



Black and Minority Ethnic Business

K N O W L E D G E C E N T R E

F A C T S H E E T



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Festival Focus - Cultural Industries Development Agency (CIDA)

Providing business support
specific to the needs of Cultural
Festival organisers

About The Cultural Industries Development Agency (CIDA)

CIDA is the leading agency for delivering Creative and Cultural career, organisational, training and business support in East London.

We offer services to individuals, new and existing businesses, and arts and cultural organisations. Our free and highly subsidised services are currently available to people based in Hackney, Newham and Tower Hamlets.

Our services:

- Advice – receive help from specialist advisors
- Training – enhance skills with industry experts
- Fundraising – find funders and develop proposals
- Networking – Exchange ideas and build contacts
- Website & e-bulletin – get the latest creative news, events and opportunities
- Online directory – raise profile and find services and support
- Resource centre – access to useful publications, fact sheets and funding databases

Issues and Barriers

Since 2004 there has been an increased understanding of the positive impact cultural festivals are making towards

the social inclusion and economic wellbeing of London's residents.

In this vein, various bodies, such as the GLA, The Department of Culture, Media and Sport and the London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games have made it clear they want to deliver a host of culture celebrations as part of London 2012. However, it is evident that London's existing cultural festival organisers are not at a high enough standard to successfully bid for these tenders or to ensure their sustainability after the London Games.

The current trend is that these organisations emerge from within the community, with little structure, planning and investment. They survive on goodwill, resourcefulness and basic business acumen. They have become very reactive organisations and lack the infrastructure to be proactive and thereby truly realise their potential cultural and economic benefits.

About the sector

The Cultural Festival sector is not a formally recognised sector. As a consequence, there is little or no understanding of the needs and requirements. This has led to many funding organisations being unable to put in place funding criteria that fully understands the aims and infrastructure of festivals.

This situation has also resulted in their being little statistical information on the number, size, frequency or reach of cultural festivals.

However, by looking at the outcomes we are certain that the multi-layered structure of festivals creates a rich environment for communication and skills development.

In respect of communication, cultural festivals can be used as a platform to engage hard to reach communities and facilitate cultural inclusion.



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In respect of skills development, the delivery chain supports a massive range of individuals and organisations, such as stall holders, performers, event managers and sponsors.

Business development needs

In the research we carried out with potential programme participants, levels of support were specified:

- 65% Accessing Finance
- 59% Finding affordable work space
- 59% Acquiring effective marketing strategies and audience development
- 47% Developing time management and business planning skills
- 41% Understanding of legalities, such as copy right
- 41% Opportunities for networking and creating collaborations
- 35% Developing staff management skills

About the programme

CIDA identified that a capacity building programme was necessary to enable this sub-sector to overcome its issues and barriers. The programme follows the following development aims:

- Operate as professional arts organisations serving diverse communities
- Create an environment for greater partnership working and collaboration
- Encourage a climate in which there is a greater degree of strategic planning and management
- Develop a sector infrastructure that will work collectively for the benefit of the whole sector
- Improve chances of being one of the key events on the London 2012 Cultural Calendar.
- Developing specific working partnerships and collaborations in 2007 – 2008.

Festival Focus is a pan-London programme, which provides business support specific to the needs of cultural festival organisers, through 1-2-1 sessions, Action Learning sets, training workshops and industry seminars.

The main aim of the programme is to optimise the infrastructure of London's main cultural festivals through a capacity building programme.

Festival Focus participants

The programme participants were selected based on the following criteria:

- Organisers of London based event celebrate and promotes a BAME culture
- Pre-start up, start up, existing and established organisations
- Not a public body run event (e.g. council, NHS, TfL)
- Demonstrate commitment and motivation for programme
- Demonstrate a willingness for collaborations
- Have festival production experience.

Participant statistics

- The programme supports a range of clients from pre-start up to established. The festivals themselves attract on average 30,000. The largest festival attracts 80,000 visitors.
- The average turnover of all our clients is only £10,000.
- All the clients produce festivals that promote and celebrate BAME culture.
- 12 of the 17 organisations on the programme are female led.
- 2 of the 17 organisations are disabled led.
- 14 of the 17 organisations are registered businesses or organisations
- On average the individual festivals have been running for four years. Longest running festival is 14 years.