



Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) funded strategies

SRB funding was bid for by the Partnership before ROWA! was launched and enabled the establishment of a community literacy strategy, running in a number of socio-economically deprived areas for a significant period of time (five years). The aim was to use the funding to address need in the target wards, and also to use the activity as a 'test bed' to develop activity which could then be rolled out across the whole area.

SRB funded activity consisted of 5 major strands which were:

- ❖ Books for Babies
- ❖ Family Literacy
- ❖ School based community literacy activity
- ❖ Workplace training (Essential Skills for Work)
- ❖ Basic Skills for Employment

Each of the strands was intended to have an impact on the others, enabling members of the community to join at any point, to progress in any direction and to involve any one else in the activity. The intention of running all five strands together was described as "flooding an area" with activities so maximising the chance of having something that would appeal to most members of a community. Furthermore, having several strands operating at the same time in a single area meant that people could move easily from one strand to another as they came to an end of one type of provision and wished to move on to another.

The development of each of the strands led to the formation of a number of countywide strategies, some of which have been funded nationally. In addition, the success of the SRB3 initiative led a successful bid for SRB5 funding to develop a similar scheme across the Coalfields area of Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire.

Books for Babies

The Derbyshire Libraries and Heritage Service, in collaboration with ROWA!, developed this initiative, based on work done at Birmingham University (Wade and Moore, 1998). The scheme was initially intended to be delivered only in the ten areas outlined for SRB funding, but, with the announcement of national funding from Sainsbury plc from 1999 to 2001, and then Booktrust, the scheme, known as 'Bookstart', covered the whole of the county and city.

Family Literacy

Family literacy programmes were well established in Derbyshire in 1997, and since that time the majority of programmes in the county have been overseen by ROWA! in partnership with Derbyshire Adult Community Education Service. Over 150 new family literacy projects have been facilitated, developing in special, secondary, nursery, Children's Centres, and SureStarts, as well as primary schools. These have grown from the standard model developed by the Basic Skills Agency in its Demonstration Programmes (Brooks et al, 1996) to include a number of new ways of working with families on literacy and basic skills. This had included family learning days and residentials, library-based projects and work in early years settings.

School Based Literacy Activities

Schools were encouraged to explore and develop ways of working with their communities to involve them in the school, and to involve the school in the community. These activities fell into two areas - training programmes for staff, volunteers and parents, and project-based activity.

❖ Training Programmes for Staff, Volunteers and Parents

One of the first objectives of ROWA! was to introduce a reading intervention scheme involving parents and volunteers that could be applied to the whole county. Encouraged by a successful evaluation of the Bradford Better Reading Scheme, ROWA! developed and extended this model in partnership with Derbyshire's Educational Psychology Service. It placed a particular emphasis on community

and volunteer involvement, and training as ROWA! Reading Partners began in September 1997.

Classroom assistants, parents and volunteers are trained to act as Reading Partners three times a week for 10 weeks. The two-day training taught specific skills and techniques for supporting children aged 5 to 12 who were struggling readers. The development of a nationally recognised accreditation in conjunction with North Derbyshire Chamber of Commerce enabled ROWA! Reading Partners to gain a meaningful qualification, providing a progression route and a means of recognising their work.

Whilst initially ROWA! Reading Partners tended to be classroom assistants, as schools became both more confident and increasingly satisfied with the scheme, more volunteers and parents became involved.

Newer developments, based on this model, requested by schools, included Talking Partners, developing oracy in the early years, and POW!, a Key Stage 2 writing scheme.

The Buddy Reading Scheme was developed following demands from secondary schools keen to run programmes in collaboration with partner primaries. The scheme involved the training of buddies (young people) to work with younger children who may have been struggling readers or lacked confidence in literacy. A handbook, resources and training package were available to schools who wished to develop the programme in collaboration with partner schools. While the majority of programmes involved secondary pupils working with primary children, some projects developed with year 10 pupils supporting year 7 pupils, others totally in primary schools. One junior school trained every year 6 child to partner a younger child.

The Buddy Reading Project has since been extended in a number of ways, for example, the development of a two year pilot project with care leavers who were trained and supported to work in a small number of primary schools. Also, working with the local TEC, the scheme was linked with work experience programmes to enable students to develop their skills before attending work experience placements in primary schools.

❖ Project based activity

Schools and their communities developed a large range of projects for involving parents and others in the community; these included Writing Boxes, Story Sacks, 'Tape Story libraries', employee volunteers, after school activities, library projects and work with older people. Many of these became ROWA! strategies, available to everyone in Derbyshire.

Workplace training (Essential Skills at Work)

Essential Skills at Work was the name given to the provision of educational programmes which developed the basic skills of reading, writing, oral communication and IT in a vocational context. Programmes were intended for employees at various levels in industry and business and were tailored to the particular needs of employees. Employers were expected, where possible, to contribute 'down time' or time off work. The placing of workplace provision within a larger literacy strategy enabled many of the employees to progress to other literacy projects, for instance further training, becoming a volunteer reader or accessing further provision through partner organisations, and engaged employers in the work of the communities in which they were located.

Basic Skills for Employment

As all the target wards were areas of high unemployment, basic skills programmes were directed at those seeking to improve their skills in order to gain work. Each SRB area developed courses for unemployed adults, offering what was most useful for the individual, taking into account the skills needs of local employers. Provision included basic skills and computing, health and safety, childcare and job seeking skills.