

Wolverhampton Black Business Network CIC

National Lottery-Award for All

Community Business Project Evaluation Report

2017/18

Background of WBBN

Wolverhampton Black Business Network CIC (WBBN) represents a cross-section of Wolverhampton's **Small to Medium Enterprises (SME) as an avenue to engage with businesses currently** under-represented within the City. The aim is to accommodate new and established businesses in a forum where black entrepreneurs can interact and grow their business.

The Network is founded to represent the interest of businesses owned and run by black men and women in the City of Wolverhampton. It has been evidenced that this section of our wider business Community has always been marginalised in terms of service provision and information. Since the demise of West Midlands Business Link, this group of our business community has not been well supported/represented to grow their businesses.

The engagement with SME from these underrepresented communities has provided opportunities for networking and sharing vital information to benefit their business.

We have therefore adopted the City of Wolverhampton Economic policy options for business.

These are the priorities:

- ❖ Attracting New Business to the City
- ❖ Supporting Businesses to Develop and Grow
- ❖ Supporting our Priority Sectors
- ❖ Improving Critical Business Infrastructure
- ❖ Developing and Growing a Skilled Workforce



Our Mission:

“To foster and maintain an economic growth and development of the Black businesses in Wolverhampton and create an environment in which businesses will flourish and contribute to overall economic activities of the region”.

Legal

The Wolverhampton Black Business Network is a Community Interest Company-CIC registered with the Companies House in 2013; Co. Number 8762314.

The Board

The Board comprises of cross-section of black business owners with a range of professionalism, skills and experience required to steer the Network to achieve its aims and objectives. It is always been on the lookout for new members to join the Board with requisite attributes to offer to businesses in the City.

The Network Management:

We have four devoted and active Directors who give their time for free to organise and manage the Network. These professionals in various business endeavours run their own businesses/organisations. We also draw from the grass - root membership volunteers who assist from to time in our network activities.

The Network has built up a following through the workshops as well as on the social media. It has a website and a Facebook account from which it reaches businesses (www.wbbn.co.uk). Its ultimate aim is to expand the Network activities throughout the Black Country where it has been evidenced lack similar representation in the remaining Boroughs of the Black Country.

The Award For All Project Objectives

This project will seek out many of the so-called 'HOME WORKER' economy who have had no support whatsoever in developing their ideas & getting them to update their skills and knowledge about setting up in business.

"Organize 8 to 10 awareness workshops for potential businessmen & women to enable them share common knowledge & experience on various business issues & identify priorities for action to develop their business ideas which will begin the journey for their financial independence. This will



involve engagement of qualified business advisors & mentors who will need to be available throughout the live of the project to provide support for attendees".

These sessions would provide awareness & skills to deal with such issues as rates, rents, procurement, commissioning, business safety, reducing crime and criminality and, who to contact in the event of encountering these business issues. Also, deal with legal matters as well as how to avoid paying penalties to HMRC and /or Companies House for late filings.

The project worker/s will engage to actively administer, manage and, widen the network with marketing promotion and publicity of the project. In addition, to ensure we take other opportunities to add value to the project by working in partnership with other organisations.

The main conference event will look to engage with leaders in the black business community & researchers to inform us of new developments such as Brexit effects, exporting abroad, and key speakers from Universities & Institutions.

Our networking activities were designed to enable prospective participants to take advantage of shared knowledge, which, this project will provide to achieve their goals. The Business Awareness project provided us with greater opportunity and fulfilling ambitions of people who have no support or engagement on how to get started in business.

The Wolverhampton Black Business Network CIC has been a reference point for these micro-businesses as well as start-ups but would like to do more for them, up to being independent in whatever business they would like to be in.

We would like to do more by providing continuous mentoring service to maintain all the advantage and benefit achieved by the project.

The Directors of the Network are satisfied with the outcome achieved through this project and would re-apply for additional support in future years to provide yet more assistance and guidance to new and existing small businesses.



Outline of activities to deliver the expected outcomes

Dates		22/08/17	24/10/17	02/12/17	30/01/18	27/02/18	26/04/18	05/10/18	6.00pm	Attendees
Workshop	1	Business Showcase							Heritage Centre	20
	2		Start-up						Business Solution Centre	15
	3			Business Exhibition Network					Heritage Centre	32
	4				Business Finance				Access to Business	12
	5					Procurement			Ethnic Minority Centre	30
	6						Business Conference		Novotel	55
	7							Marketing/ Bus. Planning/ Employment law	Bob Jones Centre	21
Total										185

Analysis of the workshops output and outcomes

Business showcase

- ❖ This workshop provided opportunity for attendees to meet various established business owners to share their experiences
- ❖ Attendees were able to network with other businesses as well as highlight their products/services.



