

Informal Festival Economies

University of East London
19th October 2006, 2pm-4pm

The Researching Festival Economies seminar series is an opportunity for the Celebrating Enterprise research team to raise and discuss issues arising from this work with other interested academics and applied researchers. The discussions will address empirical, methodological and theoretical questions. Topics covered in the series will include:

- Researching informal economic activity – the challenges
- Economic impact assessments – the pros and cons
- Sharing best practice from innovations in training and advice services.
- Festivals, work and policy – from the carnivalesque to health and safety
- Knowledge and networks in migrant enterprise

Many of those who trade or perform at community festivals and events do so on a relatively informal, ad hoc basis, getting together with friends and relatives to staff a food stall, or agreeing to sing, dance, or play instruments for a small fee. For some, these activities supplement other more regular sources of income, and are partly motivated by the desire to be involved with a community activity. For others, they can be a good way to test business ideas, without the need for large amounts of capital. Even those more established businesses or entrepreneurs from marginal populations who participate in festival trading often rely on informal networks to provide vital information, credit, and goods for their enterprises.

This seminar explores all aspects of what could loosely be described as ‘informal economic activity’ relating to festival participation. It considers the methodological challenges presented by researching non-documented economic activity. It looks at the way in which many economically marginal people slip continually between formal and informal income-generation. Finally, it asks how these phenomena are manifested in a festival context, and whether there is a support and development role for training and advice services.

For information on confirmed speakers, and for details of other seminars in the series, visit www.celebrating-enterprise.org.uk. Admission is free, and all are welcome, but advance registration is required. To register, or for more information please email e.e.roberts@uel.ac.uk

