



Funding Support

The Manchester BME network

The Manchester BME network provides an authoritative voice for BME voluntary and Third Sector in Manchester and associated partners.



Aims of the BME Network

- Hold regular network meetings, events, seminars and development days to facilitate the exchange of ideas and share solutions to common problems
- Showcase examples of good practice and highlight member case studies through regular publications such as a monthly e-bulletin
- Build relationships and co-operation between BME groups and organisations, ranging from peer to peer support to the brokering of consortium and partnership bids
- Work with others to support BME groups and organisations to grow and develop by enabling access to training and development, and increasing the level of resources coming into the sector
- Highlight the needs of the BME community by developing a greater understanding of key issues
- Provide a voice for VCS groups and organisations by developing opportunities to influence decision makers and evidencing change and outcomes

Generating income to reduce grant dependence workshops

An Organisational Development Worker from Macc was asked to facilitate two workshops with BME network members. The sessions were aimed at enabling potential BME members to connect with grant providers, and to think how to produce compelling applications / proposals. The sessions were used to:

1. Discuss the over reliance on grant funding
2. Discuss the benefits of measuring in-kind contributions and setting them out within an application
3. Discuss how to effectively measure outcome
4. Identify alternative sources of income/grants e.g. 'Pardoners'
5. Explore how BME led organisations could generate income to further its social mission
6. Identify the skills within BME organisations. Skills such as bid writing, measuring your outcomes, business planning and marketing. Skills, which are not naturally, present in some BME organisations/ charities



The sessions were used to explore:

- The benefits of properly costed applications
- Having a costed business plan
- The benefits of in-kind contributions
- The benefits of having local champions to help generate a diversity of income
- The benefits of working with funders (trusts and foundations) to apply for funding using the funders actual criteria (including their strategic priorities)

A number of other themes emerged in discussion, interestingly participants noted how:

- They experienced racism from some funders, partners and commissioners
- The competition from SME and Larger charities who nearly always got the funding they requested, unlike the BME led organisations
- They nearly always had trouble in establishing strong partnerships with local/national organisations
- Their unique selling point (USP) was not always valued or understood

Others present, also reported:

- Very positive experiences with key partners, saying that they had helped them to understand better their strengths and the power they have as charities, as well as identifying the things they are not best placed to do when making grant applications/going for contracts
- A few organisations asked Macc to help build some new and existing relationships with funders such as BBC Children in Need and the Heritage Lottery Fund
- A couple of organisations argued that if BME organisations worked together they could learn from each other's and work collaboratively to secure the resources they need to create partnerships; generating income from new activities, now and in the future
- Finally, BME network members attendees have expressed willingness to be contacted by Macc for more information

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