

GREC'S ACTIVITIES: REDUCING EXCLUSION & DISADVANTAGE

The Upward Steps

Objectives 2005-06

- Help target client group remove language, cultural and social barriers through training and development courses so as to enable them to integrate with society
- To equip clients with employability skills which enhance their competitive edge in employment through linking with employers and local education (colleges and universities)

Achieved during the year

- 10 clients recruited
- One client went into full-time employment, one client went into part-time employment
- Presently working with 4 new clients and 4 returnee clients
- 37 people are attending English-language classes, driving theory classes, computer classes and citizenship classes with GREC volunteers – mainly Polish and Latvian individuals, but also Chinese. Demand is greater than what we are able to provide for

Client barriers to labour market entry

Discussions with clients has confirmed that the main perceived problems are:

- clients now have to compete with new migrants (in particular from Eastern Europe)
- childcare
- poor English language skills
- racial discrimination and harassment

New skills developed by clients through The Upward Steps

- Introduction of driving theory test in Chinese (4 clients successfully completed the course and passed the theory test)
- Introduction of hospitality skills with English
- Introduction to British cultural awareness & citizen awareness (in line with the new Life in the UK test introduced by the government for people applying for naturalisation as a British citizen)
- Introduction to interpreting skills (for clients with good English skills)
- English-language classes
- Basic computing
- Job interview skills

Project specific issues

- Clients require a lot of support, ie. in housing, healthcare, benefits, and employment
- Childcare
- Fear of harassment and discrimination
- Increased competition in the labour market

Networks/Partnerships

- Aberdeen City Council
- Hamilton School
- Banff & Buchan College
- XPD8

Objectives 2006-07

- To secure continued funding for the project, and continue to work with associated partners

Due to the uncertainty of continued funding through Scottish Enterprise's New Futures Fund, we have not been actively recruiting clients. The few remaining clients are very keen to learn.