

Equality and Human Rights Commission
Research report 49

The 2012 Olympics: access to training and employment opportunities

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Tank Consulting

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First published Spring 2010

ISBN 948 1 84206 253 1

EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION RESEARCH REPORT SERIES

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Acknowledgements

The authors are grateful to individuals in the following organisations for giving their time to contribute to this research:

- Access to Employment
- Account3
- AJRAF Resource Centre
- ARC Training, Education and Community Services (Formerly Asian Resource Centre)
- Asian Centre Waltham Forest
- Careers London
- Community Links
- Construction Employer Accord
- Cromwell College of IT and Management
- Doorstep Training Services
- East London Advanced Technology Training
- East Potential
- Ellingham Employment Services
- Faith Regen Foundation
- Five Host Boroughs Central Unit
- Greenwich Local Labour and Business
- Hackney Community College
- HCT Group
- Learning and Skills Council
- Leyton Orient Community Sports Programme
- London Development Agency
- London Muslim Centre
- Multicultural Asian Society
- Newco Employment and Training
- Newham Voluntary Sector Consortium
- Newham Workplace
- Olympic Delivery Authority
- O-Regen
- Sanaton Association
- Tomorrow's People
- Tower Project
- Volunteer Centre Tower Hamlets
- Volunteer Network Centre

Particular thanks to the East London Advanced Technology Training, the London Muslim Centre, Newham Workplace and Tomorrow's People who supported the research through hosting and recruiting to focus groups. Thanks also to the Equality and Human Rights Commission for funding this study.

Acronyms

CSCS	Construction Skills and Certificate Scheme
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
LDA	London Development Agency
LEST	London 2012 Employment and Skills Taskforce
LETF	Local Employment and Training Framework
LOCOG	London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games
LSC	Learning and Skills Council
NSA	National Skills Academy
NSAfC	National Skills Academy for Construction
ODA	Olympic Delivery Authority
ONS	Office for National Statistics
SSC	Sector Skills Council

Descriptions for key 2012 organisations and initiatives

CompeteFor

CompeteFor is the online brokerage service which provides registered businesses with advanced notification of contract opportunities to match their profile. The service brings together buyers and suppliers in the London 2012 supply chain, and provides access to business support and advisory services.

The Construction Employer Accord

This programme funds a team of site-based coordinators or Employment and Skills Managers who work directly with contractors to secure employment opportunities on key construction sites. They are also charged with supporting individuals to take up those chances, including providing pastoral care where necessary and working with contractors to secure sustained employment across the industry.

Five Borough Job Brokerage Service

The five borough job brokerage service links local people to Olympic job opportunities, before Relay London Jobs take the vacancies London-wide. This works through the individual boroughs' own job brokerage services: Greenwich Local Labour and Business, On Site Hackney Recruitment Centre, Newham Workplace, Skillsmatch in Tower Hamlets, and Waltham Forest Worknet.

Five Borough Programme

The programme of work carried out by the Five Host Boroughs Central Unit.

Five Host Boroughs Central Unit

The Five Host Boroughs Central Unit represents and coordinates on behalf of the five host boroughs for the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games (Greenwich, Hackney, Newham, Tower Hamlets and Waltham Forest), and inputs into a range of event and legacy activities, including local employment schemes and lobbying central government and agencies on the vision and legacy for venues and infrastructure.

London 2012 Employment and Skills Taskforce

The London 2012 Employment and Skills Taskforce, which was formed in January 2006, set out a vision of how London would be different as a result of the Games, and outlined an action plan to realise this vision. The Taskforce consisted of public and private organisations with a stake in tackling London's worklessness problem and improving the productivity of its workforce.

Local Employment and Training Framework

The Local Employment and Training Framework is a job brokerage, training, employment and business support programme funded through the London Development Agency. It aims to assist residents and businesses in the five 2012 host boroughs.

London Employer Accord

The London Employer Accord aims to ensure the 2012 Olympic Games act as a major catalyst to get workless Londoners into work. A partnership of the London Development Agency, London Business Board, Jobcentre Plus and the Learning and Skills Council, the London Employer Accord is a partnership between public sector employment and training agencies and employers, aiming to deliver real benefits to Londoners. The Accord is a 'deal' whereby employers open up opportunities in return for a more integrated, responsive and bespoke service including the provision of job- or training-ready candidates.

London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games (LOCOG)

The London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games is responsible for preparing and staging the 2012 Olympic Games.

Olympic Legacy (Legacy Activity)

Within the planning for the 2012 Games is the concept of what will happen once the Games finish; the 'legacy' that will be left for the people of London and the UK generally. Many of the initiatives for training and employment are linked to legacy plans, hoping to develop a better trained and skilled workforce in the five host boroughs and in London generally. Legacy planning also covers a wide range of other issues, including the physical spaces, arts and cultural activities.

Personal Best

Personal Best is a pre-volunteer programme for the Games to equip people (particularly ethnic minority communities, women and disabled people) with the basic skills which are needed to volunteer during the Games and which are transferable to other working environments.

Relay London Jobs

Relay London Jobs is a London Development Agency-funded project to help people access 2012 Olympic Games-related jobs and training. It works through a London-wide network of job brokerage and employment support organisations, providing a mechanism for the recruitment and training of people currently not in employment.

Train to Gain

Train to Gain is a government-funded initiative to raise the skill levels of people who are in work but do not already hold at least one Level 2 qualification.

Women into Construction

The on-site coordinators on the Women into Construction programme work as part of the wider Accord team to ensure skilled women have the opportunity to be placed into manual construction jobs on the Olympic site – meeting employers' needs and tackling any barriers or perceptions of gender segregation in employment.

Executive summary

Introduction

In 2005 it was announced that London's bid to host the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games had been successful. For many, the strength of London's commitment to diversity and legacy activity was a major factor. Since the announcement, a surge of activity to build the Olympic Park and to try and maximise the potential for economic development has taken place.

Four years on, this research was commissioned by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (the Commission) to investigate employment experience, skills and aspirations of ethnic minorities in the five host boroughs in relation to the 2012 Olympic Games, with a special focus on the Asian community.

Methodology

A mixture of desk research, interviews and focus groups was used. The interviews were with local community groups (focusing on those working with Asian groups), training and employment support providers, commissioners and other relevant public agencies, employers, and Asian people who had gained Olympic-related employment. Of the six focus groups: four were with people of Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin, and one each with other ethnic minorities and White British. They included people in employment as well as unemployed people not yet looking for training or work, and those who were engaged in job support activity, for example seeking information, advice and guidance, job brokerage, work-related training and so on.

Qualitative research is exploratory and we cannot say that the people who participated in the study were representative of the communities they came from. In addition, there were some gaps in the available data that it was not possible to fill within the timescales of the research project. However, the range of methods used and our ability to compare information from a range of sources provides a reasonably robust basis from which to draw conclusions.

Five host boroughs baseline and Games-related opportunities

Five borough baseline

Three (Hackney, Tower Hamlets and Newham) of the five host boroughs are ranked in the top 10 most deprived boroughs in the country (Office for National Statistics (ONS), 2007) and all five boroughs are ranked among the 20 local authorities in Great Britain with the highest number of children living in families on key benefits (Greater London Authority, 2006). Economic inactivity and unemployment are significantly higher than for London as a whole.

The ethnic minority population in the five boroughs is 42.2 per cent of the overall population, with Asian groups forming 20.2 per cent of the total population. In Newham and Tower Hamlets the Asian population is around a third of the total population. Across the five boroughs around half of the adult working ethnic minority population is not in employment. Skill levels are low, with 39.9 per cent of Bangladeshi and 21 per cent of Pakistani communities having no qualifications compared with 15 per cent of the comparative London population.

Olympic opportunities and performance

The current focus of work in the Olympic Park is in the construction sector. Nationally only three per cent of the construction workforce is from a non-white ethnic minority, with around one per cent of the 'trades' workforce being women (ConstructionSkills, undated).

A range of initiatives has been developed to enable local people to benefit from the employment opportunities on offer, including coordinated job brokerage programmes and customised training initiatives. However, the proportion of Asian people placed in jobs by the Five Borough Job Brokerage Unit appears to be disproportionately low, given the local population.

Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA) figures for employment on the Olympic Park for June 2009 show that of the 4,434 people working on the park, 20 per cent of these are from the five host boroughs, of which 39 per cent are from minority groups. It does not publish information specifically about Asian groups. At first sight these figures compare well to industry norms. However, given the voluntary nature of the data collection methods we have some concerns about the reliability of this data.

Community groups

Community groups working largely with Asian people reported that there was initial enthusiasm for the potential opportunities the Games might bring, but this had waned as such opportunities had not come to fruition. The biggest barriers to gaining employment and training appeared to be around knowing where to find out about opportunities. In addition, jobs and training currently available were mostly in construction, and community groups reported that their Asian members were not generally interested in such jobs.

Training and employment providers

Around half of the training and employment providers interviewed ran specific Olympic-related programmes. Many providers felt that the Olympics had provided opportunities for training but not necessarily jobs. Barriers in relation to training and employment were recognised, particularly for women. Providers had developed a

range of techniques to overcome these in relation to training, and appeared to engage well with Asian communities. However, a key concern was the need to improve communications about Games-related jobs. Many providers remained sceptical about the ability of the Olympics to have a significant impact on local people, yet they were more optimistic about the future, when a greater range of employment possibilities would become available.

Commissioners and funders of training and employment provision

Commissioning organisations (and the ODA) are driven by high-level targets around ethnic minority groups, which are not broken down to specifically address issues relating to people of Asian origin. The focus of many initiatives is to meet employers' needs and maximise the number of local jobs. A range of activities is being used and the Games is an effective 'hook' to engage people; however, many local people are a great distance from the labour market in terms of skills, personal circumstances and personal development.

Employers

The three employers interviewed for this project aimed to employ locally where possible through their supply chain, and felt that some pressure could be put on sub-contractors to achieve a diverse workforce. However, the recent economic downturn has meant that some employers are moving existing employees from other locations rather than employing locally. Where they employ locally, this is often through local brokerage agencies which they expect to reflect local communities. They did not perceive specific employment barriers in relation to ethnicity, gender or religion although it was recognised that the sector is not very attractive to some ethnic minority groups. Employers were generally pleased with the public sector interventions they were working with, and had ideas for improving provision including mentoring and setting up intermediate labour markets,¹ which might include work placements and workplace training.

Focus groups

Overall, people were initially positive about the Games and the opportunities they might bring. The main problem identified was the lack of information about training and employment opportunities and how local people could access these. As a result, enthusiasm for the Games had waned. Very few of the younger Asian people we spoke with had any particular ambitions to work in the construction sector – some of them perceived such jobs to be of low value and with few prospects. Cultural and

¹ An intermediate labour market (ILM) is a form of labour market intervention that acts as a 'bridge' between unemployment and the world of work. ILMs could include work placements and workplace training.

aspirational barriers were more prevalent in the Asian groups with Asian women, in particular, raising a number of possible barriers to training and employment. But many participants also expressed an interest in Games-related training or employment, especially in sectors other than construction, should it be available.

We spoke to five Asian people who had been employed on site and they were generally positive about their experiences (although two of the five were no longer employed there). The training they received had been very beneficial, though access to in-work training was not open to all. They did not feel there had been any discrimination issues in accessing employment in relation to their ethnic or religious background, though one raised the issue that in a tough working environment being Asian could be a reason for someone to be bullied.

Conclusions and implications

The research suggests that people from an Asian background appear to be disproportionately disadvantaged in relation to gaining Olympics employment, and that there are a number of factors contributing to this poor performance.

- While the number of jobs on site is more or less as predicted, the number of actual vacancies has dropped, probably because employers have moved employees from other sites onto the Olympic Park, rather than recruiting local people for new vacancies. In addition, local communities with high levels of embedded and long-term worklessness may become harder to help relative to other more recently unemployed people.
- Most of the focus group and interview participants complained about the lack of information about Olympic jobs and training and were confused about how to access information, although there appear to be some good systems in place for linking training agencies with employment agencies and employers.
- The construction sector is not seen as a preferred career choice by some Asian groups, especially people of Bangladeshi origin and Asian women. This is particularly the case for young people, leading to many Asians 'self selecting' away from the current Olympic job opportunities.
- Despite a number of initiatives, construction remains a largely male-dominated industry. When this issue is compounded with the fact that Pakistani and Bangladeshi households have a higher number of dependent children (compared to other groups) and that there is a reported cultural expectation that women will shoulder this responsibility, it is clear that we might expect to see few Asian women working on the Olympic site.

