

Speaking Out Briefing No.18

Small Grants Programme

The Speaking Out Small Grants Programme (SGP) was launched in February 2008 to enable voluntary and community organisations working with children and young people aged 0 to 25 in England to apply for small grants of up to £1000 to deliver one-off projects or activities in their local communities. The grants were set up to fund the development and implementation of new activities or extensions of existing projects that would raise the voice of the children and young people's voluntary and community sector, focusing on three key themes: knife, gun and gang crime; substance misuse; and access to activities in rural and urban areas. The grants, worth £16,500, were distributed to 17 projects, and activities were delivered by the end of October 2008. This briefing paper evaluates the first round of the grants programme, highlighting the significant amount of work that can be done for children and young people with very limited resources.

This briefing is part of the Speaking Out series.

Speaking Out

Speaking Out is a partnership between Children England (formerly the National Council of Voluntary Child Care Organisations) and the National Council for Voluntary Youth Services (NCVYS), which seeks to build a voice for the children and young people's voluntary and community sector across government.

The project aims to develop closer links between a range of government departments (Home Office, Ministry of Justice, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Communities and Local Government, Cabinet Office and HM Treasury) and the voluntary and community sector in delivering cross departmental policies such as Every Child Matters and *The Children's Plan* and the direct implementation of initiatives which affect children and young people.

Speaking Out aims to support children, young people and family voluntary and community organisations to better understand the impact on their users of a wider range of government policies and provide routes to influence them.

The project is funded by the Office of the Third Sector in the Cabinet Office.

Who are these briefings for?

This series of briefings intends to provide members of both NCVYS and Children England and other interested parties with background and analysis on specific policy items affecting the sector.

Other activities

In addition to these briefings the Speaking Out project is developing work streams around the policy themes which include:

- organising a series of seminars and events;
- establishing communities of interest amongst members and other organisations on specific policy themes;
- making representations to government; and
- linking with wider NCVYS and Children England campaigns.

To discuss this briefing or any other aspect of the Speaking Out project please contact Ilona Pinter, NCVYS's Information and Website Officer on 020 7278 1041 or email ilona@ncvys.org.uk, or Sophie Griffiths, Children England's Policy and Information Officer on 020 7833 3319 or email sophie@childrenengland.org.uk.

1. Introduction

While there is a clear need for long-term sustainable funding for voluntary and community organisations, the contribution of small, project-based grants is nevertheless crucial, particularly to smaller frontline organisations working directly with children and young people. This briefing looks at the aims and objectives of the Small Grants Programme, the application and grant distribution process, explores the outcomes of the funded projects and how they contributed to the debate on the key issues of the Speaking Out project as a whole.

2. Aims and objectives of the Small Grants Programme

Context

As a whole, the Speaking Out project has been very successful in bringing together voluntary and community sector representatives with their statutory partners at national, regional and issue-based events. However, less has been done to empower local organisations to raise their voices within their communities and engage in debates at a local level. With Government's shifting focus to local decision-making with the introduction of Children's Trusts, Local Safeguarding Children Boards, Local Strategic Partnerships and Local Area Agreements, and a heightened emphasis on involving community members in decision-making through the Communities in Control agenda, it has become even more important for frontline organisations working directly with children and young people, to have their say on issues that are specific to their area of expertise and affect the children and young people they support.

Key areas of focus

The first round of the SGP aimed to fund one-off activities or projects that would involve children and young people to raise awareness and debate about key issues directly affecting them. Key areas prioritised were: knife, gun and gang crime; substance misuse; and access to activities in urban and rural areas. Throughout the course of the Speaking Out project, these areas have been particularly salient, featured in policy briefing papers, responses to government consultations and debated at roundtable events organised through the project.

Funding opportunities for members

The funding was open to members of NCVYS and Children England and was intended to be used by organisations to implement a range of activities including events, festivals, exhibitions, residentials, publications, web resources, research projects, sports activities, creative and performance arts projects, or any other innovative projects that could raise awareness and promote debate on these key topics.

