

MOVEONUP

September 2009 to March 2011

**FABRIC
GRADUATE TRANSITION PROJECT**

END REPORT

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Contents

Introduction	p 3
Recruitment and Marketing	p 4
Outputs	p 7
Milestones	p 16
Conclusion	p 18

Introduction

Fabric was contracted by Bradford Metropolitan District Council using the *Working Neighbourhoods Fund* in September 2009 to deliver a graduate transition programme to 20 graduates wanting to work in the creative industries.

Fabric developed and designed the 'Move on Up' programme, a unique opportunity for Bradford-resident graduates looking to work in the arts, cultural, or creative industries to gain the skills, experience and the know how to secure employment in the sector.

We completed the project in March 2011, and in total we advised and supported 33 creative industry graduates, helping 17 into employment and 2 to secure Future Jobs Fund posts.

During the programme the graduates were given over 60 hours of training, an industry mentor (in some cases two mentors), and 3 months of work placements. Throughout the programme the team at Fabric offered support, advice and guidance.

At the end of the programme, the graduates acquired a range of new professional and practical skills, an improved understanding of the work opportunities within the creative industries, and practical work experience in their chosen field. There has also been a noticeable improvement in the graduates overall motivation, confidence and communication skills.

This report outlines the process we went through and lessons learnt along the way and we hope it will provide a useful aide memoir for any other organisation tackling a similar project.

Recruitment & Marketing

Our first step, after we were contracted, was to develop a memorable name and eye catching logo for publicity and marketing purposes.

The team spent time developing the name and we came up with 'Move on Up'. We commissioned a designer to create a logo to represent the programme. It was important to design an eye-catching and memorable logo that was easily identifiable. We also wanted an 'action orientated' logo that would inspire the graduates to literally 'move on up'.



MOVE ON UP

In the first year of the programme we advertised the programme in the autumn. Information was sent out through our networks and contacts, including the University of Bradford and Bradford College. We had a simple poster and flyer with a call to action and all the relevant information. A comprehensive application form was designed to make sure the graduates met all the requirements and to ensure we were engaging the right beneficiaries. To apply, the graduates had to include all the required evidence with their application form – which meant from an administrative point of view, we were able to assess quite quickly which graduates were eligible. This also helped when submitting the paperwork for beneficiaries engaged as we had all the documentation required for our WNF claim. We also hoped that a comprehensive application form would deter any half hearted applications

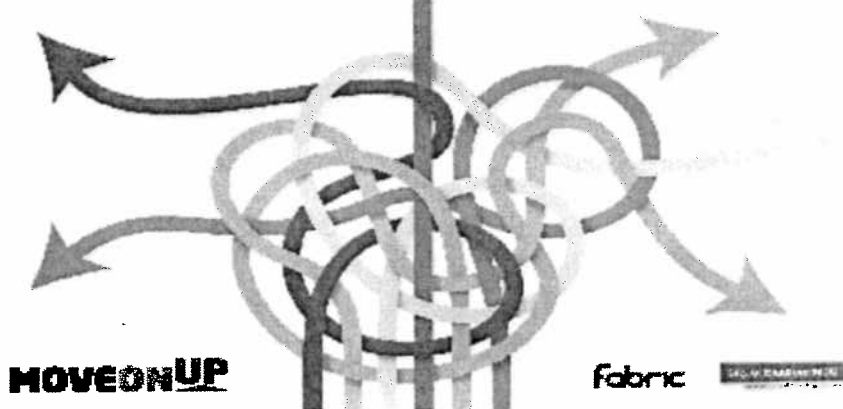
The recruitment went well, although we realised after year one that the communication materials needed to be more dynamic and colourful to compete with all the other visual media that was around. We commissioned a designer to develop a poster that reflected the programme and its content. We refined our marketing materials and the poster and flyers worked really well in attracting the right calibre of graduates for year two.

Get your creative career on the right track

Q. Do you want to find a job in the arts, cultural and creative industries and fulfil your ambitions?

Q. Do you need extra support, advice, training and work experience?

A. 'Move on Up' is a unique opportunity for Bradford-resident graduates looking to work in the arts, cultural or creative industries to gain the skills, experience and know-how to secure employment in the sector.



