The Shpresa Programme:
The Way Forward

Contents

THIS REPORT

Objectives

The overall aim of the research (Part One) was to enable the Shpresa Board to consider and decide upon the direction of Shpresa over the next 3-5 years at an Away Day which took place on 6th December 2008 (Part Two). The report:

- Reviews the current activities of Shpresa, both in their own context and in relation to the wider environment
- Identifies the key accomplishments which Shpresa would like to have in place by 2013, and the key challenges they face in achieving these
- Sets out possible future directions for the organisation which will enable them to move forward towards their chosen accomplishments and to address their challenges, and which take into account both local and national policy issues
- Is developed with Shpresa's various stakeholders to build commitment and motivation to moving the organisation forward
- Documents the key decisions made at the Away Day

The Terms of Reference for the consultancy are attached in Appendix B.

Process

The report was compiled based on the input from a selection of key stakeholders who have worked with, supported or been involved with Shpresa. A list of people consulted is included in Appendix A. These stakeholders included participants in the Shpresa programmes (particularly women, young people and children), Shpresa staff and volunteers (including some Board members). Most interviews with individuals were conducted by telephone in September/October 2008, in addition to face-to-face discussions with small groups and larger facilitated events with the Shpresa Board (27th September), staff and volunteers (19th October), and at the Shpresa Children's Congress held on the 2nd November.

The draft report was presented for consideration at the Away Day on 6th December, attended by Shpresa staff members, Board members and volunteers, the results of which are documented in Part Two of this report.

Part One of this report seeks to reflect the perspectives, ideas and opinions of a range of Shpresa's stakeholders, including their users, partners, supporters and staff and volunteers most closely involved in the delivery of the programmes.

Currently Shpresa is in a position where it can build on the strong foundations it has been able to establish since 2003 (see page 4), but where it faces challenges from a changing external environment, both in terms of the changing nature of the Albanian-speaking community (brought about at least partly by Shpresa's own efforts) and the change in Government policy, particularly in relation to integration and community cohesion (see page 5). The report goes on to describe the areas of Shpresa's current organisation and practice perceived by stakeholders as needing attention (page 6) and points to potential opportunities in the wider environment which Shpresa can take advantage of (page 8).

A five-year vision for Shpresa, drawn from the participants in this survey, is set out in Section Four (page 9). Although it cannot be described as being fully agreed on by all stakeholders (and the principal source of each element is indicated in the section), the vision does capture the key shared elements of what stakeholders are looking for in and from Shpresa. Section Five (page 11) also draws on stakeholders' input to suggest and analyse four possible models for Shpresa to consider as they deliberate the way forward from the current reality to the desired future. While these models are all seen as feasible options, they are not presented as an exhaustive list, but rather as a range of alternatives to stimulate thinking and prompt debate. It was the task of the Away Day to decide which model or combination of models Shpresa will move forward with.

Out of all the ideas and analysis, three key findings seem to re-appear consistently:

1. **Shpresa needs to pay more attention to itself as an organisation**
   For the continued existence of an organisation, a balance needs to be found between its purpose and its own sustainability, between the interests of its target group and the interests of the organisation itself. Shpresa has been very successful in finding effective ways of serving its target group (reflected by it being predominantly user-led), but to some extent this has been at the expense of strengthening its own structures and processes. Moving forward, there is a responsibility on the Board and staff to rectify this situation by (e.g.):
   a) Developing the capacity of the Board to provide a greater emphasis on governance and strategic guidance
   b) Closer management of cost recovery, ensuring that core costs are adequately covered
   c) Alignment of programmes in line with organisational as well as community priorities
   d) Promoting the organisation more effectively, paying attention to the wider context within which it is operating (including paying more attention to the presentation and dissemination of appropriate evidence)

2. **Greater focus is required within the family based approach**
   The concern that the family-based approach currently taken may be too broad for a small organisation leads to the conclusion that a more specific focus within that may be appropriate. This focus could be based on specific groups of people, specific geographic

areas, or based more on specific needs or sectors, particularly those reflected in the wider local and national Government agendas. One implication would be that Shpresa would need to learn to say "no" to some requests, or at least a more strategic way of saying "yes", involving (e.g.) signposting, advocacy, use of volunteers, etc.

