

# Community ESOL

## Contents

<b>A New Approach to Teaching English .....</b>	<b>2</b>
2. The Aim of the Project .....	3
3. Background to Curriculum Development .....	5
<b>Objectives .....</b>	<b>6</b>
4. Objective 1 - Community Groups.....	6
5. Objective 2 - Language Problems .....	12
6. Objective 3 - Pilot Study.....	16
7. Objective 4 - National Curriculum .....	31
8. Objective 5 - Curriculum Development .....	36
<b>Funding.....</b>	<b>42</b>
9. Mainstream ESOL Provision .....	42
10. Assessing Funding Practice in West London .....	44
11. Alternative Funding.....	45
12. Funding Partnership Arrangement.....	47
<b>Increasing Capacity .....</b>	<b>51</b>
13. New Provision.....	51
14. Linking with Community Groups .....	51
15. New Teaching Methods .....	52
<b>Conclusions .....</b>	<b>53</b>

### Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to the following:

Wayne Carr, ESOL Coordinator, Hillingdon AE  
Rosemary Butler, ESOL Coordinator, Hounslow AE  
Cindy Tsang, Head Teacher, HCCO  
Howard Crane, HAVS  
Jason King, HAVS

# Community ESOL

## A New Approach to Teaching English

through  
ethnic minority community centres  
with the aim of increasing capacity for successful ESOL  
learning in Hillingdon

### **1.1.1. The need for a new approach**

In the current political climate, the lack of English language is being cited as a possible cause of social divisions between different sections of multi-cultural British society. ESOL departments in areas which contain a large non-English speaking population are likely to come under pressure to solve that aspect of the problem, and to increase capacity *despite* a shortage of ESOL teachers. As CELTA training courses at FE Colleges across London expand to meet demand, more inexperienced teachers are taking up positions. ESOL coordinators in Hillingdon and Hounslow have expressed an interest in the development of additional resources and support materials to assist inexperienced teachers.

As a region with a high ethnic minority population, West London is looking for innovative ways of increasing capacity in ESOL learning. Classes are now offered through schools to relatives of pupils; this type of provision is both successful and expanding. Community-based learning is another way forward, and this project has been set up to investigate the potential for increasing capacity by working in partnership with ethnic minority community groups.

### **1.1.2. Curriculum Research and Development**

Prompted by the introduction of the new National Curriculum for ESOL and quality controls demanded by funding bodies, this project will make proposals to assist learning providers in meeting new targets. HAE has supported the curriculum research and development, based on the pilot study of a new community-based learning programme delivered by Hillingdon Adult Education to the Hillingdon Chinese Community Organisation.

A Resource CD has been produced for the use of ESOL teachers in the preparation and delivery of their classes. The notes may assist new teachers, and the classroom materials and worksheets have been welcomed by more experienced teachers, too. A number of worksheets have been described in detail to help less experienced teachers to exploit the materials fully. The scheme of Work for Community ESOL can be adapted for use in other ESOL courses.

All materials have been developed through trials in response to the needs of the pilot study group, without reference to existing course materials.

## 2. The Aim of the Project

This project is concerned with people who are some distance from labour market participation due to their lack of English language. The key aim is to increase the capacity for successful ESOL learning in Hillingdon through developing innovative methods of delivery and a partnership approach between community groups and providers, including Hillingdon Adult Education (HAE).

It is hoped to increase self confidence, improve social interaction and assist recognition of existing language skills through the new delivery methods. The intention is ***to move participants towards employability by teaching them English***, and measure the progress they make as a result of the project.

### 2.1.1. Measuring Progress

Progress over such a short-term project is very difficult to measure, especially in terms of language learning when students have little contact time and speak their native tongue for all but two hours per week. 'Soft' outcomes, such as a 'Willingness to approach English speakers' and 'Intention to continue learning English language' are given high consideration because the target group includes long-term unemployed women lacking basic skills.

### 2.2. Methodology

The project focuses on curriculum development and research into new methods of delivery. In addition it has investigated issues that are key to increasing ESOL capacity:

- Maximising funding
- Links with community groups

The outcome of the project is this report, detailing the research and development work that has been undertaken and including conclusions as to how ESOL capacity can be increased. The report will be used to disseminate examples of good practice in partnership work between learning provider and community group.

### 2.2.1. Maximising Funding

The project investigates how LSC (and possibly other) funding can be used to maximum benefit in developing successful community-based ESOL provision. This has involved clarification of the latest LSC funding requirements and some limited research into funding practice at other Adult Education Services and at FE Colleges.

### 2.2.2. Links with Community Groups

Closely related to the project is the delivery of ESOL learning at the Hillingdon Chinese Community Organisation. This is managed by HAE and funded through their core LSC funding. As a result of the project, it is hoped that links will be forged with other community groups in Hillingdon with the intention of developing community-based ESOL provision specifically geared to the needs of their members. It is hoped that this will lead to successful ongoing provision of ESOL.

### **2.2.3. Target Group**

The target group for Community ESOL consists of members of ethnic minority community groups who lack the English skills or confidence they need for involvement in local society and so only interact socially with their own group members using their own native language. The target group includes refugees and long-term residents who are

- lacking English language skills
- not attending ESOL classes in learning centres or elsewhere
- unable to utilise qualifications and work experience gained in their own country
- unable to interact with local society
- lacking in self confidence
- unaware of passive knowledge of English acquired through living in the UK
- speakers of non-European mother tongues

The project targets community group members who are likely to include women returners, refugees, unemployed men and single parents who are not currently attending ESOL classes despite their obvious language needs. The non-English speaking population of Hillingdon includes people from South Asia, the Middle East, the Far East, North Africa and East Africa; their language learning problems are exacerbated by the fact that their language base is fundamentally different from English. It is not unusual to find community members who have lived here for many years without ever managing to speak English, and their self-esteem is very low as a result.

### **2.2.4. Progression Routes**

Community ESOL group participants will be more likely to maximise their growing language skills and confidence levels if the community organisation can provide a range of progression routes, for example:

1. Support ongoing provision of Community ESOL
2. Provide a second course according to the needs and numbers in the group
3. Encourage members to attend additional English language courses at a learning centre
4. Encourage members to attend other courses for fun (eg yoga, floral art) where they will interact with English speakers
5. Encourage members to enrol for Further Education, where they will study their chosen subject in English
6. Develop new community-based learning opportunities eg IT course
7. Develop work oriented training courses through the community centre

### **2.2.5. Community ESOL : Student Outcomes**

Educational outcomes :

- OCN credits
- Further Education destinations
- Termly assessment

Language skills:

- Increased vocabulary
- Clearer speech production
- Awareness of sentence structuring
- Improved aural and reading comprehension
- Ability to complete forms

Key work skills :

Acquisition of language and communication skills

Team working

Problem solving

'Soft' outcomes :

Progression towards employability

Raised self-esteem

Higher personal aspirations

Career aspirations

Improved social interaction

Willingness to approach English speakers to converse

Enthusiasm for cultural interaction

Improved concentration

Intention to continue learning English language

Recognition of prior language skills

Motivation

### 3. Background to Curriculum Development

This project develops a new approach to assist ESOL teachers at a time when standardisation and quality controls are being introduced nationally, and when the distinctions between ESOL and EFL student profiles are no longer clear cut. Keeping the themed course materials and OCN accreditation already used in Hillingdon, it is hoped to augment current teaching with new materials and maximise contact time through essential skill-building exercises which will be language based rather than task based. The focus of each exercise will be the acquisition of specific language skills, giving consideration to the new ESOL National Curriculum.

Community ESOL materials are new, specially devised for a local community group by an ESOL teacher with experience at all levels of EFL. Aspects of EFL teaching have been adapted, and the new methods straddle the accepted norms for the two disciplines.

The new approach differs from current provision by:

- Being applicable to mixed level group teaching
- Addressing habitual errors of long term residents
- Teaching English Grammar from scratch to students with advanced fluency
- Focusing on language skills rather than task completion
- Incorporating multi purpose worksheets
- Paying attention to the specific needs of non-Europeans

#### 3.1.1. Aims of the Community ESOL new approach:

To build confidence among British residents who have absorbed English over time spent in this country but lack the self-belief to use it or even recognise it. Confidence building will be achieved by:

1. Enabling learners to make the best use of the knowledge they have acquired passively
2. Developing their language skills to the level required for their individual circumstances
3. Focusing teaching on speech production, comprehension and grammar
4. Developing new materials specifically for the target group
5. Catering for individuals with varying levels of English who aspire to very different goals

# Objectives

## of the Curriculum Research and Development

### **Objective 1 - Community Group Teaching**

Identify the language needs of community groups and investigate ways of providing learning solutions appropriate to the needs of the groups and their members.

### **Objective 2 - Language problems of non-European Learners**

Define the language problems of the target group and set priorities for language based teaching under Community ESOL.

### **Objective 3 - Pilot Study**

Carry out a pilot study using a new approach to ESOL teaching which focuses on the language skills most needed by the target group.

### **Objective 4 - National Curriculum for ESOL**

Investigate ways of incorporating the ideas behind the new National Curriculum for ESOL.

### **Objective 5 - Curriculum Development**

Develop materials to augment current ESOL teaching, taking into account the needs of the target group and the requirements of the National Curriculum.

## 4. Objective 1 - Community Groups

### **4.1.1. Benefits of Community-based teaching**

Community groups present the ESOL teacher with some benefits at the outset, which mainstream classes do not have. The learners are united by a common situation and set of circumstances; they are able to work as a group and communicate with each other in their own language. They will be at ease from the very beginning, sharing jokes and laughing at their own inadequacies, in a way which would be difficult to achieve in a mixed language beginners group where only the target language is being used.

### **4.1.2. Group Cohesion**

The community centre engenders a good group atmosphere as it provides an informal situation which makes students relaxed and more responsive to communication activities. A good class spirit is far easier to achieve in a community setting than in a mixed group where barriers need to be broken down and where, without the benefit of a common language, misunderstandings can more easily occur.

### **4.1.3. Regular Attendance**

Community-based learning is likely to produce a more regular attendance record because group cohesion is easier to achieve, especially if the members are attending the centre anyway, rather

than making an extra effort to go to a language class. Language learning is long term by nature; one of the prime considerations for successful learning is to achieve regular attendance and intent on the part of participants to continue learning English.

#### **4.1.4. Cultural understanding and integration**

Teachers who regularly attend a community group will gain an important insight into the particular issues which affect that group, and can incorporate relevant materials, vocabulary and teaching aids to suit the group's needs. The teacher is in an important position as perhaps the only regular contact that many group members will have with mainstream British society. It is an important opportunity to improve cultural understanding and encourage interaction between the community and the broader society in which it exists.

#### **4.2. Identifying the language needs of the group**

The target group has been defined in the Aim of the Project. It includes refugees and long-term residents who are lacking in self confidence, unable to interact with mainstream society and not attending ESOL classes elsewhere. They **are** aware of the pressing need to learn English. They are not attending classes in learning centres, usually for personal reasons:

- Feeling handicapped and helpless in an environment where they understand little or nothing of what is said
- Lack of confidence to approach an establishment where no member of staff speaks their native tongue
- Concern that they will be made to feel stupid when they don't understand the teacher
- Previous bad experiences in educational situations
- Embarrassment at their lack of formal education in their own country
- Ignorance of other cultures and fear of strangers

Target learners may also feel guilty because they have not been attending lessons, so that they become defensive whenever the subject is broached.

##### **4.2.1. Language needs**

These learners live in the UK, and they urgently need 'survival' English, as provided in mainstream ESOL classes. Most commonly they want to be able to buy things in shops, ask for directions, understand their children's school teachers, explain symptoms to the doctor, introduce themselves to English speakers and hold a basic conversation in a social situation.

Current ESOL methods are immediately applicable to community group teaching.

The new approach can augment provision in the following ways:

1. Assisting target learners who are particularly low in self esteem by focusing extra attention on their speech production and comprehension skills
2. Preparing for the ultimate goal of employment by increasing awareness of English grammar, without which the qualifications and work skills they may need will forever remain out of reach

##### **4.2.2. A community of individuals**

There is a great variety of community groups in West London, groups which have been here differing lengths of time, who came here for different reasons and from different parts of the world. While a community group is composed of members from a common origin, it is

important to recognise the uniqueness of the individual. The participants will vary in the following ways:

1. gender
2. age
3. educational background
4. employment history
5. personal circumstances and family commitments
6. availability for work
7. economic situation
8. personal and career aspirations
9. current use of English, access and opportunity to speak
10. number of years resident in UK
11. previous language study
12. aptitude for language study

The above list highlights the differences which must be expected in any group of ESOL learners. It is important to **remember that these differences exist** in community groups, even though the members share so much in common: ethnicity, usually a common heritage, historical background, country of origin, the same problems in their homeland, and, of most importance to ESOL provision, a common native language.

#### **4.2.3. Shared language problems**

When all the learners share the same language base, they also share the same language problems. All learners in the group from the strongest to the weakest will experience difficulties with particular aspects of the language, and there are benefits to be gained from this. Each time one student is corrected it serves to reinforce the point to the whole group.

