

ESOL PROJECT TRANSFORMS LIVES AND WINS NATIONAL AWARD

The Faith Regen Foundation: Work Focused ESOL Project in Tower Hamlets, has transformed the lives of some of the most disadvantaged people living in London and helped them get jobs. Their dedication and commitment to learning is being recognised with an Inspiring Projects Award - sponsored by the Open University - as part of the 20th Adult Learners' Week 14 - 20 May 2011.

The Faith Regen Foundation is a Muslim-inspired, multi-faith national charity which works in the employment sector to secure sustainable jobs for the most disadvantaged individuals, including ethnic minorities and women. It has a strong track record of achieving targets and outcomes to ensure positive change. The organisation's ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) project is based in Tower Hamlets, one of the UK's poorest boroughs, which has a large South Asian population. Many of its members have gone through their lives without speaking English.



The project's aim is to break down social barriers, isolation and poverty. It has improved social mobility, enhanced social cohesion and helped people to lead fully assimilated lives. One of its most striking achievements is in the numbers of Bengali women - an often overlooked section of society - who attend courses. Originally the project's target was to engage 56 people, but this has doubled. Staff also work hard with local businesses to gain work experience and routes into full-time work for learners.

Alan Tuckett, NIACE Chief Executive, said, "The stories of our award winners once again this year, the 20th Adult Learners' Week, illustrate the overwhelmingly positive impact that learning has on people's lives. The transformation that those taking part in the Faith Regen Foundation: Work Focused ESOL Project have experienced is due to their dedication, persistence and ambition. I hope that adults across the country will be inspired by their story to take up learning and discover for themselves a whole new life."

Ends

For more information about the Faith Regen Foundation: Work Focused ESOL Project contact: Mujahidul Islam on 0208 211 9430 or miriyaj@faithregenuk.org

For further information on Adult Learners' Week please contact:

Ed Melia, NIACE Head of Media, on 0116 204 4248 or 07795 358 870.

Marie Koupparis, NIACE Press Officer on 0116 204 4279 or 07824 481 499 or email: marie.koupparis@niace.org.uk

Notes to Editors

1. The Faith Regen Foundation: Work Focused ESOL Project will be presented with an Inspiring Projects Award – sponsored by the Open University - at the Adult Learners' Week National Award Ceremony at the QEII Conference Centre, Westminster, London on Monday 16 May 2011. They will also attend the London Adult Learners' Week Regional Award Ceremony, at the Museum of London, on Tuesday 17 May 2011. Journalists and photographers are invited to attend the event. More information is available from Ed Melia, NIACE Press Officer, on 0116 204 4248 or 07795 358 870 or ed.melia@niace.org.uk
2. Adult Learners' Week, 14 – 20 May 2011, is the largest annual celebration of adult learning in the UK. It is supported by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, European Social Fund, Next Step, Open University, BBC, Pearson, Specialist Schools and Academies Trust, Community Learning Champions, Local Government Association and Reed in Partnership.
3. Adult Learners' Week 2011 will include the following national events:
 - Saturday 14 and Sunday 15 May: **Cultural Diversity Weekend**
 - Monday 16 May: **Adult Learners' Week National Award Ceremony** - QEII Conference Centre, London
 - Tuesday 17 May: **National Policy Conference** - jointly organised by the British Library and NIACE
 - Wednesday 18 May: **Adult Learners' Week Parliamentary Reception** - House of Commons, Westminster
 - Thursday 19 May: **Learning at Work Day**
 - Friday 20 May: **Digital Day** and **Silver Surfers' Day**
4. A national helpline – **Next Step** - is available year-round for confidential advice and information about careers and courses. The call handlers will have access to the NIACE website and can give information about local activities during Adult Learners' Week. Calls are free on 0800 100 900.

5. Events for Adult Learners' Week 2011 are listed in the interactive online event diary at www.alw.org.uk/events where you can search by keyword, your preferred date and by the region you live in. Or call **Next Step** free on 0800 100 900 to find Adult Learners' Week events in your area.
6. The European Social Fund (ESF) is a core sponsor of Adult Learners' Week. In England, in 2007-2013, the ESF will invest £2.5 billion to extend skills and employment opportunities. For more information about the ESF and its funding opportunities visit: www.dwp.gov.uk/esf
7. The National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) is the leading non-government organisation for lifelong learning in England, and exists to encourage more and different adults to engage in better-quality learning of all kinds. It celebrates the achievements of all adult learners.