Sharing good practice

As part of the funded activity, the applicants were asked to evidence the outcomes of their work in audio, visual or written format to document the use of the grant so that their work could be shared more widely in policy debates as examples of good practice in working with children and young people. The Speaking Out project's engagement with Central Government partners has often called for submissions of project examples and case studies to illustrate the voluntary and community sectors innovative work, which this requirement sought to enhance.

All the case studies from the funded projects are illustrated in the appendix of this briefing and can be accessed on the NCVYS and Children England websites.

3. The application process

The SGP was advertised on the NCVYS and Children England websites and distributed through the two organisations' networks, through e-bulletins, newsletters and mailings. The call for applications was open for four weeks to any voluntary or community organisation working to support children and/or young people in England that was a member of either NCVYS or Children England. Organisations that were members of NCVYS or Children England could act as a sponsor or work in partnership with another non-member organisation or group as long as the member organisation remained the lead, accountable body for the activity. During the application stage it was also made clear that child protection and safeguarding policies had to be in place and that all relevant CRB checks needed to be confirmed before the funding was distributed. These measures aimed to simplify the application process and make it more accessible to a range of organisations working in local communities across England.

Based on our experience in the sector, development workers delivering services for children and young people and advocating on their behalf often find it extremely difficult to balance their time between fundraising and core work. While working with children and young people often constitutes their main responsibilities, fundraising work is nevertheless vital in preserving the organisation and keeping the services open to children and young people, but of course this is often unpaid work.

To this end, the SGP application process was purposely simplified, using guidelines, terms and conditions and applications in plain English to ensure that the projects were accessible. The criteria were left relatively open to enable projects to develop new creative approaches or to expand or extend on existing programmes, with an ultimate objective of raising the voices of children and young people on key issues that affect them. Often funding looks to support flashy, complex new schemes in an effort to make headlines and achieve a number of outcomes simultaneously rather than funding existing, yet effective projects that have proven to work. The SGP hoped to address this by providing support to existing projects as well as to new initiatives.

4. The successful projects

The initial round of the SGP received 45 applications from a variety of organisations across England. Some of the applications were not eligible for consideration as the organisations were not members of either networks or working in partnership with a member organisation; did not meet one or more of the other criteria; or did not provide the requested information in their application.

Successful projects were closely allied to one (or more) of the three proposed themes and demonstrated the contribution of the children and young people's voluntary and community sector. The panel was particularly keen to fund projects that aimed to raise the voices of those that are less often heard in these debates.

Geographic and thematic break-down

The 17 organisations that were successful received grants ranging from £700 to £1000. In total £16,500 was distributed. Organisations came from a variety of English localities including Cumbria, Gloucestershire, Somerset, Oxfordshire, London, Bradford, Newcastle, Staffordshire, Nottinghamshire, Cambridgeshire and Hampshire. In covering the three key themes, most projects focused on one theme while some covered two or three: eight of the projects looked at knife, gun and gang crime; six looked at access to activities in rural areas; two looked at access to activities in urban areas; and three projects looked at substance misuse.

Funded activities

The activities that were funded included workshops, exhibitions, competitions, performances, youth exchanges, residentials, group discussions, consultations, outdoor and indoor activities, research projects, film and radio productions, graffiti displays and the production of publicity and campaigning materials to help children and young people make an impact in their local communities.

Some projects used ongoing programmes of work that had proven to be effective to create additional, extended activities funded by the project while others used this opportunity to develop new approaches to working with children and young people. Section 5 will look more closely into some of the outcomes which show how small project grants can really go a long way in developing work with children and young people.

Fees and costs

The grants were used to cover direct costs associated with the proposed activities, most often relating to venue hire and transportation costs, particularly for those in rural areas that have to rely on private transport. Some of the funding went towards staffing costs for support and development workers who planned and ran the workshops, activities and events; training professionals who delivered sessions (e.g. graffiti artist, film makers, photography trainers and vocal coaches). Expenses also included the costs of hiring or purchasing equipment for editing films,

taking photographs and producing radio shows. Material costs included publicity, stationery, cameras and photography materials, photo processing and printing, frames for exhibitions, poster boards, painting materials and postage costs. Other costs included fees for external activities, volunteer expenses, evaluation costs, child care costs for teenage mothers attending the events, meals and refreshments, competition winner vouchers and other admin fees.