3. Opening up to other communities
The idea that Shpresa should open up to other ethnic minority groups is one that came from a number of different stakeholders, but perhaps most strongly from the staff and volunteers. Such a development does not need to be to the disadvantage of the Albanian-speaking community but, on the contrary, an opportunity for them to become more outward looking, and to be closer to the wider Community Cohesion agenda. Shpresa would be able to build on the trust and support it has developed with the Albanian-speaking community to taking a stronger leadership role in the relationship, challenging and supporting the community to integrate further.

Part Two of this report sets out the key outputs of the Away Day. Many of these reflect the findings of the research but the group was able to go further to make some key decisions on the way forward and to begin to outline what Shpresa needs to do to progress. Key decisions included:

1. **Shpresa's approach** will be to focus on the Albanian speaking community in Newham and the surrounding boroughs AND to widen their market to include other communities (i.e. a combination of Models 1and 4, set out in Section Three)

2. **Key strategic objectives** for the next 3-5 years are to:
    *   Maintain our cultural identity and improve the confidence, health and well-being of our community
    *   Change attitudes in and about the Albanian speaking community
    *   Improve access to training and employment
    *   Reach out to other communities (with a key emphasis on integration)
    *   Ensure we have the adequate resources and capacity to meet our objectives

3. **Priority actions** that were identified (amongst others) within these objectives were:
    *   Expansion of Albanian classes for teenagers and adults
    *   More work with older members of the community to reassure them about integration and support them by providing day trips, etc.
    *   Developing the women's project further
    *   Greater and more effective use of publicity (e.g. website, social networking)
    *   Addressing wider issues such as sexism and gender discrimination (including domestic violence)
    *   Providing support and opportunities for people seeking work (including linking them to potential employers)
    *   Developing new leadership in Shpresa, exploiting new areas of funding and increasing the administrative support
    *   Strengthening the Shpresa Board members and processes to enable them to play a stronger guiding and governing role

    A working group of staff and trustees was set up to develop the decisions into a draft strategic plan for consideration at the next Board meeting on 24th January 2009.

PART ONE:

THE RESEARCH

A Strong Foundation

During the five years of Shpresa's existence as an independent entity, the organisation has been able to build up an impressive track record of successful projects aimed at the Albanian-speaking community in East London. These projects, which are community orientated and family focused, have contributed significantly to the Albanian-speaking community achieving its current status in East London, and have laid a strong foundation for the community's further establishment and integration into the wider British society. More specifically, achievements identified include greater collective and individual confidence; better communication between parents and children and more quality time together; a stronger sense of identity and culture; better integration of Albanian children in schools;

In the process of doing this, Shpresa has:

1. Built up a strong body of staff, volunteers (including Board members) and supporters who are notable for their commitment, passion, professionalism, strong values and determination in taking Shpresa's work forward and to serving and supporting the Albanian-speaking community. The vast majority of staff and volunteers are themselves from the Albanian- speaking community, demonstrating how Shpresa is able to offer them an opportunity to progress beyond the programmes by involving them in helping deliver these programmes and so develop further their confidence, skills and experience.

2. Gained the trust of the Albanian-speaking community by establishing itself as an integral part of that community (delivering services by Albanian speakers for Albanian speakers), being demonstrably user-led and able to respond to needs identified by the community in a quick and appropriate way, informed by their shared language, culture and understanding.

3. Shown their ability to be forward-thinking/strategic in their approach, ready to introduce new concepts and ideas into the community if they can see them to be of potential benefit and to represent the community in key positions (e.g. school boards)

4. Achieved recognition from peers and other stakeholders outside the target community as a confident, approachable, professional community group providing a gateway into the Albanian-speaking community, able to reach and mobilise people that other agencies (both statutory and non-statutory) have been unable to reach, and providing good quality services.