Identifying these specific problem areas is not difficult for the teacher; when assessing the learners it will quickly become apparent which errors are shared by even the best speakers and writers in the group. Pronunciation exercises can then focus on the specific sounds which the group needs, tenses which are frequently misused can be taught more thoroughly and common errors can be weeded out. (Refer to the Resource CD for examples).

#### **4.2.4. Individual assessments across a broad range of language skills**

Some learners in the group may already be able to interact in English with their neighbours; others may have been here for many years without uttering a word. Those who demonstrate aptitude will progress more quickly, and some will progress because they have higher aspirations; a good education will also help, but lack of a good education, especially in members from Third World countries, is not an indicator of lack of ability to learn quickly.

The learners' diversity in the various language performance areas should all be considered, as their overall level is a combination of these elements:

- ability to communicate, convey ideas or hold a conversation in English
- ability to understand native English speakers
- pronunciation and clarity of diction
- understanding of the relationship between English writing and sounds
- knowledge of English sentence structure or grammar
- ability to write English which can be easily understood

- reading comprehension

It is not possible to tailor-make a course to meet the specific needs of each individual. Separate classes could cater for their various needs in :

Grammar, Speaking /Listening, and Reading /Writing with students grouped according to their ability in each language area. This could only be provided if facilities existed for several groups.

#### **4.2.5. Individual aspirations**

Individual needs within a community group can be complicated by the fact that married couples, relatives and close friends may be attending the same group together. Teachers must be aware of both positive and negative influences within student pairings, especially if one student habitually relies on a partner to speak for him/her.

### **4.3. Appropriate Learning Solutions**

Huge differences may exist in the aspirations and abilities of group members. In recent years a number of doctors, engineers and other well qualified professionals have arrived here as refugees. Their language needs may differ from the rest of the group, and it is important that they are identified as soon as possible.

#### **4.3.1. Doctors and other Professionals**

It is intended to follow up this project with the development of new provision which will move such learners towards employment in professions suited to their previous training and academic capabilities. Currently, ESOL provides an excellent grounding in survival English for those who want to get by in everyday situations in this country, while EFL classes provide an academic approach for language students who visit this country to perfect the language skills they have learnt at school.

A new group of ESOL students is emerging, made up of professionally trained and academically able men and women with high career aspirations, who cannot achieve their objectives through 'survival' English. They may need to pass high level English exams and re-qualify in professional exams, in competition with mother-tongue English candidates, in order to work in their chosen field in this country.

#### **4.3.2. Failure in EFL exams**

Such students have had little provision to date. They often attend EFL classes, but have a high failure rate in EFL exams because of a lack of basic preparation in grammar. Living in British society enables them to develop a higher level than their EFL peers in communication skills, but that does not prepare them to pass even the level 2 Cambridge Preliminary English Test, which caters for Threshold Level Users ('limited but effective use of the language in familiar situations').

Academic ability does not guarantee progress in language learning; a person may be academically able, but with little aptitude for languages. A scientist or mathematician is not necessarily a good linguist; indeed, (s)he may possess poor communication skills in his/her own language. It is therefore important for teachers to keep an open mind about the skills and abilities of community group members.

### **4.3.3. Confidence building through shared knowledge**

Individual group members who are normally shy or withdrawn in English-speaking situations feel more confident in a group where everyone has the same difficulties to overcome. The group members with the highest level of English can serve as the greatest encouragement to the group as a whole - sharing their knowledge, translating and assisting in class - a potent and constant reminder of what can be achieved. Because community group members share a common native language, they can help each other to learn.

### **4.3.4. Bilingual support**

In effect, if any group member understands what the teacher is trying to convey, (s)he can share it with all the others. Complete beginners requiring bilingual support can be helped in this way by other group members, making it possible to teach a very mixed level group, as the advanced students are effectively providing learning support for the beginners.

## **4.4. Best Practice**

There are three separate areas of practice which must be in place in order for Community ESOL to be successful:

- ❖ course administration
- ❖ course facilities
- ❖ teaching methods

### **4.4.1. Course Administration**

Administrative problems may need to be overcome with regard to the following:

1. premises must be convenient and accessible to the group, and ***rent costs should be funded*** to ensure the long term viability of the provision
2. to ensure the quality of provision, the expertise of a learning provider such as Adult Education or a local FE college should be used
3. additional funding will be required to cover costs relating to provision in terms of equipment, photocopies, childcare provision and student fees.
4. funding applications and form filling should be the responsibility of the learning provider. Where the necessary administrative practice is incompatible with the group's modus operandi, immediate discussion should be held and compromise agreements made. Before initiating the course both parties should clearly explain their own requirements so that administrative problems will not arise mid term.

### **4.4.2. Course Facilities**

Good practice in the delivery of a community-based ESOL course should comprise, if possible, the following facilities:

1. an experienced CELTA qualified teacher
2. provision of an accessible study area where students can write and be seated in front of the teacher, or all around a large table
3. regular fixed times for lessons
4. provision of photocopies
5. an English dictionary
6. a tape recorder / player, and accessible power point
7. chalk board or white board or A3 laminated sheets which can be written on and wiped clean
8. childcare provision for participants

### **4.4.3. Teaching Methods**

The teaching methods described above under Appropriate Learning Solutions must answer the language needs of community group members, to include usual ESOL provision with additional preparation in:

1. speech production, for those who cannot communicate what they can think in English
2. basic grammar for all, especially those who speak fluently but have never studied English methodically
3. comprehension, both listening and reading

The development of new teaching methods and materials is described under Objective 5, and examples can be found on the accompanying Resource CD.

## **4.5. Provision in West London**

### **4.5.1. Community Groups in Hillingdon**

Known groups within the borough of Hillingdon have been sent questionnaires and information about the project:

Asian Welfare and Cultural Society  
Bangladeshi Association  
Gujarati Society  
Hindu Society (Hillingdon)  
Islamic Education and Cultural Society (Hayes)  
Islamic Education Society (Uxbridge)  
Ramgarhia Sikh Association (Hayes)  
Sikh Welfare Association, Hillingdon  
Somali Women's Group

### **4.5.2. Developing Links**

The Connecting Communities Manager was sent additional questionnaires for distribution to further groups which might be interested in Community ESOL. It is hoped that Hillingdon Adult Education will be able to work with Connecting Communities and Hillingdon Race Equality Council to provide Community ESOL to more groups in future.

### **4.5.3. Examples of Hillingdon Adult Education's provision of ESOL in the Community**

1. Hillingdon Chinese Community Organisation Saturdays, 10.30 - 12.40

See "Objective 3 - Pilot Study"

2. Asian Women's Group Mon / Wed, 10.00 - 12.00 (Entry) 1.00 - 3.00 (Level 1)

Participants: 16 women, average age 30. Mainly Punjabi speakers.

The group is funded by the council, invoiced by HAE. Students only pay refundable deposit.

3. Cranford Women's Project Wednesdays, 9.30 - 11.30

Initiated under this ESF / SRB funded project in the Heathrow corridor, HAE provides classes for 16 mixed language, mixed level students. The arrangement is now in its fifth year. All costs including premises and crèche facilities are met by the project's own funding.

4. Willow Tree Community Centre Mon / Thur, 9.30 - 11.00

HAE provide classes and enrol students for Peabody Trust Housing Association who own premises, fund crèche and run courses for tenants.

5. Wood End Primary School Mon / Wed, 1.00 - 3.00  
Ladies class run by HAE in parent centre. Mixed languages, abilities and backgrounds.

6. West Drayton Community Centre Tues / Wed, 9.30 - 11.30  
For refugees on housing estate. 8 students in mixed level, mixed language group enrolled with HAE on LSC funded course.

7. NIACE Basic Skills and ESOL in Local Communities Pilot Project.  
Phase 1 ESOL : Minet Infants School  
Phase 2 ESOL : Grange Park Junior School  
Students were parents or close relatives of pupils attending the schools, and the schools recruited the students. HAE was responsible for initiating a project to establish local primary schools, including the two involved in this project, as Neighbourhood Learning Centres. After the project, alternative funding (Lifelong Learning Standards Fund) enabled the course to continue at Minet School.

#### **4.5.4. Provision in West London**

Adult Education and FE Colleges were asked to complete questionnaires to assess community-based ESOL provision across West London. The majority of outreach classes are now held through local schools, and this provision is likely to increase in line with the government's School Plus Policy. The second largest outreach provision recorded on the survey is through housing estates. Learning providers recorded 2 or less classes arranged through ethnic minority community groups.

The survey has not been completed by all learning providers, but initial findings suggest that provision in Hillingdon corresponds with provision elsewhere in West London.

## **5. Objective 2 - Language Problems**

The majority of Hillingdon's community group members find their origins in countries outside Europe; they speak a mother tongue which is fundamentally and structurally different from English, and they write using a different script which may not be an alphabet and so may not represent the sounds of the language they speak. In this case there are no points of reference: no words which are similar, no way of representing the new words in the written form which they learnt as children - some may never have learnt to write in their own language.

### **5.1.1. Writing**

Consequently, it is essential for all students and especially for beginners to familiarise themselves with the written form, and any students who are not proficient at writing the alphabet must be encouraged to form letters and copy short words as soon as possible. This project does not focus on literacy and handwriting skills (that can be done better elsewhere), but recognises the importance for non-European learners of regular practice writing and forming words in English. Writing has to be an intrinsic part of each lesson. Community ESOL presents the written form with all new vocabulary and structures, as it is the only way for learning to accompany the learner away from the classroom.

### **5.1.2. Vocabulary**

It is particularly demanding for students of this target group to remember new vocabulary; a difficulty which can be exacerbated by the fact that they are not young. In the pilot study, it is intended that the class will return to key topics and grammar points regularly. By rotating themes, functions and structures adult learners have the opportunity to revisit vocabulary and forms, assisting their memory and developing their ability to store and retrieve the new language.

Students may have acquired in the region of 300 new words by the end of a year's course, but an English speaker may use these words in a particular way, with different sentence stress for example, or using a different word order, making the words very hard for the learner to identify. Vocabulary is therefore presented to the pilot study group in a variety of contexts, using listening materials to check comprehension.

### **5.1.3. Pronunciation**

Good pronunciation is of prime importance for the target group, and indeed for all British residents, as they will need to make themselves understood through speech. It is essential if the learner is to have the confidence to speak - there is nothing more off-putting than blank stares in response to a first attempt to communicate. In everyday situations English people are sometimes intolerant of people they cannot understand; this is even more evident in the workplace, and is a particular problem for speakers of non-European languages. They might be unable to distinguish similar words ("bat / bet / but", or "wine/ vine/ fine") because the sounds of their language do not correspond to English sounds, and consequently they will be unable to produce certain sounds; they will not even know which sound is expected of them.

### **5.1.4. Speech Production**

For these reasons, Speech Production has been identified as the first priority in the new approach to teaching through Community ESOL. Pronunciation is a large part of this, but it also includes improving voice projection, intonation and stress timed sentence rhythm. (see Speech Production methods and materials on the Resource CD)

### **5.1.5. Linking Writing and Sounds**

The pilot study group of Chinese students wants to repeat words over and over again. Speakers of Chinese have learned to write their own language one word at a time, as Chinese characters do not reflect the sounds of the word. They sometimes apply this learning method to English, treating each written word as a combination of unrelated symbols; they learn that 'c-h-a-i-r' is the correct combination for the word 'chair', without realising that 'ch' makes the sound at the beginning of the word, and 'air' makes the sound at the end. (What they are doing is rather like representing the word 'chair' with the numbers which correspond to the position of those letters in the alphabet: '3.8.1.9.18'.)

Because English writing tends not to follow the rules, for example 'character' begins with 'ch' denoting a different sound, many students have not realised that there are any rules at all.

This results in two major problems for the students:

- They might write words with the letters jumbled up eg. cahir (for 'chair')
- They experience great difficulty in remembering the sound of the word until it has been repeated many, many times; seeing the written word does not help them to remember the sound.

If an English speaker learns French, for example, he will quickly realise that 'ch' in a French word (eg 'chambre') has the same sound as 'sh' in an English word, and will substitute that sound every time he finds 'ch'. When he tries to pronounce the French 'r' he will probably pronounce an English 'r' in its place. But he will not have any fundamental difficulty in remembering the word because he can always relate it in some way to English. If he then tries to learn Chinese he comes up against a far greater problem. It is very difficult to distinguish the sound of one word from another, and to remember the precise sound that is needed for a particular word. The written character for that word is a combination of strokes which give no clues to the sound. So the easiest way to remember the Chinese word is to write the sound of it using our own alphabet to reflect the sounds which make up the word. The problem for Chinese learners of English is that they have no alphabet of their own which they can apply to our words to reflect the sounds and make them easier to remember.

This particular problem may apply to speakers of other languages from around the world which do not use our alphabet. In any case, extensive practice of the sounds of the English language to encourage clear diction, and the forming of connections between the written word and the sound, will be of benefit to all learners.

#### **5.1.6. Comprehension**

Non-European learners of English face enormous difficulties when they try to understand the spoken word. Even if they learn a large number of common vocabulary items, they may not be able to pick out the words they know from a piece of connected speech at normal speed. It is therefore essential that ESOL classes provide additional practice of aural comprehension. Recorded examples of connected speech, native speakers using topic vocabulary and simple dialogues must be incorporated into lessons.

