

# **nesa**

## **Organisational Development Phase III**

### **Final Project Report**

#### **PROJECT BACKGROUND AND AIMS**

In March 2005, **nesa** was awarded an Arts Council England, South West grant of £75,690 towards a third phase of organisational development (March 2005 to May 2006). This phase was designed to build on the achievements of Organisational Development Phases I and II and to put in place the final building blocks for a sustainable future for **nesa**.

The application included the following objectives:

1. Secure a broader more stable funding base for **nesa**'s work
2. Develop the financial management systems
3. Develop the IT systems
4. Continue to develop a quality assurance system
5. Implement a programme of Continuing Professional Development for staff and freelance artists
6. Develop Marketing and PR
7. Increase involvement in strategic forums and partnerships
8. Improve office accommodation and equipment

**nesa** recruited the following experienced new staff to form the Organisational Team:

- Assistant Director (15 hours per week), Lesley Featherstone, had previously been Director of Tees Valley Arts, a renowned participatory arts organisation in Tyne Tees specialising in social inclusion and regeneration arts projects.
- Organisational Development Project Manager Cathy Poole (37 hours) had initiated and lead Watershed's Education programme in 1989 and led the team. During that time she was seconded for one year to South West Screen.
- Marketing Officer (7.5 hours), Sam Williams has a background in arts marketing but had a career break following the birth of her first child. Sam was a participant on our My Time My Space project for women experiencing post natal depression. Her involvement in the project rebuilt her confidence and she competed successfully against other external candidates for the post.

The new team was supported by Sheila Hedges as Project Assistant who had joined **nesa** for Organisational Development II, and led by Director, Caroline Green. The team met quarterly to set milestones and targets and to review progress.

In view of the Organisational Development Project Manager's sick leave, it was agreed with the Arts Council that the end date for the project could be changed to July 31<sup>st</sup> 2006. This meant that Cathy could complete the project on her return, working for a longer period part time to fulfil all agreed tasks. Lesley Featherstone who successfully competed for the Director's post following Caroline Green's resignation and started work in June 2006, oversaw the final two months.

This report covers May 2006 until July 31<sup>st</sup> 2006. It includes both information first submitted in February 2006 and additional material covering the rest of the project.

## Final report

### 1 Secure a broader more stable funding base for nesa's work

The Organisational Development Project Manager, Cathy Poole, lead on fundraising. She submitted a wide range of funding bids and supported other members of the **nesa** team to prepare and submit bids for specific projects. Appendix A provides a breakdown of all the bids submitted and the outcomes.

Over 20 bids were made with many of the smaller bids being successful. However, within the context of shrinking funding pots and increasing demand, none of the larger bids were successful before May 2006. **nesa** has gained ongoing support from Youth Arts and Housing and Social Services, and was asked to make a bid for the Creative Links MOSAIC project to work with BME groups with severe and lasting emotional health issues. However, a reduction in **nesa**'s core grant from B&NES Arts Development over the period 2005 – 2008 due to cutbacks in the Arts Development Budget has been disappointing.

A Fundraising Strategy and Action plan linked to the Three Year Plan have been produced. We were encouraged when a Stage 1 bid to Reaching Communities (for Neighbourhood Arts Programme) was successful. Stage 2 is being completed by Lesley Featherstone, the new full time Director who has now taken over full responsibility for fundraising for the future.

**nesa** has been awarded Grants for the Arts funding for an ambitious project, Creative Change. **nesa** will therefore be able to build on the effective structures established during Organisational Development Three and focus on an innovative programme of socially engaged arts activity for which it hopes to gain profile throughout the South West.

### 2 Develop the financial management systems

Lesley Featherstone, Assistant Director, led this area of work.

In the first six months the following took place:

- Review of existing financial systems; a report submitted to the Board.
- An action plan with defined and timed tasks
- A generic project budgeting system was produced and introduced to staff
- The ACEVO Full Cost Recovery System was applied to **nesa** and a report presented to the Board.

Following the achievements highlighted in the Interim Report, standardised budget setting and control procedures were introduced and are in use.

These include:

- Project Outline template [a project and project budget planning tool]
- Budget and Cash Flow template
- Quarterly updating of budgets, actual against expected
- Quarterly meetings, Finance Officer and Budget Holders
- Central Storage of Budgets and Project Outlines to assist access and communication.