5. Developed a strong network of organisations and individuals able to complement and support Shpresa's own efforts, including connections with other community groups from the Albanian-speaking community.

6. Begun to build a body of evidence of the impact of their work and the successes they have had by recording stories and experiences and being able to demonstrate the personal and communal developments that have resulted from their programmes (especially amongst women, young people and children)

These various factors have all contributed to Shpresa Programme not only achieving recognition through a series of awards, but also enabled Shpresa to attract funds and to

grow rapidly in the first few years as agencies sought to address the immediate challenges caused by the influx of Albanian-speaking refugees.

A Changing Environment
The external situation, in which Shpresa is now operating, is no longer the same as it was in 2003, when Shpresa was established:

1. The Albanian-speaking community is small, geographically spread, and no longer seen as a high priority on the Government's agenda. Shpresa can take at least some of the credit for the transition of the community from being a recently-arrived group of refugees to being an established community, but the needs and issues the community faces now are no longer the same as those that Shpresa was set up to address. Aspects of the Albanian culture and mentality (e.g. the slow progress being made towards the emancipation of women) remain a challenge, and the reluctance of parents to allow their children to attend activities not run by other Albanians demonstrates that there are still issues of trust which need to be addressed.

2. Government policy has shifted towards the Community Cohesion agenda, which is partly about strengthening and building individual communities but is also about bringing those different communities together in one cohesive society, supported more by "integrated community organisations" rather than "a range of separate groups for different sub-communities" (Commission on Integration and Cohesion 2007).

3. There has been a change in emphasis away from more community (social/cultural) focused interventions towards more concrete targets around security, work and employment. Examples of this shift include:
   a)   The Flexible New Deal enhancing Jobcentre Plus, and
   b)   The Working Neighbourhoods Fund (replacing the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund and the Deprived Area Fund), which is a dedicated fund for councils to develop community-led approaches to getting people in deprived areas back to work. Locally this is already making a difference as Newham Borough Council, for example, will be receiving £13.24m per year from the Working Neighbourhoods Fund to turn around long term unemployment in the borough (http://www.newham.gov.uk/News/Mayor WelcomesGovernmentFundingAnnouncment.htm, accessed 21/10/08)

4. Just as policy priorities have shifted, so has there been a change in the public funding environment. There is now an increasing tendency of Government to see community and voluntary organisations as providers of services and engaging with them through the channels of procurement and commissioning. Policy changes influence funding patterns not just in the communities and local government arena, but in education too, where the shift from SureStart to Children's Centres and the changing nature and level of support for schools has led to there being less of opportunity for external agencies to access funding. In East London, too, the forthcoming Olympics are attracting both attention and diverting funding into different arenas.

5. It remains to be seen what the implications of the current credit crunch/recession are for the community and voluntary sector, but there seems to be a growing recognition that organisations need to begin preparing now for a potential contraction in available funds.

6. Related to this, some aspects of the funding environment have not changed, but Shpresa's changing situation has affected their ability to access funds. Trusts and foundations, for example, are perceived to be more interested in new and/or innovative work as opposed to supporting ongoing service delivery. Accessing funds for capacity development also remains a challenge, with funders more interested in impact on users. Even where such funds are available, they are often limited in relation to the size of the demand and so competition tends to be high.

Areas for Attention

In addition to these external changes (and in some cases, because of them) it is possible to identify some key areas which Shpresa needs to address as they consider how best to move forward:

1. Shpresa's current approach and mission, although appropriate at the time of its establishment, is not aligned sufficiently with the changing policy environment (see 2.2. above). The focus on a single community sits less well with the Community Cohesion agenda, and the cultural emphasis sits less well with the priority now given to more social outcomes relating to employment issues, addressing crime, etc.

