



CUC, Tremough, Cornwall

Constructive Series - A collaborative approach to construction training

Strategic Partners:	ConstructionSkills, SWRDA, JobCentre Plus, Local LSCs and colleges, client/employers representatives
Collaborators:	Local Authorities, CIOB, Business Link, GOSW
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Region:	South West of England
Sector:	Housing
Project Timescales:	September 2003 - ongoing
Themes:	People and skills, Partnering and Supply Chain Management, Sustainability, Training, Valued people

Local Authorities in the South West were integral to a strategic approach to construction training being driven throughout the region. Following a ConstructionSkills South West initiative, a strategic partnership of the South West Regional Development Agency, local Learning Skills Councils, Jobcentre Plus, Business Link, Local Authorities and Colleges was established in each county of the South West. These 'Constructive' partnerships sought to address the recruitment and training needs of the industry, support the development of businesses and promote the local economy.

Project background

Construction employment in the South West has increased rapidly over recent years. The number of people working in construction rose by 18% during the period 1998-2004 and is expected to grow by another 20% between 2004 and 2012. This rise will create at least 20,000 jobs in the region and will be accompanied by the continuing skill shortages across the sector. This demand data was the underlying reason for the development of the 'Constructive' series project which adopted a collaborative approach in order to satisfy the need to:

- Improve the image of the industry
- Attract new entrants to the industry
- Up-skill the existing workforce

To achieve this, the partners worked with clients, lead contractors and associated supply chains on selected building projects so as

to provide local people with local jobs and construction training using local project money. The initiative was extended to include Repair and Maintenance supply chains, particularly those under contract to County and District Councils, and expanded to cover Housing developments.

Project objectives

Following on from the successful launch of 'Constructive' Cornwall, in 2003, 'Constructive' partnerships were also established in Devon, Dorset, Somerset, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and West of England areas by mid-2006. Operational teams were established to pool resources, develop collaborative funding streams and work on solutions to local recruitment problems.

Although each partnership was managed and operated locally, the philosophy behind the project was the same across the

region. A common framework for the 'Constructive' partnerships included the following objectives:

- To encourage additional employment in the construction industry by targeting:
 - new entrant apprentices (16-24) and adults (25-62)
 - local unemployed, skilled and semi-skilled
 - local unemployed, unskilled
 - long term unemployed
 - the economically inactive and socially excluded
- To encourage more female and ethnic minority entrants
- To establish a fully qualified and carded workforce
- To develop a new network of assessors and work based recorders
- To encourage sustainability by creating permanent jobs and a recruitment facility that is known and utilised
- To have a positive impact on the local economy

"Constructive (Devon) will work with contractors to facilitate the maximum employment of local people within the Construction Industry and to establish a fully qualified workforce by the end of a contract."

Mission statement 'Constructive' Devon

Site surgeries

One of the most positive initiatives under the series was the establishment of site-based surgeries that facilitated information on CSCS and NVQs as well as further advice on training opportunities. The initiative was initially launched under the 'Constructive' Devon partnership. In this case, the site surgeries were developed to help the Major Contractors Group (MCG) members of the Constructive Devon operational group, to access their supply chain and meet the target of having 100% trained workers on construction sites. The surgeries were held on a number of sites in Plymouth, such as the Royal William Yard, the Plymouth Centre regeneration and the Devonport Urban Village and arranged through the project/site managers. The team was led by a Company Development Adviser and assisted by OSAT and Apprenticeship officers. The advice offered during the visits was associated with the following issues:

- **Company Development Adviser**
 - New Companies into Training
 - Grant opportunities
 - Training Plans
 - Investors in People
 - CSCS cards
 - NVQs
 - H&S training/ testing
 - Adult recruitment and training

- Inexperienced worker training
- Non Traditional recruitment / STEP grants (link to EO advisor)
- Opportunities for local people (constructive objective)

- **On Site Assessment and Training (OSAT) Adviser**

- Employer guidance
- Opportunities for experienced workforce
- Grant opportunities
- CSCS cards
- NVQ2-NVQ3
- Work Based Recorders
- Experienced Worker route
- H&S testing

- **Apprenticeship Officer (AO)**

- Employer guidance
- Funding routes
- Apprentice IAG
- One-to-one reviews
- Mentor/ WBR
- Programme Led Pathways (PLP)

- **Other Advisors / initiatives / other subjects (as requested)**

- JobCentrePlus (as constructive partner)
- Education (schools visits and Professional Development for Teachers)
- Construction Ambassadors (from lead contractor/ supply chain)
- PR opportunities
- Neighbourhood initiatives (E2E)
- NCW opportunities

Following the success of this Devon initiative, best practice was shared with other 'Constructive' partnerships across the South West and site surgeries were used on several major build sites such as the CUC and the Eden Project in Cornwall, the Broadmead Regeneration Project in Bristol and the Solstice Business Park in Wiltshire. Overall, approximately 8,000 trainees are estimated to have attended on-site training sessions. The range of information provided to the operatives on site underlines the all-encompassing approach of the project. The overall contribution of the project to the construction industry can be demonstrated when considering certain elements of the project with reference to the initial objectives.

Recruitment

Adult Apprenticeships (25–62) - By pooling partnership resources and funding, the 'Constructive' series supported 'NVQ, H&S and College Day release' as well as 'childcare/ transport' for single parents.

Benefit: Additional industry recruits to NVQ/H&S qualified status.

Non-Traditional Workforce - The pooling of partnership resources to increase the awareness of construction as a viable occupation to non-traditional groups through FE 'taster' courses.

Benefit: Increased the recruitment catchment area.

Training

Qualified Workforce - By targeting, and working with, the lead contractor and their supply chain, the partnership brought its resources to bear on large build projects within the region and worked a training plan with companies to qualify the workforce.

Benefit: More efficient use of resources and partnership funding in support of training.

Supervisory and Management Training - The Partnership facilitated funding for SME Supervisors' and Managers' courses which led beneficiaries towards NVQ3 and NVQ4 qualifications.

Benefit: Expanded the scope of training to include SME managerial staff.

Industry Image

Collaboration and awareness - By forming a partnership of key regional stakeholders, the 'Constructive' series fostered positive action and an increased awareness of the Construction Industry.

Benefit: Enhancement of the industry's stature and 'Partnership funded projects' encouraged wider recruitment, particularly from non-traditional sources, and a better qualified workforce.

Local Economy

Sustainable Jobs - Clients increasingly demand that a qualified workforce is to be used. Consequently, 'unqualified' companies will lose tremendous business opportunities, leading to redundancies within the industry.

Benefit: Providing opportunities for companies to up-skill their workforce and arranging training sessions for new workers, the Constructive series gave the opportunity for more South West SME's to be able to tender for work and thus able to sustain their workforce in employment.

"By helping local companies take on new trainees, we not only create employment and help people gain qualifications but we also increase the capacity in local companies so that they can compete for more contracts as a qualified company and help retain wealth in Somerset."

SWRDA – Head of Operations Somerset

The 'Constructive' series fully supported the Mission and Objectives of the Sector Skills Council (SSC) and sub-regional Strategic and Operational teams worked together to achieve outputs against the South West Sector Skills Agreement. The involvement of local employers was paramount to the success of the Constructive Series and to the needs of the industry and economy throughout the region.



The Eden Project, St Austell, Cornwall



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