5. Outcomes and achievements of the funded activities

The funded activities demonstrated a spectrum of positive outcomes for children and young people, beyond those that were directly sought after through the funding initiative. This section goes into more detail on the outcomes and achievements of the funded activities.

A safe environment

A survey on views around knife, gun and gang crime conducted by the British Youth Council (BYC) as part of their funded activity found that young people whose peers had been in gangs had not been exposed to opportunities to gain a positive sense of identity in a healthy or safe setting. Similarly, in the research report published by Barnardo's North East Young People's Regional Advisory Group:

“The actual fear of crime may drive some young people to carry a weapon to defend them against a knife, gun or gang crime attack.”

There is an overwhelming sense that some young people are very anxious in their environments, where rules of territoriality in urban settings or problems at school or even problems at home leave them feeling fearful, unsure and low in self-confidence. The funded activities were able to provide a safe place where children and young people could explore how they perceive themselves. The activities were often much more than an opportunity to debate important issues like knife, gun and gang crime because they enabled young people to get outside of their immediate environment, where in some cases knives and gangs, abuse or neglect are a reality. Instead they were able to reflect on themselves as individuals, learn new skills, make new friends and build their confidence.

Barnardo's research also showed that children and young people have an understanding that there is a need to both help prevent offending and also provide safe ways for young people to leave gangs.

Discussing the issues freely and openly

Knowing about these anxieties, ALOVE organised a residential event for a group of disadvantaged young people from different ethnic minority communities living in an urban area in London at a suburban residential centre where they could freely discuss their concerns, views, ideas and share personal experiences of gangs and crime. In addition to the discussions, they all took part in other indoor and outdoor activities such as cooking lessons, archery and other sports. For some of these young people English was not their first language and living in low income urban settings, they may not otherwise have had similar opportunities.

Social and personal development

Through the funded activities, children and young people were able to get involved in a number of social and developmental activities where they could learn new skills and build their confidence. For example, out of the 300 young people that were involved in the Southside Radio project over the summer 2008 in South London, 30% categorised themselves as being not in education, employment or training (NEET) and 91% were from an ethnic minority. An evaluation of the project found that Southside had made the young people feel more involved in their community, raised their self-esteem, given them new skills, improved their communication skills and given them new career aspirations.

Responding to local needs

Young people at Southside explained that without this project they would have been doing nothing but hanging out on the streets over the summer. Instead they felt they were given opportunities in an inclusive environment:

“You get to interact with people near your own age group. Get to go on air, learn how to present, produce and record vox-pops.”

“Because young people are involved in everything and not outcasted.”

“Because it gives youngsters a chance to show what they can do.”

One young participant jokingly called it ‘secret education’.

Voluntary and community based projects are often better equipped to deal with the particular needs of their client group – in this case children and young people from black and minority ethnic (BME) communities in South London – because the work arises from a need to solve a particular problem. Without having a series of boxes to tick and with relatively flexible funding, groups can focus on individual beneficiaries rather than tightly defined outcomes within their distinct remit that statutory agencies often have to face:

“Embedded within the community and at the grassroots level, local voluntary and community organisations are particularly adept at involving their users and reflecting the diversity of the local area. They are also well aware of equality issues and embrace local diversity. The smaller scale of their operations also makes them closer to their clients and hence closer to identifying and knowing about their needs.”¹

¹ NAVCA et al. *Sustaining Grants: Why local grant aid is vital for a healthy voluntary and community sector and thriving local communities*. June 2007

Meaningful relationships with adults

While many of the activities were planned and implemented with full participation from the children and young people involved, they would not have been possible without the development workers and volunteers who provided invaluable, professional guidance and support to the children and young people. During the activities, children and young people were able to spend time with adults who they knew and trusted. For those coming from disadvantaged circumstances, and particularly if they did not already have positive relationships with adults in their lives such as teachers, developing solid, meaningful relationships with adults was integral to their development overall.

Many of the projects were able to place vulnerable young people in situations where they could develop positive relationships. For example, Southside Radio gave young men from BME communities positive male role models, showing them opportunities for achievement and positive engagement that do not involve being in a gang.

