



Level Best: Evaluation Report

A development programme to boost the confidence and contacts of people who experience racial discrimination and/or who are disabled.

January - March 2021

Supported by:



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Executive Summary

Level Best was an intersectional pilot development programme designed and delivered by Result CIC and funded by UnLtd's Inclusive Recovery fund with support from the Department of Culture Media and Sport and Comic Relief.

'I have felt supported and heard in a way I have not in other workshops/courses that have done in the past. Which has given me access to inner resources that I have been unable to access before.'

Result CIC recruited participants and selected 12 from 26 good quality applications.

Group profile

- 8 (66%) were people with experience of racial discrimination
- 9 (75%) were disabled
- 6 (50%) were not in work when they applied to the programme.
- 5 (42%) had experience of racial discrimination and being disabled.

100% of participants gave the highest mark for 'I benefited from the programme' and 100% said they would very strongly recommend it to others.

Evaluation

In the final qualitative evaluation of the overall programme, 81% of feedback scores gave the highest mark across 6 aspects.

We also do pre and post quantitative evaluation as follows:

- Send pre-course questionnaires asking participants to do an initial self-assessment against 6 learning criteria and share information about themselves and their learning style.
- Carry out final-day self-assessment without showing participants their pre-course figures, to measure as objectively as we can their progress against the learning criteria.

- There was an average pre- to post-programme self-assessed increase across 6 criteria including self-confidence, resilience and full use of skills and abilities of +31%. This is particularly impressive across a relative short time span of the programme.

You can [view a short film](#) of Level Best participants describing the impact of the programme on their development.

The group's mutual support was powerful. Generous sharing and discussion of different viewpoints led to several committing to creating an ongoing network of support for each other.

'I will now pass my learning on to others in the BAME networks I'm a part of, so I can do some good in their lives.'

Who is Result CIC?

[Result CIC](#) is a community interest company, a social enterprise whose purpose is to provide professional coaching and training to people who are marginalised and who may not otherwise be able to access this. All of Result CIC's coaches and trainers bring their own lived experience of being marginalised including being disabled.

From its Salford base, Result CIC works nationally and internationally. As well as supporting marginalised people, it offers services for managers and leaders of organisations who want to bring about positive change and greater inclusion. Its clients have included the British Civil Service, BBC North, the University of Manchester, Liverpool John Moores University, Manchester Health and Care Commissioning (MHCC), DaDaFest (Deaf and Disability Arts), Manchester Sickle Cell and Thalassaemia Centre and Salford Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG).

Result CIC's socially focused business model keeps overheads to a minimum and ensures that resources are targeted to delivery. The company holds surplus in an [Inclusion Fund](#) which can be used to fund coaching for people who are excluded and who would not otherwise be able to afford support.

Since 2017 Result CIC has produced annual Social Impact Reports. You can view the reports for [2017-18](#) and [2018-19](#) online.

What is Level Best?

The Level Best programme used Result CIC's proven successful combination of group workshop learning and 1:1 coaching. For the first time, we added online Masterclasses with leaders in their fields who have lived experience of racial discrimination and disability. The programme is based on the idea that by creating a safe, positive learning environment where participants trust each other and can share some common experiences, and by adding individual coaching as a way to process and build on learning, you can multiply the benefits of learning together.

| Month | Workshops (1 day – 5.5 hours) | Coaching 1:1 (1 hour) | Masterclasses (75 mins) |
|-------|--|--|--|
| 1 | Your experience, identity and strengths | Your goals and ways to work towards them | Jasspreet Thethi: Setting up your own enterprise |
| 2 | Communicating and being heard; assertiveness | Your progress and learning | David McAlmont: Stardust or Eden? |
| 3 | Using and making connections to support yourself | Review and planning ahead | Ruth Ibegbuna: Resist imposter syndrome and lead yourself. |

What made this programme different?

