



**LINKnet Mentoring Limited, Edinburgh**

**About LINKnet.**

Established in 2000, LINKnet has been serving minority ethnic people living in Edinburgh, the Lothians, Scottish Borders and Fife for 14 years being the first and the only direct mentoring organisation in our geographical area. All developmental activities of LINKnet are based on the principle of mentoring. The core service is to design and deliver various mentoring programmes to help people into employment or further education. One to one mentoring has been proven to be one of the most effective people development approaches - 71% of participants in LINKnet's programmes for the past 11 years have progressed into education and employment.

**How the Scottish Government Equality Fund Grant was used.**

LINKnet received a grant of £34,500 (2013/14) from the Scottish Government's Equalities Fund to be administered by Voluntary Action Fund to establish a job agency during 2013/14. There was no job agency in Edinburgh that specialises on minority ethnic people and main stream job agencies paid scant attention to minority ethnic job seekers.

In response to this LINKnet established its Diverse Recruitment Consultancy (DRC) with the help of the grant. Making a direct link between the candidate and the employer, DRC sought to increase the number of minority ethnic people securing employment. The service is different to other job agencies for the following reasons:

- Diverse recruitment Consultancy (DRC) is the first and the only recruitment consultancy that specialises on minority ethnic job seekers (Candidates) in the proposed geographical area.

- The income generated through employment consultancy is channelled back to the charity so that it can sustain its charitable activities without depending on agency funding.
- LINKnet trains its candidates on communication skills, basic office skills, care work, cultural diversity and work related confidentiality and boundaries before matching them to job opportunities.
- Without the specialised support that the DRC offers, it is hard for minority ethnic people to compete in the labour market and most of them end up doing jobs that are outside their qualifications and skills.
- LINKnet provides an easy route for public, private and voluntary sector employers to recruit qualified and trained people from minority ethnic communities .

**Case Study One: Har**  
 Har had qualified as an electronic engineer but worked for Burger King for a long time being unable to find a suitable job. LINKnet mentoring helped his job hunting and he is now working for NHS in the capacity of an electronic engineer. Adding value to our service his unemployed mentor also secured a job as a careers advisor with Skills development Scotland. She thought that mentoring Har made her own job hunting much easier.

**What Changes did the grant help you bring about?**

The grant allowed for the development and the promotion of the DRC.

The grant has enabled LINKnet to form new partnerships with public, private and voluntary sector employers. For example DRC has formed partnerships with Carr Gomm, Richmond Fellowship and Garvald. At present

DRC staff are negotiating with the City of Edinburgh Council, HM Armed Forces, Scottish Government, Scottish Parliament and St. Judes Laundry service to develop further partnerships.

With the help of the grant, LINKnet also have developed training modules on care work and office work.

50 candidates have registered so far with DRC - 14 of them have taken part in the first care work training round that was held on 18 Jan 2014. 8 out of the 14 have now applied for care work through DRC.

### **Challenges in Delivering the Project**

The biggest challenge has been enlisting employers to work with LINKnet. Work with large public sector bodies is hampered by bureaucracy.

Most of the organisations do not want to pay a fee to recruiters. LINKnet has tried to work free of charge to win their trust in the first place.

#### **Case Study Two: Safah**

Safah was of mixed heritage, her father Pakistani and her mother white Scottish. She was born and raised in the UK. At the time she approached LINKnet she was 17 years of age but had never been to school. Although she spoke very good English her reading and writing were poor. She had determined to develop a better life. After a year's mentoring she has now joined an art and design course at Edinburgh College. For a young person who has never been to school this is a tremendous achievement.

### **VAF's More than Just Money Approach**

VAF has supported LINKnet with developing and strengthening outcomes whilst also assisting with using the LEAP monitoring tool to report more robustly. LINKnet have also received ongoing support and encouragement

in the development of the project including information on other funding opportunities.

*“Working with people for their development is exciting enough. Seeing results is the icing on the cake”.*

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