Recruitment

In the first year, the response was good and we shortlisted 17 applications and having interviewed all of them, we selected 15. Our target for year one was 10 graduates, so we decided to recruit 15 as a contingency as we expected some to drop out along the way or find employment. We started the training programme in October 2009 with 15 graduates. The majority of the graduates were keen to make a change and to further their careers. They attended all the training and engaged with the seminars and workshops.

We had a small number of graduates who often turned up late to the training and when they were participating added little or nothing to the sessions. We soon realised that this small minority of graduates were less serious about developing their careers and they became a drain on our time and resources. The team at Fabric continued to work with these graduates and we developed different strategies to deal with them and continued to support them to the best of our abilities.

For year 2 we developed a more rigorous recruitment and interview process. We had over 25 enquiries and 17 applications, some were not eligible and we interviewed 12. The interview process was more structured and rigorous as the graduates had to deliver a presentation. We hoped this would weed out the non-serious applicants. We selected 10 graduates for the year 2 programme. The interview process worked well and for the second year all 10 graduates were enthusiastic and eager to change their lives.

Graduate Agreement

We designed a graduate agreement for the programme, that was a contract between Fabric and the graduates that they would agree to attend the training, behave in an appropriate manner etc and anyone not adhering to this would be asked to leave the programme. We had a few graduates in year one that we had to speak with about their behaviour and attendance, but none in year two.

Contract Variation

Towards the end of the programme, we had a contract variation that resulted in 8 more graduates being recruited for a mini 'Move on Up'. Due to the tight turn around, we only advertised through our networks, we recruited 8 more graduates by application form only. We are still working with these graduates and supporting them into employment or the development of their career as an artist.

Lessons learnt:–

- Ensure marketing is relevant, eye-catching and bold.
- Communicate in a language that is appropriate to the target audience.
- Comprehensive application form – to avoid timewasters
- Rigorous interview process
- A signed graduate contract as to what is expected and required

Bursaries

As part of the programme the graduates received a bursary. This was staggered throughout the project and could only be claimed once key milestones were reached. We also paid our host organisations a small amount to take the graduates on work placements; this was to cover their time and administration costs. The graduates were paid when they achieved the following milestones:

- Completed over 30 hours of training
- Identified and had a number of sessions with their mentor
- Identified work placements and completed 3 months of work placement
- Submitted mid-point and end-point evaluations.
- Become employed or self employed

OUTPUTS

Beneficiaries engaged.

The 33 graduates engaged were diverse in all respects, disciplines, age and ethnicity. We had a good mix of male/female, and ethnic origin; White British, British Asian, Austrian, Romanian and Polish. The graduates' disciplines included visual arts, film makers, motion graphics, actress, screen writer, poet, musician, animators and graphic designers. Out of the 33 beneficiaries engaged, 2 graduates did not manage to complete the full programme in terms of securing a work placement. However, one did go on to secure Future Jobs Fund employment, whilst the other graduate's disability hindered him moving forward.

Graduate Quotes:

- *Over the last month I've been very fortunate to be part of 'Move on Up' programme which provided me with a wide range of tools to use in my benefit. The series of training seminars enriched my professional and personal development. I have been able to focus on my priorities and establish an action plan triggered through my personal philosophy. I have built up a personal approach based on positive thinking. This programme helped me to gain confidence and provided me with the opportunity of meeting people, making connections, discover possibilities of employment and collaborations.*
- *Having joined the course with very low confidence, with a large part of this being due to just been made redundant, it has brought a lot out of me and made me have more of a positive attitude. I have had some great feedback from my work and personality in general and I dread to think how I would be feeling right now if things had been different and I hadn't, 'bitten the bullet' to join the course. I have had plenty of thinking to do, being involved in courses that I would have probably dismissed previously. Each lecture has been beneficial in some way to me and I have taken something away to think about further each time. I have been on a placement with an experienced graphic designer and am getting priceless help to achieve a job in the end.*

People Supported towards Employment

At the beginning of each programme we had one to one sessions with the graduates to look at their aims and objectives. From the one to one sessions the graduates developed action plans and learning and development objectives for their work placements and career paths. For the work placements the graduates had to identify a number of organisations they wished to work for and Fabric approached these places on their behalf. All the graduates completed the employment supported element.