Start-up workshop

- ❖ The objective of this workshop was to provide real case scenario on pitfall on setting a business in haste or without proper preparations.
- ❖ The presenter at this event shared her experience in setting up her business and gave some tips to attendees on how to go about

Setting up a new business

Business Exhibition Workshop

- ❖ This event provided attendees opportunity to display as well as sell their products. Businesses had the option of talking about their business and pitching for customers.
- ❖ Attendees heard a moving business experience on managing expectations

Business Finance workshop

- ❖ As many businesses face the difficulties of raising finance, this workshop provided some resources and information on how to apply for finance from the banks and other finance houses.
- ❖ The presenter on this workshop is an Accountant knowledgeable in access to finance to SMEs

Procurement Workshop

- ❖ This workshop was well attended and very popular and the presenters were the Director of Procurement from City of Wolverhampton Council and a Procurement professional.
- ❖ This covered all aspects of tendering for Local Authority Contracts and the common mistakes

Business Conference

- ❖ The theme of the conference was 'highlighting the contribution of Ethnic Businesses to the economy of the City'.



- ❖ New and existing business owners as well as Local Government officials, MPs, and academics attended the conference and from University of Birmingham a specialist in Ethnic Minority Enterprises.
- ❖ This provided insight into the working of the Local Government and the infrastructural provision in the City.
- ❖ Many businesses and Service organisations displayed their products/service
- ❖ This was the highlight of our activities since it drew participants from all over the region.

Marketing, Business Planning & Employment Law matters

- ❖ This was a three in one workshop brought about by the interruption of the Football World Cup, as we had to merge events, which were scheduled for June/July.
- ❖ Attendees were taken through the processes of marketing their products and how to produce a good business plan
- ❖ Experienced Advisers from ACAS, who are specialist in employment Law, delivered the employment law matters. The engagement of ACAS was greatly welcome by participants as they were able to demystify some of the issues around various types of contracts and their implications.

Summary

- ❖ All our attendees were very satisfied with the quality of the delivery of the workshops and happy to be involved in future programmes in 2019. This is evidenced by a series of questionnaires completed by attendees of both the workshop and the business conference.
- ❖ Many participants engaged in business activities with one another and lots of Networking.
- ❖ As a direct result of the events, some attendees engaged in contracts and apprenticeship
- ❖ Many who attended the workshops wanted to attend similar events in 2019 if repeated.



- ❖ The project achieved all its objectives including exceeding the projected number of attendees, which was set at 100.
- ❖ The Conference on its own enabled so many businesses coming together and listening to speakers from the City Council leaders on the inward investment in the City of Wolverhampton and how they affect business, positively or negatively.
- ❖ During this period, Wbbn has been able to engage with many of the attendees to provide some mentoring services and guidance on their business ideas and progression including apprenticeship.

Lessons Learnt/Impact

The organisation had the following challenges

- 1 Finding suitable volunteers to assist with planning the workshops and helping out with the deliveries
- 2 The number of events scheduled in this project was too challenging considering that the planning, marketing and delivering those meant that a lot of time and efforts were required.
- 3 Finding the speakers for the events at short notice proved to be quite a task. We had to rely on goodwill of some of our speakers to fulfil these objectives.
- 4 The issue of planning visits to businesses to continue the follow-up contact proved to be as challenging.

On the positives

- The organisation has been commended by attendees for putting on the workshops in the absence of such public engagements in the City.
- It has built up a database of businesses in the City whom we are now able to reach easily with information relevant to their business.
- The organisation received much approval from all our presenters and speakers for the choice of topics and organising the events.



- Not all these would have happened without the financial support from the National Lottery Award for all programmes, as we have no funding from elsewhere to deliver this support.

Appreciation

Wbbn would like to acknowledge the assistance and support provided to it and the project by the following organisations in Wolverhampton without which it would have been difficult to deliver.

They are; Access to Business, Ethnic Minority Council, the Heritage Centre, Novotel Hotel, Business Solution Centre and Bob Jones Community Centre.