Furthermore, reading comprehension is enormously difficult for learners whose native language uses a different alphabet or script. They need to be given every opportunity to familiarise themselves with written words, and with the common letter combinations which represent English sounds. To achieve this, the written word must be made available to supplement the spoken word as much as possible.

#### **5.1.7. Reading and Listening**

For example, form filling exercises not only empower the learners to read sentences which they are likely to need in the course of their daily lives in this country, but at the same time they encourage elementary writing skills. For students who cannot read and understand the written questions, it may help if the questions are read aloud for them. Such an exercise might then be considered as aural comprehension, but by connecting the written form to the spoken words, the students' ability to read is being improved. In this way comprehension exercises can serve two functions, both listening and reading.

Reading skills are essential for anyone who may wish to work in an English environment, and basic reading skills should be encouraged from the first contact. It is felt that the best way to address the learning needs of the target group is to link aural and reading comprehension by :

- presenting spoken English as listening comprehension and supplementing it with the written transcript
- presenting written English as reading comprehension, but subsequently reading the words aloud so that the writing and the sounds of the language are always linked

This approach is developed under Objective 5, and supporting materials can be found on the Resource CD.

### **5.1.8. Grammar**

Sentence structure is an area of specific concern for non-European language learners. The study of grammar can seem daunting for both teacher and learner, but rules and structures provide a framework on which to hang all the rest of their language skills. Students who lack this framework will always be limited in their language acquisition. The teaching of grammar is best incorporated into the exercises for language skills; for example, a structure can be picked out of a listening exercise, taught as a model, and then applied using the topic vocabulary items.

### **5.1.9. Grammar Problems of long term residents**

It is very common for a fluent speaker to miss off the final 's' in "He live in London" or use the wrong part of the verb "She have a cough". This mistake can indicate a fundamental lack of knowledge about the construction of the English language, and is more complicated than it at first appears.

### **5.1.10. Examples:**

- |   |                     |   |  |
|---|---------------------|---|--|
| 1 | Student error       | : | My bag have a zip  |
|   | Student explanation | : | It's MY bag, not his or hers, therefore not 3 <sup>rd</sup> person       |
| 2 | Student error       | : | She legs hurt (meaning 'her leg hurts')                                  |
|   | Student explanation | : | After 'she' we must add 's' to the next word (no idea which is the verb) |

Both students are near the top of their group for ability to communicate, and are able to speak fairly confidently in everyday situations. In order to achieve the language competence required in the workplace they will need to focus their studies on basic language structure. This is an extremely hard task for an adult who has little inclination to be a language student, especially when she has been using the language incorrectly for many years and is not aware that she is making mistakes.

Being aware of the extreme difficulties that many of the target students have with English grammar, this project takes the innovative step of presenting all learners, irrespective of their ability to speak, with simple exercises in basic sentence structuring. It is felt that even students who have advanced communication skills should regularly return to the first rules and structures of English language until they can apply them in speech and improve their overall level. This is essential for those aiming to work in an office or profession, and will be of benefit to anyone hoping to work with English people.

### **5.1.11. Poor conversation but good grammar**

While some target students speak well but struggle to learn English grammar, a small number of others may have studied it at school without acquiring any communicative abilities, and so remain incapable of holding a conversation. Any unknown words render the whole sentence incomprehensible to such students, and they fail to make themselves understood to even the most patient listener. However, in terms of grammar these might be assessed as higher level students, easily able to pass written exams. Such students form only a small minority.

### 5.1.12. Language priorities of Community ESOL

To cater for the varying language needs of the target students, it has been decided to prioritise speech production, comprehension and grammar in the curriculum development for this project. (See Objective 5). ***The accompanying Resource CD includes new materials and methods to assist teachers in the preparation of community-based ESOL classes in these three prioritised areas of language learning.***

## 6. Objective 3 - Pilot Study

### 6.1. Purpose of Pilot Study

The project has been instigated by a desire on the part of the learning provider to

1. increase participation in ESOL by approaching target learners through their community group
2. unlock skills of refugees and long term residents, especially women unable to return to work
3. unlock unrecognised language skills of those who live in the UK but cannot interact with mainstream society
4. specifically target those refugees and long-term residents who are NOT to be found in the workplace or in ESOL classes in learning centres

1 Hillingdon has a large number of diverse community organisations, comprising groups who speak many different mother tongue languages. Many target learners attend their own community groups, and feel relaxed there because everyone speaks their language. The advantages of community-based learning have been described under *Objective 1*.

2. Refugees and long term residents may have acquired useful work experience and qualifications before coming to the UK, but find that it all counts for nothing once they get here. They are forced to re-qualify but cannot pass the exams because of their lack of English; as a result, skilled professionals might be found working here as cleaners. Many women with work experience and education are now housewives whose situation keeps them at home where they always speak their native tongue. They have little prospect of gaining employment in their chosen career.

3. Residents who have been in England for many years without having any opportunity to learn English suffer frustration, lack of confidence and even fear in many situations which require a knowledge of the language. They have acquired some English passively simply by absorbing it, but they are unable to put it to any use because they do not even realise what they know. The desire to learn English is strong among this group, but their self esteem is particularly low, and that is a key reason for their failure to recognise and use the knowledge they have.

4. The specific language needs of each group and each individual vary considerably, but in all cases their employment opportunities here, in an English speaking environment, are very few even at the very lowest level. The project recognises an 'invisible population' of immigrants who :

- are unable to find employment

- feel unable to attend classes in a learning centre

This invisible population might be considered to have the greatest need of all target ESOL students, but they are extremely hard to locate. It is felt that classes in community centres can directly approach them and, by improving their English language skills, increase their chances of employment and career aspirations.

## 6.2. Measuring Outcomes

The intended outcomes (**Progression Routes** and **Student Outcomes**) for the pilot study are the same as those listed under the Methodology for the project as a whole (2.2.4 and 2.2.5), and are an intrinsic part of it. The success of the project is measured in terms of the pilot study students' improved English language competence and progression towards a state of employability.

This will be demonstrated through their personal advances, described above as 'soft' outcomes, such as an increased willingness to interact with English speakers, career aspirations, improved concentration and motivation.

## 6.3. Setting up the Pilot Study

The Pilot Study is being conducted through the Hillingdon Chinese Community Organisation in South Ruislip. The organisation started classes under an independent arrangement in April 2001, before approaching Hillingdon Adult Education. HAE took over the management of the course in September 2001 with the same teacher and students, and supported the new approach and teaching methods, setting up the Community ESOL Project to study its development. At this point the contact time was increased from an hourly session to a two-hourly session per week, during term time. Students are assessed termly and at the end of year presentations they receive a certificate showing their level of achievement and 100% attendance where applicable. OCN accreditation has been introduced by HAE for the 2001 / 2002 school year.

### 6.3.1. Pilot Study Group Participants

The study focuses on 12 students who were assessed over their first four weeks of contact. Since then the group has expanded to 17 learners.

The group includes members with a range of previous work experience: nursing (specialising in physiotherapy), hairdressing, medical research, medical doctor (retired), two students, factory worker, office worker and dental assistant. Current work at the beginning of the project was limited to work in Chinese catering by five of the participants.

Name	Muk Lan*	Yan Yong	Yook Lin	Ai Lean	Chang E *	Xue Lan	Hua Xu *	Mei	Xue Pu	Rui Xiang	Yin Yuk	Emi
Gender	F	M	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
Age	17	20	66	42	41	33	42	36	65	29	44	27
Status	AS	AS	R	LR	LR	LR	LR	V	V	LR	LR	V
Work 1) <i>present</i>		CC	OAP		CC	CC	CC		OAP		CC	
Work 2) <i>previous</i>	Student	Student	House wife	Dental Assist.	nurse	Hair-dresser	CC	Med.research	doctor	Factory worker	h/w	office

Borough	Eal	Eal	Hill	Hill	Eal	Eal	KCh	Hill	Barn	Eal	Hill	Hill
---------	-----	-----	------	------	-----	-----	-----	------	------	-----	------	------

\* denotes case studies (pseudonyms are used)

See over for Key to Table :

KEY TO TABLE :

Status: AS - Asylum Seeker. R - Resident. V - Visitor. LR - Long-term resident 10yrs+

Work (1) current : CC - Chinese Catering OAP - retired

(2) previous : CC – Chinese catering Stud - Student h/w - housewife

Boroughs: Ealing, Hillingdon, Kensington & Chelsea, Barnet.

The group differs from mainstream classes in the following ways:

1. mixed levels from beginner to advanced study together
2. common language base allows bilingual methods to assist the complete beginners
3. a baby attends class with her mother and father
4. participants can be called away during class
5. severe lack of confidence and self-esteem among the long term residents who cannot communicate in English has prevented them from attending learning centre classes
6. students' registration fees are paid by the community group
7. a few participants are not eligible for free ESOL tuition

#### 6.4. Administering the Pilot Study Group

##### 6.4.1. Funding the Course

LSC Funding has been applied to the course in exactly the same way as it would be to a mainstream course in a learning centre. HCCO is invoiced for the fees of the students and pays all fees, currently drawing on an alternative funding award (Lottery, Awards for All). Funding to support the community organisation in the form of costs relating to renting the premises has been negotiated with HAE. The group meets in council owned premises but has to pay rent to the council for use of the premises.

##### 6.4.2. Enrolments

Students are enrolled as HCCO members. Most pay fees to the organisation in respect of their children's membership and Chinese language classes, but these fees barely cover costs (£45 per year). Students are also enrolled as Hillingdon Adult Education learners, and complete Student Learning Agreements in accordance with HAE policy. Each student who qualifies for free ESOL tuition incurs the registration fee of £12 for the year (for which HCCO is invoiced, see above), while those who do not qualify incur tuition fees of £102. This fee may be absorbed by HAE or HCCO, but it is felt that passing it on to the individual students would be divisive and unacceptable in the context of community group provision.

#### 6.5. Student Assessments

The first contact period was conducted in the coffee bar, with the students surrounded by friends and relatives, some of whom were proficient in English. Many of the students simply asked for a translation of everything that was said, and insisted "No English".

Next they were taken to a learning area, and it became clear that there was a huge difference in language performance levels between the group's participants, from quite fluent speech to lack of response to "What is your name?" or "Is that your drink?"

### 6.5.1. Student Consultation to define Course Contents

They were each asked what they wanted the course to include:

What do you want to learn?

Speaking and pronunciation                      Listening and understanding                      Grammar  
 Reading and writing                      English for computers

Would you like to include cultural activities?

Dancing              Films              Music              Exercise              Festivals              Other

Five out of twelve students needed to have these questions translated for them by the Chinese assistant teacher. The ensuing discussion in Chinese was most productive as group members suggested the common themes which were most important to them:

Doctors / dentists / health vocabulary (especially women’s problems), Parents meetings at school, Banking, Shopping, Take-away customer interaction, Directions and transport.

Everyone wanted to concentrate on English Language, and leave cultural activities for a later date, and most had speaking and pronunciation as their top priority. English for computers was requested by four students, and a separate computing course may be set up as a result. Three students requested grammar, and another three requested reading for newspapers and school notes.

Students did not request Listening and Understanding, perhaps because they had never done listening exercises before and considered it something which was acquired rather than taught; many were unaware of how poor their listening skills were. The majority of students said they did not want to do any writing. However, when the first vocabulary items were taught using visual aids with no written words, some students asked for the spellings, and immediately the whole group wanted to write them down. It was therefore concluded that separate language assessments would be used to determine the group’s language needs, and these would be incorporated into the scheme of work.

**Outcome of student consultation:**

Speaking and pronunciation	11
Listening and understanding	0
Grammar	3
Reading and writing	3
English for computers	4
Doctors / dentists / health	7
Parents meetings at school	5
Banking	4
Shopping	3
Take-away customer interaction	2
Directions and transport	2
Cultural Activities	0

The Scheme of Work (see Resource CD) was drawn up to reflect the wishes of the students with regard to topics, and their language needs as determined by assessment.

### **6.5.2. Individual Assessment**

During a prolonged assessment period, learners were given a variety of tasks in order to determine their individual needs. They were then given an assessment grade from 1-6 for each of the following categories:

1. ability to communicate, convey ideas or hold a conversation in English
2. ability to understand native English speakers
3. pronunciation and clarity of diction
4. understanding of the relationship between English writing and sounds
5. knowledge of English sentence structure or grammar
6. ability to write English which can be easily understood
7. reading comprehension

### **6.5.3. Task 1 Enrolment Form**

Students were asked to complete the Hillingdon Chinese School enrolment form, which is written in both Chinese and English, and they were expected to fill in their own personal details in English.

1. Numbers, such as Date of Birth and Telephone, posed no problems at all.
2. Filling in 'Name' was more complicated than it might seem, for the following reasons:
  - Most students have a Chinese name and an English name.
  - They have less attachment to their English name, and might not be concerned about how it is spelt.
  - Their English name (the name which English people call them) might bear little resemblance to their Chinese name.
  - Some students also use the English spelling of their Chinese name, and that can be completely different from the name they give as 'English name'.
  - Chinese women continue to use their maiden name after they are married, so they are not sure which surname to give when filling forms.
  - It is not customary for Chinese women to use their first name with a complete stranger.

Taking these factors into consideration, it becomes clear why so many students were hesitant or unable to answer the question "What is your name?" at the initial meeting.