The Fabric team continued to deliver one to one sessions throughout the programme and the graduates felt they could call, pop in with queries and where possible one of the team would aim to help them.

As the project developed we have designed various diagnostic tools for our one to one sessions and we have recently adopted and adapted a tool created by the Cultural Enterprise Office that is proving to be successful.

Lessons Learnt:-

- A 2hr session is just the start of an ongoing process – much more time per graduate is required
- Constant support and motivation is required throughout the programme for the graduates
- More rigorous diagnostic tools for the one to one sessions
- Keeping in touch and reminding the graduates about their aims and goals

People Assisted with Skills Development

Our programme was linear so after completing one to one sessions, (although these did happen throughout the programme), the graduates embarked on a training programme. The training was designed to equip the graduates with the skills and tool kit required to help them find employment and be successful at their work placements.

In the first year the graduates had over 30 hours of training, and in the second year this increased to 60 hours. The training consisted of the following seminars, workshops and sessions. Where possible the training was interactive and involved working in pairs and groups. We still run training sessions and 6 of the graduates recently attended a session on 'How to start a business'.

Training Completed:

- Goal Setting
- Working in Groups
- Skills Analysis
- Effective CVs
- Writing CVs
- Developing job seeking strategies
- Effective Interviews
- Mock Interviews
- Time Management
- Project Management
- Cultural visit and interviews
- Presentation Skills

- Marketing Yourself
- Project Management
- Becoming Self Employed
- Writing an Artists Statement – Part 1 and 2
- Writing a business plan
- Starting a business
- Networking and update session

The graduates found the training very useful and it served as a good foundation for their work placements. The second year of training worked particularly well, as the graduates performed well as a group and have since supported each other through the programme. We ran an informal session for the graduates with the Fabric Director (Gideon Seymour), they had to articulate what they wanted to someone they didn't really know. Gideon would then question them about their aims and objectives and really drill down as to what they really wanted.

Graduate Quotes

- *It has helped me in focusing my energy on the job hunt, after having completed part of my showreel. I also found topics such as 'limiting beliefs' very powerful. It was also very good to be in an encouraging and understanding atmosphere*
- *Time management and planning have become important in my daily routine, as has my ability to network and find out information through contacts to gain work*
- *I have learnt further interview skills and how to prepare for interview questions. I have also recently learnt how to use Adobe illustrator whilst designing for the live brief. I have learnt my particular learning style. I have started to create a whole new portfolio for my design work.*
- *It's helped to build my confidence and to recognise a lot of skills I didn't realise I already had, particularly team working and dealing with people. It helped me to understand the value of what I contribute to a team and why I enjoy team work.*
- *It has given me a more rounded understanding of the creative industry particularly with regards to community work. It has helped me identify strength and weaknesses and where I need to build experience and skills to enable me to gain the career I want.*

- *Having intensive training at the start which encouraged the group to develop as a unit and focussed us all quickly.*

Lessons Learnt:-

- More bespoke sessions when required – e.g. writing an artists' statement
- Training sessions over a condensed period of time rather than spread out
- Team building activities like the Liverpool trip and film
- Repeat of mock interviews as and when required
- Build in more peer review, mentoring and support
- Session with whole group and Fabric Director

Work Placements

Once their training was complete, the graduates embarked on a 3 month placement or, in some cases, 3 separate 1 month placements. Work placements have taken place in a wide variety of organisations: museums, galleries, film sets, recording studios, animation, design and TV studios, to name a few, and have taken place across the country including Edinburgh, Manchester, Liverpool and London. The placements have provided the graduates with invaluable experience, and in some cases, the host organisation has offered their placementee employment.

Over the eighteen month period we have organised and secured the work placements detailed below. The work placements took a considerable amount of time to research, organise and arrange. Many of the graduates wanted to have a variety of work placements which meant organising in some cases three individual placements for a graduate. Where possible we have visited the graduate at the work placement to sign all the paperwork and to make sure everything was ok. The paperwork involved was comprehensive and covered an induction, principles and contracts for the host organisation.