Result CIC had previously worked with a partner to support their staff (e.g. University of Manchester disabled staff) or clients (e.g. Sickle Cell patients at the Manchester Sickle Cell Centre). For Level Best, they recruited openly for participants via their own diverse networks, website and social media. This produced a group with a particularly rich combination of experiences and made for powerful learning and sharing together.

Result CIC's Directors, Hormoz Ahmadzadeh and Jane Cordell, designed the programme and worked as associated facilitators and coaches. They invited two

experienced coaches with lived experience of being marginalised to join the team – Mel Larsen and Teresa Wilson. This boosted the experience and pool of ideas and insights offered to the group.

Result CIC's Marketing and Communications associate, Rob Martin, was commissioned to produce a short film capturing participants' experience on the programme.

What was the impact of the Level Best programme?

a: The numbers

Progress by the end of the programme

9 participants completed pre- and post-programme self-assessments against x criteria. They scored themselves on a scale of 1–10.

| Criteria | Average change (points) | Average change as % |
|---|-------------------------|---------------------|
| I am self-confident. | +3 | 30% |
| I am resilient when handling challenge and change. | +2.8 | 28% |
| I can ask for help when I need it. | +3.8 | +38% |
| I am making best use of my skills and abilities. | +3 | +30% |
| I can communicate my views clearly and with confidence. | +2.8 | +28% |
| I feel at ease with who I am. | +3.2 | +32% |
| Overall | +3.1 | +31% |

We used a 'flat' method of calculating percentage increases, counting each point on the 1 to 10 scale as an equal 10%. Within these scores, individual changes ranged from +8 to + 65%. Obviously, a person giving a high pre-programme score e.g. 8 has less scope for greater increases than someone scoring 1 or 2.

10 participants completed the final evaluation form.

| Criteria | Average score (1–5) | Number/percentage of top scores (5) |
|--|----------------------------|--|
| I benefited from taking part | 5 | 10/100% |
| The workshops were useful | 4.7 | 7/70% |
| The facilitators were engaging | 4.9 | 9/90% |
| 1:1 coaching was effective | 4.8 | 9/90% |
| The Masterclasses gave new insights. | 4.2 | 4/40% |
| I would recommend the programme to others. | 5 | 10/100% |
| Average total | 4.76 | 49 of max 60 /81% |

b: The words

The following are direct quotes from the programme participants volunteered on the feedback form. They speak for themselves. Going through the comments, we observed certain themes so have grouped them under these below.

General

'The skill, generosity of spirit and information, kindness, professionalism of the Result CIC team really cannot be overstated. They created a safe, professional, inspiring arena in which we explored ourselves, our ambition, our ideas, and co-developed the individual tools (through a very well-structured programme) to move forward where we wish and want to go.'

'This course has made a real difference to me and my ability to face challenges currently in my life. It will be a resource to me, I hope, for a long time. It has been a real privilege to work with everyone and I will really miss it.'

'I didn't feel worthy before, but now I'm going for promotion and it's also improved my personal relationships. I'm not negative anymore. This programme has changed my life and that's not an exaggeration!'

'I have enjoyed every workshop and all the coaching sessions I have had have been excellent.'

'Thank you so very much for this! It really will change my outlook on so many aspects of my life and I'm glad to call a few more people family now :-)'

Greater confidence

'I feel I have gained a genuine confidence (Not just a painted-on confidence that gets me in a room, but a real sense of self that means once I'm there, I will truly honour my intent and self), tapped into a real core part of myself that had got hidden among the layers of work, life and all the mess in-between, and really enabled me to draw on myself as a resource. Trust in myself and feel excited about my future. Thank you all!'

'What was most useful? The confidence that comes from validation, moving beyond that and the skills to maintain, as well the ability to reflect on where next.'

'I have also managed to learn more about my character. This shall help me understand other people opposite my character and learn to work and live with them'

without crushing my confidence.'

'My past experiences of racism, bullying and sexism were small events that I have given a big meaning to. I have drawn a line under them and can now concentrate on now and the future as these are the only things I can change.'