2. Related to this is the way that Shpresa promotes itself. Part of this is quantitative: there is insufficient promotion to enable outsiders to see the "bigger picture" of what Shpresa is trying to achieve but there are also qualitative issues as well:

   a) Although evidence of success exists, it is not necessarily presented in an appropriate format/language to promote Shpresa effectively with potential donors and commissioners (e.g. relating results to cost effectiveness, others' priorities, current agendas, etc.)
   b) There is a lack of statistics on the geographical spread and the size of the Albanian-speaking community
   c) Although a network has been established, Shpresa has missed opportunities to take advantage of some of the skills, connections of other members of the network and to enter/develop joint projects
   d) Expressions of need are often expressed in terms of inputs (" we need to employ a community development worker") as opposed to outputs ("we can train 50 women in business skills") or even outcomes ("we will have 20 profitable businesses established in three boroughs in two years time")

3. The gap between Shpresa and the wider policy environment has led to Shpresa finding it increasingly difficult to access funding for its work, resulting in a growing dependency on volunteers and an imbalance in funding for different target groups. This challenge is greater due to Shpresa's comparatively limited diversity of income streams.

4. Although Shpresa's accounts show an ability to raise funds (and to a limited extent, to attract contracts) from a variety of both statutory and non-statutory sources, two points arise:
   a) Most funding is programme orientated and restricted in purpose, leaving little for investment in the organisation itself.
   b) Whether the need to raise even small amounts of money is allowing a realistic assessment and reflection of the total costs (i.e. delivery and core) Shpresa incurs to deliver a service or programme.

5. One of Shpresa's responses to this funding dependency is to rent and manage the building where the Shpresa offices are currently housed. There is a difference in perception as to the appropriateness of such a strategy. For some people outside the organisation it is seen as a diversion away from Shpresa's key purpose, but for others within Shpresa it is very much in line with Shpresa developing into an established resource for the community and providing a physical space which provides possibilities for both individual and communal projects to develop and grow.

6. There is a perception that Shpresa lacks focus, that it is engaging in too many diverse activities (e.g. with different groups in different places for different purposes). The counter-argument to this is that the family based approach adopted by Shpresa does by definition lead the organisation into a variety of fields for a variety of purposes, reflecting the needs and demands of the different family members. Apart from the promotion issue this raises (adding a further point to 3.2 above), it also raises the question as to whether the diversity and complexity which such an approach implies is feasible for a small organisation with limited resources to manage. Current programmes already reveal that there is a bias towards working with women, young people and children, while Albanian-speaking men tend to regard Shpresa as a project for women and have been less involved. Even where the men have been involved, projects have been less successful. While acknowledging the cultural norms that lead to such a situation, it does undermine the intended comprehensiveness of the approach, and may even raise the question of Shpresa's relevance to some parts of the community.

7. There is an apparent tension in Shpresa between being user-led and responsive to community needs and establishing itself as a sustainable organisation. The organisation has shown itself able to respond effectively to the needs of the Albanian-speaking community. This response, however, is often informed by:

    a) A strong "can do" attitude in the organisation, and a readiness to take on whatever it is asked to do by the community it serves
    b) Availability of a volunteer or staff member ready and able to take on the task (with the implication that if a suitable person is not available then the task will not be done, unless funding can be raised)

    The impression is that such effective responses are less informed by more organisationally focused questions such as:

    a) How does this activity tie in with our wider strategy and priorities?
    b) Is this a priority for us now given our limited resources?
    c) What implications does this have for our limited resources (not just in terms of funding, but also staff/volunteer time)?
    d) Is there anyone else we could link in with in order to deliver this service at less of an expense to ourselves?

8. This tension also reflects itself in the Shpresa Board which, despite being multi-skilled and experienced, is made up largely of members of the Albanian-speaking community who have often benefited from Shpresa programmes in the past and are now using their newly developed confidence to give something back to their community and to Shpresa. While this has the advantage of making the Board more representative and closely aligned to the group that Shpresa is seeking to serve, the impression is that the Board tends to look more at what needs to be done for the community, rather than being

more assertive in its governance and strategic role on behalf of the organisation. One concern which would seem to be a Board matter, for example, is the high dependency that Shpresa has on very few key staff, and yet there does not appear to be a succession plan in place in the event of one of the key staff deciding (or having to) leave.