One of the major problems graduates claiming benefits experienced, was the fact the 'Move on Up' programme was not recognised or acknowledged by the benefits office. Conflict occurred when the graduates embarked on work placements as they were not 'available for work', even though the work placements would help them secure work in the future. If this project or a similar project was to be run again then we would advise that it is in partnership or at least acknowledged by the Job Centre which then allows graduates to claim benefits whilst on work placement.

Year 1 Graduate	Placement	Employment Status
Angelika Aibel	Studio Distract	Employed with
Ryan Booth	Brahm	Freelance copywriter
Catherine Chamberlain	Audiences Yorkshire South Square Artworks	Employed with
Ramona Dragulescu	Bradford Playhouse	Freelance actress
Asad Ishafaq	Dan Forster Design	
Jaimini Limbachia	Dan Forster Design	Employed by ITV as an editor
Caroline MacRae	Dan Forster Design	Employed
Oliver Neilson	Caring Together Klang Records	Self employed artist
Luke Waltham	Kala Sangam	Employed by Kala Sangam
Joel Seckelman	Shades Shanaz Gulzar	Self Employed freelancer
Nicky Whitfield	Studio Distract	Freelance animator
Sadja Shah		Future Jobs Fund

Luke Hardistry and Lewis Hackett decided to set up their own business rather than do a work placement; with hindsight we should have encouraged them to do a work placement as this would have helped them when setting up their business.

Luke Matthews is looking into setting up a script reading and script editing business.

We were unable to secure work placements for Sajda Shah and Luke Matthews.

Year 2	Work Placement	Employment Status
Mohammed Adrees	JDA This is Chemistry	Still on work placement
Liam Cooper		Future Jobs Fund
James Grover	Peak Studios Baby Boom Records	Freelance Technician
Bridget Hayden	Cartwright Hall Gallery II Pop Up	On work placement
Gemma Hobbs	BCVS (Bradford community environment project) Kala Sangam	Employed by Small World Collective as a practitioner
Simon James	Cartwright Hall Pop Up National Gallery of Modern Art Edinburgh	Freelance technician
Kashmir Kaur		Freelance bag maker
Thomas Lever	Barely There Productions	Freelancer/Film
Steve Searle	Distant Future Animation Studio	Employed by Distant Future as a freelancer
Clare Wellham	Apples and Snakes Pop Up Gallery	

Kashmir Kaur has not secured a work placement due to personal circumstances but will hopefully meet with a mentor shortly.

Graduate Quotes

- *Real life experiences. A whole host of job roles I never knew existed. First hand experience of many of these roles.*
- *It has taken me from nowhere to the first step of my ideal career and it is looking promising!*

- *I have learnt new skills in particular through my work placement. I have learnt to work in a different more pro active way, used the software Illustrator much more than previously had, managed my time effectively, stuck to deadlines...the list goes on. The most important would be skills with regards design practice and implementing them in my work.*
- *Yes. My final placement at JDA was excellent. I enjoyed the work and developed enormously. JDA said they would have employed me if it was financially viable for them. It's given me confidence to believe I can work in similar environments.*
- *It was a steep learning curve when I stepped into placement. I quickly became a project support worker and helped with all aspects of running a project. The most useful aspect for me was working as part of a team and seeing organisation politics first hand.*

Host Organisation quotes

- *If the NGS decided to train rather than to employ experience then Simon would definitely be in contention for any jobs available.*

Lessons Learnt:-

- Good contacts established in the first year made the second year easy in terms of some of the placements
- Organise informal interview before graduate starts work placements
- Where possible meet host organisation and graduate together and during the placement
- Notify the host organisations that we are not VAT registered
- Recognition of the programme from the benefits office

Into Employment

We worked constantly with the graduates, helping them identify employment opportunities and develop job seeking strategies. We offered mock interviews throughout the programme and this proved very useful to prepare the graduates just before an interview. We ran a full day of CV writing and constantly helped the graduates refine and develop their CVs.

