other support services they have been involved with:

'You have someone to speak to whenever you need support. You don't get that at the Job Centre' (Beneficiary).

'Since I've been coming here I haven't had to go the Job Centre for help. At the Job Centre you just go in there and search on the computer for jobs, there is no one to speak to one to one. No real assistance' (Beneficiary).

'I don't think the Job Centre really want to know about what I want. So that's a big difference but coming here you know there is someone who will sit down with you and work with you. She asks about you – 'how've you been'. It's all about you, the support is much broader' (Beneficiary).

Overall, it was fed back that the RKL ETE Brokerage Service retained some innovative elements in terms of it being a women centred outreach service that utilises volunteers from their target group wherever possible. Further, this project has enabled RKL to make partnership links with organisations it has previously had no contact with.

5.8 Dissemination and mainstreaming

The future funding of this women's centred ETE service is already being considered by the RKL led staff team.

'We just need more time and more money to be able to continue, it seems like it's just got off to a good start and that's the main thing. I think we would be letting a lot of women down if we stop now. I am in the process of looking into other streams of funding for them to take over'(ETE Brokerage Service Advisor).

'We are seeking to secure funding from elsewhere, we've got to get

something to match up' (ETE Brokerage Service Project Manager).

The ETE service staff reported the impact being involved in service provision had had on them personally and professionally:

'It's made me recognise the extreme barriers that women face' (ETE Brokerage Service Advisor).

All staff reported feeling very strongly that they would continue to ensure that the learning they had received through their contact with women-only-work would not be lost.

5.10 Brief Discussion of Other Principles

This report has highlighted the successes this project has had in terms of the Equal principle of Partnership Working as their links with local agencies are well formed. The ETE Brokerage Service has also been active in the Transnational element of Equal/ SOVA and have transnational meetings in London.

The final Equal principle is Equal Opportunities and this was evidenced by the project in terms of its activities aimed at overcoming barriers and opening doors for women. This principle also relates to the internal employment practices of RKL and their adherence to their corporate Equal Opportunities procedures. No concerns were raised in this regard in the course of this evaluation.

CHAPTER 6 -CONCLUSION

6.0 Summary of Evaluation Findings

This evaluation has shown that the ETE Brokerage Service is a credible provision that offers a holistic employment orientated experience. It has developed excellent partnership links with a variety of relevant local agencies. It has, however, suffered a negative impact from the reduced timescales in Action 2.

The project's success at forming links with other agencies working with disadvantaged women has provided easy access to a pool of potential referrals, however the short time scales in which the service has to work with these women has affected the project's attempts to meet beneficiary targets.

The project has worked to empower women by providing information, offering support and enabling women to overcome a variety of personal and educational experience barriers. The project has taken an empowering approach, has been innovative in terms of its being a women's only service and has been strong in relation to the further Equal principles of transnational work, mainstreaming and dissemination and Equal Opportunities.

5.1 Key Strengths

- In response to the withdrawal of original partner pledged to provide referrals and premises, Red Kite Learning Team quickly developed more localised partnerships to promote and host the service
- Responding to a series of key delivery and management staff changes the ETE Brokerage Service Team managed to minimise any potential disruption
- The team have successfully accessed the core hard-to-reach target group the service was designed to engage through their development of excellent partnerships with local programmes already working with this target group of women
- The beneficiaries of this project reported feeling more confident in their attempts to secure employment and training

- The beneficiaries responded well to the holistic nature of this ETE Brokerage Programme's empowering practices
- ETE Management and delivery staff are committed to ensuring the
- learning from this programme is mainstreamed organisationally within RKL

5.2 Difficulties or Barriers

- Original partnership could not deliver on premises and referrals pledged in original tender document
- Core ETE Brokerage Service Team staff underwent a series of staff changes during the funding period of the project
- Barriers to wholly holistic working practices with the target group were identified as the project having such a large number of women to fulfill their contractual obligations
- Further, some involved with the project felt that the extensive paperwork that had to be filled out, for funders of the project, proved dis-empowering and overtly time-consuming
- The target numbers of women staff had to see in order to fulfil their contractual obligations proved a barrier to providing a truly holistic service

5.3 Items to Consider for Future Projects

The positive outcomes recorded in the main part of this report can be built on and it is hoped the following recommendations will contribute to the continued success of the ETE Brokerage initiative and/or any potential replication:

- The enthusiastic and committed ETE Brokerage staff team must be commended for all their hard work and congratulated for their effective handling of potentially disruptive start-up issues. These staff members experiences could also be used for illustrative purposes when designing any future services
- The excellent local partnerships initiated through this programme need to be maintained, as potentially beneficial relationships for RKL after the funding period

- Further, this project's successful access to hard-to-reach women may be used as a model for future projects aiming to work with this target group
- The success of engaging disadvantaged women in Basic Skills Training and CV writing/ Interview techniques workshops may be incorporated into RKL's organisational practice
- The holistic nature of this ETE Brokerage Programme's empowering practices has successfully re-engaged many women with ETE. Again, this could form the basis of an effective model for future RKL programme practice
- In future project proposals RKL may reflect their learning throughout the project delivery phase by ensuring any future projects of this type of work with smaller numbers of women, thus ensuring a truly holistic and intensive support package
- A review of the appropriateness of systems of paperwork may ensure that initial ETE Brokerage meetings prove empowering and less time-consuming
- As an organisation, RKL must ensure that the learning from this women-only service is mainstreamed throughout the organisation

APPENDIX A Activity Plan results

NB The shaded areas in this table are administrative requirements which do not relate to the Equal themes

Activities	EQUAL Theme	Evidence of Achievements/Barriers to Achievements
Prepare an Implementation plan and submit this to the SOVA Women Into Work Programme Manager or Programme Director		
Recruit staff for the project as identified in the project budget, ensuring they have the necessary skills and experience to undertake their job descriptions to a high standard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Equal Opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Equal project manager in post from August 2006 ○ Project staff in post September 2006
Recruit trainees/beneficiaries to the programme, ensuring eligibility to participate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ empowerment ➤ Equal Opportunities ➤ Partnership working 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the referral route has been established through a variety of local agencies ○ Probation office referral set up
Undertake an initial assessment of need and negotiate an individual plan with each beneficiary, recording all information on the prescribed enrolment form and individual learning plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ empowerment ➤ innovation ➤ Equal Opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Individual learning plans filled in for each beneficiary ○ Information recorded on prescribed forms and kept in Individual Learner files
Undertake a recorded and systematic induction with each beneficiary, which must include Health and Safety, domestic issues, complaints procedure etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ empowerment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ evidence on case files which contain a comprehensive range of induction information, including a complaints policy

Design and agree an individual training agreement for each beneficiary, identifying the learning outcomes to be achieved and how trainer will assess the understanding and progress of beneficiaries against session learning outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ empowerment ➤ innovation ➤ Equal Opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ a range of individual interventions were evident from case files
Design a supervision programme for each beneficiary with the appropriate members of staff to set, monitor and review agreed targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ empowerment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ as above
Devise plans for each training session, identifying the learning outcomes to be achieved and how trainer will assess the understanding and progress of beneficiaries against session learning outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ empowerment ➤ Equal Opportunities ➤ partnership working 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Evidenced in case files
Assess and formally record the progress of individual beneficiaries, seeking and recording the opinion of beneficiaries about their own perception of their progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ empowerment ➤ Equal Opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Evidence in case files of feedback information
Assist and support beneficiaries in attending Development Partnership, sub group meetings and Transnational activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ empowerment ➤ Equal Opportunities ➤ partnership working 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Attendance at transnational meetings
Attain feedback from beneficiaries on a regular basis: immediately after assessment and ILP development, whilst attending the project and as the beneficiary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ empowerment ➤ Equal Opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ See above

leaves the project (if possible)		
Ensure beneficiaries sign and date attendance sheet each time they meet with a staff member or undertake training, showing the time they attended, why they attended. A staff signature is also required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ empowerment ➤ Equal Opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Evidence in case files
Ensure supervision with staff takes place on a regular basis and appraisals undertaken		
Report all complaints and compliments to the Women into Work moving on Programme director, as detailed in this contract		
Complete and submit monthly Claim Forms, detailing all outputs, outcomes, expenditure and activity during the month, both for match funding and ESF funding. These must be submitted to the SOVA Women into Work office as described in the Partner Provider Support Manual. Beneficiaries should be monitored for up to six months after they have left the programme in order to justify positive outcomes		
Undertake the annual Self Assessment Process with the support of SOVA Women into Work: Moving On Staff, preparing a Self Assessment Report and then a Development		

Plan		
Produce a Closure Report at the end of the project in line with ESF and SOVA requirements		<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Not available at the time of writing