

PRESS RELEASE

Contact: Jane Jackson, The Rural Media Company
01432 344039
janej@ruralmedia.co.uk

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Rural Media tackles big rural issues Posh or Poor?

The Rural Media Company has successfully won grants from the Big Lottery and The UK Carnegie Trust for two new projects, **Show and Tell** and **Migrant Stories** respectively, which address particular rural issues in Herefordshire – social exclusion and the influx of migrant workers.

The downside of rural life has been in the news recently with a new report from the **Young Foundation**. "In some ways, the country is becoming posher and poorer..... There has been a boom in the rural economy and a lot of the community has become wealthier....but many groups are losing out" In particular, first time buyers, young people, those without cars for access to work and training, as well as migrant workers, often put out of work at short notice - all can find themselves alone in a sea of much better-off neighbours.

"While the rural economy is growing quickly, it is vital that marginalized groups are not overlooked by service providers and the communities in which they live", said Jane Jackson, Director of Production at The Rural Media Company. She continued, " low budget cameras and editing equipment, together with publishing local content on the web, are opening up new opportunities for minorities to be heard."

Herefordshire people are already working on **Show and Tell** to produce evidence in the form of video testimony for a new DVD report in partnership with Bristol University, School for Policy Studies. Local agencies, including Sure Start, Community Transport, Age Concern, are encouraging people to have their say about how to target public services and benefits to help them help themselves.

People enjoy responding to questions and getting their voices heard on the cost of rural living, accessing transport, jobs, education, libraries, health and other services and their confidentiality is protected by the researchers. One man in an outlying village walks 8 miles into Hereford every day to reach the Job Centre. There is no regular bus service along his route, but he says he

could not afford to travel by bus even if there was one. A single mother, left with several children by her ex-partner, struggles to make choices between paying for her children's school trips and putting more coins in her electric meter to do the family's washing.

The UK Carnegie Trust is supporting **Migrant Stories**, an action research project to create understanding between migrant workers and local residents of the County. The Rural Media Company will be out in the community running photography and storytelling sessions, and producing 3-minute Digital Stories of rural life, reflecting cultural differences and similarities between Herefordshire and some of the EU Accession countries. The Digital Stories will be available for everyone to view on County websites, and for community screenings early next year.

If you would like more information on either of these projects, or to get involved, please contact The Rural Media Company on 01432 344039, or email info@ruralmedia.co.uk.

Release ends

Note to Editors

- Digital Stories are especially suited for community media activity, giving people with no media experience a chance to express their views by recording their voice and adding their own pictures.
- The Rural Media Company works throughout the UK. We combine community and informal education, training and advocacy with the professional skills of the media industry. The results are effective, high-impact, high-quality media projects and educational materials at the cutting edge of current policy and debate. The Rural Media Company is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee.
www.ruralmedia.co.uk
- The Young Foundation is a center for social innovation that undertakes research to identify and understand social needs and then develops practical initiatives and institutions to address them.
www.youngfoundation.org