Solutions to knife, gun and gang crime and anti-social behaviour

Some of the projects focused on finding solutions to knife, gun and gang crime, by engaging young people in surveys to gather their views. The BYC survey, for example, found that the top reasons for young people carrying knives or guns were: to gain respect; to gain a certain 'image'; and because of peer pressure. To explain why some young people get involved with gangs, the respondents said it was: to have a sense of identity; because of peer pressure; and because friends or family are already in the gang.

Respondents also said that out of all potential solutions they particularly supported: ex-gang members educating young people about the reality of being in a gang; better ways to deal with young people who are excluded from school; increasing employment opportunities for young people in the community; and finding ways out for those who get involved in gun, knife or gang crime to get out such as safe houses.

Affecting change locally and nationally

A number of projects were able to make a considerable impact involving the wider community and contributed to problem-solving issues that were relevant to all. In response to the death of a peer in a local traffic accident, the Guyhirn Speeding Project by Young Lives made a film to raise awareness of the issue of speeding and poor road conditions in their local area. The film was presented to the Parish Council to try and effect change.

In Millom, the local Children's Centre organised a photography exhibition expressing children and young people's views on access to activities in a very rural part of Cumbria. The event brought together different agencies of the community including schools, children's services and the police in order to find common solutions. As a result, the School Sport Partnership in Cumbria now funds a Friday-night football

club attended by over 50 young people and a young chefs' club is also in the making!

Barnardo's North East shared their research on knife, gun and gang crime with local and national politicians, police commissioners, schools, youth and social care agencies and the media. They have also been approached by the Regional Youth Work Unit with a proposal for a partnership project to build on their study across a wider network of young people in the North East.

The showcase event organised by young people from the London Gypsy and Traveller Unit helped increase community cohesion in East London boroughs. Children and young people from the Irish Traveller community living in Hackney, Haringey and Tower Hamlets put on a show including dance performances, singing and poetry readings. The event was attended by over 150 people from the community including representatives from local authorities. An exhibition of the young people's work toured the boroughs after the event to raise awareness and celebrate their work. As one of the most marginalised groups in society, often subjected to racial abuse and bullying both in the media as well as in schools and their wider social environments, these children and young people were able to highlight the rich, cultural contribution of their community as well as celebrate their own positive contributions as young people. Several news stories on the project were published in local media, portraying positive images of young people as well as the Gypsy and Traveller community. The project gave the young people a great deal of confidence as well as a sense of pride and achievement.

The BYC used the funding to enable young people to feed directly into central government. They conducted an online survey using their network. The findings from the survey were used to inform a delegation of young people who presented the evidence to an All Party Parliamentary Meeting (APPG) on Youth Affairs at the Houses of Parliament where they met Government Ministers and MPs including Vernon Coaker, Minister for Crime Reduction at the Home Office. This led to a more in-depth meeting between young people and Home Secretary Jacqui Smith.

Developing involvement and participation

With an emphasis on involving children and young people in the proposed activities at the application stage, many projects used this opportunity to develop creative approaches to participation and active engagement.

Action for Children's Millom Children's Centre's project was very much children-led:

“By listening to children and young people, asking their opinions, empowering them to make positive contributions and asking them to take ownership over a project builds their resilience and develops their self esteem. Therefore by not necessarily addressing their personal issues or behaviours directly we have been able to nurture their capacity to deal with these things themselves and move forwards in achieving their potential.”

The funded project in Millom found that despite living in rural areas and in relative proximity to stunning, natural environments like the Lake District National Park, local children and young people do not always have the resources, skills or aspirations to access these facilities. Instead they need help from parents, voluntary and community organisations, schools and children's services to access these activities and to stay informed about what is on offer.

In this way, the SGP gave some organisations a chance to take risks and innovate, using this opportunity to try something new based on their existing expertise in working with young people.

Capacity building for VCS

In some instances, the funding gave practitioners a chance to develop their own capacity for new areas of work. For example, in order to deliver 11 workshops around Northumberland to children and young people, two Development Workers from the Northumberland Federation of Young Farmers Clubs (NFYFC) attended a training course on alcohol and substance misuse. Flexibility within the grant programme enabled workers to gain specialist knowledge which will benefit the organisation in the long-run as well.