- There were few religious issues that emerged as direct barriers to employment on the Olympic site. We saw some evidence of religious teaching being a positive factor in helping Asian people into work where the pastoral role of imams is being used to promote work from a religious perspective. This may have some positive role in reducing worklessness. Therefore, it may be useful for public agencies to engage with appropriate religious leaders in planning and promoting employment agendas.
- There is evidence to suggest that people from some Asian backgrounds (Pakistani and Bangladeshi groups) have lower levels of educational attainment than other ethnic groups (ONS, 2004). This is likely to make competing for any work harder. Our research suggests that some Asian people in the five host boroughs are engaging with training as a route to raising skills levels. But few participants were willing to undertake training in construction and many felt that they needed to get a job with pay, rather than enter a training programme. This implies that marketing should emphasise more clearly the longer-term benefits of undertaking a training course.
- The five host boroughs have very high numbers of people from ethnic minorities who are workless; the jobs on the Olympic site represent something of a 'drop in the ocean' compared to the scale of the overall problem. While promoting the Olympics as a positive opportunity, there needs to be some realism about what can be achieved. As we get closer to the Games themselves, there are likely to be other job options that Asian people may aspire to.
- The funding regime for many publicly funded initiatives often sets high-level targets, however the specifications for provision tend to be quite broad and may not be focused on the need to provide specific interventions for specific community needs. This can disadvantage those communities who are furthest away from the labour market, for example, in terms of skills and personal development, particularly where providers are paid on outcomes.
- There is evidence of training that is designed to specifically meet the needs of employers with a clear infrastructure in place to support this process. Our anecdotal evidence from focus groups and interviews suggests engagement of Asian groups remains low. This suggests that information, advice and guidance provision is finding it difficult to refer Asian people into such training; it may be that community perceptions of the construction sector is the key issue here.
- A comprehensive infrastructure has been developed around employment support and employers appear to regard this highly. However, they need job-ready,

motivated candidates to come through this system and our research suggests that many Asian people would not be able or motivated to take a job in construction for the many reasons highlighted above.

The above conclusions lead to the following implications for future actions:

- There should be a clear strategy that links the range of engagement activity with the full range of jobs that will be available both directly with the Olympics and those related to the Olympics.
- There should be a clear promotion campaign targeted at the Asian community that promotes the construction sector.
- Current systems for information provision should be broadened to include a wider range of groups and communities. However, information needs to be realistic about future opportunities so as not to raise false expectations.
- The way that data is gathered and the categories used should be improved in order to focus more clearly on local needs within the five host boroughs. Better access to data will also enable clearer evaluation of progress.

In summary, our research suggests that the already high level of worklessness of Asians within the five host boroughs is not being sufficiently addressed by the Olympic development directly. However, the scale of the worklessness problem is large and as this is coupled with a lack of desire of many Asians to enter the construction sector, we should be realistic about what can be achieved directly by the Olympic development, particularly when it is so closely focused on one sector at the current time. However, there are further opportunities with the much broader Olympic-related activities which, when combined effectively with the direct Olympic work, may be able to bring the vision of equality as a part of the Olympic legacy to life.

1. Introduction

1.1 Context

London won the chance to host the 2012 Olympic and Paralympics Games on 6 July 2005. It was a moment of celebration with London winning the Games partly due to the strength of its commitment to diversity and legacy activity.

The overall vision for the London 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games, agreed by the Olympic Board is: 'To host an inspirational, safe and inclusive Olympic Games and Paralympic Games and leave a sustainable legacy for London and the UK'.

The Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA) was established to manage the development of the Olympic Park and Village. The London Organising Committee for the Olympic Games (LOCOG) was established in order to manage the delivery of the Games event itself. As a public body, the ODA has statutory duties to promote race, gender and disability equality. The ODA published its Equality and Diversity Strategy in July 2007, and reports on progress towards its equality aims and objectives in its annual Equality and Inclusion Review (ODA, 2009b).

Four years on from the original announcement, this research was commissioned by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (the Commission) to explore the employment experiences, skills and aspirations of ethnic minorities in the five boroughs hosting London 2012, in relation to the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. The research was conducted from the perspectives of race, gender, and religion or belief, focusing on Asian people. Our research focuses on activities in the 'five host boroughs', which border or neighbour the 2012 Olympic Games site. They are Greenwich, Hackney, Newham, Tower Hamlets and Waltham Forest.

The aims of the research were to:

- Explore the aspirations of unemployed ethnic minorities in the five host boroughs who were trying to get Games-related employment.
- Assess the impact of training in enabling people to gain Games-related employment.
- Assess how in-service training builds the confidence of those who are employed, both in their current work and in their ability to find future employment.
- Assess the experiences of ethnic minorities in the five host boroughs who had gained Games-related employment.
- Suggest ways to increase employment and training opportunities for ethnic minorities in the five host Boroughs.

1.2 Methodology

The methodology comprised a number of elements.

Desk research

We collated and analysed labour market information for the five host boroughs to establish a baseline in terms of the ethnic minority population in the area, and key data in terms of unemployment and economic inactivity by ethnicity, gender and, where possible, religion. Sources of information included Office of National Statistics (ONS) information from the Annual Population Survey and the Labour Force Survey, as well as the Greater London Authority (GLA)'s Data Management and Analysis Group's briefings. This was supplemented with local sources of data to establish a full profile of the ethnic minority labour supply in the five host boroughs.

Additionally, we undertook a mapping exercise of the different projects and programmes designed to facilitate access to Games-related employment. We did this through the training and employment providers' and commissioners' interviews, and through a review of specific 2012-related funded projects.

We also undertook a literature review to identify any relevant local, regional or national research reports which look at the barriers to employment of ethnic minorities. Examples include: GLA's Data Management and Analysis Group reports on the labour market in London (2008a and b) and the Commission's recent reports on race discrimination in the construction industry (2009; Caplan et al., 2009). A full list is in the References section of this report.

Interviews with ethnic minority community groups

We undertook interviews with representatives of community groups² (targeting those with specific links to an ethnic or religious community) to gather information about the perceived aspirations and needs of people from these communities. Those contacted included small groups run by volunteers, as well as larger charities, and encompassed women's, religious, volunteering and cultural groups and associations.

The interview covered issues around:

- knowledge of 2012 Olympic-related opportunities (generic and specific)
- identification of skill gaps
- knowledge of local services for employment and training
- experience of access to such services and identified barriers

² A community group is a group of people who come together to pursue a common cause or interest for the good of their community.

- quality of services (including perception of success rates), and
- how far services adapt to meet ethnic minority needs.

We contacted directly 39 relevant community groups in the five host boroughs and representatives of nine community groups participated in the research. Eight took part in a telephone interview and one completed the exercise as an online survey. The location of the community groups is set out in Table 1.1. Two of the community groups interviewed operated across the four host boroughs of Hackney, Newham, Waltham Forest and Tower Hamlets. Taking into account those groups working on a multi-borough basis, the nine community groups interviewed had coverage of the five host boroughs.

Table 1.1 Community groups interviewed

Borough	Number of organisations contacted	Number of responses
Greenwich	7	1
Hackney	5	0
Newham	8	2
Tower Hamlets	8	2
Waltham Forest	11	2
Multi-borough	unknown	2
Total	39	9

Five umbrella organisations agreed to help with the research and forwarded the link to the online survey to relevant community groups but this did not generate any responses. Seven further community group representatives felt they could not comment because they had not discussed the 2012 Olympics with members. The remaining community groups were contacted several times, but no representatives were available to complete the survey.

Interviews with commissioners and training and employment providers

We interviewed commissioning organisations (that is, those commissioning training and employment support) and training and employment providers (those providing employment support and training to help people get into work) to establish the extent to which needs and barriers faced by ethnic minorities were identified and met within programmes. We focused on attitudes and understanding of equality issues and how these are translated into delivery. We also examined views on delivery models, including output and outcome-related funding and their impact on hard-to-reach

groups. This focused on public provision targeting both the unemployed and those in employment.

In total, 44 training and employment providers were contacted, and telephone interviews completed with 20 of them. Three of the providers interviewed offered services across London. Providers' length of experience varied from two to 50 years. Most offered a variety of training services; across all providers this ranged from pre-vocational and basic skills to degree and professional qualifications. Most also provided some form of employment support service.

Table 1.2 Training and employment organisations interviewed

Borough	Number of organisations contacted	Number of responses
Greenwich	3	1
Hackney	10	6
Newham	7	2
Tower Hamlets	8	4
Waltham Forest	5	1
Multi-borough	11	6
Total	44	20

In addition, the three key Commissioners and funders of activity relating to the Olympics: the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), Jobcentre Plus and the London Development Agency (LDA) were interviewed, as was the Five Host Boroughs Central Unit. This acts as a conduit for funding in the area for investment in training and employment by the main funders but also has significant flexibility in commissioning activity. Discussions with the Olympic Development Agency (ODA) were also held as the organisation is central to delivery and has a key enabling role in the success of partner initiatives. The aim of the interviews was to establish the extent to which provision is targeted at ethnic minority groups and how this is tailored to particular needs.

Interviews with employers

Interviews with employers³ were undertaken to establish: attitudes towards employing individuals who have undertaken training programmes and/or who are

³ By employers we mean the companies currently delivering Olympic-related contracts, that is, the construction companies working on the Olympic sites.

from hard-to-reach groups; their approach to ongoing training; the type of support provided in-house; and attitudes to public provision such as Train to Gain and the wider Employer Accord offer. We identified key employers involved in Olympic-related activity and aimed to seek views from a range of businesses with different levels of engagement in the Employer Accord, including sub-contractors. However, given the imminent start of the full evaluation of the Employer Accord and the need to keep employers on board with that process, we were given access to only three Accord members, with whom we completed interviews. All three were from the construction sector.

Focus groups and interviews with individuals

Six focus groups were held and participants came from across the boroughs.

Table 1.3 Focus groups completed

Ethnicity	Gender	Employment status	Number of participants
Bangladeshi	Women	Employed/unemployed	4
Bangladeshi	Men	Employed/unemployed	18
Pakistani	Women	Employed/unemployed	6
Pakistani	Men	Unemployed	5
Non Asian/Non White British	Mixed	Unemployed	8
White British	Mixed	Unemployed	9
Total			50

The planned focus groups with Asian men and Asian women in Olympic-related employment proved particularly difficult to organise within the limited timescale of this research. We were provided with a list of 20 Asian people working on site but nine of the people on the list informed us that they were not working on site, and six were either unobtainable or unwilling to take part in the research.

Telephone interviews were held with the remaining five employed people, which included one woman and four men. We recognise that this is a very small sample size, but this issue is symptomatic of later findings that few Asian people appear to be working on the Olympic site.

Terminology around race and ethnicity

In England and Wales, the Office for National Statistics distinguishes 16 categories of ethnic group:

- White: British, Irish, Any Other White background.
- Mixed: White and Black Caribbean, White and Black African, White and Asian, Any Other Mixed background.
- Asian or Asian British: Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Any Other Asian background.
- Black or Black British: Caribbean, African, Other Black groups.
- Chinese or Other ethnic group: Chinese, Other ethnic group.

We acknowledge that there is diversity within each of these groups (in terms of ethnicity, religion, national identity, cultural identity, language and ancestry) (ONS, 2008); smaller populations that may regard themselves as belonging to different ethnic or religious groups are included within the classified groups. However, to maintain consistency between national statistics, Games-related targets and the focus of this report, we have used terminology which relates to the 16 categories wherever possible.

1.3 Report structure

Chapter 2 outlines basic data about the economic profile of the five host boroughs and the people who live there focusing on ethnic minority and, more specifically, Asian communities. This includes data around unemployment, economic activity, worklessness, skills and gender. Key data around the Olympic developments are also highlighted.

Chapter 3 focuses on our interviews with key organisations and individuals while Chapter 4 reports on the focus groups. At the end of each of Chapters 2 to 4, there is a conclusion summarising our findings. Chapter 5 includes an overall conclusion that draws together all our findings across the project, plus some implications for future actions.

2. Five host boroughs baseline and Games-related opportunities

2.1 Five host boroughs

This chapter provides an analysis of the population in the five host boroughs and a baseline in terms of economic status by ethnicity, gender and religion. The chapter goes on to provide an overview of the level and type of employment opportunities available on site, the types of skills and employment interventions being used, and current performance in terms of ethnicity and gender.

The area covered by this research project is the five east London boroughs which will be the focus of the London 2012 Olympic Games activity, known commonly as the five host boroughs. They are Newham, Hackney, Tower Hamlets, Waltham Forest and Greenwich. For many years, east London has been a key focus of regeneration activity in the capital following the decline, firstly, of the docks and then of manufacturing industry. Large-scale developments have been associated with the realignment of the economic base in the area towards the service sector, most notably with the development of Canary Wharf from the 1980s onwards. However, the area remains characterised by high levels of deprivation, with above average levels of unemployment and a high ethnic minority population.

Three (Hackney, Tower Hamlets and Newham) of the five host boroughs are ranked in the top 10 most deprived boroughs in the country (Office for National Statistics (ONS), 2007) and all five are ranked among the 20 local authorities in Great Britain with the highest number of children living in families on key benefits (Greater London Authority (GLA), 2006). Economic inactivity and unemployment are significantly higher within the five boroughs than for London as a whole and nationally.

Ethnic minority population

There is a significant ethnic minority population totalling 42.2 per cent of the population in the five boroughs. While the ethnic minority population is high across the area as a whole, the proportion varies from the majority in Newham (60.8 per cent) to a little more than a quarter in Greenwich (26.3 per cent). Likewise, the constitution of the ethnic minority population varies by borough. Black groups form around half of the ethnic minority population in Greenwich and Hackney, while Asians represent around a third of the total population in Newham and Tower Hamlets. Indeed, over two-thirds of the total Asian population in the area live in two boroughs: Newham and Tower Hamlets. In terms of the three target groups for this research, Indians represent 5.6 per cent of the population, slightly below the London average, and are spread across all boroughs with a significant peak in Newham (30,300). At 4.2 per cent the Pakistani population is roughly double that for London as a whole, with significant populations in Newham and Waltham Forest. More than half of the

total Bangladeshi population of London (57 per cent) live in the area, with Tower Hamlets being home to over a third of all London's Bangladeshis. There is also an important Bangladeshi population in Newham.