3. Some students could not spell the name of the road they lived in.
4. Only two of the students knew the English names of the languages they spoke (eg Mandarin)
5. Most did not know the English name for the town they were born in.
6. Two students could not spell 'China' or 'Chinese'
7. One could only use capital letters
8. Four students were able to complete the form unaided, or by asking questions in English, and they helped the rest of the group to complete theirs.

Students who were able to complete the form unaided with mistakes which did not impede understanding were assessed at 6 for writing, while those who could not write their own personal details were assessed at 1.

#### 6.5.4. Task 2 Communication

Each student was engaged in verbal communication with the teacher, on a subject intended to put them at their ease. Most students had children with them, attending Chinese classes while the mothers were learning English, and this was most commonly the subject:

How many children do you have? How old is your son?

Additionally, a detail from the enrolment form was expanded, eg:

I see you live in Ruislip. Is your house near the station?

Or I see you live a long way from here. Did you come by bus?

Or So, you speak 3 Chinese languages. Which is your first language? Which language do you speak with your children?

In this communication task, pointing and demonstrating was used to assist understanding, and translation as a last resort. The student was assessed according to how well she engaged with the teacher, in particular whether she picked up on English words which had been explained, demonstrated or translated for her, and tried to use them herself. Assessment for communication was from 1 to 6, where 1 indicates unwillingness to communicate in any way at all, and 6 demonstrates an ability to respond to simple questions in English, placing minimal strain on the other speaker. Marks were also given at this point for ability to understand an English speaker, and a preliminary assessment of their knowledge of sentence structure was made.

#### 6.5.5. Task 3 Word Lists

Two lists of words, each containing a particular vowel sound, were drawn up, with the letters representing these sounds highlighted in a different colour.

leg well get egg pet ten bet  
feel feet week keep peep teen keen

These vowel lists were used to teach two English vowels with their most common written forms, but the students' ability to differentiate between the words in a list demonstrated their knowledge of the consonants which surrounded the vowels. The same assessments were conducted using lists which focused on other vowels, and on consonants:

puppy	bubble	tatty	daddy	kick	giggle
fifty	Vivien	thirtieth	the weather	sausage	zoos
sheepish	Asian	church	judge	lily	roaring
mummy	nanny	singing	hard hat	yoyo	willow

Students were asked to identify the word when it was called out, by pointing at their copy of the list. Two students were not able to do this unaided.

Next, students were asked to call out a word, any word they chose from the list, and the other students had to identify the word they had said. This simple test clearly demonstrated the students' ability to connect the sounds with their written form, as well as highlighting basic problems with pronunciation. Marks were awarded from 1 to 6 for these two assessment categories.

### 6.5.6. Task 4 Multiple Choice Test

The multiple choice test was designed to assess the students' knowledge of English sentence structure as well as their reading comprehension.

1 Here are 12 words. You need 8 of them to fill the spaces in the passage which follows:  
 Happy to children in brings is  
 are London by and New from  
 Hillingdon Chinese Community Organisation meets every Saturday morning during school term time. It (1)..... in South Ruislip, not far from the Central Line tube station. It is near bus routes 114 and 140, and for those who come (2) ..... car there is plenty of car park space available. It is a new community group, in existence just over a year, which (3) ..... together Chinese people from all over West (4) ..... . They celebrate important occasions in the Chinese calendar such as (5) ..... Year, and organise trips to join in with other Chinese celebrations, like the Dragon Boat Festival (6) ..... London's Docklands. There is a refreshments bar selling tea, coffee, toast, biscuits (7) ..... sweets. The community group is very popular with families; the (8) ..... can learn Chinese writing, and their parents can learn English. It's a great place to meet friends and have a friendly chat.

One student filled all the gaps correctly. Question 3 caused a problem for everyone else. Two students were unable to attempt the test unaided, but one managed 4 out of 8 once the words were read out to him. He scored 1 for reading comprehension, 2 for knowledge of sentence structure.

### 6.5.7. Initial Assessment Results

Using students' performance at the four Assessment Tasks, an initial assessment was reached for each individual.

	Muk Lan *	Yan Yong	Yook Lin	Ai Lean	Chang E *	Xue Lan	Hua Xu *	Mei	Xue Pu	Rui Xiang	Yik Yun	Emi
communication	1	2	1	6	2	2	2	3	2	4	3	2
understanding	2	3	1	6	2	3	2	2	2	5	3	2
pronunciation	4	5	2	4	3	2	2	2	3	2	3	4
writing/sounds	5	1	1	6	3	2	3	6	4	6	3	5
structure	5	2	1	4	2	2	3	5	4	4	2	5
writing	5	2	1	6	2	2	3	6	3	6	3	5
reading	5	1	1	6	2	3	3	5	4	5	3	5

This demonstrates a huge difference in language attainment within the group; there is no one language profile common to all, and individuals had extremely different scores across the range of language skills. It was felt that this group had particular needs which would best be met by the development of a new course which focused on improving the speech, comprehension and grammar of all its members. In this way it was hoped to move participants more quickly towards a state of employability. Materials and methods had to be devised which would challenge most of the students most of the time.

## 6.6. Group Teaching

The assessments highlight the problem which was examined in the previous section (Language Problems - Grammar) of uneven language profiles among the group's participants.

Initially, students were divided into two groups according to their overall level and ability to understand what the teacher was saying, with the teacher and assistant alternating between them. However, a part of the time was spent together, and sometimes the whole session. These combined sessions were found to be beneficial in a number of ways:

- the learning experience became bi-lingual for the beginners, as they could resort to Cantonese when they did not understand
- the stressful element was thereby removed for those who could not understand English
- stronger students were happy to translate new vocabulary for weaker students, gaining self confidence as learning developed into teaching
- weaker students gained in confidence when they succeeded alongside stronger ones, for example by achieving better pronunciation of new words
- a friendly group spirit developed
- all students had an opportunity to shine in new exercises
- teacher and assistant could work together and observe each other
- The aspect of teamwork which evolved through students helping each other and sharing what they knew, enhanced the learning process.

Because it is a mixed level group, students with good reading skills were asked to read more advanced texts to the rest of the group. A sentence for pronunciation and intonation practice might be taken from the text for all to repeat. Weaker readers were encouraged to work with written texts in a variety of ways, so that they might lose their inhibitions and gradually acquire the confidence to approach reading tasks on their own. At the same time, the needs of those who want to learn to read and write for work purposes could be met.

During the second term most teaching was combined, with the whole group working together and the assistant providing learning support for the one student who could understand almost nothing.

## 6.7. Case Studies

Pseudonyms have been used.

### **6.7.1. Case study 1: Muk Lan**

Age: 17 years, 5 months  
Status: Asylum Seeker, 4 years leave to remain  
Resident in UK since: June, 2000  
Previous English study: 4 years at high school in China  
Prior Work Experience: none  
Current use of English: none  
Stated language needs: speaking, everything

At first contact, Muk Lan could only be described as very vulnerable. I thought that she couldn't speak at all; every effort I made was met with a blank stare. She joined the group 6

weeks after its inception, with her newborn baby and the baby's father, and she hid behind him most of the time. She was quiet for the first two lessons; if I was asking the students to answer in turn she would remain silent when I came to her. So I organised a couple of pronunciation exercises with everyone calling out together, and she joined in with that, quietly.

When we did written work, form filling, I noticed that she was completing the form while her partner could not. She had to explain to him what the questions said. For the more demanding written exercises she was top of the class. But she insisted on writing out the Chinese translation for every word on every piece of paper I gave her. If 15 topic vocabulary items were taught, she knew only one or two; but the following week she knew them all.

She continued to avoid direct conversation in English, but I noticed she was still avoiding it in Chinese too, clearly embarrassed by her situation, terribly shy and completely overwhelmed. The community group gave the couple enormous support, dealing with social services, translating for them, donating gifts for the baby etc. After 2 months, Muk Lan was beginning to answer my questions, not just in class but socially too. At the first end of term assessment she scored the highest overall mark of the group. I told Muk Lan and the community group leader that she should go to college and study as much English as possible, as she was capable of getting qualifications in English.

At the beginning of the second term Muk Lan started initiating conversations with me, and she displayed a new confidence in lessons. I lent her a book and cassette for Cambridge PET preparation as she was lonely at home and wanted to study. The 'Employment Record' form was completed by all the students, and Muk Lan answered question 7 (What kind of work would you like to do?) with the single word 'teacher'.

It will probably take two years before she can start GCSE courses, then a further 7 years through the English education system to qualify as a teacher, and while she's studying she'll have parental responsibilities to cope with too. She has started assisting the teacher in Chinese classes, which involves withdrawing from part of the English lesson, and she now gives personal support to an adult learner on a regular basis. I feel that this contact will be beneficial to her English as she has to explain everything in English. It certainly boosts her confidence. She can learn in twenty minutes what the rest of the class learns in two hours.

By the end of the project, Muk Lan has made progress in English which cannot be due to the language she has learnt in class. She has acquired some vocabulary through living in England, she is intelligent and has youth on her side. But the factor which has enabled her to use these advantages is the raised self esteem and raised aspirations which have come about thanks to the support she has received from the community group. She now attends a daytime course through Uxbridge College and is preparing to take the Cambridge PET exam in 2002. She has enrolled on the childminding course run by HCCO, commencing January 2002.

### **6.7.2. Hua Xu**

Age: 42 years  
Status: British, permanent resident  
Resident in UK since: 1987  
Previous English study: none  
Prior Work Experience: Chinese catering

Current use of English: little: not enough for dealing with school, doctor etc  
Stated language needs: to understand and speak to customers, teachers, doctor etc

At first contact, Hua Xu would not speak. The only words she said were “No English”. She looked confused and embarrassed when addressed in English, and turned to friends for a translation of every word before replying with a nod or shake of the head.

With perseverance I could see that she understood many individual words, but would not commit to answering a sentence which included any unknown words. She was desperate to learn; although painfully shy, she registered herself for lessons - no-one was pushing her. She would come up to me, wanting to speak, but then stand in silence; when I spoke to her she panicked and turned to look for help.

As the course progressed she always sat with friends, and reverted to Cantonese throughout the lessons whenever she wasn't sure of something. But she always offered the answer if she knew it, and she surprised me once or twice by remembering a word which the others had forgotten. She showed more enthusiasm for the grammar than most of the group and, as her confidence grew, even asked for explanations or confirmation of grammar points.

At the first end of term assessment she spent twice as long as the others on the short multiple choice test, but scored 8 out of 10, ahead of some of the more advanced students. With no prior study of English and limited formal education in her own language, she was proving to be an able and dedicated student.

Homework is voluntary, but on one occasion I commented on the fact that Hua Xu had not done the work. She said “Sorry, no time. Very busy”. I told her that it was very important to spend a little time at home going over what we had learnt, and she went on to explain that she had been running the take-away all week with just her brother in the kitchen.

She became more confident week by week, always paying great attention and learning quickly. By the end of the project she showed a willingness to interact in English which had been totally lacking at the outset. She had 100% attendance from April to December, and intends to continue with the course for as long as it runs. She has no wish to move on to other courses at present, but has requested that the Saturday morning class be extended to 3 hours.

### **6.7.3. Case study 3: Chang E**

Age: 41  
Status: British, permanent resident  
Resident in UK since: 1991  
Previous English study: a few months in an ESOL class when she first arrived  
Prior Work Experience: Nurse, 8 years, in China. Some physiotherapy training.  
Current use of English: tries to speak, but understands very little  
Stated language needs: Level required to return to work as a nurse

At first contact Chang E was not so much shy as embarrassed at her inability to speak, but that didn't stop her from trying. Her pronunciation was quite clear, but her vocabulary was very limited. She could only understand the simplest conversation if it was predictable. Her reading and writing were poor, although she could form letters correctly and copy neatly. She always

worked with the support of an advanced student, and took pride in filling in forms correctly and fully; after having the questions explained to her in Chinese she would ask for a translation of her answer and then ask for it to be spelled out.

Gradually she moved her position to sit next to me. Although she was slower than most of the group to form her phrase, she would make sure that she had the chance to say it. If I was looking for a volunteer, she would have a go. She found it difficult to remember new vocabulary and forms each week. At the first end of term assessment, she took the test very seriously and made every effort but was not able to remember all the vocabulary we had studied. She showed frustration when she could not remember 'health' vocabulary, having been medically trained in China.

Chang E demonstrated good attendance, enthusiasm to learn, and a particular satisfaction in the grammar exercises, which she can do as well as anyone. Her progress is slow, and it is bound to be slow; an English 40 year old trying to learn Chinese would progress no faster under similar circumstances. By the end of the project Chang E had raised her aspirations to consider returning to nursing, and was showing real determination to improve her English with this in mind. She has enrolled on the childminding course run by HCCO, commencing January 2002.

### **6.8. Development of Teaching Methods and Materials**

No existing course books have been used in the preparation of teaching methods and materials for the pilot study. The course developed entirely in response to the students' language needs. When an exercise was found to be difficult for several members of the group, another exercise was produced for the following week, taking the problem down to smaller or simpler parts which could be understood by all.