Opportunities to take advantage of
As Shpresa considers the way forward in terms of building on strengths and addressing external and internal challenges, there are also opportunities offered by the wider context which Shpresa can take advantage of:

1. Although the pattern of funding has changed over the past few years, there are several opportunities for Shpresa:

   a) The now established practice of commissioning voluntary and community sector organisations to deliver services which assist both national and local Government to achieve their objectives. In this line, funding/contracts are accessible to support current Government initiatives around (amongst others) community integration and cohesion, sports development, young people's participation, children and families, back to work/employment creation, health and wellbeing, arts and drama
   b) Even though funding for Voluntary Sector capacity building is limited, there are possible sources of funds and support available from bodies such as
      - Charities Aid Foundation (www.cafonline.org)
      - The Baring Foundation (www.baringfoundation.org.uk),
      - Capacity Builders (www.Capacitybuilders.org.uk) and
      - Unltd (www.unltd.org.uk).
   c) There may also be opportunities within the private sector (Bank of America was cited as an example) although the current economic situation may affect the likelihood of that, at least in the immediate future

2. Although small, the Albanian-speaking community are spread out across a number of boroughs where their needs are similar (e.g. Thames Gateway, Barking and Dagenham, Enfield, Finsbury, Walthamstow Forest, Kilburn, Swiss Cottage-Finchley Road) and where further progress towards community cohesion is a priority.

3. The external recognition of Shpresa's success provides a strong platform for future development:
   a) Current connections, relationships and networks can be built upon to establish new links and partnerships
   b) The changing demands of the Albanian-speaking community can be seen as an opportunity to develop new services and support, more in line with wider Government priorities
   c) Developing the rented building into a better resource for the community and a source of income for Shpresa
   d) The strong volunteer base creates opportunities for Shpresa to play a different role while ensuring volunteer-run services continue.

4. Other Albanian-speaking or more recently-arrived (refugee) communities, community based organisations and community workers could use the same skills and support that Shpresa has been able to apply with the Albanian-speaking community.

When stakeholders were asked to identify where they would like to see Shpresa in the future, several key elements emerged. In each case, it is indicated where the strongest drive for the idea came from.

1. **Expanded and Diversified Programmes**
    (From current participants in existing programmes)
    Currently the main target groups for Shpresa are women, young people and children. It was suggested that programmes could be expanded not only to continue working with these groups, but to include men, older people and disabled. It was also suggested that there should be a programme focused specifically on 16-21 year-olds, distinguishing them from younger children/teenagers who may have different interests.

    Programmes should continue to focus on the current needs of Albanian-speaking community, including volunteering, running women's support groups, gifted and talented clubs, complementary therapy, family advice, aerobics/fitness, Albanian language/dance/drama classes, radio station, entrepreneurial skills, employment, work experience, skill building (inc. media/IT), sports, learning support.

2. **An Organisation Reaching Out to other Cultures and Communities**
    (From staff, volunteers and young people, external stakeholders)
    A new dimension which emerged from the discussions was the idea that Shpresa could be more open to other cultures, continuing to work with Albanian-speakers, but including other cultures' dances, arts, drama and languages. Different clubs would cater for other communities as well as Albanian- speakers, and linkages could be established with other classes, clubs in other minority ethnic groups in order to share each other's values and traditions and offer the opportunity for volunteering across cultures.

3. **Shpresa Sharing Skills and Experience with Others**
    (From external stakeholders and staff/volunteers)
    Shpresa's record of achievement demonstrates the effectiveness of their approach and model for community development and integration. This component suggests that Shpresa could capitalise on that by introducing and sharing this model to other (newly arrived) communities and training parents and workers to adapt and be more assertive.

    Shpresa has also established itself as a community-based social enterprise, and the skills and methods used to do this can be shared to address issues of employment and to break down the grey economy. Similarly projects nurtured by Shpresa could target a wider audience across cultures. The current Accountancy project, for example, could not just model such an enterprise, but provide services and training.