Table 2.1 White and ethnic minority population in the five host boroughs

	Population number	Percentage of the total population			
		White %	All ethnic minority %	Black %	Asian %
Greenwich	222,600	73.7	26.3	12.7	7.7
Hackney	208,400	61.3	38.7	21.5	9.4
Newham	248,400	39.2	60.8	20.0	33.3
Tower Hamlets	212,800	54.2	45.8	5.3	34.1
Waltham Forest	221,700	62.9	37.1	15.6	15
Five borough totals	1,113,900	57.8	42.2	15.1	20.2

Source: Office for National Statistics (2006)

Table 2.2 Asian population in the five host boroughs

	Percentage of the total population ⁴				
	All Asian	Indian	Pakistani	Bangladeshi	Other Asian
Greenwich	7.7	4.4	1.1	0.9	1.3
Hackney	9.4	4.1	1.5	2.8	1.0
Newham	33.3	12.2	8.9	9.2	3.1
Tower Hamlets	34.1	2.3	1.0	29.8	1.0
Waltham Forest	15.0	3.8	7.7	1.2	2.3
Five borough totals	20.2	5.6	4.2	8.7	1.8

Source: Office for National Statistics (2006)

Population by religion

In England, 3.1 per cent of the population state their religion as Muslim (8.5 per cent in London), making this the most common religion after Christianity (ONS, 2001).

⁴ Please note that percentages are rounded to the nearest decimal point, and the totals may therefore appear not to tally exactly.

Thirty-six per cent of the population of Tower Hamlets and 24 per cent in Newham are Muslim.

Table 2.3 Religion of people in the five host boroughs

	Percentage of population by borough					
	Greenwich	Hackney	Newham	Tower Hamlets	Waltham Forest	London
Christian	61.5	46.6	46.8	38.6	56.8	58.2
Buddhist	0.9	1.1	0.7	1.0	0.4	0.8
Hindu	2.0	0.8	6.9	0.8	1.8	4.1
Jewish	0.2	5.3	0.2	0.9	0.7	2.1
Muslim	4.3	13.8	24.3	36.4	15.0	8.5
Sikh	2.2	0.9	2.8	0.4	0.6	1.5
Other religions	0.3	0.6	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.5
No religion	19.3	19.0	9.0	14.2	15.4	15.8
Religion not stated	9.3	12.0	9.0	7.4	8.9	8.7

Source: Office for National Statistics (2001)

Labour market activity among ethnic minorities

In an area of already high economic inactivity and unemployment, the impact of worklessness falls disproportionately on ethnic minorities. Accurate figures for employment status by individual ethnic group are not available at borough level; however, Table 2.4 provides figures for London as a whole. Employment rates are lower for all ethnic minorities compared to white groups. Among our target groups, the employment rate for Indians is nearly six percentage points below that for white groups, but significantly lower for Pakistanis (24 percentage points) and Bangladeshis (36 percentage points lower).

A key factor impacting on the employment rate is skill levels. The employment rate among the working age population of London, excluding students, is 89 per cent for those with a degree level qualification, falling to 44 per cent for those with no qualifications (GLA, 2008a). This is likely to be a significant factor in the particularly low employment rate among Bangladeshis and Pakistanis, where the proportion with no qualifications stands at 40 per cent and 21 per cent respectively in contrast to 15 per cent for all working-age people in London (GLA, 2008b).

Table 2.4 Employment rate estimates by ethnic group, persons of working age, Greater London 2004-6

	Employment rates (%), working age			CI attached to 2006 rate
	2004	2005	2006	
All groups	69.1	69.1	69.0	±0.7
White groups	74.6	74.7	74.6	±1.2
White British	75.3	75.0	74.6	±1.4
Other White	71.5	73.3	74.3	±2.9
Mixed groups	60.0	62.5	63.0	±8.1
Asian or Asian British	58.5	58.6	58.7	±3.1
Indian	68.1	69.2	69.0	±4.3
Pakistani	44.6	48.0	50.4	±8.1
Bangladeshi	40.3	38.2	38.5	±6.8
Other Asian	62.4	59.3	58.3	±6.9
Black or Black British	58.3	58.6	60.2	±3.5
Black Caribbean	65.4	64.7	65.1	±5.1
Black African	52.7	53.9	56.3	±4.8
Other Black	58.3	56.9	57.4	±19.4
Other groups	52.8	54.1	53.8	±4.2
Chinese	54.9	51.4	67.1	±11.2
Other groups	52.2	54.6	51.8	±4.5
<i>All ethnic minority groups</i>	57.4	57.9	58.4	±2.0

Source: GLA (2008a)

Notes: CI = approximate 95% confidence intervals attached to rate

Table 2.5 Employment and inactivity rates of working-age people from non-white ethnic minorities for the five host boroughs, January to December 2008

	Proportion of people from non-white ethnic minorities %	Working-age employment rate for non-white ethnic minorities %	Working-age inactivity rate for non-white ethnic minorities %
Newham	69.4	52.3	38.9
Tower Hamlets	59.0	47.2	41.7
Hackney	49.0	58.8	31.7
Waltham Forest	46.6	56.3	35.5
Greenwich	33.5	60.5	33.2

Source: Office for National Statistics (2009a)

Gender, ethnicity and employment

Again, at borough level there are no accurate data about employment by gender and ethnic group; however, London-wide figures highlight the stark contrast in employment rates between women from different ethnic groups (see Table 2.6). Pakistani and Bangladeshi women fare significantly worse than their White British and Indian counterparts, with employment rates well below half of the working-age population. The other notable point is that, among Bangladeshis and Pakistanis with already high levels of inactivity and unemployment, the differential between female and male employment rates is significantly higher than for other groups.

As well as the impact of low qualification levels on employment rates among certain ethnic minorities, having dependent children has a significant impact on employment rates of women in London. In Inner London, the employment rate of women with dependent children stands at 43 per cent. It has been suggested that employment rates decrease as the number of dependent children increases (GLA, 2005). This potentially has a disproportionate impact among ethnic minorities where households tend to have a higher number of dependent children. For example, in 2001 in Great Britain, Bangladeshi and Pakistani families were larger, on average, than families of any other ethnic group; over 40 per cent of these families had three or more dependent children. This is compared with 28 per cent for Black African families, 20 per cent for Indian families and 17 per cent for White families (ONS, 2009b).

Table 2.6 Employment rates by ethnicity and gender, Greater London, 2007

	Males		Females		Gender gap in rates
	Employment rate (%)	CI (+/-)	Employment rate (%)	CI (+/-)	
Persons of working age	76.6	±0.9	62.7	±1.0	13.9
White groups	80.6	±1.6	69.0	±1.9	11.6
Ethnic minority groups	68.9	±2.7	52.0	±2.7	16.9
- Indian	78.3	±5.5	62.5	±6.5	15.8
- Pakistani/Bangladeshi	62.5	±7.4	25.9	±6.5	36.6
- Black or Black British	66.4	±5.2	59.7	±4.5	6.7
- Mixed ethnic group	62.4	±12.4	59.6	±10.5	2.8
- Other ethnic group	69.2	±4.7	47.3	±4.8	21.9

Source: Greater London Authority (September 2008a)

Notes: CI=95% confidence intervals, in percentage points, attached to the employment rates.

2.2 The 2012 Olympics

Olympic employment: scale and sectors

The building of the Olympic Park is the largest construction programme in the UK. Including the Olympic Village and the adjacent Stratford City development, it is likely to be the biggest development in Europe, with the peak of available jobs reaching 20,000 in 2010.⁵ Initial projections suggest that London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games (LOCOG) will directly employ around 3,500 people at the Games-time peak, gradually increasing from around 1,000 at the start of 2011. For Games-time itself, it is anticipated that there will be up to a further 100,000 contractor jobs, although the vast majority of these will be short term, in addition to an estimated 70,000 Games-time volunteers.⁶

At the current stage of the Olympic development, employment opportunities are concentrated in two key sectors: construction and security. Industry-level workforce data from these two sectors may provide a benchmark against which to measure the success of Olympic-related initiatives in increasing employment among ethnic minorities and ethnic minority women.

⁵ Information from London 2012 website at <http://www.london2012.com/get-involved/work-for-2012/construction-jobs-and-skills/jobs.php> [Accessed July 2009]

⁶ Information from London 2012 website at <http://www.london2012.com/get-involved/volunteering/index.php> [Accessed July 2009]

ConstructionSkills

National data from ConstructionSkills (ConstructionSkills, undated), the Sector Skills Council for the construction industry, suggests that only three per cent of the workforce is from a non-white ethnic minority. The proportion of women in the sector is 10 per cent but this falls to one per cent in craft and trade occupations and among construction sole traders. At a national level, it would, therefore, appear that non-white ethnic minorities and women are under-represented within the industry.

Security industry

Figures for the security industry are hard to isolate due to security staff being spread across a number of Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) codes. However, data from Skills for Security, the sector skills body, suggest that employment of ethnic minorities is 17 per cent, while female employment amounts to 16 per cent of the total (Skills for Security, 2006). While figures for the sector in London cannot be disaggregated by ethnic minority due to the sample size, data from Skills for Security suggest that the proportion of ethnic minorities amounts to over 40 per cent of employees, with Asians representing around 15 per cent of the workforce, over double the level for the UK as a whole. Figures for women are less encouraging, with only around 10 per cent of employees in the industry in London being female.

While the construction sector represents most current Olympic jobs, of the 100,000 jobs identified in the run-up to the Games and during Games-time, interviews with staff from the London Development Agency (LDA) and Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA) suggest that 65,000 of these will be in the security, catering, cleaning and waste management, and transport sectors. While it is important to recognise that forecast numbers do not all represent new vacancies, these four sectors have been identified as potentially facing skills shortages and as offering significant employment opportunities.

Olympic-related skills and employment initiatives and performance

Such a scale of development presents real opportunities to get unemployed people into work and to improve the skills of people within the five host boroughs and across London. The ODA developed its Employment and Skills Strategy in February 2008 to outline a clear path to employment between job seekers, job brokerage networks and employers (2008). The strategy (available on the ODA website) shows a dedicated 'work stream' for equality with focused support for women, disabled people and people from ethnic minorities – however, there is no specific detail available on this area.

The ODA is working in partnership with ConstructionSkills, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), LDA and the five host boroughs to develop a National Skills Academy

for Construction (NSAfC). This represents a major training opportunity for construction across the five host boroughs and beyond.

At the time of writing there are no data available for the NSAfC in terms of overall performance and ethnicity statistics.

ODA's approach to engage local people

Our discussions with stakeholders show that the ODA is also working with contractors, Jobcentre Plus and job brokerage networks in the five host boroughs to develop an integrated approach to help local people into jobs on the 2012 construction programme. This approach centres on a series of Employment and Skills Managers (ESMs), funded through the Construction Employer Accord, who work directly with contractors to secure employment opportunities for local people on the Olympic site. The approach places a high emphasis on the specific needs of employers; such a 'demand-led' approach has been shown through other research to be effective (Tank Consulting, 2004). Priority is given to people in the five boroughs, through the five borough job brokerage service, who have 48 hours advance notice of vacancies. There is also a network, Relay London Jobs, working across London to maximise opportunities for all Londoners.

Performance of the five borough job brokerage service is outlined in Table 2.7 and provides valuable data for all Census groups, which is not available from the ODA figures. A high proportion of jobs brokered through the five boroughs are manual construction roles which may explain the particularly low figures for women. Overall, the proportion of ethnic minority people gaining employment is high, standing at 65 per cent for direct Olympic jobs, though this figure falls to 53 per cent if all White Irish and White Other are removed from the figures. The figures also highlight the relatively poor performance of Asians in accessing employment, with only seven per cent of direct Olympic-related jobs going to Asians. Figures for women and Asians are lower for Games-related jobs than for all jobs.

As can be seen from Table 2.7, the five borough brokerage scheme has a broader remit than 2012 Games-related employment, with around four-fifths of jobs brokered being off site. It responds to the broader legacy objective, as set out in the London 2012 Employment and Skills Taskforce (LEST) to reduce worklessness in London. While the wider infrastructure does not fall within the scope of this research it is not always easy to differentiate between Games-related and other activity (see Chapter 3).

Table 2.7 Jobs accessed through five borough brokerage during April 2008 to March 2009

	All	All ethnic minority	All Asian	Women
Number of 2012 jobs brokered				
Greenwich	29	11	1	1
Hackney	98	70	3	2
Newham	65	53	8	4
Tower Hamlets	31	11	2	8
Waltham Forest	57	37	6	5
Total	280	182	20	20
<i>Percentage of total 2012 jobs brokered</i>		65%	7%	7%
Total number of jobs brokered				
Greenwich	268	92	6	22
Hackney	300	231	16	33
Newham	338	269	52	26
Tower Hamlets	156	88	49	12
Waltham Forest	203	155	42	45
Total	1,265	835	165	138
<i>Percentage of total jobs brokered</i>		66%	13%	11%

Source: Five Host Borough Central Unit.⁷

ODA's training and employment opportunities

The ODA undertakes a range of activities to keep local residents from the five host boroughs informed about the development, both at a general level and more specifically about training and employment opportunities. Newsletters are sent to all residents in the five host boroughs every quarter. There is some information about training and employment within these publications. Additionally, the ODA produces a quarterly newsletter, *Jobs, Skills, Futures*, available on its website (2009a).