#### **6.8.1. Vocabulary sheets**

At first a sheet of pictures representing topic based nouns was distributed, and students were asked to repeat words, identify an item when it was called out, and subsequently produce the word in response to picture stimulus. Students added the written words under the pictures themselves. Since the priorities for the course were to improve speech production, grammar and comprehension, vocabulary sheets needed to be exploited to serve other functions. The most obvious use for them is in pronunciation practice. (See the Resource CD: Speech Production). One sheet taught adjectives of feelings and emotions, and this was very useful later on for intonation practice, to convey different attitudes while repeating a dialogue.

#### **6.8.2. Grammar sheets**

In order to fit the teaching of grammar into the topic based structure requested by the students, additional grammar sheets were produced, addressing fundamental matters such as: what can be represented by the word 'it' or any of the personal pronouns. Students were unable to recognise that 'our house' could be replaced by 'it' (not 'we'), 'he' not 'she' for 'her brother' etc. Grammar sheets were devised to explain the most common errors, or sources of confusion. These have been reproduced on the Resource CD, under First Grammar.

However, grammar sheets have their limitations, and students who are aiming to attain effective everyday English need to practise useful phrases and vocabulary in the course of each lesson. Rather than have to produce and photocopy an additional grammar sheet, it became the goal to

incorporate the grammar point into the vocabulary / comprehension sheet. The multi function sheets which were developed to achieve this end, are described in the section on Curriculum Development (Objective 5) as Activity Sheets.

### **6.8.3. Comprehension materials**

'Eczema' might be regarded as an advanced vocabulary item. But to the mother of a child who suffers from eczema it is an everyday word. Working on the principal that the words we need are the ones we learn first, this project's new materials reflect the language needs of the pilot study students. For example, most students wanted to learn how to understand their children's teachers on parents' evening. School tracking grades and end of term reports were used to produce a worksheet which reflects the vocabulary used by the school, and most commonly referred to by the teachers: behaviour, effort, attainment.

The worksheet set out to give numerous examples of these 3 attributes, and to assist student recognition of each one. At the same time it demonstrated how an English sentence can be turned around while maintaining the same or similar meaning, by changing a noun for a verb, for example. This eventually became the second function of the sheet, as verb recognition was incorporated as a completely new but associated exercise. The sheet provided more than 2 hours of worthwhile activity, and is reproduced on the Resource CD as Activity Sheet 5.

### **6.8.4. Dialogues**

Audio cassette recordings were used on 2 occasions, and provoked an unexpected response from the students. The recordings were extremely simple, using topic vocabulary which had been pre-taught, and with unhurried, clear speech - one speaker at a time; and yet not one of the students understood everything after listening twice. The best communicators immediately recognised the value of such an exercise, and the whole group asked to listen again several times.

When asked, at the end of the project, for their opinions on all the various exercises, it was the tape recordings that got the greatest disapproval. Some of the students, mainly those who had the worst comprehension skills, said they preferred the dialogues to be read by the teacher and assistant teacher every time. This is not a good idea! Students need to familiarise themselves with as many different English speakers as possible if their comprehension skills are to improve.

It is hoped to produce an audio cassette of the dialogues produced for the study, but in class they were mostly read out by the teacher and assistant in class. The vocabulary used was precisely what was needed for the situations and topics requested. Students listened, usually twice, then answered questions and discussed the content. Finally they were given the transcript to read, and they practised reading them out in pairs. At the end of the project, these dialogues were voted most popular of all the materials produced.

## **6.9. Outcomes**

Intended outcomes were listed under Methodology, (2.2.4 and 2.2.5).

### **6.9.1. Progression Routes**

Hillingdon Chinese Community Organisation is a vibrant and forward thinking group. A variety of funding sources are applied so that new opportunities can be offered to members.

The previously mentioned suggested progression routes have already been made available to the Community ESOL participants:

- ❖ the organisation has undertaken to continue to provide Community ESOL, and has secured funding to ensure continuation of the provision
- ❖ those participants whose English level is high have been encouraged to attend higher level English language courses at a learning centre
- ❖ ESOL course participants have been encouraged to attend other courses for fun (eg yoga, floral art) in order to interact with English speakers, and the programme of Adult Education courses has been made available to them
- ❖ with the support of community group members, one ESOL course participant is now working towards the English examination which will prepare her for Further Education
- ❖ a new community-based learning opportunity has been set up to teach child minding skills using bilingual support, with accreditation which could lead them to full registration as child minders and ultimate self sufficiency in employment

### **6.9.2. Student Outcomes**

As the Community ESOL project has been written up over a matter of months it is unlikely that the language levels of the participants would have changed markedly. However, in the case of long-term residents who have not previously undertaken English tuition, their very involvement in the scheme and continuing high attendance rates (see Case Studies 2 and 3, above) already demonstrate the success of the community based approach. The new materials which were developed and tested out on the group, created a great deal of enthusiasm in classes with high motivation among learners. Enthusiasm among participants remains high, and confidence among weaker students is constantly building.

Termly assessment was carried out in June and December in which the new vocabulary and structures were tested. These demonstrate the participants' improvement in terms of language performance in the areas specified in the Aims of the Project :

- ❖ Increased vocabulary
- ❖ Clearer speech production
- ❖ Awareness of sentence structuring
- ❖ Greater aural and reading comprehension
- ❖ Ability to complete forms

Students' work will be submitted for OCN accreditation at the end of the year. Key work skills have been gained through participation on a regular basis, as all participants have to communicate in English during the lessons - this being a major step forwards for some of the students - and complete a variety of tasks in English including problem solving which is done in pairs or groups.

### **6.9.3. Final Assessments**

End of term assessments were carried out in December. Ability to communicate, convey ideas or hold a conversation in English, ability to understand native English speakers and pronunciation / clarity of diction were assessed when Hillingdon's ESOL coordinator came to observe the lesson. He spoke to 7 of the students individually and addressed the group as a whole, and found them to be very communicative and lively.

In particular, the 7 individuals were assessed by the teacher while the coordinator was speaking to them (Muk Lan, Yook Lin, Ai Lean, Xue Lan, Hua Xu, Rui Xiang and Mei) and the rest of the group during discussions with the assistant. Students were also tested on the vocabulary and grammar which had been studied during the term.

#### 6.9.4. Assessment Results

Two students were unable to attend for much of the term (Yik Yun due to work commitments, and Xue Pu due to ill health) and were missing for the end of term assessments.

All of the other students show an improvement in communication, understanding or pronunciation (apart from the most able student whose level is already much higher than the rest). Improvements in reading and writing are difficult to assess over such a short time, and tests were not devised which would be able to measure such small changes. However, the two students who were unable to complete forms or write personal details at the outset have improved, and their final score reflects this.

The end of term grammar test was set to test the specific points which had been taught:  
 Verbs : be, have, do                      countable / uncountable nouns                      some / any  
 All students present (7) scored in excess of 80%, apart from Yook Lin (66 years old) who was helped by the assistant.

#### 6.9.5. Initial Assessments

	Muk Lan *	Yan Yong	Yook Lin	Ai Lean	Chang E *	Xue Lan	Hua Xu *	Mei	Xue Pu	Rui Xiang	Yik Yun	Emi
communication	1	2	1	6	2	2	2	3	2	4	3	2
understanding	2	3	1	6	2	3	2	2	2	5	3	2
pronunciation	4	5	2	4	3	2	2	2	3	2	3	4
Writing/sounds	5	1	1	6	3	2	3	6	4	6	3	5
structure	5	2	1	4	2	2	3	5	4	4	2	5
Writing	5	2	1	6	2	2	3	6	3	6	3	5
Reading	5	1	1	6	2	3	3	5	4	5	3	5

#### 6.9.6. Final Assessments

	Muk Lan *	Yan Yong	Yook Lin	Ai Lean	Chang E *	Xue Lan	Hua Xu *	Mei	Xue Pu	Rui Xiang	Yik Yun	Emi
communication	4	3	2	6	3	3	3	4	2	4	3	3
understanding	4	3	1	6	3	3	3	3	2	5	3	2
pronunciation	5	5	2	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	5
writing/sounds	5	2	2	6	3	2	3	6	4	6	3	5
structure	5	2	1	4	3	3	4	5	4	5	2	5
writing	5	2	1	6	2	2	3	6	3	6	3	5
reading	5	2	1	6	2	3	3	5	4	5	3	5

#### 6.9.7. Soft Outcomes

Achievement of 'soft' outcomes is being demonstrated as follows :

- ❖ Progression towards employability

Students completed an Employment Profile form, and all of them expressed an interest in working within an English context as and when their language permits, apart from the two students over 65 years old, and two who are happy working in Chinese catering.

One class member worked as a medical researcher in China; since beginning the course she has found work as a laboratory technician, doing work which is very easy for her but very demanding for her English.

7 of the pilot study group students have embarked upon a course organised by the Chinese Community in partnership with Stanmore College. It is an Introduction to Child Minding, the CACHE Foundation Award in Caring for Children. 5 of these students could not have considered joining such a course, delivered in English by English professional trainers, without the ESOL preparation and improved self belief.

❖ Raised self-esteem

Students were very proud to receive certificates at the end of year presentation, in front of their children - some of whom were not aware that their mothers had been studying English while they were in their own classes. One has passed her driving test this term. The ESOL participants display much more confidence within their community group - which is a very large group - than they did at the outset.

❖ Higher personal aspirations

The ESOL group has brought some new members into the community group. Group members are encouraged to help with refreshments, looking after children and other community activities. Helping others raises the individual's opinion of herself and her position in the community. One participant, who is a hairdresser by trade, cuts the hair of other group members, free of charge. It is striking to see individuals who didn't speak at first contact, opening up to show new group members what to do, and taking a leading role in the class.

❖ Career aspirations

A trained nurse and physiotherapist is working hard to improve her English and, after 10 years in this country, now entertains some hope of working in the NHS one day (see Case Study 3).

A teenaged mother now hopes to become a teacher, although she faces many years of study if she is to achieve it (see Case Study 1). She now teaches Chinese to an English adult learner, and she is attending the Child Minding course.

❖ Improved social interaction

One of the students has invited English children to go out with her son, taking them on an outing for the first time. Several students have started to speak about English people they know. It is only possible to describe for certain the improved interaction which is evident at the community centre. At the end of term the ESOL coordinator came to observe a lesson; he engaged in conversation with most of the students, but specifically with 2 students (Case Studies 1 and 2) who had been completely uncommunicative at the outset of the project. He found both of them very willing to interact; for those of us who had observed their development from first contact, it was truly remarkable.

❖ Willingness to approach English speakers to converse

A Chief Inspector of police in full uniform came to address the Chinese Community Group at their Christmas party. Five of the ESOL class members, including some who had been very reticent at first contact, were happy to go and sit at her table and they wanted to introduce themselves to her.

❖ Enthusiasm for cultural interaction

In response to student requests, guests are to be invited to show students aspects of British culture, a recipe swap has begun and a video swap is being considered.

❖ Improved concentration

Most participants have not been in a learning situation for 20 years, and some had only limited schooling when young. The group is now completing quite complicated tasks which they would not have attempted initially. In particular, a reading comprehension (R2 - Job Advertisements, on Resource CD), which kept them all engrossed for about an hour. Lessons have been extended from one hour to two hours, by student demand.

❖ Intention to continue learning English language

Most of the students began lessons in April, are still attending consistently in December, and are determined to continue, even though they have never followed an English course for this long before. (Two students have not attended for many weeks: a lady of 66 due to ill health, and a working mother due to work commitments.)

❖ Recognition of prior language skills

Four students showed a remarkable improvement in the first six months of lessons. Having been assessed with a score of 1 or 2 for communication because they failed to respond to very simple questions at the initial meeting, they now speak to the teacher without hesitation on a variety of subjects, even initiating English conversations themselves. This cannot be explained simply in terms of the language items they have been taught, but demonstrates that passive knowledge which they were not aware of is now actively being used.

❖ Motivation

The group is noisy; students motivate each other and call out answers eagerly. There is a competitive edge to many exercises, and all students have been able to succeed ahead of their peers in one area or another, either pronouncing a pure sound or remembering a new word or piece of information. It is the students' motivation which makes the lessons enjoyable and ultimately successful.

## **7. Objective 4 - National Curriculum**

A summary of the key requirements described in the DRAFT VERSION of the New National Curriculum for ESOL (Entry Levels only) can be found on the Resource CD. At the time of preparing this report only the Draft version of the curriculum was available, but the thinking behind it is clear. It draws on aspects of Basic Skills and EFL teaching, while placing an equal emphasis on the four language skills: Speaking, Listening, Reading, Writing.

### **7.1.1. Grammar**

Grammar is to be integrated within the teaching of each of the four skills under the National Curriculum, and the requirements are quite demanding. The new materials developed for this project similarly include the teaching of grammar and language functions within normal topic based lessons. They focus on the grammar identified in the National Curriculum as necessary for the production of the language functions at Entry Levels 1 and 2 only, broadly the following:

*Verbs: Present simple of be / have / do*  
*Regular verbs eg. like / play*  
*'have got' to indicate possession*  
*adjectives after 'be'*  
*questions using simple present be / have / do*  
*imperatives and negatives*  
*Present continuous*  
*Past simple and continuous*  
*modals: can, must, need to, have to, could + infinitive*

*subject pronouns*  
*countable / uncountable nouns*  
*plurals*  
*indefinite article*  
*'wh' questions*  
*possessive and demonstrative adjectives*  
*and pronouns*  
*object pronouns*  
*prepositions, prepositional phrases*  
*adverbials of time*

The new grammar materials of Community ESOL are specifically restricted to the grammar requirements of National Curriculum Entry Levels 1 and 2 because it is the very basic grammar which forms the foundation for all learners. An investigation of the grammatical needs of the target group suggests that long term residents who have made no methodical study of English grammar (or another European language) can acquire a functional use of the language and a certain degree of fluency, but will be unable to progress beyond that level. They have the greatest difficulty in passing language based exams which they may need for their work. Community ESOL therefore focuses on the very first principles of English grammar and highlights the fact that the most accomplished 'speakers' in the group still need to have these reinforced.

