



PEARLS radio training course for women

Country: United Kingdom

Organisation: The Panjabi Centre and Women's Radio Group – www.desiradio-panjabicentre.org.uk/PEARLS/indenx.htm – www.womeninradio.org.uk

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Partners involved: N/A

Target Group: Women, ethnic minorities

Programme Description:

The Panjabi Centre (home of Desi Radio, a community radio station in Southall, London) and The Women's Radio Group (a specialist training organisation) co-operated to offer radio production training to women from minority groups, particularly those from ethnic minorities, single parents, older women and women returning to work after being full time carers.

The accredited training is presented in a series of 12-week courses funded by the London Development Agency and free to trainees. It includes modules in radio production and presentation techniques, interviewing, digital editing and programme making. Each trainee leaves with a portfolio of work made up of reports, jingles, features and a magazine programme.

Women from many different backgrounds take part in the training. The diverse nature of the group gives women who would otherwise never meet in every day life to get to know one another and exchange experiences. An assessment is carried out in the fourth week to highlight the women who might need more one to one attention. If trainees are in difficult situations

(e.g. women who struggle with the English language or those who left education early) it is important to give them the support they need to complete the course.

Work experience placements are also offered. They focus on community radio and online media outlets in the local area. After the course is finished PEARLS maintains contact with the graduates and encourages the trainees to keep in touch with each other, form support networks and participate in community radios in London.

"This project is a practical example giving women from diverse backgrounds the opportunity to spend time with one another, work together and get to understand diversity through practising it." PEARLS report's author

"It was a really supportive group and we helped each other through. It was a commitment and I felt I couldn't make excuses not to come, and that was a really big thing for me, to get through to the end." Trainee

Challenge: Jobs within the media are limited. Some students who finish the PEARLS training course may not be able to compete with more experienced jobseekers.

Solution: Although the radio sector is changing, opportunities are presenting themselves with new digital, online and community based radio stations emerging. The skills learnt at PEARLS can be transferred to any one of these mediums.

Impact and success stories:

- The project is able to promote values that support tolerance and good relationships between diverse cultures and people.
- Women gain a set of skills to further their job prospects, enrich their lives and benefit their community.