The programmes supported by the ODA for training and employment services in relation to the Olympic Games also have their own programmes for marketing their individual services and opportunities.

⁷ Unpublished data provided for this report by the Five Host Boroughs Central Unit (2009).

The latest information on the current contractor workforce is set out below. The figures are a snapshot of employment on the site and the ODA estimates that cumulatively, to date, approximately 10,500 have been employed.⁸ The figures are generated from a site induction form which has a response rate of around 59 per cent, with certain elements such as ethnicity and previous employment status being voluntary fields. Thus the percentages shown are percentages of responses, not of all people asked to respond. Furthermore, the voluntary nature of responses to the ethnicity question means that care needs to be taken when drawing conclusions from these data. The overall accuracy may be affected by the higher response rate among five borough residents and the extent to which some groups are used to supplying this data (for example, participants in publicly funded support).

- 4,434 people are currently working on the Olympic Park.
- 20 per cent of these are resident in the five host boroughs (the target published in the Employment and Skills Strategy is 15 per cent).
- 10 per cent of the total were previously unemployed (the target published in the Employment and Skills Strategy is seven per cent).
- 20 per cent of those from the five host boroughs were previously unemployed.
- 10 per cent are trainees and apprentices on the site.
- 20 per cent of the total contractor workforce are from ethnic minority groups.
- 39 per cent of those from the five host boroughs are from ethnic minority groups.
- Six per cent of the total contractor workforce are women.
- 500 people have been placed into work through job brokerage.

Source: Olympic Development Authority (2009c)

There was a sharp rise in performance in terms of employment of ethnic minorities from the five boroughs on the Olympic site between April and July 2009 (from 28 per cent in April to 39 per cent in July). Data were not available to investigate the reasons for this; it may be attributable to significant churn in the workforce or potential underlying issues around data collection.

Employment of ethnic minorities

We do not have any information on how ethnicity is being defined and how figures break down in terms of specific ethnic groups. We also do not have a breakdown of sectors in which the workforce is being employed, the assumption being that the vast majority work in construction. Therefore, while we cannot compare the figures directly, the performance in terms of the proportion of the workforce being from ethnic

⁸ A job is identified as any worker employed for five days on site.

groups, at 39 per cent, is similar to the national figure of three per cent for non-white ethnic groups working in construction. The figure is, however, lower than the proportion of ethnic minority residents in the five boroughs. This could be a sectoral issue, possibly with employers' not employing people from ethnic minority groups, alongside people from those communities not aspiring to work in the construction industry. Based on the figures available, the proportion of the non-five borough workforce that is from an ethnic minority falls significantly, to around 20 per cent.

Employment of women

The ODA's figures for the employment of women at six per cent compares less favourably to national figures of women working in construction, at 10 per cent. This may well reflect the relatively low proportion of non-manual jobs on the Olympic site as compared to the sector as a whole. Indeed, anecdotal evidence from interviews with the ODA suggests that around five per cent of women are represented in the manual trades on the Olympic site, which is well above the national average.

2.3 Summary

- The five host boroughs (Greenwich, Hackney, Newham, Tower Hamlets and Waltham Forest) are ranked among the 20 most deprived in the country.
- The host boroughs have a significant ethnic minority population (42 per cent); two-thirds of the Asian population in the area live in two boroughs, Newham and Tower Hamlets, where there are large Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities.
- Across London as a whole, employment rates for all ethnic minority groups are significantly lower than for White groups. Pakistani and Bangladeshi women fare particularly badly.
- At a national level, non-white ethnic minorities and women are under-represented in the construction industry.
- According to the ODA's own figures, the proportion of the workforce from ethnic groups appears to compare well against the national figure of three per cent for non-white ethnic groups working in construction. However, care needs to be taken when drawing conclusions from these data, given issues identified around data collection.

3. Interviews with key organisations and individuals

This chapter reports on the interviews that were held with a number of individuals and organisations including community groups, training and employment providers, commissioners and funders of training and employment provision, and employers engaged on the Olympic site.

3.1 Community groups

Representatives of nine community groups participated in the research. Most of these were long-standing groups and had been in existence for more than seven years; one of the groups formed three years ago. The groups provide activities in a range of areas, from health and childcare to religious and cultural events and volunteer brokerage.

All of those interviewed worked with a very large ethnic minority user base, particularly Bangladeshi and Pakistani. Between 30-65 per cent of the community groups' users were women. Most of the groups had no specific religious focus and were open to everyone; two groups had a focus on a specific religious minority. One of these worked with the Muslim community and the other with the Bangladeshi Hindu community. Two groups also offered single-sex services (that is women-only or men-only).

2012 Olympic Games-related training and employment opportunities

Four of the community groups held regular meetings where members talked about business or employment and training opportunities. Some of these organisations discussed the 2012 Olympic Games but others did not, either because of a lack of information or because they felt that it was not relevant to the needs of their members.

Other community groups informally discussed 2012 Olympic Games-related employment and training opportunities with their members. Some of these groups wanted to support members further but said they did not have enough information to help members find 2012 Olympic Games-related employment and training. One reported that members themselves asked about training and employment in relation to the Games and although the organisation tried to find out more they did not receive a response from their local authority.

Most of the community group representatives said that members considered the 2012 Olympic Games as a potential opportunity for training and/or employment. The sectors or industries in which members were hoping to seek direct employment were very broad, including: retail, security, transport, construction, leisure and

tourism, translation, management, and hospitality and catering. Two of the community groups were also working with existing businesses in the catering and security sectors.

Barriers to training and employment

Community groups were asked if members reported barriers in accessing 2012 Olympic Games-related training or employment. A few said members had not reported barriers but that this had not been specifically discussed with them.

Some reported that members found it difficult to find information about 2012 Olympic Games-related opportunities which led to the view that there were little or no opportunities:

We aren't getting information about Olympic-related opportunities - lack of information is the barrier to accessing opportunities.

There are no Games-related training or employment opportunities in Greenwich - there is no information on how to access Games-related opportunities.

There is general disquiet that the promised opportunities have not appeared. Communities are keen to get involved - whether that is through training opportunities or employment, but there appears to be little opportunities at the moment.

The lack of opportunities was of more concern to the community groups than the barriers that their communities might face. Barriers cited which were generally cultural and impacted primarily on women included attitudes towards work as well as practicalities relating to dress code and working with alcohol. The view was that attitudes are changing but the reality was that there were some sectors that many women were unlikely to aim for, such as construction:

There is a real issue of perception - people feel that there is little substance behind the promise of Games-related opportunities. There may be some practical barriers for some people (for example, working with alcohol) but this is relatively small. Barriers include skills deficits as well as some cultural issues (for example, dress codes). Some cultural issues are felt to be very ingrained but are improving; for example Bangladeshi women are getting more opportunities than before - but we need to be realistic - they are unlikely to ever work on a building site!

In terms of career choice, one representative suggested that migrant communities often fall into stereotyped career choices due to the need to be close to other community members; this becomes a self-perpetuating issue that can take many

years to break away from. This may be a factor in why construction is not seen as a first career choice for many Asian groups.

The nature of the jobs available was also reported to be a barrier. Most of the opportunities were thought to be in the construction industry, an area that not many of their members had training or experience in. Therefore, they would require training. It was reported that people are either not interested in working in the construction industry or people preferred to go straight into work rather than enter training:

Members find it difficult to access Olympic-related jobs because the majority of jobs are in construction and people do not have the skills or training in that field (most of the younger members have said that). Members are not that interested in training - they need a job that pays the bills.

No barriers have been reported but the problem is that only construction training is currently available. Other training is not open yet and not many are interested in working in construction. People find it difficult to find employment related to the Games as it is mainly low level or construction and not suitable for them.

In terms of religious barriers, one community group representative felt strongly that there are often many misconceptions around what their religion (Islam) 'allows' them to do. This organisation works with imams at the local mosque to take a clear pastoral role in redefining religious teaching in the current context and to help support individuals to view their faith in a renewed context around work, benefits, and so on. This was reported to be effective in getting more people into work and in addressing some traditional stereotypes from within their own community.

Training and employment support

Many of the community groups provided some form of support for training, some provided training through their own staff, while one group provided venues for training. Employment support was provided directly by some organisations, whereas in others this was done informally through their own staff and resources (such as use of computers for job search, help with writing applications). Other groups referred to local providers for training or employment support.

Most respondents said that none of their members had begun training specifically geared towards 2012 Olympic Games jobs and developments or did not know if this was the case. Only one organisation knew of members who had undertaken construction training whereas another group provided volunteer training under the Personal Best programme. Again, most respondents either said that none of their

members have been employed by any of the companies currently developing the Olympic site or did not know whether members had found employment. However, one community group said that 'a few' of their members had found construction jobs.

At the end of the interview, community group interviewees were asked if they had any further comments. The need for more information on how to find 2012 Olympic Games-related training and employment opportunities was reiterated:

We would like to find out more about Olympic-related training and employment and business opportunities - events should be held to inform communities about opportunities.

There seems to be a lack of information - and although the communities we work with are keen to get involved they and we do not know how or what opportunities there will be. There is little point in glossy presentations if in fact there are little or no opportunities. Our members are also keen on the legacy - but there is no open discussion on that either.

3.2 Training and employment providers

Profile of training and employment providers consulted

Twenty training and employment providers participated in the study. Most worked with very high proportions of people from ethnic minority communities (estimated between 65 per cent and 97 per cent). Within this, Asian clients were well represented at between 20 per cent and 40 per cent of total clients. Levels of engagement by women varied between roughly 40 per cent and 60 per cent. Three organisations worked with more than 75 per cent women, including one organisation established as women-only. Data on religion was reported as often not being collected; most of the providers who did comment said that religious minorities (predominantly Muslims) were felt to be around 20-40 per cent.

Most of the providers we interviewed offered training to both women and men; five said that they offered single-sex training. The single-sex training offered included: an ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) project for Bangladeshi women, a mentoring programme for young black men and construction courses for women. One provider said they were trying to replicate a realistic work environment and, therefore, all classes were mixed.

None of the providers offered training dedicated only to ethnic minority people or to people of Asian origin. However, one provider offered provision almost exclusively to women from ethnic minority groups, and one worked almost exclusively with Muslims.

2012 Olympic Games-related training and employment opportunities

Around half of respondents ran specific Olympic-related programmes, which included:

- construction training and CSCS (Construction Skills Certificate Scheme) cards
- SIA (Security Industry Authority) licence card
- ESOL
- ESOL and basic skills for the hospitality sector
- bus driving (PCV⁹) licence
- personal fitness training, and
- personal development and employability.

Barriers to training and employment

Around two-thirds of respondents said that the 2012 Olympics were regarded by their clients as being an opportunity for training and employment, although several qualified this response by saying that the Olympics were regarded as an opportunity for training, but not for employment:

Olympic opportunities [that is Olympic-related employment opportunities] are not as accessible as we would like them to be.

Olympic-site jobs are very specific with what they require – they want people who have experience and who are fully trained. They cherry-pick the people that they want - our clients don't really get a look-in.

This may relate to more general issues around how far training providers are providing training that is demand-led and specifically meets the needs of employers. There is an ongoing debate around this issue that is not within the scope of this report.

Several respondents felt that the Olympics still felt a long way away for their clients; many would see the Olympics as offering an opportunity for training, with jobs coming on stream closer to 2012. However, three organisations were providers of the Personal Best programme,¹⁰ which aims to help unemployed people or those who have little or no qualifications by providing them with a stepping stone into work, further employment or volunteering.

⁹ A PCV licence is a driving licence for 'person carrying vehicles'.

¹⁰ The Personal Best programme is led by the London Development Agency (LDA) and in partnership with the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and JobCentre Plus. Personal Best is part funded by the European Social Fund (ESF).

Many providers felt that their clients in the five host boroughs faced a number of barriers in accessing training and employment, some of which were general rather than being specifically related to the Olympic games. Barriers included:

- employers' awareness and attitudes
- sexism (in the construction industry)
- women returning to the workforce (after periods of care responsibilities) who were in competition with younger, more recently qualified and experienced people
- family commitments
- cultural barriers – this was mentioned mostly in relation to Bangladeshi women. However, there were large variations in terms of how restrictive participation is for women. It was felt that any restrictions around training or working in a mixed gender environment would be particularly strict where the training and/or employment might be in the construction sector, presumably due to negative perceptions of this sector
- the need or wish to wear 'traditional dress'
- language barriers, and
- hard physical work in the construction industry (for women).

Training and employment support

When asked about ideas for overcoming such barriers, respondents suggested the following:

- high-quality information, advice and guidance
- structured work placements
- targeted outreach to community centres and religious venues
- targeted funding with specific support (such as childcare payments)
- training and awareness-raising for employers, and
- childcare provision.

In terms of childcare provision, some providers had specific views:

If they wanted women involved employers should offer childcare for entry-level jobs - there is absolutely no perception that women are wanted in those jobs - childcare provision should be part of the job offer.

Respondents currently have a range of methods to engage people from hard-to-reach communities. Examples included highly targeted outreach sessions in the community, using local and community venues for these sessions, as well as employing staff from local communities to build trust.

Providers were equally split on how far clients had achieved training and employment specifically linked to the Olympic Games. Many said that clients had

started training, some specifically geared towards the 2012 Olympics, others in acquiring relevant skills (for example, in construction and hospitality) but not directly geared towards the Games. Half of the respondents had clients who had gone on to 2012-related employment, although the number of clients employed per organisation varied considerably.