### **7.1.2. Habitual Errors**

It is felt that without a good grasp of basic structure, learners tend to make up their own rules as they acquire vocabulary through living in an English speaking environment. In order to make themselves understood they put words together any way they can, and often incorrectly, then they repeat the same mistakes continually over a period of time. As their fluency increases they apply this incorrect grammar extensively, and find it very difficult to change what has become a normal mode of speech for them. Many long term residents can be difficult to understand, but quite unaware of the fact that they are speaking incorrectly.

### **7.1.3. Speech Production**

Some long term residents also have a tendency to produce fast, incomprehensible speech in English without being aware of the fact; the Community ESOL approach to rectifying this problem ties in with several aims of the National Curriculum. For example, teachers might say frequently : "I'm sorry, I can't understand what you're saying. Could you repeat it more slowly, please." This type of formula for signalling a lack of understanding politely is useful for the group, and recommended as a discourse skill at Entry Level 1.

Improving the speech production of very quiet speakers might involve special exercises such as asking students to repeat words in different ways: in a happy or sad voice; slowly then quickly for long words; softly and loudly. This will encourage them all to vary and control the quality of their voice and speech production; it will particularly benefit those who do not usually produce sounds within the acceptable range. Exercises of this kind help to prepare non-Europeans for the importance of intonation and stress in English speech. The National Curriculum has a section for phonology (under: Speaking) which repeatedly lists the following essential points:

#### **7.1.4. Intonation:**

*Awareness of falling intonation on complete definite statement*

*Rising intonation to elicit understanding / ability to produce rising tones to query information*

*Falling intonation in first part, rising in second : subordinate clauses, question tags*

*Awareness of rising intonation for questions in general, particularly yes/no, and that falling intonation is often found with 'wh' questions*

*Awareness of rising intonation for politeness*

*Awareness of rising intonation for offers and invitations*

*As necessary, rising intonation on conjunctions and adverbs to show the narrative continues*

*Alternative questions and lists: voice rises on the first alternative, falls on the last.*

#### **7.1.5. Stress:**

*Awareness of stress-timed sentence rhythm for statements / questions*

*Awareness of stress falling on important words in the sentence /ability to stress important words*

*Awareness of stress falling on sequence markers*

*Awareness of elision and unstressed vowels*

The sections relating to phonology and discourse skills, as well as the sample activities in the National Curriculum, have been integrated into Community ESOL materials as far as possible. The project's teaching materials assist in the delivery of practical exercises for the various aspects of speech production and specifically concentrate on the National Curriculum requirements with regard to intonation and stress, which are currently under-resourced through mainstream ESOL provision (*see Resource CD: Speech Production*).

Speaking and communication skills are thought to be well resourced and are not generally the focus of this study. However, many of the new materials are designed to practise speaking and listening, and therefore communicating. For example, under Intonation there is an exercise which uses very basic vocabulary, which the students are expected to reproduce using different intonation patterns. The more complex vocabulary for defining the attitudes and emotions of the various intonation patterns, would normally be considered for advanced learners. However, they are common human responses which students need to learn, and appear as a communication skill required at Entry Level 1 in the National Curriculum.

#### **7.1.6. Sound / Symbol Recognition**

Word Lists are used to familiarise students with all the sounds of the English language and to make them form connections between the sounds and their written representation in English. They are fairly challenging as a reading exercise as the words are not all commonly used, and they stand alone with no context to assist recognition. This encourages students to try decoding the unfamiliar words by drawing on their understanding of phonics, the use of our alphabet to represent sounds. Specific letters have been picked out in a different colour to help them to make the connection, and similar sounds have been paired as a memory aid.

These Word Lists can be found under *Speech Production* on the Resource CD, but they tie in with Reading and Writing requirements of the National Curriculum for Entry Level:

*Reading EL2: be aware that there are more sounds than letters of the alphabet*

*EL3: where possible use phonic strategies to decode unfamiliar words*

*recognise a range of letter combinations and silent letters; be aware that certain letter patterns are common in English*

*Writing EL1: use basic sound symbol association to help spelling; develop understanding of the phonic relationship between certain sounds and letters and letter combinations*  
*EL2: develop awareness of strategies for spelling*

Reading and Writing at Entry Level 1 are mainly concerned with learning the alphabet and forming the letters, both upper and lower case, as well as punctuation, different prints and layouts. This part of the National Curriculum ties in with Basic Skills and literacy teaching. This area has not been developed for the Community ESOL project, which focuses on speech production, grammar and comprehension.

### **7.1.7. Comprehension**

The inclusion of Comprehension as a unified area of language learning is explained above in the section on Language Problems (*Objective 2*). The language skills of Listening and Reading are normally considered separately, but for those who lack the ability to understand the spoken word, it can often be reinforced through a presentation of the same words written down. Similarly, learners who have poor reading skills can be assisted in their comprehension of written texts if the words are read out for them. Both skills need to be developed to a functional level for all ESOL students, and when they are interlinked there are additional benefits.

A variety of dual purpose listening /reading materials have therefore been produced. These fit within the requirements of the National Curriculum for reading and listening skills in many ways, including:

- *Reading and understand short texts*
- *Developing understanding and use of vocabulary, morphology and phonics*
- *Listening for Gist*
- *Listening for detail*
- *Following instructions*
- *Identifying feelings and opinions*

Comprehension materials include several form filling exercises which specifically fulfil Reading and Writing requirements as follows:

*Reading EL3: read and interpret information in a graphical form; be aware of the conventions of simple tabular formats (Activity Sheet 4)*

*read and understand words commonly used on forms; be aware of form filling conventions and language commonly used on forms*

*Writing EL2: fill in / copy information, including personal details, accurately and legibly on forms; develop understanding of form conventions, including stated and unstated instructions*

### **7.1.8. Homework**

The draft National Curriculum suggests the following strategies for independent learning at Entry Level 1, Speaking:

***Students should be encouraged to do the following.***

*1. At home:*

- *go over work done in class, read it aloud, check understanding;*
- *read practice dialogues to themselves, try learning them by heart;*
- *keep a new vocabulary book and try to learn five new words after each lesson;*
- *tape lessons or parts of lesson and play back at home;*

- use self-access English learning materials (books, computer programmes and tapes) outside the classroom for extra practice or revision;
  - consult their teacher about appropriate materials.
2. When using the phone:
    - rehearse what they are going to say before dialling, think about possible questions and answers;
    - write down what they want to say, or main points, before dialling.
  3. Try to watch TV/listen to the radio/read headlines and simple books in English every day, if only for a short time. Ask English-speaking friends or relatives to explain words, phrases they do not understand or look words up in a bilingual dictionary.
  4. Play simple board games, cards or language games (e.g. *I Spy*, *20 questions*) with English-speaking friends or relatives.
  5. Join the local library. If they have children, read with them, asking them to read as well as reading to them.

Community ESOL encourages students to take up such independent strategies for learning, but recognises that students with literacy problems will be limited in what they are able to do. Furthermore, some students have commitments and responsibilities to family and business which may make it impossible.

## **8. Objective 5 - Curriculum Development**

Six experienced ESOL teachers from different boroughs and learning centres were interviewed to establish current teaching practice in West London, with specific reference to materials made available by learning centres. The following comments were made by the teachers:

- very few ESOL materials are available
- few are published (compared with EFL materials)
- new materials would be welcomed
- teachers generally produce their own
- difficulties are faced by inexperienced teachers to produce materials
- listening materials on cassette are very few and far between, so rarely used
- some EFL materials can be applied to ESOL

### **8.1.1. The Aim of the Project**

The aim of this project is to outline a new approach to teaching ESOL through community group classes. If a comprehensive course incorporating the new methods and materials is required, it can be produced subsequently. This report is intended to show the teaching approach which has been developed, the language skills which should be included to meet new standards, and the materials which have been tested during the pilot study.

### **8.1.2. The New Materials**

The materials presented in Community ESOL are intended to support less experienced ESOL teachers who may have had little training in phonetics and grammar. It is hoped to encourage regular practice sessions in the classroom, in line with the expectations of the new National Curriculum. (See Objective 4).

The teaching materials developed under this project can easily be added to normal classroom practice. Teachers will use the tools which they feel comfortable with, and can draw on the ideas which they feel will be of most benefit to their students.

### **8.1.3. Research**

Research to consider a new approach to ESOL community teaching has been undertaken because

- the needs of community groups are changing (See: *Objectives 1 and 2*)
- the learning profiles of their members are increasingly varied (See: Pilot Study, *Objective 3*)
- new demands are being placed on ESOL teachers to meet fixed standards
- the new National Curriculum will need to be incorporated in future provision (See: National Curriculum, *Objective 4*)
- community teaching brings particular benefits (See: Community Groups, *Objective 1*)

As a result of this research, new methods have been developed for delivering ESOL in a community group setting. The Resource CD contains ideas and materials for use in Community ESOL, devised with due consideration to the reasons listed above; the materials are for teachers to use as a supplement to their current teaching, as appropriate. Three areas of language teaching have been identified which correspond specifically to the needs of the target group, figure prominently in the National Curriculum and are thought to be under-resourced at present: Speech Production, Comprehension and Grammar. While lesson plans for a short course have been devised, it is hoped that the ideas will be of value to ESOL teachers on a daily basis, to help them meet the new demands facing them.

Community ESOL aims to advance all learners towards the following goals:

1. To speak in clear English so that others can understand with minimal effort, by developing good pronunciation and diction.
2. To listen effectively for specific information from real life situations and to understand the gist of the English spoken around them.
3. To read effectively, recognise key words, decode unfamiliar words by sounding them out.
4. To accomplish the level of written English which they need for life in this country, including preparation for eventual work and study if required.

## **8.2. Augmenting Current Teaching Practice**

The Scheme of Work (see Resource CD) for Community ESOL is based around these 4 listed goals. It is intended to be applicable for mainstream ESOL courses, and is deliberately open so that teachers can continue to use tried and trusted methods while adding those aspects which may be required to meet new standards and curriculum specifications.

### **8.2.1. Topics**

Vocabulary is taught in topic areas, these topics being the most frequently taught in mainstream ESOL classes, but allowing for the addition of specific areas requested by the community group. In the pilot study group the following topics were requested:

- School - for communicating with their children's teachers

- Health - to communicate with doctors and hospital staff
- Banking
- Food and Catering - for customer interaction at work (Chinese Take-Aways)
- Technology - especially computer terminology

These have been added to the common themes of Work, Shopping, Leisure, Directions, Home and Family which are intended to assist with delivery of National Curriculum requirements including following directions and introducing family members. The chosen themes also offer opportunities to revisit vocabulary from one topic area when a similar or related theme is taught later in the year. For example, the topic of Food and Catering (in the context of the Chinese community), is likely to draw on the vocabulary items taught under Work, while Family brings up vocabulary used in Home, School and Health. It is essential to revise vocabulary items many times before adult learners from an unrelated language base will master them.

### **8.2.2. Scheme of Work**

The Scheme of Work assigns about 3 lessons to each topic area, to develop a 34 week course for delivery through the course of one year. Materials will be used according to the abilities and needs of the group members, so the Scheme of Work can be reapplied each year, modified by the addition of any further topics requested by the group; greater demands will be placed on students each time a topic is revisited. Some groups will have more contact hours than others, and teachers will develop topics only as far as time allows. The focus of the course is on developing language skills, and the topic can be seen as the picture, painted on the canvas of the language teaching.

### **8.2.3. Key Language Skills**

Each lesson should aim to develop at least one key language skill. The Scheme of Work reflects this aim by setting out each lesson under the following headings:

Topic	Speaking	Listening	Reading	Writing	Grammar	Homework
-------	----------	-----------	---------	---------	---------	----------

In the Scheme of Work, a lesson based around one short dialogue might appear under the set headings in a number of ways, including the following 2 examples:

materials used. A variety of teaching materials like the example dialogue used here will be needed, and some are reproduced on the Resource CD for teachers to use.

One activity can teach several key skills at the same time :

1. Topic vocabulary can be pre-taught, and repeated carefully to improve pronunciation.
2. A tape recording of a short dialogue can be played, incorporating the new vocabulary, for the purpose of improving aural comprehension and practising the key skills of listening for gist and listening for specific information.
3. Words and phrases arising from the dialogue can be repeated carefully by the students for intonation practice.
4. The written transcript can be shown to them to develop reading skills.
5. From this a grammar point can be picked out, explained and practised.
6. Students can go on to produce a similar dialogue themselves in paired work.