- Use of Purchase Orders to ensure shared control of expenditure
- Mentoring in budget management and control offered as part of regular 121 meetings.
- Budgets: Setting and control, paper to be included in Staff Induction Pack.

Further achievements include the following:

- Completion of Organisational Budget linked to Fundraising Strategy and Action Plan
- Board agreement to adopt Full Cost Recovery for use with fundraising above £30,000.00 and a template for implementing Full Cost recovery has been produced [ACEVO]
- A policy for Service charge/management fees has been adopted by the Board [flexible, depending upon amount applied for ]
- A policy for building up Cash Reserves is in place, with a plan to develop them partly through the implementation of Full Cost Recovery
- An Induction programme and a Staff Development programme is planned which will assess the level of support required by staff members in the implementation of the policy and procedures.

A Financial Strategy for the organisation is in preparation.

### **3 Develop the IT systems**

Project Assistant, Sheila Hedges, developed this area of work. The following took place:

- An IT policy was produced
- An integrated network facility was implemented between the 2 **nesa** offices so that both offices can now access the server
- Training and advice was offered to staff in use of the network, creating excel spreadsheets, producing reports in word
- The contacts database was refined and maintained
- Data collection and monitoring systems were improved and implemented

While **nesa** experienced two server failures during the first six months and had to work hard to resolve the issue of linking two separate offices some distance from one another, the final phase of the project has been relatively trouble free. Consequently and less of Sheila's time has been spent troubleshooting than in the first phase. However, she has put in place good systems for maintaining the equipment and ensuring that all runs as smoothly as possible on very limited resources.

During the final phase of the project, the following has taken place:

- a report template for evaluation has been completed
- the IT policy has been approved by the Board
- Reviewing the database content to ensure freelance artists' details are current
- Amending the database to deal more efficiently with mass mail outs
- Reviewing shared contacts to ensure content is current

#### **4 Continue to develop a quality assurance system**

During Organisational Development II we introduced the PQASSO Quality Assurance System, achieving Level 1 in Training and Development, Managing Money, Governance and Management and Level 2 in Staff and Volunteers and Planning for Quality.

During Organisational Development III the Project Manager, Cathy Poole has turned her attention to the remaining 6 areas. We have almost completed all required tasks to complete Level 1 in User Centred Services, Managing Resources, and Networking and Partnerships. We have given particular attention to Monitoring and Evaluation and are hoping to achieve at least Level 2 in this area. This is involving a thorough review of our existing policy and procedures, establishing new guidelines for staff and artists, reviewing and updating methods of gathering information and storage of monitoring information, and reviewing our reporting format and dissemination systems. The Assistant Director is leading this particular area.

We still have to look at the last area, Managing Activities and this will be our focus for the last 3 months. We have already started to review and simplify our strategic planning process and the Director is currently revising the 3 Year Plan and producing an Annual Plan for 2006 07.

We have significantly strengthened the Board with the recruitment of 2 new highly skilled trustees. Ralph Wynne-Griffiths, a practising barrister, has joined to provide legal expertise, and freelance consultant Anna Smith has filled an identified skills gap in terms of fundraising and marketing. The appointment of Joanna Day, a highly experienced arts development professional, as the Chair has improved the overall functioning of the Board and provided stronger leadership. The Board is now reviewing its sub-committee structure and is moving forward with renewed clarity of purpose.

#### **6 Implement a programme of Continuing Professional Development for staff and freelance artists**

The Organisational Development Project Manager has built on the findings of the Organisational Development II Training Needs Analysis to produce a Staff Training Plan. Priorities for training have been clearly identified linking to our strategic objectives and programme of activity. A learning and development culture has now been firmly embedded within the organisation, with training needs identified through performance review and supervision systems and staff being regularly informed about CPD opportunities. There has been a notable increase in staff accessing professional development training. This has included working with volunteers, fundraising, project management, leadership, and first aid.

The whole organisation will be receiving disability equality training with trainer Ann Pointon on 14<sup>th</sup> March as part of the creation of a disability equality policy. Training around race equality has still to be scheduled.

The Assistant Director has been reviewing our relationship with our freelance artists. This has been a very thorough piece of work and has included reviewing our recruitment and induction process and the way we support and develop artists through the project process. She has now produced an artists' induction pack and organised a training day for artists on 24<sup>th</sup> April.