In terms of suggestions for improving provision, that is the overall infrastructure to support local people into work, there was a mixed reaction. Some felt that moving from training to employment was the hardest part, while others felt the right training was not in place (like specific construction skills). One felt that better funding to employ higher quality staff to advise clients was important. Several providers commented on the need to improve communications about jobs on the Olympic sites mentioning that:

- Not enough jobs were being advertised locally.
- Vacancies were advertised one or two days before the closing date, making it difficult for providers to put forward clients.
- More robust communications systems were needed between training and employment support providers and employers.
- There needed to be some means for local people to 'get a foot in the door' with the big employers.
- The system for advertising jobs was fragmented and elaborate, there were very few vacancies actually available, and competition for jobs was high.
- Providers needed to be informed about future developments in time to put appropriate training in place.
- More clarity was needed about what jobs might become available in the future and when.

Of the current interventions used to support people into employment (such as customised training, job brokerage projects), none of the respondents could name any specific examples where these had been improved for people from ethnic minorities or, more specifically, for Asian people, as a direct result of opportunities for the Olympic Games. This also applied to those from religious minorities and women from ethnic minorities, although one provider did say opportunities for women more generally had improved.

Generally, providers were not very enthusiastic about the opportunities so far for the Olympic Games and many felt that there was little evidence of its impact on local people. However, a few providers said that training opportunities overall had improved as a result of the 2012 Olympic Games and three providers mentioned the Personal Best programme, one enthusiastically, the others much less so.

3.3 Commissioners and funders of training and employment provision

Scope of commissioners of Olympic-related activity

Interviews with representatives of three partner organisations are covered in this section plus discussions with the Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA) and the Five Host Boroughs Central Unit. Firstly, it is worth outlining the remit and scope of the three partner organisations in relation to the Olympic project. The key funders – Learning and Skills Council (LSC), Jobcentre Plus (JCP) and London Development Agency (LDA) are all directly supporting projects designed to increase access for local people to employment on the Olympic Park. For example, the LDA directly funds the ODA’s Employment and Skills Managers. However, all three funders are committed to the wider goal of increasing employment across London in response to the Games. This is set out in the London Employment and Skills Taskforce (LEST) Programme with its commitment to reduce worklessness across London by 70,000. This means that investment in provision, though it may respond to needs identified on the Olympic Park, cannot always readily be identified as specifically for Olympic jobs. The success of the investment in training and employment provision is, therefore, often seen in relation to both the direct Olympic jobs and the wider legacy context.

In addition, commissioners saw strong links between LEST activity and wider initiatives delivered through the local authorities in the area. In particular, the City Strategy Pathfinder, which covers the five borough area, was seen as having similar objectives to the LEST and could be used as an additional tool to supplement Olympic-related activity and maximise benefits to the local community.

External economic factors

A key issue recognised by respondents was the relative lack of opportunities available due to the recession. While overall numbers of jobs were broadly in line with expectations, the proportion that have resulted in genuine vacancies is less than expected with, instead, many more workers being transferred from other jobs. One respondent said in reference to the quality of the brokerage system put in place that, ‘the pity is that there are so few vacancies actually on the site’. Another said that terminology has moved away from job creation to ‘job safeguarding’.

Equality targets

For Games-related activity, commissioning agencies set targets for ethnic minorities, gender and for disabled people. These are driven by individual agency targets and targets set out in documents such as the ODA’s Employment and Skills Strategy. For the most part, these are high-level targets with, for example, none being set around specific ethnic minorities. Indeed, not all of the commissioning organisations collected information against the 16 Census categories for ethnicity.

Where this level of detail has been collected at project level, it is possible to cross-refer data to establish the number of Bangladeshi women, for instance. However, even where this information is available, it appears that no commissioning agency is using this level of detailed data within their own reporting mechanisms or to inform future planning. Some interviewees did not consider the need to set more detailed equality targets and considered that by setting high-level targets, the expectation is that a local provider will broadly reflect their local communities in aiming to achieve these.

The setting of targets for individual projects depends on the type of activity being supported and also, to a limited extent, takes into account local demography. Where a project has a very specific sector focus, targets take into account current industry performance in relation to diversity. Hence a mainstream construction training project, for example, will have the target for females reduced from 50 to 15 per cent. By and large where training or employment projects are more generalist in nature, they are more likely to reflect local demography, with certain projects targeting ethnic minority involvement of up to 60 per cent.

The LDA had started piloting the collection of data on religion on a voluntary basis with the intention of rolling this out in the future. No other agency collected this information as a matter of course.

Barriers to training and employment

Respondents saw the key barriers to be consistent with the types of barriers that are faced by the long-term unemployed. This includes inter-generational unemployment, lack of basic skills, and motivational and aspirational issues. When drawn on specific barriers faced by Asians, ethnic minority women and religious groups, the following were mentioned:

- cultural barriers to work
- distance from the labour market in terms of skills, personal circumstances and personal development
- English language skills, and
- affordable and appropriate childcare.

This was a general list of barriers; particular groups may face multiple barriers.

Mainstream or targeted equality provision

All commissioners felt that mainstreaming equalities in training and employment provision was the most appropriate approach. The main reason put forward for this was that Games-related provision was designed to move individuals into an intensive work environment and that provision had to reflect the world of work. There were a

few exceptions, such as two flagship projects focusing on women and disabled people accessing construction employment. However, these targeted projects form a negligible part of the overall investment.

This approach had a clear impact on how commissioners designed project specifications. It was felt not to be the role of commissioners to be too prescriptive, trusting providers to define the detail of their methodology to respond to targets set. Hence, it was not appropriate or necessary to design in elements to address specific barriers, rather allow the space for providers to build them in themselves. Their view was that by and large there was adequate provision and flexibility to accommodate additional measures, such as outreach and English language support.

From discussions, there appeared to be a distinction being drawn between employer-led, Olympic-focused provision and the wider engagement strategy. A whole range of projects has been designed to broaden access to training and employment using the hook of the Games as a means of engaging not just the unemployed but also the hardest to reach among the economically inactive. These include the Personal Best volunteering programme, engagement in schools, the LDA Opportunities Fund and also a range of other local provision such as a Single Point of Access, an engagement programme through the City Strategy Pathfinder. These programmes are designed as the stepping stone into Games-related employment brokerage and employer-led training. One interviewee recognised that inevitably, there was screening to ensure that job-ready candidates were put forward to interview and that this was particularly important on a project with such a lot at stake as the Olympics.

Improvements and successes

A few areas were highlighted which could be improved. One organisation conceded that there could have been better engagement with communities for the construction phase of the project. This was put down to time pressures. This respondent, however, did feel that the infrastructure was now in place for future projects of this sort and lessons learnt could be rolled out on other projects, such as Crossrail.¹¹ One respondent cited the need for more training provision to be provided within local communities while another mentioned the need to improve links with childcare provision and, in particular, increasing access to childcare that was appropriate to people from different cultures.

¹¹ Crossrail is the new high frequency railway that will connect will connect the City, Canary Wharf, the West End and Heathrow Airport to commuter areas east and west of the capital. Main construction of the railway will begin in 2010, with services commencing in 2017.

A key area of success cited by all interviewees centred on the improved cooperation between public partners which delivering the legacy of the Games has necessitated. Strategies such as LEST have driven the approach and led to an improved infrastructure for skills and employment which has resulted in more flexible and responsive provision. It was strongly felt that this has had the benefit of maximising the number of jobs available to local people and improving the responsiveness of public sector provision.

One respondent felt that the weakness of equality programmes in the past has been their poor link to the labour market. The emphasis of the Olympic-related activity has been on maximising the number of jobs available to local people and the role of the Skills and Employment managers was cited as key to this approach. Embedded in the ODA, the Skills and Employment managers worked closely with contractors to encourage them to make opportunities available to local brokerages. Respondents also cited the forecasting function which has led to improved knowledge of training needs and to the establishment of specific training programmes.

The improved cooperation in terms of brokerage between Jobcentre Plus and local brokers was also mentioned. This included Relay London jobs which extended access to jobs across London but also had a wider benefit in being a conduit for capacity-building initiatives.

3.4 Employers

Due to the LDA being about to undertake a full evaluation of the Employer Accord and to maintain the goodwill of businesses, we were only able to access three employers for interview. These were from the construction sector, reflecting the focus of activity on site at this point. Our aim was to discuss with employers their approach to recruiting local Asian people, including Asian women and those from religious minorities. In particular we wanted to establish their views on the barriers faced and support provided to address the barriers.

Local recruitment in the construction sector

The three interviewees were from international or national companies, all with direct experience of working in the five boroughs, two of which were main contractors on the Olympic site. The nature of the sector means that main contractors employ relatively few people on site with most employees being employed through their supply chain of sub-contractors. In addition, all employers were used to working

within a 'planning gain'¹² environment which has necessitated adopting a strategic approach to employment of local people and diversity issues.

In relation to the overall contract size, each main contractor interviewed employed a relatively small labour force directly. Their direct employees could be characterised as relatively highly skilled, in professional roles, as compared with sub-contractors employing people with a range of skills from skilled manual trades through to unskilled workers. While each main contractor had policies to diversify their workforce, the core of their work around recruiting local people and diversity centred on their supply chain.

In all cases, planning gain was a key driver in terms of their approach to employing local people and diversity and informed the relationship with sub-contractors. All dedicated significant resources to this activity. One employer said that:

...employing locally was initially a response to Section 106¹³ agreements, but now had become second nature.

The approach to cascading targets down to sub-contractors varied between employers: one said that they could not force sub-contractors to take people on, while a second had tied sub-contractors to contractual obligations for equality targets. In all three cases, whether contractual or not, the view was that pressure could be put on contractors as their willingness to undertake partnership work would have an influence on future contract decisions.

Sub-contractors have their own recruitment mechanisms, usually working through private agencies. In order to ensure that local or diversity targets are met, the lead contractors have a proactive role with their supply chain in order to encourage them to employ local people. They worked with their sub-contractors to identify opportunities and link those to suitable individuals. The main contractor retained responsibility for the link with public sector partners who undertook training or brokerage or for running training programmes themselves.

Public sector partnerships

The lead contractors used a whole range of sources both to fund their own activity and to source people to work on site. These included LEST-funded local authority training and brokerage, Jobcentre Plus, LDA provision, Train to Gain, Employer

¹² Planning Gain refers to the economic and social benefits that might be negotiated with a developer in exchange for permission to build a new development.

¹³ Section 106 agreements are agreements between a public agency (usually a local authority) and a developer which outlines the planning gain arrangements.

Accord, the LSC Skills for Jobs programme and Apprenticeship funding. They also worked with a range of other voluntary sector or specialist services where they had developed individual relationships, including with homeless charities and the probation service. One employer worked very specifically with local employment projects with a specialism around the construction sector.

Barriers to employment

When discussing barriers, interviewees tended to highlight general barriers which were common to all those who have been out of the labour market for a while. One employer, however, pointed out that you cannot generalise and that the barriers reflect each individual's circumstances, requiring a unique response. The following barriers to entering employment faced by local people in disadvantaged communities were identified:

- commitment
- time-keeping
- attendance
- attitude and interpersonal skills
- a need to 'settle in to a job', and
- individuals facing multiple barriers.

Specific barriers faced by ethnic minority groups and women were seen as secondary, but the attractiveness of the sector to Asians and a tendency for women to be more family than work oriented were both mentioned (no religious barriers were raised). However, one interviewee qualified the lack of attractiveness of the sector as not being universal for all Asians. The company was historically successful in recruiting Sikhs to the industry, but this group forms a low proportion of the local population. It was felt that Bangladeshis were not interested in working in low-skill construction jobs but were interested in management opportunities.

One interviewee had experience of young Asian people wishing to work in the sector but being discouraged by parents, who had a stereotypical view of the industry which was considered to have few prospects. A second interviewee highlighted a lack of a tradition of working in construction as being a barrier to involvement, with people being drawn to sectors where they were already well represented, such as tailoring. One respondent, however, reported they had been successful in recruiting Asians, though could not identify a specific reason other than the high Asian population in the relevant borough (Newham). For women, it was felt that views about the sector were exacerbated by them not being expected to work, though willing to do voluntary work.

Referrals

Opinions about the barriers outlined above may be affected by the referral process. In all cases, it was the role of external organisations to identify potential recruits and put them forward to the employer. This could be from a single source, such as through a local brokerage or through a range of partner organisations. In all cases, the employer required an element of screening, considered more or less successful, by the external partner, in order to ensure minimum requirements are met. One interviewee said that they prioritise soft skills rather than vocational skills which can be provided through training on site:

...the need for good attitude and to be personable rather than having vocational skills.

That being said, one of the employers worked with referral organisations that had provided construction training prior to referral.

Therefore, in all cases, the employer was largely reliant on referral agencies in terms of the ethnicity and gender of potential recruits. None of the organisations provided exact figures about ethnicity but felt that, as one employer stated, they achieved 'a good cross-section of communities'. This was less the case in relation to gender:

Of the occasional women referred, it was very unlikely that they would be Asians.

Training and in-work support

The three interviewees stated that people recruited through local recruitment received in-service training. Adapting training to the needs of local recruits depended on how the individual was referred. For example, the employer that worked with local construction projects offered these recruits the same training opportunities as other staff. The other two employers offered a much more intensive induction in-house, one through a specific access training programme.