In this way, one short dialogue can give the opportunity to practise all the key skills, with the requirement of just one worksheet.

#### **8.2.4. Audio Recordings**

A course cassette has not been produced as part of this project, but can be produced if there is any demand. Written dialogues have been produced, and teachers or learning centres may make their own audio recordings for use in class. There are several advantages to using a recording rather than live dialogue, especially for practising pronunciation, intonation and stress, where the language sample must be repeated in exactly the same way each time. It is difficult to achieve this when reading aloud as the reader will tend to use different stress without realising. Also, the teacher can focus attention on the tape, leaving himself free to ask questions and give instructions.

#### **8.2.5. Sample Dialogue**

##### Topic: Health

<u>Dialogue</u>	Doctor:	What seems to be the problem, Mr Taylor?
	Patient:	My back aches.
	Doctor:	Is there any reason for that, that you know of?
	Patient:	Yes. It started hurting after I did some decorating work at home. I had to lift some heavy blocks.
	Doctor:	Well, you must be careful at your age, and ask for help when you need it. Now you'll have to rest until it's better. I'll give you a prescription for painkillers, and some ointment to rub on.
	Patient:	Thank you, doctor.

*(for similar dialogues on a variety of topics, insert the Resource CD, go to Comprehension, then Dialogues)*

This short dialogue can be used in many ways. If the level of the group is fairly low, they will want to listen to it several times in any case, and it is more interesting to repeat it with various different aims and use it to develop a number of language skills. They will become familiar with the dialogue so that a more difficult exercise will be possible once they are not struggling to understand the language sample.

**Topic vocabulary** to be pre-taught : back, ache, hurt, rest, prescription, painkillers, ointment.

**Speaking exercises** to be drawn from this dialogue include:

1. Pronunciation practice
  - consonant clusters - 'prescription'
  - final 'k' sound in 'back'
2. Intonation practice
  - rising intonation for 'yes / no' questions, falling intonation for 'Wh' questions
  - Say 'Thank you, doctor' in different ways, changing tone of voice, to express a change in attitude.
3. Sentence stress
  - Mark the important words in each sentence
  - Choose 2 or 3 sentences and examine where the stress falls (listen to tape again)
  - Practise saying these sentences with correct emphasis on important words
  - Play sentences again, stop tape and all repeat together, for rhythm practice
4. Role play, where one student is given an illness, and the other is the doctor

**Listening exercises** to be drawn from this dialogue include:

1. Listening for gist
  - Set a comprehension question before they listen  
eg Who is Mr Taylor speaking to?
  - Ask another question after playing the dialogue the first time  
eg Why did he go to see the doctor?
2. Listening for detail
  - Ask for 1 or 2 important details when they have listened the second time  
eg What advice did the doctor give him?  
What medicine does he need?
  - Stop cassette at a particular point to test comprehension
3. Listen and repeat
  - for intonation
  - for sentence stress, rhythm

**Reading and writing** exercises to be drawn from this dialogue include:

1. In pairs, students read a transcript of the tape after the speaking and listening exercises have been done
2. Write a sentence each about what's wrong with them eg I've got a stomach ache.
3. Read the sentence that someone else has written
4. Dictation - write down the first words spoken by the doctor
5. Fill in the missing words from an incomplete transcript, where key topic vocabulary is missing, for example

**Grammar exercises** to be drawn from this dialogue include:

1. Modals : have to / must / had to
2. Omit one type of grammatical word from the transcript, and ask them to fill it in eg sequencing words : 'after', 'when', 'until' or prepositions : 'for', 'at'
3. Students have to mark all the verbs
4. Students have to mark all the nouns
5. Take out all the articles and ask which is needed for each noun: 'a', 'the' or nothing

### **8.2.6. Homework**

Homework is always voluntary where adults are concerned, but many students request it. If they do not look at what they have learnt between one lesson and the next they are unlikely to remember it, and the teacher's job becomes more difficult because progress is slow. Students should be encouraged to keep up their interest in English once they get home because this will enable them to progress much faster. Progress and achievement develop motivation, and a vibrant class which is well motivated is much easier to teach.

Having said this, homework should never be too demanding. A student who is unable to understand homework requirements may be deterred from attending the following lesson.

### **8.2.7. Pronunciation**

Pronunciation practice has been integrated into every lesson with the pilot study group (See: Speech Production, on the Resource CD). This is done in a number of ways :

1. Written words are linked to the sounds they contain, and practised
2. New vocabulary is introduced as pronunciation practice
3. Picture sheets with words they have already learned are re-taught, focusing on pronunciation and linking words which contain the same sound
4. Two similar sounds which cause confusion are presented in contrast
5. Regular pronunciation practice sessions, where each student calls out one word from a list, and the others have to identify it

### **8.3. Worksheets**

Multi function Activity Sheets have been designed as a key part of the curriculum development. Current practice in ESOL does not expect students to buy expensive course books, and so materials used by learning centres need to be reproduced cost-effectively. The new Community ESOL materials aim to provide maximum opportunity for practising language skills, grammar and functions, with minimal photocopying. The Resource CD contains a section with Activity Sheets which can be printed off for use by teachers, together with a full explanation of how each one can be used. Other materials available for classroom use by teachers include Word Lists (Speech Production), Reading Materials and Dialogues (Comprehension) and Grammar Sheets.

### **8.4. Lesson Planning**

Lesson Plans have been produced for a short course of 12 lessons, which can be applied intensively or just once a week. Extra materials accompany this course development and can be found on the Resource CD, to support a longer course. A 34 week scheme of work has also been produced (see above: **8.2.2**) which could be applied for a whole school year. Teachers can draw suggestions for each lesson from the scheme of work and use some of the materials supplied to supplement their lessons.

# Funding

## 8.5. Funding Status of Community Group Members

Community Groups across London bring together people from an overseas community. They find themselves in our city for a variety of reasons; the group can provide support for isolated individuals, and help them to integrate into our multi-cultural society. Most in need of help are those who have just arrived, especially if they cannot speak English. Asylum seekers may need the help of their community to apply for the relevant documents they need to stay in this country. Many young girls arrive on a Fiancée Visa, but have come to settle here. Newly weds must be married for a year before they are given permanent leave to remain. During this time they are very vulnerable, and are likely to turn to their community group for support.

### 8.5.1. Valuing Visitors

Visitors to this country may be valued community members who can assist others less fortunate than themselves. They may need English in order to do this. Their life skills and work experience, as well as specific areas of expertise can all be utilised to the benefit of the community group. Community groups would not wish to exclude Visiting Community Members from English language provision or any of its services.

### 8.5.2. Service Provision

If a Community Group is to provide a service to its members, it must be able to offer that service to all its members, while group members must have documents to support their stay in this country. Assuming they have entered this country through correct and proper channels, they should be included in all services provided by the group.

### 8.5.3. Out-of-Borough Members

Community Groups which draw members from a wide area of London have the additional problem that their members do not all qualify as residents of the same borough. A group may need the support of the local council which covers its principal venue to fund it, irrespective of where its members live.

## 9. Mainstream ESOL Provision

Most ESOL classes are provided through learning centres such as Adult Education or FE Colleges and their core funding is through the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). The LSC will consider eligible for funding :

“any member of the home population of England, living in England, who is over the compulsory school age and is following an eligible programme of study at an LSC funded institution in England”

- any person who has lived in England for 3 years before the start of the programme is considered to be a member of the home population
- EU nationals living in England, (and European Economic Area migrant workers living in England) are considered to be members of the home population of England

- exceptional circumstances can be considered where an individual has lived in England for less than 3 years, but where other evidence demonstrates membership of the home population
- persons who have been temporarily employed outside the UK
- refugees, their spouses and children
- asylum seekers with exceptional leave to remain, their spouses and children
- reciprocal student arrangements
- persons who have been granted exceptional leave to remain or exceptional leave to enter, and the spouses and children of such persons
- asylum seekers (and dependants) who are in receipt of a means-tested benefit, or voucher assistance from the National Asylum Support Service, or assistance from the local authority under the provisions of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 or the Children Act 1989
- young, unaccompanied asylum seekers aged 16-18 placed in the care of social services
- persons with recently settled status, including those with indefinite leave to remain

### **9.1.1. European Union Members**

European Law enables students from the EU to access *vocational* training in England funded by the LSC. EFL courses would not normally fall within the definition of vocational training, and would not therefore normally qualify for LSC funding. However, some EFL qualifications provided to students on ESOL programmes are considered eligible. Students from the EU who are resident in England should be eligible for LSC funded externally accredited EFL qualifications or ESOL courses if appropriate to meet their learning needs.

EU students may be eligible for funding where they are in part-time work or equivalent, for example au pairs. EU students who are combining the EFL programme with a vocational programme, and the vocational programme is the primary learning goal, may also be eligible for LSC funding. EU students are ineligible if they are visiting England with the sole intention of learning English.

Overseas Students are not funded by the LSC. Any student who does not qualify as a Home Student is considered an Overseas student.

### **9.2. Ineligible Students**

There are various categories of people from overseas who find themselves in this country on a long-term basis, in need of English language tuition, but who are not eligible for free mainstream ESOL classes which are funded by the LSC. People who have just arrived in this country are the most vulnerable, and the most in need of English tuition. It is likely that such people will receive support from their own community, and become members of the community group. They may be ineligible for LSC funded English classes.

The whole ethos of a community group is different from a college or other education service. The community group only exists to provide for the needs of its members. It is clear that many members of community groups need English language provision, and many groups are likely to list ESOL provision as a key priority. Questions about who qualifies as a home student and who doesn't are inappropriate and divisive in the context of a voluntary organisation trying to achieve self-sufficiency and integration within British society.

### **9.2.1. Catering for Excluded Students**

If community-based ESOL classes are funded by the LSC in the same way as mainstream classes in learning centres, then the same people are going to be ineligible for both. The key aim of this project is to increase the capacity for successful ESOL learning in Hillingdon through developing innovative methods of delivery and a partnership approach between community groups and providers, including Hillingdon Adult Education.

## **10. Assessing Funding Practice in West London**

Questionnaires were sent to the following educational establishments to evaluate current funding practice and outreach work being undertaken in West London through community groups.

### **10.1.1. Adult Education Services in the West London Region :**

- Hounslow
- Brent
- Hammersmith and Fulham

NB: All ESOL classes in the London Borough of Ealing are through Ealing Tertiary College. The London Borough of Harrow has no Adult Education Service. All post 16 education is through FE Colleges and (Sixth Form Colleges)

### **10.1.2. FE Colleges:**

- Uxbridge
- West Thames
- Harrow College
- Hammersmith and West London
- Thames Valley University
- Stanmore College
- College of North West London
- Ealing Tertiary College

Comments were requested on the subjects of outreach classes, student profiles and LSC funding, and any related issues. Only half of the questionnaires were returned. The following data from the survey should only be read as an indication of the situation.

### **10.1.3. Current Funding**

In all cases the most important source of funding is the LSC. Other funding includes: ESF; SRB; WLLLP; WEA; EMAG; Schools; LLSF

### **10.1.4. Outreach Work**

The majority of outreach work is now carried out in schools:  
approximately 6 classes per learning provider are held in schools  
approximately 2 classes per learning provider are held on housing estates  
approximately 1 class per learning provider is arranged through an ethnic minority community group.

### **10.1.5. Student Profiles**

Recent refugees and Asylum Seekers make up the largest group, above 80% in one case and between 30% and 80% in all the rest.  
British Residents, who would qualify as Home Students, account for less than half of the total.

### **10.1.6. Other Comments**

Comments received from learning providers through this survey:

1. Some students are unable to attend classes because crèche places are not available
2. Classes are arranged at the request of Community Groups
3. New classes are run according to the availability of tutors, space and funding
4. Clear guidelines are needed from LSC about eligibility criteria
5. Discrepancies occur with regard to the eligibility of certain groups of students

## **11. Alternative Funding**

Community groups can apply to a variety of sources for financial assistance with setting up and running ESOL classes. Most funding bodies restrict the support they give to a maximum of 3 years, often only one year or the duration of a short term project, so that another application must be successful in order for the funding to continue. This will pose great problems for voluntary groups who lack the personnel, expertise and experience to produce applications of the necessary standard. Some help is available through the local Association of Voluntary Services; in Hillingdon assistance is through HAVS.

Ethnic minority community groups can receive priority financial support for ESOL classes from the following bodies:

1. Local Councils
2. London Borough Grants (part of the Association of London Government)
3. Lottery : Awards for All (small grants)
4. Lottery : Community Fund
5. Learning and Skills Council Local Initiatives Fund
6. London Development Agency
7. Family Support Grant Programme (through the Home Office Family Support Unit)
8. New Deal for Communities (specific areas only: South Kilburn, North Fulham)

In addition to the sources of public funding listed above, voluntary organisations may also be awarded funds for ESOL provision through Grant making Trusts or Foundations. Such grants are only available for charitable purposes, and voluntary organisations which are not registered charities may need to receive payment through another charity. Arrangements can be made through the local Council for Voluntary Services.

### ***11.1. Funding the Pilot Study Group***

It is not easy for ethnic groups whose English is not very good to fill out the many forms and provide pages of information. The co-ordination and planning of projects requires expertise which amateur volunteers are unlikely to possess. They may not be aware of all the regulations, legislation and other guidelines. Funding Bodies and Councils could provide expertise, help, support, and resources to help small ethnic groups to comply with these rules. Once the project takes off, the groups will need part-time or full time workers to run these projects to ensure that they are delivered on time, on budget, on course and to the ultimate benefit the community.