Context

The programme was run online during the UK's lockdown period due to Covid-19.

'Speaking for me personally, it has given me a new lease of life in the middle of the pandemic!'

'The programme came at an important time for me and as such was one of the best interventions I have had.'

Working in the group – impact

'Just hearing about other people's lives, what motivates them to change or be better, is vastly motivating and a useful aspect of this programme.'

'I find the community aspect very useful, I felt I could open up about issues I would not normally be able to discuss in a professional environment.'

'The group we had was amazing – it was a privilege to meet and work with the other candidates. There is so much to take forward and I hope we keep in touch.'

'I have managed to meet new people with quite inspiring stories which I can relate to.'

'What was most useful? The interactions and hearing everyone else's thoughts, perspectives and lived experiences. I have felt supported and heard in a way I have not in other workshops/courses that have done in the past. Which has given me access to inner resources that I have been unable to access before.'

'Most useful: The openness of everyone on the programme both the coaching staff and the participants. The group dynamics, the feeling of being in a safe space, the emphasis on finding strength in your personal story.'

Coaching: impact

'The coaching was particularly useful to clarify my thoughts and think about the future and where I want to try to head to.'

'The individual coaching sessions were really good for starting our own personal development.'

Communication

'Assertiveness session helped me to speak up for myself.'

Networks/longer-term impact

'I will now pass my learning on to others in the BAME networks I'm a part of, so I can do some good in their lives.'

Future: more please!

'I have loved being on this workshop and if there is a follow up one any time in the future, please sign me up!'

'Suggest an alumni [group] of other people who have done the course before as potential for other networks and inspiration.'

'Please keep doing what you do. So many more people would thrive with this opportunity. Can I ask that this is promoted again within George House Trust [a Manchester HIV charity] for the women as they are not a confident group?'

'I would like to have further sessions of coaching and look forward to those. If possible, some longer term support would be useful to me – something each quarter perhaps to keep the momentum?'

Continuing to improve

The feedback on future development centred on two main topics:

- Workshop length: a couple of participants suggested breaking the full-day events into shorter more frequent ones. This is a good point in principle. For the pilot, the timeframe specified by the funder meant it was not possible to spread the programme out in this way.
- Breakout groups online: these were usually self-managed, mainly to promote privacy and trust between participants. Some participants felt some 'light facilitation' would have helped balanced contributions within the groups better.

Conclusions and next steps

The results of this pilot show the huge potential of a semi-intensive programme of this type, incorporating coaching and involving facilitator-coaches with lived experience of the issues facing the participants.

Result CIC is extremely grateful to UnLtd and its supporters for the opportunity to run the pilot programme.

Result CIC now wants to make the most of that opportunity and will be disseminating this report and the video recording of feedback to key contacts.

How could Level Best help your organisation?

The beauty of Level Best is its flexibility. The programme can be run:

- online, face to face or in a hybrid version (e.g. workshops in person and coaching online or by phone)
- as a combined project for several organisations who would wish to send their staff members, creating a rich set of diverse experience and contact
- as a project for a medium to larger-sized single organisation into which employment-reading people currently out of work could be incorporated.

The benefits your organisation can expect from running, or contributing to, a Level Best programme allow you to:

- promote more confident, assertive staff with a clearer sense of how they want to progress and develop in their careers.
- boost staff participants' contribution and productivity at work.
- discover in depth what your colleagues with experience of racial discrimination and/or disabilities need to thrive.
- foster stronger role models who experience racial discrimination and/or are disabled, encouraging a pipeline of wider applicants for future jobs.

Next steps

Contact us with any questions you have about Level Best or to arrange a discussion with you or your organisation.

We can carry out an informal verbal needs analysis with you / your organisation about the current situation. That can then form the basis of a provisional plan on which to base your own version of Level Best.

Email: info@resultcic.com

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If you are interested in being kept up to date with Result CIC's work, you can [subscribe](#) to our 30-second read monthly newsletter of our fresh new blog posts via our website.