None of the employers provided training which was targeted at specific ethnic minorities or gender-specific training. The view was expressed that provision should meet equal opportunities standards but, beyond this, it was the quality of the training and the existence of real job opportunities that should encourage motivated people to participate.

The employers that provided intensive induction concentrated on enthusing and motivating the client group. One employer required 100 per cent attendance during the induction to test commitment, though this was designed to start on a Thursday to split the week up; the emphasis was on providing a 'real' experience. It was

suggested that some provision did not sufficiently reflect the world of work where there would be 'no excuses'. The importance of mentoring to support local recruits and recognition that an individual's needs were unique were also emphasised by one respondent. Mentoring was supported by case meetings bringing the contractor, mentor and training provider together, where recruits could be referred to external services such as drug rehabilitation or language provision.

Recruits were able to access NVQ training following induction in the three organisations. For two, NVQ training was given alongside existing employees, but the third employer saw this as a key way of introducing structured training to their sub-contractors, who would not provide this level of training to staff recruited through private agencies. In one case, a six- to seven-week 'settling in' period for local recruits was allowed before they started NVQ training, so that they could become accustomed to the world of work and have time to deal with any benefits issues. A high proportion of these individuals had low levels of literacy and numeracy and were screened prior to starting vocational training, but this was undertaken alongside all other new recruits to avoid stigmatising individuals.

Once in employment, employers generally felt there were no significant issues with employees in relation to ethnicity, gender or religion and that this was reflected in retention levels. A case where an Asian woman felt that she was 'culturally misunderstood' by colleagues was noted; this had been raised with a mentor and a strategy was being developed to deal with the issue. One employer, however, highlighted the high number of Asians who drop out from their access course. This was put down to them being referred by external agencies despite a lack of interest in construction.

One respondent spoke about the support that is put in place for people from different faiths once in employment, which included prayer areas for Muslims. They also provided advice to supervisors about Ramadan in order to support Muslim workers at this time.

Public sector intervention

There were mixed views about the role of the public sector in trying to increase diversity and local recruitment. One respondent felt that there was potential for initiative overload leading to conflicting outcomes and that setting high targets for local recruitment can have a detrimental impact in terms of creating sustainable employment in the sector. This employer wanted to develop recruits by moving them to new sites but this was potentially undermined by Section 106 agreements which require high local recruitment rates. A more strategic approach was wanted. Furthermore, the robustness of some local recruitment schemes which use postcode-

related data was questioned, as they did not distinguish between local residents and on-site workers living in short-term accommodation in the area concerned.

The other two interviewees were more positive about planning gain as it had encouraged a change of attitude among employers. One felt that setting targets for local recruitment should be made compulsory as these had had a knock-on effect, and that by forcing the industry to undertake training it would create longer-term benefits in terms of the sustainability of the sector. The traditional approach of using private agencies in a highly competitive industry meant that without local labour agreements, there was little incentive to train workers.

The three employers interviewed understood they were dealing with people with potential barriers to employment so that screening should be 'within reason', but all raised the issue of poor quality referrals from public agencies, with inappropriate people being put forward. An example provided was of someone with a fear of heights being put forward for a scaffolding job. This was put down to a poor understanding of the needs of employers by some people in the public sector. It was felt that such an approach is counter-productive, particularly at a time when there is no shortage of labourers:

It helps no one; you end up with sceptical candidates being foisted on sceptical contractors in a sector where penalties for failure to deliver on time are high.

In all cases, referrals were better where there was a closer link between the employer and broker. In many cases they had developed good relationships with specific providers that, over time, had been able to tailor the service they provided to the employer. One interviewee described providing talks to Somali and women's groups to raise awareness about the sector. Another highlighted some positive training funded through the Employer Accord, designed to improve the knowledge of Jobcentre Plus staff and how to pitch potential recruits. However, the inflexibility of public sector organisations was raised and the example cited of a dispute between the probation service and Jobcentre Plus which resulted in one trainee having their benefits stopped.

Finally, in response to the question 'what could be done better?', one employer suggested that it may have been a good idea to implement an intermediate labour market on site. An intermediate labour market is a form of labour market intervention that acts as a 'bridge' between unemployment and the world of work. An intermediate labour market could include work placements and workplace training.

3.5 Summary

Community groups

- Most community groups that took part in the research said their members believed there was potential for training and employment opportunities through the 2012 Olympic Games and were showing some interest.
- Some did not know how to access information about training and employment opportunities, and believed that there were few Games-related training or employment opportunities currently available.
- The perceived focus of Games-related employment on the construction sector discouraged most groups.

Training and employment providers

- Employment and training providers felt they generally engaged well with people from ethnic minorities, including Asians. There is little training specifically targeted at Asian communities, but providers did not perceive this to be a problem as participation rates were still felt to be high.
- There were cultural barriers as well as external barriers to participation and ultimately gaining work. The barriers mentioned were not 'Olympic-specific' but were probably the same as those faced by these groups within any training or employment setting.
- Some providers have engaged quite well with offering training specifically linked to the Olympic Games, while others have not been able to do so – this is inevitable with any programme that is competitively tendered.
- There was a lack of awareness about what has been achieved to date by the ODA in terms of employment for local communities. Providers generally felt that local people might be getting some training, but this is resulting in few actual jobs.

Commissioners and funders of training and employment provision

- When measuring performance in terms of employment and training programmes, commissioning organisations are driven by high-level equality targets in terms of ethnicity, gender and disability. There was little evidence that targets are set around specific ethnic groups, or gender within particular communities, to address particular under-representation in the labour market.
- A defining feature of Games-related provision is that it is demand-led. A great deal of effort and resource has been put into ensuring that the training and brokerage activity is responsive to the needs of employers.
- Alongside the direct Games-related skills and brokerage work, commissioners and funders are delivering a range of activities around schools, volunteering and other projects, using the hook of the Games to broaden access and engage those outside the labour market.

- Commissioners' approach to engagement was reliant on delivery organisations addressing the needs of local communities, but without more targeted support there is potential for sections of the community to slip through the net.

Employers

- Construction industry employers work in a highly competitive environment with strict penalty clauses around failure to meet deadlines and quality standards. The recession means that currently there are very few vacancies, particularly in low-skilled roles.
- The main contractors directly employed a relatively small and highly skilled workforce, unlike their supply chain of sub-contractors. Most of their work around recruiting local people and diversity centred on this supply chain. They felt that pressure could be put on their sub-contractors to deliver on equality targets and that this could influence future contract decisions.
- For the most part external partners, such as public sector agencies, source and refer new applicants to employers. Employers did not consider barriers in relation to ethnicity, gender or religion to be a particular issue although they did identify the lack of attractiveness of the construction sector to some Asians and a tendency for women to be more family than work orientated.
- The employers we spoke to have put a range of mechanisms and in-work support in place to ensure that those recruited from disadvantaged groups are able to sustain employment.

4. Focus groups and interviews with individuals

This chapter reports on the focus groups and interviews conducted with local people in the five host boroughs. Fifty people participated in total in the six focus groups and five Asian people who had been successful in gaining Olympic related employment took part in individual interviews. First, we discuss the findings arising from the focus groups, which aimed to explore participants' perceptions and experiences about the training and employment opportunities offered by the 2012 Olympics. We then look at the experiences of Asian people who have gained employment.

4.1 Expectations of the 2012 Olympic Games

Participants were asked about their initial impressions when the announcement was made in 2005 that the Olympics would be held in London. The general consensus among ethnic minority participants was that there would be an increase in the number of jobs available in the five host boroughs and possibly in the surrounding areas:

It is a good thing for the country and the people... It would bring jobs and training opportunities.

The feeling was that the number of manual labour and construction-based jobs would be likely to increase; for example, there might be a requirement for electricians and security.

Other positive responses focused on the local infrastructure. One participant explained how they felt that urban redevelopment was inevitable while others talked about improvements to the area including improved roads, transport and housing. The Olympics would 'change the face of east London' and raise the profile of the area.

Others were less enthusiastic after the announcement however. Some of the White British felt that there would be no benefit and that the 'tax payer would be hit hard', questioning how the whole project would be funded. There was a doubt about how the income generated from the Games would be used to benefit the local communities with one participant arguing that the money used for the Games should have been spent on something that would have ensured more jobs were available to local people, like a hospital.

Those who initially expressed negative feelings towards the Games had not changed their feelings over the last four years. The following comment reflected the opinion of most people from across the focus groups:

I live in the heart of Hackney – at no point in the last 18 months have I seen any advertisement in the local jobcentre [for Olympics-related jobs].

This view was reflected even by participants who had an initial positive outlook on the Games, and who now appeared to have changed their opinion of the Olympics since the announcement. The predominant reasons for these negative feelings were similar across all focus groups: that they were not generally aware of many jobs or training opportunities available to them in relation to the Games:

In terms of the Olympics and relevant jobs there is not much happening – or not much that we know about.

The jobs that are supposed to be available aren't available – there is no benefit to us.

Participants claimed that 'local people have been pushed aside' and that:

We cannot access the current jobs because the companies on site are not employing local people.

Local people are not getting the jobs – Europeans get the jobs.

There was a general feeling that the recession was a significant factor in the lack of jobs that are available.

One participant felt very strongly about the Olympics, comparing the development to that of the Docklands:

...catering for the rich people because we cannot afford most of the buildings that are part rent/part buy – we get pushed away.

However, a small number of participants were more positive and felt that opportunities were there if people looked carefully and asked about the Olympics and what was available.

Participants were asked for their overall opinion on how far the developments of the Olympic Games 2012 have benefited their community. All of the groups expressed some disappointment:

East London is a poor area and the Olympics were sold as an opportunity to tackle this but it's not happening – the jobs are just not there.

Rising prices were a concern as the Olympics approach, with some strong views expressed:

I don't know if there are any benefits, there are no benefits for us.

There will be new buildings, but what will change? Personally I have not seen anything that has changed.

One participant provided a specific example about how the Olympics have actually had a negative effect. The participant said that a local car mechanic had to relocate because of the site development and, despite getting compensation, has lost his customer base.

Although in a minority, there were some positive views expressed, with participants suggesting that the benefits would be seen, but in the long term:

The only time that we will benefit from the Olympics is when it's over.

The long-term benefits will be good – the Games will bring money to the community and will bring more jobs.

4.2 Experience of training and job opportunities

Participants were asked if they were aware of any specific training opportunities for the Olympic sites. The general consensus was that there were not many opportunities available and that this was a significant barrier:

The government hasn't publicised it enough and not that many people know about what is available, even if there are opportunities.

However, views were mixed, with some suggesting that there was a lot of training on offer from various organisations but that this training was not that relevant to the Olympics. When discussed in more detail, participants mentioned seeing a number of different training opportunities including apprenticeships in construction on site (advertised through Access to Employment) and construction training advertised in a community centre. Some participants were undertaking security and construction training, one was undertaking CSCS (Construction Skills Certification Scheme) training while another had a friend undertaking a dumper truck training course. Some of the ethnic minority women were undertaking English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes while others had completed the course. The general feeling among these participants was that the course would help them successfully complete other training and find a job. One participant said:

If there were training opportunities, we would be interested in taking up Games-related training.

Local providers were thought to be most helpful because they offered more tailored support.

One participant was due to start a training course but it was rolled over because too many people were registered. He had not heard anything for some time and described this as 'frustrating'. While this is not an obvious barrier to training, it could put people off future training courses.

Volunteering opportunities were discussed. One participant said that they had seen volunteering vacancies advertised through the jobcentre and that this would, more than likely, include some relevant training, for example in customer services. Others implied that volunteering roles directly related to the Games would interest them. It was felt that the 'experience gained through volunteering is crucial' and, therefore, they would consider such opportunities. Some women expected volunteering opportunities to arise prior to the Olympics in construction, hospitality and in sales, and stated that they would be happy to work in secretarial, security, first aid, retail and carer roles.

The common barrier for all groups was a lack of information about training opportunities. This was also the case when it came to employment. Despite some engagement in training, most participants, including those who had seen training opportunities, had not applied for any Olympic-related jobs, predominantly because they had not seen any advertised.

There were exceptions to this. Two men had applied for construction jobs but been unsuccessful. Some women had seen jobs advertised in local newspapers (such as *East End Life*) for construction and catering roles and although they had not applied for these jobs, some of their husbands or friends had applied, but had similarly been unsuccessful.

The lack of information was a major concern. One participant said that she lived in Hackney but 'it feels like the Olympics are happening in the north of England' and that 'there is a distinct lack of communication'. This was echoed by another participant who claimed that he got most of his information about the Olympics from the national news. The way jobs were advertised was also seen as a barrier.

The same jobs on the Olympic site can be seen by everyone in all parts of London – how can local people compete on this level?

Apart from the lack of information, other barriers to gaining Olympic-related employment were raised. The importance of having the appropriate training was recognised. Many participants agreed that skills and training were the most important

factor when looking for any work, including work related to the Olympics. Therefore, a lack of relevant skills and training was described as a significant barrier:

...more training would make a difference to us.

Some participants explained that if training was not free, they would probably not be able to afford it. Another recognised barrier was a lack of experience for the jobs that were available and training could sometimes provide opportunities to gain that experience.

To date, the majority of Olympic jobs have been based in the construction industry. It emerged in some of the focus groups that many Asian participants were not interested in working in this sector. Younger people explained that this was not a sector their parents expected them to go into; one commenting that he was expected to work in an office-based environment instead (this issue is discussed further under 'Culture, religion and equal opportunities', below). However, two Asian participants did have construction experience and stated they would happily work in this sector again.