4. **Influencing Others**
    (From staff and volunteers)
    While recognising that it is not always in the mandate or capacity of a community-based organisation to effect every change it wants to see, this element of the vision points to the need for advocacy to influence others into making decisions beneficial to the Albanian-speaking community. A specific (and ambitious) example is the establishment of a GCSE in Albanian, but others include Albanian young people campaigning for themselves and other ethnic minority youth, and being more assertive with schools etc. in how they should be adapting to working in a multi-cultural society.

5. **Making an Impact**
   (From staff and volunteers, participants in current programmes)
   Shpresa's work should continue to have a positive impact on the Albanian-speaking community. The gap between women and children should be narrower, for example, men should be more involved in the family, more community members should be in employment, and the Albanian-speaking community should be better integrated with other communities and wider society.

6. **Shpresa a Larger and More Established Organisation**
   (From staff and volunteers, external stakeholders)
   Shpresa should consolidate and grow into an established organisation promoting Albanian culture, providing guidance on opportunities, funding, support services, etc., and making full use of the building it currently occupies.

7. **Well Connected Internationally**
   (From young people)
   Shpresa should be well connected internationally (e.g. with other diaspora Albanian organisations, youth exchange networks, organisations/communities in Kosovo/Albania) in order to provide more opportunities for young people to gain experience, establish new relationships, and to link in with Albanian-speaking people across borders.

SECTION THREE: ALTERNATIVE MODELS

In the course of discussions with stakeholders different images emerged of how Shpresa might develop in order to move towards the vision outlined above. There were no suggestions that Shpresa should not continue to exist, but equally there was a general feeling that "continuing as is" is not an option. Shpresa needs to build on its successes to date and, recognising the changes that have taken place in the community it serves and in the wider environment in which it operates, to move on to the next stage of its development.

This is not seen as an exhaustive list of alternatives: there is overlap between some of them and elements of each could be used to develop a new combination of options that Shpresa might find more appropriate. It is felt, however, that this list does represent the range of possibilities reasonably well. It should also be born in mind that we are looking primarily at the next 3-5 years, and that whichever model is chosen for this period can be built upon and modified subsequently.

1. **Focus on Albanian-speaking community in Newham (and surrounding boroughs)**
   Shpresa would be a small organisation embedded in the community, building on its past achievements to act as a forum for community-run services/activities run by volunteers, nurturing local enterprises, and serving as a conduit to mainstream services. After some initial investment (e.g. developing a better website, improving the building), activities would be financed primarily by a combination of user fees, income from rents in the building, with occasional fundraising for new/innovative projects/research. Outreach work could still continue, but only on assured financial footing.

Benefits	Dangers
• Stronger focus • Less reliance on external funding • Shpresa remains close to the community and community needs would be paramount • The narrower geographical focus and creative use of the building would provide a community resource open to all ages and communities and promote greater integration • At a later stage, more outward looking projects may be "added on" to the core activities • Less investment needed to make the necessary changes	• Narrower focus could lead to loss of staff and volunteers • More inward-looking • May discourage integration and maintain community dependency on Albanian-led organisation • Loss of ambition • Reduction of organisational systems to a minimum • Reduced influence

2. **Shpresa re-positions itself in the procurement/commissioning world**
   In order to attract more certain, longer term financing for (expanded) services Shpresa can provide to meet identified needs within local government/LDA/central government priorities, Shpresa aligns itself more closely with mainstream priorities and gears itself up to make successful bids and attract contracts, often (at least initially) as part of a consortium of agencies able to address issues across communities. Ongoing support for the Albanian-speaking community would come from:
   - Their involvement in services Shpresa is paid to provide
   - Volunteer-led activities, subsidised by Shpresa income from contracts
   - Fundraising for specific (often new/innovative/research based) activities

Benefits	Dangers
• More reliable, ongoing income streams • Increased unrestricted financing for programmes • Closely aligned with Government and other priorities • Sharing of expertise with others and opportunity to reach other communities • Albanian-speaking community incorporated into wider community cohesion agenda • Opportunity to collaborate with other organisations/agencies in consortium bids • Trusts and foundations can still be targeted for new/innovative/research work	• Mission-drift • Needs of the Albanian-speaking community neglected in favour of attracting contracts • Failure of Shpresa to become competitive • Preference of Commissioners/ contractors for larger, well established providers • Loss of volunteers • Insufficient profit left over from contracts to fund ongoing projects for target group • Loss of influence (at least initially)