For all our speakers and presenters as well as volunteers

For our planning meetings, we would also like to appreciate one of our Directors and owner of Divine Heritage Trades Ltd, for making his offices available whenever we needed it.

For the entire Directors of Wbbn for their hard work in delivering its project despite the added burden of running their own businesses.

Here are some photos from the events:









WOLVERHAMPTON BLACK BUSINESS NETWORK

ANNUAL BUSINESS 2018 CONFERENCE

IMPACT OF MINORITY BUSINESSES ON OUR LOCAL ECONOMY
SMALL BUSINESS FUNDING | NETWORKING

Our Speakers

Thursday
26th April 2018
6pm - 9pm

TICKETS ONLY £10

Novotel Wolverhampton
Union Street
Wolverhampton
WV1 3JN



PROFESSOR MONDER RAM OBE
CENTRE FOR RESEARCH IN ETHNIC
MINORITY ENTREPRENEURSHIP (CREME)



MS FUNGAI NDEMERA
CEO, THE FLAME LILY HEALTHCARE LTD

COUNCILLOR PETER BILSON
DEPUTY LEADER OF CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON
CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND CITY ASSETS

MS SANDRA CROASDALE
DIRECTOR, BESS CARE LTD

HON. EMMA REYNOLDS MP
WOLVERHAMPTON NE

MR TOYESE ANIFALAJE
CEO, APEX RETAILERS LTD

HON. ELEANOR SMITH MP
WOLVERHAMPTON SW



FOR TICKETS
CALL 07771 734 967
INFO@WBBN.CO.UK





Financing

This project was delivered, thanks to the funding from the National Lottery Award for All programmes. In 2017, Wbbn made an application to the National Lottery fund and was successful and awarded £10k to deliver our Community Business Project. This funding has enable Wbbn to buy equipment, engage presenters, speakers, volunteers as well as marketing and promotion of the activities. It also enables Wbbn to pay for venues, admin material, travel as well as refreshments. It also helped us to produce banners and folders and cover other miscellaneous expenses. The project account has been excluded from this report for confidential reasons.

Following a successful completion of this project, Wbbn is anticipating making a new application to continue to support these businesses in 2019/20.

We are also looking to improve our website to be more useful to our businesses in searching for business related information.



Appendix 1

WBBN - EVALUATION SHEET OCT. 5, 2018					
1	How did you hear about the event	Telephone	e-mail	Social Media	Other
2	What type of business are you in	Retail/Service	Manufacturing	Voluntary	Social Enterprise
3	Overall would you say the event was useful to you	Yes	No	Not Sure	
4	How would you rate the Venue	Poor	Good	Excellent	
5	Overall how would you rate the speakers	Poor	Good	Excellent	
6	Are you happy with the day/time of the event	Yes	No	If no specify your date/time preference	
7	Are you happy with the time allocation for the speakers	Yes	No	If no specify how long you would prefer	
8	What business topic/s would you like us to cover next year (Tick or Circle One)	Finance/Funding; Procurement; Marketing; Start-up; Business Planning; Legal/employment; Business Awareness			
9	What in particular did you like or not about today's event				
10	To what extent did the event meet your expectation (Give Your answer in %)	Score.....			
11	Would you like to be notified about Wbbn future events	Yes	No	If yes please give your e-mail address or mobile no. here (optional)	

Thank you for completing the evaluation questionnaire

www.wbbn.co.uk



Appendix 2			
	Events	Attendants	Remark
1	Business Showcase	20	Attendees rated this event highly. This enables us to work with the Heritage Centre who provided a conducive venue.
2	Start-up	15	This event could have done with more preparation on content
3	Business Exhibition	32	This was an excellent event as all the attendees enjoyed themselves. Some of the exhibitors sold their product
4	Business Finance	12	Despite the hitch of sorting out the venue which delayed the start of the workshop, this was well received the moment it took off and all attendees enjoyed the presence of BCRS
5	Procurement	30	This was well attended considering that it was a daytime event and the weather was not that great. The presence of the Director of Procurement from the City of Wolverhampton Council was a big attraction to the event.
6	Business Conference	55	The Conference added a great value to the organisation as well as presented attendees with high quality speakers. The venue also added to the prestige of Wbbn. The challenge here was paying for the venue and providing refreshments as well as the amount of planning involved.
7	Marketing/Business Planning/Employment Law	21	This was the last event of the year but still drew a good turnout due to the topics of the workshop