6. Feedback on the grants programme

Overwhelmingly, the feedback on the grants programme was very positive, with particular reference to the ease and simplicity of the funding process. The grant recipients valued the flexibility, freedom and trust with which they could utilise the funding.

“Having freedom to best use a pot of funding, as opposed to lots of stipulations, was really helpful as we could completely target it to where it could be best used within this specific cultural context. As you can see from the DVD the young people really engaged and it has made a huge difference to their lives. The young people had space – space to really explore who they are, and who they want to be, with encouragement that they do have choices, and can have aspirations outside of what their home environment enforces. We have one young person from the residential that because of a conversation on the residential will be applying to ‘Platform 2’ this summer!”

Sandjea-Marie Clarke, Strategic Development Officer, ALOVE

Recipients also valued that funding facilitated participation and engagement work without strict outcomes or heavy demands on their time, both in terms of the application and reporting processes. This enabled them to explore the issues which were more pertinent to children and young people.

“Having specific funding to talk and listen to children and young people around a particular subject is excellent. From the application we knew that the information we gathered would be returned to Speaking Out to lobby policy. However as it was participation activity for us it was important that the group saw where their efforts are going this is why we held the exhibition so that the group could influence on a local level but also for the group to really be heard in the wider context.”

Gemma Roberts, Project Worker, Action for Children

As part of the SGP, each project was assigned a Speaking Out project officer as their first point of contact for any queries or problems, and a few project visits took place during the funding period. The informal and open nature of the relationship between the funding body and the grant recipient enabled a positive experience for all involved.

“The small grant programme had a quick turnaround which was very beneficial to our event. The staff team were all very supportive and easily accessible if we had any queries.”

Lorraine Sweeney, Youth Co-ordinator, London Gypsy and Traveller Unit

7. Potential for future work

Almost all organisations said that they were looking to use the ideas, practices and knowledge gained from the SGP-funded activities in future projects or to integrate them into already-established programmes. The overwhelming enthusiasm to carry on the work highlights the potential that small grants have in helping organisations to become more sustainable in the future and providing a valuable stepping stone for their continued work.

In the future, the BYC would like to provide opportunities for young people to gain training in public speaking while the Northumberland FYFC is looking to run similar workshops on sexual health and teenage pregnancy.

Southside Radio would like to involve more radio producers and professionals to extend the range of career opportunities that could inspire young people as well as increasing the capacity of the project. Young people said they wanted more music sessions, tutoring in instruments, music production, lyric writing and rapping opportunities.

Full Circle Education - a charity which provides young people at risk of exclusion alternative education and learning pathways – was funded to deliver graffiti art training sessions to young people to explore the dangers of gun and knife crime. Due to the success of the project, they would like to use this as a model for future pieces of work with different groups of young people.

8. Conclusion

This review demonstrates the significant difference that a relatively small amount of funding can make within the voluntary and community sector.

While the recipient organisations found very different ways of utilising the funding, they were all united in being able to engage children and young people in positive activities, providing them with a sense of achievement, self-confidence and helping them to develop self-efficacy, and ultimately helping them to use their voice to make a difference in their community.

The Speaking Out project is running a second round of the SGP to extend the great work to other voluntary and community organisations working with children and young people in England. We anticipate more excellent work which we will seek to share with the entire sector so that we can all learn from the good practice on the ground.