One graduate was employed by their host organisation, 11 graduates became self employed or set up a business and 6 became employed and 2 are working in Future Job Funds roles. Due to the nature of working in the creative industries, many roles

are on a freelance basis and a number of graduates did register self employed; they are developing a portfolio career and looking at the different ways they can use their skills. Three of our graduates are still completing their work placements.

Graduate Quotes:

- *If no work comes to you, you can make work for yourself.*
- *I am confident that if a junior copywriter position is available at an agency, I would secure employment. 8 months ago I would not have been in a position where I was confident in my ability or my portfolio. The combination of placements and mentoring has improved me considerably.*
- *Move on Up provides great help for people attempting to get into the creative arts which is notorious for being difficult to find work in especially with the current lack of jobs*
- *Before 'Move on Up' I knew I wanted to work in Film and TV, but didn't feel I had the experience and CV to get noticed in the industry. Now I've completed 2 work placements and have had access to countless expert mentors who have given me the self-confidence to apply and be recognised by employers.*
- *Move on Up has offered the intensive support and training I needed in order to return to work.*

Lessons Learnt:-

- Identify alternative approaches too employment as very hard to secure employment in this current climate
- Keep in constant contact with the graduates to keep them motivated
- Work with host organisations to identify internships

Mentors

Mentoring was a major part of this programme and each graduate has had one or two mentors. The graduate identified exactly what they wanted to achieve from each session, making the session focussed and concentrated. Mentors were helping the graduates with the following areas:

- Portfolio development
- Advice and networking contacts
- Performance techniques
- Improve their confidence
- Next career move
- Establishing a business

We had 27 mentors on the programme and the majority of graduates will keep in touch with their mentor. As with our work placement element, we had a comprehensive paper trail for mentoring as well, this included the graduate and mentor agreeing goals and outcomes. A contract was issued to each mentor and we required meeting notes from each session. We paid our mentors an hourly rate, from £25 upwards, sometimes it was for a one off session and other mentor/mentee agreements consisted of 6/8 sessions.

Graduate Quotes

- *Initially (and naively) I was simply hoping to get a list of contacts of people at TV studios who might have given me a job or placement, but Mark made me realise that there was no point in him recommending me to anyone unless I knew precisely where I was heading.*
- *I learnt the difference between performing my poetry as opposed to just reading my poetry. I also gained more information on what was happening in my area and who to contact, as well as different places to look for jobs.*

Lessons Learnt:-

- Where possible, someone from the Fabric team to observe sessions
- Ensure graduate is focussed and objectives for mentoring are clear
- Submit signed meeting notes from session
- Match the right mentee with the right mentor

MILESTONES

Steering Group

We conducted 8 steering group meetings, and the group was invaluable in the support and advice it gave throughout the programme. Having a wide range and diverse group of professionals in the group was also beneficial as they contributed different perspectives on some of the issues we experienced. It was also useful having other WNF project directors as part of the group, as they could understand the difficulties we experienced. The project director also sat on another graduate transition steering group and this also helped as the programme developed. Building relationships with the other WNF graduate transition programmes resulted in peer mentoring and support which was extremely useful.

Staff Recruited

We advertised for a project coordinator in August 2009 and had over 15 applications; we interviewed 8 people and chose Abbe Robinson. Abbe has proved an invaluable member of the team, as her background is film and many of our graduates had film related disciplines; she has been a constant source of advice and support to the graduates and Project Director. Recruiting a 'hands on' person to this role has been crucial as the co-ordination and input into the project has been diverse and varied.

Marketing and Communications Strategy Agreed

The strategy was written in September and agreed by the steering group.

Protocols

All the protocols were completed and we developed a process of working which has helped the programme run smoothly. We also developed a number of templates for mentoring, work placements and evaluations and these have proved useful when managing all the paperwork and tracking the graduates' progress. Keeping accurate files and a transparent paper trail have been essential important in terms of tracking the graduates' progress and for auditing purposes.

Evaluation Framework Agreed

The framework was written in September and agreed by the Steering group. We evaluated every training session we ran and conducted mid-point and end-point evaluations for both year groups. The evaluations throughout the programme proved useful in shaping the project and they helped us reflect on the project and make any necessary changes.