3. **Shpresa seeks to continue serving the Albanian speaking community in the UK by merging/amalgamating with a strategically well-placed organisation** which has a wider remit in terms of both target group and services. Shpresa would cease to exist as a separate entity but its services and support would be maintained on a firmer financial footing by being part of a larger, well positioned organisation able to attract both funding and contracts. Shpresa's model of community strengthening and integration would continue to be used with the Albanian-speaking community and could inform and influence interventions with other communities.

Benefits	Dangers
• Able to focus more on programme activities if supported by established, well-financed organisation • Able to share good practice across the organisation • Promoting Albanian-speaking community needs within a wider community cohesion approach • Governance and organisational issues become less of a concern • Larger, multi-community focused organisations are preferred by commissioners	• The focus on the Albanian-speaking community would become subject to the changing priorities and directions of the wider organisation (and may get lost) • Alienation of volunteers and staff • Passion and flexibility overtaken by imperatives of performance and compliance • Shpresa invests time and effort in looking for a suitable partner but fails

4. **Shpresa builds on the business skills and programme models it has developed but widens its market to include individuals/groups from other communities**, as well as continuing to support the Albanian-speaking community through one integrated programme. Building on knowledge and experience already gained to support the Albanian-speaking community in a more outwardly focused programme based on outcomes, closer to the community cohesion agenda; Reaching members of other communities and linking them through common purpose (e.g. developing entrepreneurial skills, setting up businesses, youth focused activities, health and wellbeing, etc.)

Benefits	Dangers
• Provides opportunity to address both community needs and wider agenda • Activities/programmes developed in line with expertise, community/society needs and demands • Challenging the Albanian-speaking community to join more in the mainstream and to be more outward looking • More reliable financing based on providing skills that more people want (broadening the market) • Contributing to community development and cohesion by training people from all communities in important skills • Increased influence through trainees and recognition as a valued resource	• Opposition from current target group if they perceive their interest will not be addressed • Balancing act between community needs and market demands will continue • Greater emphasis on tangible skills and outcomes at expense of cultural focus • Loss of volunteers and staff being asked to do a different job

PART TWO:

THE WAY FORWARD

AWAY DAY DECISIONS

1. **Shpresa's Vision**
   The Away Day broadly affirmed the vision for Shpresa set out in Part One, Section Two. Particular emphasis was placed on the integration of the Albanian speaking community into the wider community, but without them being assimilated in the process. It was also recognised, however, that Shpresa needs to be clear on what they mean by integration.

2. **The Development Model**
   Participants decided that the most appropriate model for Shpresa to follow would be a combination of Models 1 and 4 outlined in Section Three above, continuing to focus on the Albanian speaking community in Newham and the surrounding boroughs AND to widen their market to include other communities. This approach will not only help promote and support the concept of integration, but will also provide opportunities for Shpresa to develop a range of funding and income-generating sources to improve its own sustainability.

3. **Strategic Objectives**
   - Maintain our cultural identity and improve the confidence, health and well-being of our community
   - Change attitudes in and about the Albanian speaking community
   - Improve access to training and employment
   - Reach out to other communities
   - Ensure we have the adequate resources and capacity to meet our objectives

4. **Priority Actions** that were identified (amongst others) within these objectives were:
   - Expansion of Albanian classes for teenagers and adults
   - More work with older members of the community to reassure them about integration and support them by providing day trips, etc.
   - Developing the women's project further
   - Greater and more effective use of publicity (e.g. website, social networking)
   - Addressing wider issues such as sexism and gender discrimination (including domestic violence)
   - Providing support and opportunities for people seeking work (including linking them to potential employers)
   - Developing new leadership in Shpresa, exploiting new areas of funding and increasing the administrative support
   - Strengthening the Shpresa Board members and processes to enable them to play a stronger guiding and governing role

5. A **working group** of staff and trustees was set up to develop the decisions into a draft strategic plan for consideration at the next Board meeting on 24th January 2009.