9. Resources

'Defending local grants: resources you can use.' Local Grants Forum. January 2009

<http://www.navca.org.uk/publications/defendinggrants/>

Youth Opportunity Fund and Youth Capital Fund

<http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/youthmatters/youthfund/>

Grassroots Grants – Community Development Foundation

http://www.cdf.org.uk/bfora/systems/xmlviewer/default.asp?arg=DS_CDF_TECHART_23/_page.xsl/27&xsl_argx=3

vcashpoint

<http://www.vinspired.com/vcashpoint/>

Mediabox

<http://www.media-box.co.uk/>

myplace

http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/prog_myplace.htm

Participation Works

<http://www.participationworks.org.uk/>

Youth in Action – EU Programme

http://ec.europa.eu/youth/youth-in-action-programme/doc74_en.htm

10. Other briefings

- Briefing 1** Knife, gun and gang crime
- Briefing 2** The Government's Social Exclusion Agenda
- Briefing 3** Access to Services in Rural Areas
- Briefing 4** Public Service Delivery
- Briefing 5** Community Cohesion
- Briefing 6** Local Government Reform
- Briefing 7** Placeshaping
- Briefing 8** Comprehensive Spending Review
- Briefing 9** Rural migrant children, families and young people
- Briefing 10** Gang, Gun and Knife Crime: Seeking Solutions (Part 2)
- Briefing 11** Ministry of Justice Third Sector Strategy
- Briefing 12** HM Youth Crime Action Plan
- Briefing 13** Communities in control: real people, real power
- Briefing 14** 2012 Olympic Legacy
- Briefing 15** The 2008 Drug Strategy
- Briefing 16** Environment
- Briefing 17** Children, young people and disability

All the briefings are available at www.ncvys.org.uk or www.childrenengland.org.uk.

Free hard copies are also available to order. Please contact Ilona Pinter, NCVYS's Information and Website Officer on 020 7278 1041 or email speakingout@ncvys.org.uk, or Sophie Griffiths, Children England's Policy and Information Officer on 020 7833 3319 or email sophie@childrenengland.org.uk.

Appendix: Case studies of the funded projects

Ilford Youth Participation Residential - ALOVE – Salvation Army

The Ilford Youth Participation Residential project supported by ALOVE (the Salvation Army) took a group of 12 young people aged 13-22 years from the urban context of Ilford in East London to Woodrow High House in Amersham for a weekend residential in October 2008. All the young people in this group were from low income households, and predominantly had English as a second language.

The focus of the residential was to provide the young people with an opportunity to have an 'out-of-London experience', to experience an alternative space, to help challenge some of their common assumptions and to try new things such as different foods, pastimes and activities. The residential provided the young people with a conducive learning environment where they could freely explore the theme of 'Gangs, Guns and Knives' and participate in the discussions about a key area of work which affects young people's lives today. The indoor group sessions were discussion-based and interactive, giving the participants a chance to express their thoughts, emotions and ideas through speech as well as drawings and writing. The sessions were recorded and made into a short film. As well as participating in this debate, the young people took part in outdoor activities that they had not experienced previously such as archery, swimming, low ropes and more, which helped them to develop new skills and confidence.

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Young people speaking out about knife, gun and gang crime - Barnardo's North East

Barnardo's Young People's Regional Advisory Group (YPRAG), which applied for the Speaking Out SGP funding and carried out the whole project, is made up of 10 former and current Barnardo's service-users, aged 12 to 24 years, from its projects across the North East region. Members of the YPRAG come from some of the most marginalised, vulnerable and socially excluded groups of society including young carers, teenage mothers, homeless young people, those with disabilities or learning difficulties, care leavers, those who have been sexually exploited or harmed.

The YPRAG used the funding from the Speaking Out SGP to run a creative arts competition and conduct a survey of over 100 socially excluded young people in the region, seeking views on knife, gun and gang crime, how this impacts on their lives and what they think should be done to tackle it. They also conducted face-to-face interviews with their peers from social networks, schools and other youth work projects.

The research showed that while a lot of the young people are worried about crime, only 2% of those questioned had been victims themselves. A lot of people felt that they could use a higher police presence on the streets, this included CCTV and increased "beat" areas. 8% of young people wanted tougher punishments for violent crime and 92% felt that there should be more creative solutions, such as prevention in schools, and more positive images of young people.

The recommendations included that young people should be more involved through school debates around violent crime and its consequences. In addition, they suggested that a programme should be set up where Youth Workers identify and select young leaders or 'influencers' in schools, even if they are anti-social. These young people influence others but need a lot of support and leadership training to make sure that this influence is positive and against violent crime.