## 7 Develop Marketing and PR

Despite very limited hours (7.5 per week) the new Marketing Officer, Sam Williams has made considerable progress with improving **nesa's** internal and external communications and this has had an appreciable impact on all aspects of **nesa's** marketing. Sam has:

- Revised the Communications Strategy
- Revised the project marketing protocols
- Implemented the new brand image developed through Organisational Development II throughout project publicity and through the creation of name badges for staff and freelancers
- Produced an Annual Report for 04 05 reflecting the new quality brand image
- Supported by the Organisational Development Project Manager, Sam has progressed plans for a **nesa** website with a volunteer website designer sourced through Arts and Business.
- Improved relationships with local press through one to one meetings, better quality press releases, press calls
- Created material to support advocacy presentations by the Director and other staff

Sam is currently focusing on working with a freelance designer to create 3 information leaflets summarising the key strands of **nesa's** work: Neighbourhood Arts, Arts in Health, Young People and Creativity and finalising the design of the website which will go live by the end of the project.

## 8 Increase involvement in strategic forums and partnerships

The sharing of management functions between 3 members of a Senior Management Team has enabled the Director and other senior management staff to devote more time to developing strategic relationships. The Director has made presentations to B&NES Executive Committee, B&NES Economic Development Partnership and Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Trust Arts Strategy Working Group. She has also been involved with B&NES Arts Development Team and Youth Service in developing a youth arts strategy for B&NES.

Significant new partnerships have been formed with:

- Somer Community Housing (the local social housing provider)
- Bath Women's Aid
- B&NES Extended Schools Service
- B&NES Get Active Initiative
- The Kidzfit Initiative (working with obese children in Norton Radstock)

**nesa** continues to take a significant role within the Market and Coastal Towns Initiative in Norton Radstock and is now linked into the development of the Local Area Agreement for B&NES.

We have also significantly strengthened our existing partnership working with the Primary Care Trust Health Visitor Team, B&NES Community Safety and with regeneration partners in South Bath and are developing new projects with each.

**nesa** is working with the Institute of Interdisciplinary Arts at the University of Bath to explore the potential for developing a joint research project exploring the role of the artist in arts and regeneration projects and with the Mental Health Research Unit at

the University to evaluate the long-term benefits of **nesa's** My Time My Space project for women experiencing post natal depression.

**nesa** is now participating in the South West Youth Arts Network and has contributed to the development of the South West Arts in Health Strategy.

### **8 Improve office accommodation and equipment**

**nesa's** existing office accommodation is cramped, split between 2 sites causing difficulties for internal communications and IT networking, and largely located on the first floor rendering it inaccessible to people with mobility issues.

In the short-term, Grants for the Arts funding has enabled **nesa** to rent an additional office at our overspill site, Leigh House, and purchase additional computer equipment to support the new temporary posts.

We have also been able to research long-term accommodation options and it is highly probably that **nesa** will be able to move into enhanced and permanent accommodation in a new community resource building being planned as part of the regeneration initiative in Radstock during 2008. This will provide **nesa** with a suite of offices, enhanced participatory arts spaces for the Radstock Art Project, designated exhibition space and access to shared facilities such as kitchen, crèche, meeting rooms, and photocopier. The building will be fully accessible. This accommodation will significantly enhance **nesa's** capacity and long-term sustainability. Negotiations are currently underway to determine exact spatial requirement and costs.

In the medium-term **nesa** is left facing a further 2 years in current inadequate office accommodation. We are currently trying to negotiate additional office space at Greystones, our main office site, with B&NES Youth Service. This would bring all the team together in one location, albeit it still in cramped offices.

### **SUMMARY**

**nesa** has made significant progress during the Organisational Development III project. We have recruited a very strong project team who have brought valuable new skills, experiences and approaches to the organisation. We are already a more robust organisation with strengthened internal policies, procedures and quality assurance systems, new high quality marketing resources, a strengthened Board and a range of exciting new partnerships. This internally focused work will enhance our ability to develop a high quality programme to meet our long-term objectives.

Our major challenge for the coming year is to attract substantial new funding to support our proposed programme of activity and to ensure a sustainable future for **nesa**.