6. **Appendix A**

List of People Consulted

External Stakeholders
Sandre Jones, Glimmer of Hope Foundation
David Gold, Glimmer of Hope Foundation
Alistair Wilson, School for Social Entrepreneurs
Emma Mortoo, School for Social Entrepreneurs
Jonathan Ellis, Refugee Council
John Connor, Aston Mansfield
David Masters, Mayfield School
Bob Garton, Gascoigne School
Janine Hunter, Newham Borough Council
Shankara Angadi, Twist
Stephen Timms, MP East Ham

Internal Stakeholders
Shpresa Board members
Shpresa Staff/volunteers
Shpresa users: women, young people and children

Appendix B

The Shpresa Programme: Agreeing the Way Forward

Terms of Reference

Background

This proposal has been developed after an initial meeting with Luljeta Nuzi, Flutra Shega and Tim Spafford, which was set up by Sandre Jones of the Glimmer of Hope Foundation. The proposal is based on the discussions at the meeting and is intended as a first draft for consideration and feedback. Once the final version is agreed it will become the Terms of Reference for the consultancy.

Broadly, Shpresa sees itself at a crucial juncture in its development and progress. Since its establishment as a separate entity in 2003, the organisation has successfully strengthened itself and grown its programmes, thereby able to reach more people in more ways. With the changing nature of the community Shpresa is serving, however, and the changing environment in which Shpresa has to operate, the organisation has reached a point where decisions need to be made as to which directions it should be following and where it should be directing its energy and resources.

Against this background, the **purpose** of the consultancy is to work with staff, Board members, users, partners and donors to:

- Review the current activities of Shpresa, both in their own context and in relation to the wider environment
- To identify the key accomplishments which Shpresa would like to have in place by 2013, and the key challenges they face in achieving these
- To agree future directions for the organisation which will enable them to move forward towards their chosen accomplishments and to address their challenges, and which take into account both local and national policy issues
- By working together with Shpresa's various stakeholders to build commitment and motivation to moving the organisation forward

The intention is that the report will be completed by 31st October 2008 and presented to a planned Away Day on 6th December, 2008 at which the Shpresa Board and staff members will consider the findings. They will also consider the implications of the recommendations, both in terms of current activities (e.g. what to continue, what to scale down or stop) and in terms of where future investments need to be directed. Based on the outputs of that day, a more detailed implementation plan will be drawn up by staff.

Process

The process, which will be finalised and managed in close collaboration with Shpresa staff, will involve one-to-one conversations and group discussions with the following stakeholders:

Stakeholder	Type of engagement	When	How long	Comment
Women, young people, children in Shpresa programmes	Initial visit	28th June	3 hours	An initial visit to get a better understanding of the programmes

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	Discussions with YP Steering Group, Women's Forum	To be confirmed (Sept)	1 hour each	To be done during/after regular Saturday session
Partners 1: Head teachers /School Link teachers	One-one conversations (by phone or face-to-face)	tbc	Max 1 hour each	To be set up by Shpresa
Partners 2: Charities (e.g. Aston Mansfield, Ilford Youth Centre, RAMP, TWIST, etc	One-one conversations (by phone or face-to-face)	tbc	Max 1 hour each	
Funders (e.g. Glimmer of Hope, Tudor Trust, Sure/Early Start)	One-to-one conversations (by phone or face-to-face)	tbc	Max 1 hour each	
Shpresa Board members	Group Discussion	tbc	1 hour	To be held after scheduled Board meeting
Shpresa staff	Group discussion	tbc	1 day	A meeting to share the ideas and input from other stakeholders, to obtain staff members' own perspective, and to finalise recommendations

Time required
It is estimated that the total time required for the above discussions, plus time for the necessary design and documentation, liaison with Shpresa staff, the final report and attendance at the December Away Day will be in the region of 10 days.