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Speaking Out on gun, knife and gang crime – British Youth Council

The British Youth Council (BYC) – a youth-led volunteering and campaigning organisation bringing together local councils of young people around the UK - believes that it is important that young people are seen as part of the solution, not just as the problem. In addition, solutions which affect young people are undoubtedly more effective when young people help design them. This funding enabled young people to participate in constructive debate on the important issue of knife, gun and gang crime, and influence significant decision-makers. To gauge young people's opinions on this issue, BYC conducted an online survey of young people aged 13 to 26 throughout the UK.

Key messages from the survey included that top reasons for young people carrying knives or guns were to gain respect, to gain a certain 'image' and because of peer pressure. Reasons why some young people get involved with gangs included having a sense of identity, because of peer pressure and because friends or family are already in the gang.

Respondents also said that out of all potential solutions they particularly supported ex-gang members educating young people about the reality of being in a gang, better ways to deal with young people who are excluded from school, increasing employment opportunities for young people in the community and finding ways out for those who get involved in gun, knife or gang crime to get out such as safe houses.

A delegation of young participants then presented these findings to MPs and civil servants, including Vernon Coaker, Minister for Crime Reduction at the Home Office, at an All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Youth Affairs in June 2008. In addition, the young participants made a short film of the project which was made public to through BYCTv and promoted throughout BYC's network.

For more information contact:

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Value Your Life Not a Knife - Full Circle Education

Full Circle Education is a charity based in Kidbrooke, London, dedicated to maximising the life chances of young people through alternative educational provision and learning pathways. As part of the funded activity for the SGP, Full Circle Education employed an Art Tutor to work in the medium of graffiti art to highlight the dangers of gun and knife crime.

Using this creative medium, 30 young people who are at risk of being excluded from school and the majority of whom come from broken homes and poor backgrounds, were involved in group discussions where they talked about their own personal experiences with guns and knives. They completed worksheets, and worked both individually and in small groups to make designs for posters, t-shirts and baseball caps. The final weeks were devoted to displaying their designs onto the wall boards and clothing which they were then able to take home to show their family and peers.

Due to the success of this project, the staff team at Full Circle would like to use it as a model for future pieces of work with different groups of young people.

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Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month Event - London Gypsy and Traveller Unit

The London Gypsy and Traveller Unit (LGTU) works to increase the opportunities open to the Traveller community and to enable children, young people and their families to exercise greater control over their lives by providing support and advocacy services for Traveller families living in Hackney, Haringey, Newham and adjacent boroughs; and by influencing policy and practice at borough, regional and national level. The Gypsy and Traveller community is one of the most marginalised groups in society and, according to a recent Children's Society report, '9 out of 10 children and young people from a Gypsy background have suffered racial abuse and nearly two thirds have also been bullied or physically attacked.

As part of the Gypsy and Roma Traveller History Month in June 2008, the LGTU delivered a showcase of talent event led and delivered by 50 young people aged 5 to 16 years from the Irish Travelling Community. The event aimed to empower and acknowledge the achievements of young people from this vulnerable community, and raise awareness of the rich, cultural contribution that this community makes. Young people were involved in the planning, organising and auditioning for the event. The showcase included singing and dancing performances, poetry readings, film screenings and an art and photography exhibition, by young Travellers from the boroughs.

The event was attended by over 150 people from the community, including representatives from local authorities. The young people were proud at being centre stage for the right reasons and were overwhelmed at the amount of people that turned up to watch their performance. Some of them received awards from the Jack Petchey Foundation for outstanding achievements and overcoming barriers to learning, certificates from the Metropolitan Police Youth Strategy group, and AQA and ASDEN accreditation certificates.

An exhibition of the young people's work was displayed in local libraries across Hackney, Haringey and Tower Hamlets. The young people went along with their families to see the exhibitions and were very proud to see all their work up for everyone to see. Several new stories on the project were published in local media, portraying positive images of young people as well as the Gypsy and Traveller community. The young people are a lot more confident now.

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Our Point of View – ‘Having Our Say’ photo exhibition - Millom Children’s Centre – Action for Children

Despite living in rural areas and in relative proximity, children and young people do not always have the resources, skills or aspirations to access the stunning, natural environments in their area like the Lake District’s National Park. The Millom Children’s Centre learnt this by conducting a summer project with 12 children and young people aged 9 to 16 years from Millom – often referred to as a ‘service desert’ in a very rural part of Cumbria.