Similarly, one woman expressed a concern with regards to the appropriateness of a construction career given her circumstances:

Personally I would not have a problem working in construction but I do not have the skills, I have three children and even if I did the training I'm not sure I would find a job after the Olympics.

Some of the Asian women had other concerns. While a lack of information on relevant opportunities was again mentioned, other factors such as childcare needs were raised and one participant did not want to find work until her child has passed the age of 14. Many said they were only able to work during certain hours because of childcare responsibilities, while another felt that her English-speaking ability needed to improve before she could start looking for any work.

One of the male participants also suggested that being unable to speak English could be a barrier but others were quick to point out that Eastern Europeans with similar language barriers had managed to succeed. In their opinion, the inability to speak English was only part of the barrier to finding work. There was a feeling among several participants that most of the workers on the Olympic site were from overseas and this could prevent local people taking the jobs:

They [people from Eastern Europe] will take half of the minimum wage and this saves money in the long term.

Others felt it was unfair to blame Eastern Europeans for taking these jobs, as they were only doing manual labour and the ground work needed before the next stages of development.

Age was another barrier raised by some participants. One said that he was 'put off applying due to my age' (40+ years old), while another participant who was over 60 years old felt like she had been 'put out to dry' and, despite her experience, there was nothing available. Interestingly, one participant suggested that they would not apply for construction training because they were under the impression that this sector was targeting school leavers and those under 25 years old.

Another participant described his 35 years' work experience in the construction sector and explained that he had all of the necessary skills and management experience to succeed. However, he has been unable to find construction work in the United Kingdom for 10 years and felt that his experience in other countries was not viewed in the same way as it would be if gained in the United Kingdom.

Despite the current negative feeling from all the groups towards the Olympics, the perceived barriers and the lack of jobs and training available, there is an indication that people are interested in jobs and/or training related to the Games, should the right opportunities arise. As one participant said:

I would love to be part of the Olympics, not just for the work but for the kudos that comes with it. It would be like helping the community.

Women involved in the focus groups expressed an interest in a variety of job roles, including administration, cleaning, catering and security. This suggests that if the jobs and training became available in sectors other than construction, they would be interested in applying. In addition, one participant, who had got a job in a local supermarket in one of the host boroughs, felt that this job was available as a result of the Olympics. This could be important for the perceived legacy of the Olympics and the jobs that are created, not only on site, but also off site in other sectors such as retail or hospitality.

4.3 Suggested improvements

Several suggestions were made with regards to improving access to training and job opportunities. All focus groups agreed that improved communication was an important factor and suggested this could be achieved through a variety of methods. Jobs needed to be advertised in local newspapers and papers with a wide distribution, such as *Metro*. There should also be more information on the Games in general in the local papers.

It was felt that regular updates on vacancies and training opportunities related to the Games would benefit the local community. One participant elaborated and said that:

Even if jobs are not available at the moment, they should say what will be available and what range of jobs will be available, as well as who will be able to access these jobs.

Many participants felt there should be somewhere that everyone can go to get information, advice and guidance that is specifically related to the Games. One expressed concern over the Olympic website and how disorganised it was. She suggested that this website 'should be accessible for all local people' and went on to say that:

A centralised point would be useful, where all of the information (jobs and relevant training) is available.

One focus group suggested that a workshop be held to advertise the Olympic-related training and job opportunities. The group agreed that there was lack of information and a lack of awareness surrounding the opportunities available and something like a workshop or similar event could help address this.

The Asian women had particular concerns. They required support and information about the Olympics in areas that were accessible to them. This included community centres, training providers, the jobcentre and in local mosques. Some felt that there needed to be more ESOL and IT training in local areas (such as Bethnal Green, Mile End and so on) as they would not travel for the training because they needed to stay close to family and in the local neighbourhood. The view was expressed that training would be more appealing if there was some guarantee of a job once the training had been completed. There was also a feeling among some participants that travel expenses and childcare costs should be covered by employers and training providers, as well as there being the opportunity for flexible working or training hours.

4.4 Culture, religion and equal opportunities

Participants discussed how culture and religion could impact on the likelihood of them applying for jobs or training.

Most seemed to appreciate that employers would need to consider other cultures' beliefs and might also need to make arrangements to help support certain employees or trainees (for example, providing prayer rooms for Muslims):

Hackney is a multicultural place and everyone needs to have the same opportunities.

Culture and religion should be considered. For example, one thing could be offensive to one culture and not the other.

If someone prevented me from wearing a cross I would find it offensive.

It was felt that employers and training providers needed a greater understanding of Ramadan, for example, and the need for prayer times:

People take cigarette breaks; we should be able to take prayer breaks.

Two participants felt that flexible working hours were a necessity (for different prayer times) and that without this benefit they would not take a job although others felt this was less important, and would still consider a job without the flexible working.

The view was also expressed that although culture and religion should not be ignored, it should also not be taken to extremes in working or training environments:

Everyone should be equal and employers should not have to do things differently.

The whole culture and religion issue is over the top. It's like a political game. I go to work to work. It has nothing to do with my culture or religion.

With regards to equal opportunities there was a strong feeling among some participants that barriers still existed:

There are barriers everywhere. Equal opportunities are only on paper – in practice it does not exist.

There was a feeling among some Asian people that they received less information than other groups about opportunities and that these were not being made clear to them. One participant suggested that Asian people are already under-represented in certain sectors (like construction) and once this situation changes it would become easier for more people to move into the respective sectors. It was noted that some sectors rely on word-of-mouth contacts and once a network had been established, it is much easier for other people to move into work in a similar area with their peers.

Several of the Asian women expressed strong views about equal opportunities, suggesting that some Asian groups have a significant advantage over others:

There seems to be more opportunities and provision for Bangladeshi women than Pakistani women in Tower Hamlets – in Newham and Hackney [Bangladeshi and Pakistani] women have the same opportunities.

And that they were receiving less support than people who were new to the country:

There is a lot of support for people who have recently come to this country – these agencies often think that because I have grown up here and can speak English I don't need help – but I need help too.

One participant added:

There is some racism and prejudice against Pakistani women. Some people feel superior and are patronising.

Furthermore, men were seen to be at an advantage over women when looking for work or training because they do not have to wear a hijab and:

Men are not expected to look after children and employers are less willing to take on mothers.

Careers

The younger Asian men who participated in the focus groups and were still predominately at college explained how their culture looks more favourably on academic careers and, as a result, the Olympics have not had very much impact on their intentions for training or employment. They were not interested in construction careers:

Bangladeshi families would not look favourably on construction [as a career]. Doctors or lawyers and other academic careers are more respectable. The stigma associated with construction is a problem.

It would appear that Bangladeshi families are looking for their sons to move into roles that are perceived to be more 'prestigious':

Construction is seen as more 'hands-on' blue-collar work.

One participant added that his parents would not look favourably on him working in construction while another explained that a paid work placement in construction was offered to people in their college, which predominantly consisted of students from a Bangladeshi background, but there were no applicants. A possible conclusion is that younger generations of Bangladeshis and Pakistanis may be discouraged from working in construction by their parents.

Although this attitude towards the construction sector was widespread among the younger Asian men in this study, there were a few exceptions. Some individuals either already worked in the sector or said that they would work in general

construction, and some said they would consider higher-level jobs in the construction sector (for example engineering) if they became available.

Gender issues

The Bangladeshi and Pakistani women's groups offered some insights to the gender differences in their cultures with regards to employment and training. It was explained that, in the Bangladeshi culture, women do not work but look after children. They would only look for work once the children were old enough. They could also not have close contact with men so, for example, would be unable to work in a restaurant because they would have to work close to men. They went on to explain that they could work with men as long as they had their own personal space such as in an office (as they would have their own desk), in a shop or supermarket, or in childcare roles. They also suggested that more ESOL and IT training should be offered in their local areas because they were unable to travel too far for cultural reasons.

Another factor mentioned was that many Pakistani and Bangladeshi women wear a hijab and would not take a job where they cannot wear this. Some women explained that agreement to do so is made with an employer prior to them taking a job. Furthermore, there were differences in job search behaviour in that some of the women tended to look for work using a personal contact (through community or women's groups), whereas the men in their culture would be more likely to go to the jobcentre.

Some of the Asian women explained how women from their culture would look for different jobs to men and would not work on a construction site. Others did not mention any significant differences between the types of jobs that men and women look for although, generally, women tend to have different skills. However, as one male respondent mentioned, in Pakistan, women did work in construction, both in technical and labour-based jobs.

Similarly, some participants in the non-Asian groups felt that construction was not an industry solely for men:

I have worked in construction and there have been plenty of women in this sector.

I have worked in a factory and there were many women – it should be no different now on the Olympic site.

For some, gender-specific working environments are no longer an issue, with men and women mixing in a variety of different working environments.

Finally, it was suggested by one male participant that men and women differed when looking for work or training because women could be more selective with the work they chose to do as they were providing a secondary income, whereas men were considered to be the main breadwinner.

4.5 People in employment

We were able to interview five people from the Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities, one woman and four men. (Please see notes on sample size in the Methodology section of Chapter 1.) All had worked on the Olympic site, though two no longer did.

The five interviewees were positive about the Games coming to the area and felt that it would be good for the unemployed in the area. Some had a construction background but all saw their skills and interests to be relevant and expected opportunities to be available.

Experiences

Attitudes towards accessing employment and training relating to the Olympics were mixed. Two had attended a training scheme that had led to paid work experience on site. The other three had not undertaken any specific training: two because they had applied for unskilled construction roles and had previous construction experience; the other because they had the required skills set.

The two interviewees with previous construction experience were, however, disappointed to have only been offered a manual job on site and given no additional training. One was very disappointed about the training opportunities available. He had accessed several short-term contracts on site via private recruitment agencies but was frustrated that he could not access training to move into a permanent or higher-skilled job. He had tried to access public-funded training without success and felt the costs of training were a barrier to his progress. The other had since been offered a training place on a steelwork course but was unable to take this because of personal family issues.

Two interviewees mentioned that language training would be useful though they did not feel their skill level affected their chances of accessing work. One of the two interviewees who had received training was particularly impressed - it was not classroom-based but provided real opportunities to try out skills in a real working environment. He was also able to try out a variety of jobs on different sites. This particular scheme included a paid placement, but more generally this respondent felt that the fact that there was a lot of free training was important in extending access.

The guaranteed job placement was seen as a real benefit of the training. One interviewee explained that he had previously undertaken courses but could not get a placement so was unable to gain a qualification. That said, he also felt that qualifications were not always enough and that experience was important:

It is catch 22 – they don't want a novice on site.

However, he was annoyed that his apprenticeship had started three months later than promised.

Four of the interviewees had not experienced any issues around ethnicity, gender or religion that affected their ability to apply for a job or to retain the job. Four had accessed jobs through a local brokerage service. One said that friends of his from his community had undertaken the training and were working on site. Another said that 'agencies call me back because I'm good at what I'm doing'. One of those interviewed, who worked in an administration role in the construction field, did however question how many jobs were actually being made available.

Without naming ethnicity or culture specifically, one interviewee highlighted the difficult nature of construction work. It had not impacted on his ability to access work and he had, in fact, beaten stiff competition to get a job, but he described construction as 'not the nicest environment' and the reality was that it is very hard physical work. This impacted on how co-workers treated each other and he felt that it was 'OK if you give back as much as you get'. He said, 'I personally just get on with it and don't let it affect me', but he felt it might be easier for him because he 'blended in' more than some people in his community because he was British Asian. He also said it can be worse for Asians because there are very few of them working in the sector.

When this interviewee was asked how employers could help in addressing issues of bullying, he said that it was raised in training sessions and that it was taken seriously but he felt that it did not make much difference on the ground, saying:

They can put things in place but when you are out there it's different.

Of the five people interviewed, two were no longer working on the Olympic site. One who had received training had decided to give the job up as he was not really interested in construction, stating that 'his heart was not in it'. This individual remained interested in future vacancies, including in electrical engineering, which he had been introduced to as part of his training, or areas he had a previous interest in. The second interviewee who had left site had issues with a supervisor but this had not put him off applying for other jobs on site.

When discussing the issue of barriers, one raised the subject of Eastern European workers. There appeared to be large numbers on site and while this interviewee did not think this was an issue personally, he felt that they were prepared to do the manual work that others would not.

Experience of accessing work

None of the five people interviewed felt their background was a hindrance to accessing work or while in work – one felt strongly that it was ‘down to the individual themselves’. While the men did not raise any cultural barriers, the female respondent highlighted a number of cultural issues that affected women accessing the labour market. She said that people were very surprised that she worked in the construction field, even in a non-manual role. Women from her culture were not interested in construction. She stated that parental influence remained strong and younger people were encouraged to go into higher-level jobs, specifically mentioning medicine as an example.

She also highlighted that attitudes and culture affected how long women were in the labour market for and the types of jobs they want. For her part, these attitudes were changing but she was surprised how many of her friends went into caring jobs such as teaching. Even people of her generation were more family-oriented and once they had children, were more likely to work part time or give up work until children are grown up.