#### **11.1.1. Initial Grant**

The Hillingdon Chinese Community Organisation (HCCO) recognised a need for specialised ESOL classes for its disadvantaged female members who had never had the self confidence to

attend mainstream classes. Initial funding was provided in May 2001 through the REAP grant (Refugees in Effective and Active Partnership) to conduct assessments into the needs of the Chinese refugee community as well as providing ESOL and learning support to this ethnic minority women's group.

### **11.1.2. Hillingdon Adult Education**

As the group developed HCCO wanted to provide ongoing classes for all, with a permanent funding arrangement. Hillingdon Adult Education offered to provide the teacher and support some additional costs relating to teaching materials. The course has been set up as an outreach course for HAE from September 2001, with venue, term dates and times to suit HCCO. It receives mainstream LSC funding, and is subject to HAE enrolment procedure, quality controls and accreditation.

#### *Learners*

The learners come from West London, including Hillingdon, Ealing, Kensington & Chelsea, Barnet. (Details in Objective 3 – Pilot Study)

#### *Status*

The group has mixed status; some are refugees, some are visitors, some are new immigrants, some have lived here for more than 20 years, some are dependents, some are students, and some fit into many of these categories. 6 have been in the country less than 3 years.

### **11.1.3. Lottery Awards for All**

At the same time, HCCO has been successful in attracting further awards to support this group. In August 2001 a small grant under the Lottery Awards for All was received to cover costs such as rent of premises, volunteer expenses, administration, equipment and teaching resources, bilingual support and photocopying.

### **11.1.4. LSC Local Initiatives Fund**

Closely tied to the ESOL provision is a new training initiative, funded through the LSC Local Initiatives Fund, which aims to provide employment opportunities for some of the class members through training and accreditation in Childminding. Such training will place huge demands on learners whose English language skills are so limited, and it can only proceed in conjunction with specific ESOL lessons and full language support. The training course is expected to bring an improvement in English language skills for participants which will exceed normal ESOL class progress.

The success of HCCO in attracting support from four different sources demonstrates that funding for community ESOL is readily available. The needs of the group can be fully met and funded by applying the various different types of funding, provided the courses are flexible and administered properly. However, each places its own restrictions on the group, and all awards must be used for a specific purpose only.

The overall administration of the various projects demands skills and expertise to monitor, assess and fulfil the requirements of each individual funding provider.

HCCO receives no direct funding as a voluntary organisation, so that a successful project this year will not ensure survival for next year unless further funding can be procured to provide for administration and rental costs. Most funding takes several months to plan, including organisation, research, consultations and administration. These costs are not met by the project funding, and there is no guarantee that the application will be successful. Medium to

long term planning cannot be undertaken, since none of the funding bodies has the responsibility to support the organisation.

## 12. Funding Partnership Arrangement

It is extremely complicated for a small group to arrange funding and the correct distribution of such funds, and many voluntary organisations will find it beyond their means to do so. It is therefore an ideal opportunity for learning providers to work in partnership with the voluntary organisation, so that the available funding can be successfully secured and put to its correct use providing ESOL tuition and language based training courses, spreading ESOL funding over the longer term to enable learners to progress to mainstream education.

It is hoped to instigate a viable partnership arrangement between learning providers and community groups which will use the expertise of the education services to access the public funding which is available for ESOL, and link it to the learners in greatest need of tuition - the community group members who cannot join mainstream classes.

The partnership will benefit both parties as follows:

<b>Learning Provider</b>	<b>Community Group</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ready supply of adult learners with specific learning needs</li> <li>2. Increased capacity in a priority learning area</li> <li>3. Opportunities to expand learning by providing the community group with new courses</li> <li>4. Probable high attendance rates</li> <li>5. Predictable numbers and uptake.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Learning provision for members</li> <li>2. Funding arranged to support such provision</li> <li>3. Courses tailored to needs of group</li> <li>4. Opportunities to move members towards social integration</li> <li>5. Improved skills and employment opportunities for members</li> </ol>

The partnership will place demands on both organisations as follows:

<b>Learning Provider</b>	<b>Community Group</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Discuss funding applications in partnership with community group representative, assisting as necessary</li> <li>2. Oversee the use of funds in accordance with funding body requirements</li> <li>3. Administer courses</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Submit funding applications, receive funds and spend them correctly</li> <li>2. Discuss learning needs of members with learning provider</li> <li>3. Enrol members as students of learning provider</li> <li>4. Adhere to regulations of learning provider and funding bodies</li> </ol>

Any partnership arrangements must be understood by both sides, with terms of reference to show the responsibilities of each.

### *12.1. Applying for Funding*

Learning Providers could assist Community Groups to apply for funding which would specifically support Community ESOL classes. Each community group could submit the application quite simply, as they would only need to fill in their organisation's details and enclose the relevant supporting documents.

It would be in the interest of the learning provider to put together the initial application by working closely in partnership with one or more local groups to make sure that the arrangement is workable. The following points must be established:

#### Will the funding arrangement fit AE / FE College requirements?

These will include college regulations with regard to the tutor, health and safety, equal opportunities, disability discrimination, working time regulations etc. Quality controls, student learning agreements, class sizes, accreditation and enrolment procedures must also be taken into account.

#### Will the funding arrangement meet the needs of the community group?

These will include the time and venue, number of groups, level of language tuition, suitable tutor, mixed ability groups, provision of childcare etc.

#### Will the funding arrangements provide for the language needs of the learners?

These may be very varied, and continual assessment of each participant's language competence must be carried out. (see Objective 1). Funding must support ongoing provision, as language skills can only be acquired through long term commitment, and each individual must be taught until (s)he achieves the level (s)he requires to enter mainstream society and access employment and education opportunities.

### *12.2. Funding Application Proposal*

Grants are available to fund ESOL provision and to fund ethnic minority community groups. Funding bodies encourage partnerships, especially with educational establishments and public organisations because they are recognised and therefore bring stability to the arrangement. Learning providers can develop an arrangement which will increase capacity in the prioritised area of ESOL by linking with community groups who need that provision. The same arrangement can be made with several different groups, keeping administration simple.

#### **12.2.1. Standard Application Form**

A standard application, such as the one suggested below, could form the basis of the agreement between the learning provider and the community group. Funding application forms all require fixed and stated aims, criteria, outcomes etc, and these could form the basis of the Terms of Reference which the learning provider expects of each community group it enters into partnership with.

#### **12.2.2. Example:**

Purpose of proposal:

To provide ongoing English language classes for community group members.

Proposal criteria:

Our ethnic minority voluntary group wants to widen access to mainstream employment and education for our members.

Aims and objectives of community organisation:

To provide support, friendship and guidance for all members of our group to help them overcome isolation in Britain.

Evidence that the proposal is needed:

Many of our group members cannot communicate in English and lack the self-confidence to attend free English language tuition in learning centres.

Project requirements for funding:

<b>Premises Rent:</b>	rental costs guaranteed long-term, to secure ongoing provision
<b>Teaching equipment:</b>	white board and pens, cassette player, table and chairs
<b>Materials:</b>	photocopies, books, stationery, dictionaries
<b>Fees:</b>	college registration and accreditation fees for all participants, plus tuition fees for those students who are not eligible for LSC funding.
<b>Volunteers:</b>	2

Project Activities:

1. Accredited English classes to be provided in community group setting, run through local Adult Education / FE college.
2. Subsequent training courses delivered with English language support, aimed at improving the language competence of participants while providing accredited training.

Intended Outcomes:

The project is ongoing - English language classes will be provided indefinitely. The participants will gain the confidence and language skills to access employment opportunities or move into further education.

Measuring Outcomes:

- ❖ participants begin to communicate in English
- ❖ they attend regularly
- ❖ they gain OCN credits (or other accreditation) associated with the course
- ❖ they re-enrol for subsequent community courses
- ❖ they enrol for mainstream courses at learning centres
- ❖ they unlock prior work skills and qualifications to find employment in Britain

Target Beneficiaries:

Community members who are isolated from mainstream society due to lack of English language. A large proportion of these will be women unable to return to the work they previously held in their native country.

Quality assurance:

Activities will be provided by local AE / FE college, and subject to their quality controls.

Equal Opportunities:

Every community member will be offered the service, which will be free to all at the point of delivery, irrespective of the eligibility criteria of any of the funding bodies.

Involving target beneficiaries in the project:

Bilingual publicity will be distributed to members and displayed publicly. Members who cannot communicate in English will be invited informally to attend.

# Increasing Capacity

Having investigated how alternative funding can be used to maximum benefit in developing successful community-based ESOL provision and having detailed the potential for partnership arrangements between learning provider and community group, the project makes the following suggestions for achieving increased capacity in ESOL.

## 13. New Provision

It appears from the project's survey that there is a great deal of scope for new community-based ESOL provision across West London. Many community groups exist with members who need ESOL lessons. Funding is available to promote new community-based learning schemes, and especially to increase ESOL capacity.

### 13.1.1. Problems to overcome

- At present, classes are provided for community groups which approach the learning provider.
- Many community groups do not know how to approach the learning provider.
- Some community groups have no formal structure, consisting only of a group of people who meet up on a regular basis.
- The venue proposed by the group may not be suitable.
- There might not be crèche facilities.
- The community group may not have the funds to pay for rent of premises.
- If rent cannot be paid or other problems arise with the venue, provision will probably cease.
- Learning providers have difficulty finding a suitable tutor for the group.
- Even if the learning provider supplies the tutor and runs the course, the community group may be left out of pocket, needing to find funding for premises and additional costs.
- Some community group members are not eligible for LSC funded classes.

## 14. Linking with Community Groups

By developing links with local community groups, many of the problems listed above can be overcome.

### 14.1.1. Funding Arrangement

Any arrangement which allows community groups to utilise the expertise of the learning provider, especially with regard to funding issues, would create an opportunity to start new provision within that group. A suggested arrangement has been made in the previous section (Funding: 12).

### 14.1.2. Supplying Community Tutors

There is a shortage of qualified and experienced ESOL tutors. Any plans to increase capacity must first consider how to find a suitable tutor.

Community tutors may be required at unusual times, for example Saturday mornings or early evening for after school groups. They may need to be more flexible in dealing with their community class as it may include a mixture of students of all levels. Learners' children may be present on the premises at the same time, which can lead to class disturbance on occasion.

#### **14.1.3. Supporting Community Members who wish to train as ESOL Tutors**

For these reasons, it may be difficult to find a tutor who is willing to take the group. It may be necessary to look for a tutor with links to the community under these circumstances. Many community groups have some fluent English speakers with a good educational background who are interested in teaching other members. If these aspiring teachers have the necessary level and qualifications, they could be assisted to complete a CELTA course at a local college under the same (or another) funding arrangement. They would then be qualified to teach the group, leading to the accomplishment of self-help within the community.

If they are not of a level to be accepted on a CELTA course, they could still assist the tutor and gain valuable experience as an ESOL volunteer. The presence of such a volunteer at lessons would make it possible for the class size to be larger, thus increasing participation.

#### **14.1.4. Other Foreign Languages**

Colleges and Learning Centres often run large language departments which get involved with language exchanges and cultural activities. ESOL groups are not normally included in such activities. ESOL students have been considered under the umbrella of Adult Literacy and Basic Skills. They are, in fact, foreign language learners, which is something quite different.

Cultural integration will begin when ESOL students are viewed in the same light as students of Russian or Japanese. They are trying to learn something which is extremely difficult, which most English people have never attempted and cannot imagine. Foreign Language Learners and Teachers are in the best position to understand them, because they share similar learning experiences. Learning centres could therefore consider beginning links with community groups through their language department activities.

## **15. New Teaching Methods**

New provision will only be successful if the lesson content, materials and teaching methods are suitable for the group. Participation will grow, and new learners will be attracted to the class by word of mouth if the students feel they are learning what they need.

Mainstream ESOL teaching methods may not suit all the needs of community group members. This project set out to develop new methods, entirely in response to the needs of the group members.

The results of the research have been described in this report, and the new materials produced through the curriculum development are available on the accompanying Resource CD.

# Conclusions

Community-based classes can increase ESOL capacity in West London if the following factors can be brought about :

1. Learning Providers to be pro-active in approaching community groups
2. Partnership arrangements with fixed terms of reference between learning provider and community groups, to secure funding for long term provision
3. Learning Providers' expertise in funding and administrative matters to be made available to Community Groups
4. More community tutors to be trained, having gained experience as volunteers in community group lessons
5. Teaching methods to increase preparation in specific language skills :
  - Speech Production (pronunciation, intonation, voice quality, sentence stress)
  - Grammar (basic rules and structures for all students)
  - Comprehension (reading to support listening, listening to support reading)

\* \* \* \* \* *END OF REPORT* \* \* \* \* \*

*Research, Report, Curriculum Development and New Materials by Liz Chiu  
Commissioned by Hillingdon Adult Education  
Funded through  
European Social Fund  
West London Lifelong Learning Partnership  
Hillingdon Association of Voluntary Services*

*January 2002.*