Mid Term and Final Report

The mid-term report was written and submitted; again it was useful to have some reflection and evaluation time to develop the project. The end report is a summary of the project to date; hopefully it will be useful to anyone else embarking on a similar project, as they can learn from our lessons learnt log.

Mentors Identified

As noted, in the mentoring section we actually recruited over 27 mentors, some were the same in years 1 and 2. We now have a good network of mentors from a variety of disciplines. Our aim to keep in contact with the mentors and we were pleased to see that some attended our final showcase event.

Graduate Recruitment event

We delivered our first event, a graduate recruitment event and exhibition at Bradford University in conjunction with Artworks and Bmedia on the 24th February 2010 and spoke to quite a few potential graduates for year 2.

The final event, a showcase exhibition, took place on March 3rd at the Art Space at the Pop Up Gallery in Centenary Square. The exhibition included work, performances from a number of the graduates and we had over 70 people attended. The event was organised by the graduates, for the graduates and it was a very successful event and a good way to mark the end of the project. It was very rewarding to see the graduates perform to a live audience and to view their 2D, 3D and film/animation work.

Two of the graduates from year 2 were the main organisers of the event and they learnt how to organise and manage an event, design and print posters and flyers, co-ordinate artists' work, hang and display work, and work as a team. Both graduates will find the skills acquired invaluable and useful for any role they pursue.

Graduate Quotes

- *We were trusted to organise and run an exhibition about the Move on Up programme and exhibit our work as professionals, this brought the programme to an uplifting conclusion.*

CONCLUSION

The programme ended in March 2011 and we had 25 graduates complete the whole programme of training, work placements, mentoring and 68% have gone into employment. A further 8 graduates were recruited and they were offered support into employment, CV writing and interview skills. In total we have worked with 33 graduates from a wide range of disciplines. We have achieved all our set outputs and milestones and in some cases over achieved on our outputs.

As a model to help unemployed graduates gain employment it is one of the most successful as it covers all angles, building and raising confidence, essential training and skills development, work placement experience and constant support and advice. As the project developed we learnt how to adapt and amend the different elements to suit and meet the graduates needs. It has been important that the project was flexible and not set in stone from the beginning – although within agreed structure.

Unexpected outcomes

An unexpected outcome from the programme was the huge shift in the graduates confidence and self esteem, and how just spending some 'one to one' time with the graduates instilled faith in themselves and the confidence to move forward. The work experience was fundamental in developing the graduates in terms of 'real world' experiences and giving them some tangible skills to include on their CVs. The mentoring with an industry mentor was also invaluable and the combination of all these elements resulted in a successful programme with long lasting results for the graduates. We also over achieved on our outputs in terms of people into employment, which in the current climate is a real achievement.

What would we do differently?

In terms of what we would do differently – if we had the opportunity to run a similar programme we would like to open it up to professional practitioners that are not graduates, as we had quite a few enquiries from non-graduates. It would also be ideal if we could develop a programme to anyone in the region, not just Bradford, and organise training sessions in other areas, especially in areas where no training or support is available.

Next Steps

Once the project has been completed we would like to spend some time evaluating the outcomes as well as all the costs involved. We would like to develop a programme of activity, training and support and look at other opportunities for funding. After the programme has been completed we will write to all our host organisations and ask them whether they would be willing to be involved if there was no financial incentive. We will also write to all our mentors and trainers and see if they would also be interested in continuing supporting the programme and in partnership apply for funding to maintain and deliver aspects of the project.

This success of this project is down to the partners, host organisations, mentors and graduates as well as the Fabric project team. There have been some valuable lessons learnt and we hope that similar programmes will be possible in the future as we have proved that with the right training, support and work experience we can help graduates into employment.

Graduate Quotes:

- *Thanks a lot! I really feel like this could work out as a long term perfect career for me. Cheers!*
- *I have thoroughly enjoyed my time on 'Move on Up' and feel that it will enhance my CV and hopefully my chances of getting employment in the field that is right for me.*
- *The myriad of networking opportunities the course provided were invaluable.*