4.6 Summary

- Overall, the initial reaction at the announcement that London was going to have the Games was a positive one, with people from ethnic minority groups appearing to be particularly enthusiastic. There was a general expectation that jobs would be available to local people and that it would impact positively on the area.
- The main issue expressed time and again in the focus groups was the lack of information about training and employment opportunities that are Games-related and, particularly, how local people can access those that are available.
- As a result, the positive feeling towards the Olympics has waned over time, as all groups have experienced frustration about the lack of ability to access opportunities. The frustration centred mostly on a lack of information about opportunities – but all groups also felt that opportunities were being taken up by other groups, rather than local people.
- Views were mixed about how much training was currently on offer, with many of the participants interested in Games-related training opportunities should they become available, particularly in sectors other than construction. Volunteering was also seen as a useful way to gain experience.

- Several ways of improving access to training and employment opportunities were suggested, including: better use of local newspapers for advertising vacancies; community locations or a centralised point where people can go for information; advice and guidance on the Games, and an improved Olympics website.
- Most young Asian men were generally uninterested in a career in construction and appeared to experience some parental pressure that discouraged them from entering the industry. There appeared to be some lack of understanding of the full range of jobs within the sector.
- An important barrier highlighted by women was that of childcare, predominantly relating to cost, although some women were unwilling to work until their children reached a certain age. Some Asian women also raised issues such as wearing the hijab, and limitations on working with men as affecting their choice of work.
- While many women expressed a strong desire to work, construction was not usually the industry of choice, with women more interested in other sectors such as administration, cleaning and catering.
- The views of those who had been employed on site were more positive in terms of access to jobs, which may well reflect their success in this area. However, it was noted that construction is a tough field, and under-represented groups may experience an element of bullying.

5. Conclusions and implications

This study set out to explore the employment experiences, skills and aspirations of ethnic minorities in the five host boroughs of the 2012 Olympics through interviews with training and employment providers, community groups and other key players, focus groups with local people and interviews with a few of those who have gained employment. It is, by nature, an exploratory study, and while we cannot say that the people who participated are representative of the communities they come from, our findings are indicative of the perceptions, aspirations and expectations of those in the five boroughs and illustrate some of the issues that need to be addressed.

Our analysis suggests that Asian people appear to be disproportionately disadvantaged in relation to gaining Olympics-related employment. While the Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA) states that 39 per cent of those employed from the five host boroughs are from ethnic minority groups, they are not able to state how many of these are Asian. However, data from the five borough unit brokerage service suggest that a far lower percentage of people working on site are Asians, despite this group comprising just over 20 per cent of the population in the five host boroughs. Likewise, the focus groups and interviews indicate that people of Asian origin are not faring well in terms of employment on the Olympic site. There may be a number of factors contributing to this poor performance, which are discussed below.

5.1 Factors influencing involvement

Economic downturn

The effect of the current recession should not be underestimated. While the number of jobs on site is more or less as predicted, the number of actual vacancies is lower. Although we were not able to get specific figures for this, this was consistently recognised as a major factor in our discussions with the relevant agencies and employers. This is likely to mean that employers will move their employees from other sites onto the Olympic Park, rather than look for local people to fill new vacancies.

In addition, in a time of recession, there will be a higher proportion of recently employed people among the unemployed, due to redundancies. The recently unemployed are likely to be more 'employable' than the long-term unemployed. The effect of this on local communities with high levels of embedded and long-term worklessness is that they will become harder to help, in comparison with other more recently unemployed people, and will, therefore, find it harder to compete for work. In an area such as the five boroughs, where there is a high level of worklessness among Asians, they are likely to be disproportionately affected by such factors.

Availability of information

There appear to be some good systems in place for linking training agencies with employment agencies and employers. These systems bring employers closer to training and employment support and are highly focused on employers' needs (which in other research is shown to be good practice). However, most of the individuals who took part in focus groups and interviews remained confused about where to find information on Olympic jobs and how to engage with the current systems.

In addition to information about jobs, it is clear that, at agency level, there are some problems around information. The complex range of initiatives, funding streams and different stakeholder agendas has meant that only high-level information is recorded. So, for example, the ODA's inability to provide a breakdown of their ethnic minority statistics makes it hard to undertake more sophisticated planning of provision targeted at specific communities.

The complexity of initiatives makes it additionally hard to isolate Olympic-focused jobs. For example, the key developments include the Olympic Park, the Olympic Village and Stratford City; these are all interlinked in many ways but are subject to different planning arrangements and have different reporting requirements. Another example would be the information in relation to 'Olympic-specific' jobs (often defined as only those jobs on the Olympic Park site) as compared to 'Olympic-related' jobs (which may be jobs gained through the much broader range of London 2012 Employment and Skills Taskforce (LEST) activities).

Cultural issues

There appear to be some cultural issues that may impact on the ability of some Asian people to access Olympic jobs. Most current Olympic-related jobs are in the construction sector. Recent adult migrants may tend to gravitate towards more traditional sectors (such as catering and retail) while some of the younger people in this study faced parental pressure to seek careers in sectors which, they perceived, had better prospects. There was little recognition of the higher-level career options within construction among the people we met. This factor is likely to lead to many Asian people (particularly young people) 'self selecting' away from the current Olympic job opportunities.

There was some evidence that the need or wish to wear traditional dress (for cultural and/or religious reasons) may have a negative impact, particularly in the construction sector. However, this was largely anecdotal, and the very small numbers of Asian people working on site made it difficult to draw conclusions in this area. By far the most significant cultural issue was around perceptions of the construction industry as an appropriate sector in which to work.

Gender issues

There is likely to be a general gender issue around women working in the construction industry across all ethnicities. Despite a number of initiatives, this remains a largely male-dominated industry; at a national level only one per cent of the 'trades' workforce are women. The response from one community group when asked about the possibility of Bangladeshi women working on a construction site was: 'It is never going to happen!'

Pakistani and Bangladeshi households tend to have a higher number of dependent children (compared to other groups) and there is a reported cultural expectation that women will shoulder this responsibility. The importance of good-quality, accessible childcare was raised, plus the need to have locally based facilities offering English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and training opportunities for women to access alongside their caring responsibilities.

Some Asian women did express an interest in training and seeking Olympic-related work, albeit in sectors other than construction, such as administration and catering. As the Games approach it is possible that the number of opportunities available for these women may increase as more employment sectors are represented on site.

Religious issues

Significant religious issues did not emerge as direct barriers to employment on the Olympic site. However, it may largely be that people are self selecting out at an early stage and such issues have simply not come to the fore. Some issues were mentioned around dress and people fasting for Ramadan, but these were presented more as potential barriers rather than actual barriers experienced by employers and individuals. This suggests that a job in construction is so far away for many Asian people that these very practical issues have rarely been considered or tested.

We saw some evidence of religious teaching being a positive factor in helping Asian people into work. A local mosque in east London sees very large numbers of local people come through the doors. The pastoral role of the imams is being used to promote work from a religious perspective. This may play a positive role in reducing worklessness.

Skills issues

There is evidence to suggest that some Asian groups have lower skills levels than other ethnic groups. This is likely to make competing for any work harder for them. However, our research suggests that Asian people are starting to engage more with training as a route to raising skills levels although few people appeared to be willing

to undertake training in construction and many felt that they needed to get a job with pay, rather than enter a training programme.

The reality is that many construction training programmes are run through the Apprenticeship programme which offers a wage while training; our focus group participants did not all seem to be aware of this fact.

The phasing of Olympic activity

The five host boroughs have very high numbers of people from ethnic minorities who are workless¹⁴; in the region of over 150,000 people.¹⁵ The June 2009 figure of 4,434 jobs available on the Olympic site represents something of a ‘drop in the ocean’ compared to the scale of the overall problem. While promoting the Olympics as a positive opportunity, there needs to be some realism about what can be achieved. Despite this there needs to be ambition and creativity in working towards higher participation rates and employment outcomes relating to target groups.

The fact that many of the Olympic jobs currently are in construction is a clear factor, if we recognise that some Asian people do not regard construction work positively. As we get closer to the Games-time events themselves it may be that there are other job options that Asian people may aspire to, such as catering, retail, hospitality and so on. The need for high-quality information on available jobs and training opportunities will become vital, as this is where we may see real opportunities arising for this community.

Use of targets and specifications within publicly funded provision

There is a high level of engagement activity in the five host boroughs that is aiming to address worklessness. In the context of this research, it does not appear to have been very successful in getting Asian people into work on the Olympic site. It should be noted of course, that this has never been the specific aim of this work. The funding regime for many publicly funded initiatives often sets high-level targets that are not sophisticated enough to address the needs of specific groups. For example, most contracts set targets for working with people from ethnic minorities; this is rarely broken down further and so providers may tend to ‘cherry pick’ from groups that are easier to engage or help, in order to meet their targets. It would be useful for public agencies to set more specific targets that reflect the needs of local communities.

¹⁴ Worklessness is a term used to define those that are economically inactive and those that are unemployed.

¹⁵ This figure was extrapolated from the Annual Population Survey, ONS, Oct 2007-Sept 2008.

Similarly, specifications for provision tend to be quite broad and may not be focused on the need to provide specific interventions for specific community needs. This can disadvantage those communities who are furthest away from the labour market, particularly where providers are paid on outcomes. For example, targeting promotion of the industry and marketing the long-term benefits of training may be needed in order to attract more Asian people to construction opportunities.

Availability of training

There appear to be some very positive developments around training, with evidence of training that is designed specifically to meet the needs of employers with a clear infrastructure in place to support this process. Where we spoke to people who had undertaken training, they were generally positive about its benefits and impact in helping them secure work, although some training providers had less positive views. At the time of writing we were not able to get any detailed statistics from the National Skills Academy for Construction. This would show how far people from an Asian background are starting to engage with such training that is likely to result in them being able to compete for Olympic construction jobs. Our anecdotal evidence from focus groups and interviews suggests such engagement is low.

This suggests that information, advice and guidance provision is not helping to refer Asian people into such training; it may be that perceptions of the construction sector are the key issue here. Again, the importance of putting good information systems in place before opportunities in other sectors become available cannot be overemphasised.

Availability of employment support

Again, a comprehensive infrastructure has been developed around employment support and employers appear to regard this highly and recognise that the development of employer-focused employment support is under way and starting to take shape. However, employers need job-ready, motivated candidates to come through this system and our research suggests that many Asian people would not be able or motivated to take a job in construction for the many reasons highlighted above.

5.2 Implications for future actions

Strategy linking engagement initiatives with jobs

There should be a clear strategy that links the range of engagement activity with the full range of jobs that will be available both directly with the Olympics and those related to the Olympics. Such a strategy should:

- Be very clear on target groups and differentiate the strategy according to the needs of these groups, where necessary.

- Develop targets that reflect the above decisions.
- Work with key community-based agencies and religious leaders in developing the strategy and putting this into action.
- Enter into an open and honest debate about childcare issues – this includes recognising the cost of childcare initiatives and the expectations of communities and employers.
- Develop a wide range of provision that recognises the very long journey that some Asian people may face in accessing employment or training.
- Consider extending the role of mentoring within the construction sector.
- Consider the development of new approaches to employment of Asian groups, such as intermediate labour market initiatives.

Better promotion of the construction sector

There should be a clear marketing campaign targeted at the Asian community that promotes the construction sector. This campaign should:

- Highlight the range of careers within the sector from entry level to higher level.
- Promote a clear career path.
- Show the role of women in the sector and how this is being supported.
- Address any stereotypes about gender and cultural issues, showing how these might be overcome where appropriate.
- Show the training routes available (including those with pay), such as the Apprenticeship programme.
- Be in relevant community languages for parents and community elders.
- Possibly be endorsed by leading cultural and religious figures.

Better provision of information around employment and training

Information around employment and training should be improved. Current systems for information provision should be broadened to include a wider range of groups and communities. However, information needs to be realistic about future opportunities so as not to raise false expectations. Therefore, systems should:

- Promote local successes clearly to show that there are some opportunities available.
- Be clear about the range of opportunities and any future ones that may come on stream, and when.
- Ensure that provision takes into account the effects of the recession as far as possible.
- Include the much wider range of Olympic-related opportunities, where possible.
- Develop a common approach to data collection and reporting that is sophisticated enough to deal with a targeted strategy.

Better collection of data and reporting

Many of the issues highlighted have had to rely on anecdotal evidence, reported through interviews and focus groups. There is a lack of available data from some key agencies on the specific experience of Asians. Data collection and reporting should be reviewed in order to:

- Develop a common approach to data collection that ensures a higher return rate.
- Ensure reporting of ethnic minority statistics (including exactly what is included in this category) is consistent across agencies.
- Ensure systems are sophisticated enough to reflect the needs of local communities.
- Ensure reporting is more generally available to enable a more transparent evaluation of progress.

In summary, our research suggests that the already high level of worklessness for Asians within the five host boroughs is not being sufficiently addressed by the Olympic development directly. However, the scale of the worklessness problem is large and it is coupled with the lack of desire of the Asian community to enter the construction sector; we should be realistic about what can be achieved directly by the Olympic development, particularly when it is so closely focused on one employment sector. However, there are further opportunities with the much broader Olympic-related activities which, when combined effectively with the direct Olympic work, may be able to bring the vision of equality as a part of the Olympic legacy to life.

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This research was commissioned to investigate employment experience, skills and aspirations of ethnic minorities in the five host boroughs in relation to the 2012 Olympic Games, with a special focus on the Asian community. It included desk research; interviews with ethnic minority community groups, training and employment providers and employers; and focus groups with people living in the five host boroughs. Findings suggest that Asian people are disproportionately disadvantaged in gaining Olympics employment for a number of reasons, including the availability of employment and training-related information, the economic downturn, cultural issues and the phasing of Olympic activity.