Through this project, the children and young people gained new skills and used photography to express their views on the activities they take part in, how they access them, what activities they would like to take part in and what stops them accessing them. Each child was given a disposable camera to capture what they do in their own time. They also visited the Thurston Outdoor Education Centre (OEC) at Coniston and took part in activities to help explore the issues.

The group then organised and hosted a photo exhibition, designing the invites and an information sheet to accompany the exhibition. They invited people who they believed were key to helping them access activities and those who would influence decision-making in their community, including parents, the mayor, local councilors, youth workers, head teachers, the area superintendent, the Lake District National Parks and Cumbria Children’s Services representatives.

As a direct result of the exhibition, a fun, weekly 5-a-side football club has been set up on Friday evenings, which is regularly attended by over 50 young people and paid for by the School Sport Partnership in Cumbria. A young chefs’ club is also in the making.

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Alcohol and Substance Misuse Workshop - Northumberland Federation of Young Farmers Clubs

The Northumberland Federation of Young Farmers Clubs delivered a series of Alcohol and Substance Misuse Workshops to 11 clubs in its organisation over a period of 6 months. The two Youth Development workers employed by the county attended a Substance Misuse and Alcohol training course which was delivered by the Northumberland County Council and Sorted, an outreach substance misuse service that provides treatment and care to young people experiencing problems because of use or misuse of substances. This training allowed NFYFC staff to deliver the required training to the young people attending the workshops.

Over 220 young people, aged 10 to 28 years, took part in the workshops, which consisted of icebreakers, team work and hands on learning. The workshops explored the young people's understanding of drugs, their classifications, their effects, the different terms used, the legislation around substances including the main offences and penalties under the Misuse of Drugs Act.

The main outcomes of these workshops were highlighting the effects of drugs on the body and the consequences of having a police record.

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Southside Radio - Oasis UK

Southside is a youth-led media project and radio station based in South London, aiming to inspire young people through music and creativity, and giving them the chance to express their views, showcase their talent, produce, MC or make a video.

A group of young people were funded to do radio shows on living safely, highlighting positive activities available for young people, talking about substance misuse and positive contributions that deter people from gang culture and crime. Some of the shows involved interviews with politicians including London mayor Boris Johnson and Stephen Timms MP, musicians and professionals where the young people aged between 9 and 25 years, posed questions on specific issues around gang culture and crime, whilst also voicing their own opinions.

Around 300 young people participated in the project by working on the radio shows, a supporting magazine project, a photography project, on lyric writing and rapping workshops, on music production and engineering workshops and on participating in radio broadcast training. 20 young people worked closely with the projects and had regular weekly radio slots. 9 young people received AQA accreditation in introduction to radio. Out of all the young people that were involved in the project, 30% categorised themselves as being NEET and 91% were from an ethnic minority.

A survey of the young people at the end of the project, found that Southside made them feel more involved in their community by giving them something to do other than hanging out on the streets. It was an inclusive environment; it raised their self-esteem, gave them new skills, improved their communication skills and made them think of new career opportunities.

For more information contact:

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Young People's Leaflet - Somerset Rural Youth Project

With support from the Somerset Rural Youth Project, young people designed and produced an information leaflet to help adult members of any Somerset community understand young people's views and feelings about the accessibility and affordability of services in rural areas.

Several groups of young people from 6 communities were consulted about the content of the leaflet and the main working group designed the cover and how the views of the young people were displayed on the other side.

The leaflet was distributed at Somerset Rural Youth Project's Building Stronger Communities – Involving Young People Conference in October 2008 attended by Parish Councillors and other community members. In addition, it was distributed to community organisations such as Village Hall Committees, Parish Councillors, District and County Councillors and Voluntary Youth Clubs.

The full participation of young people in production of the leaflet was to enhance the understanding of the needs of young people and how they communicate with them. This has been a very successful project, inspiring and empowering one group of young people to take the next step of making a short DVD to express their feelings about where they live. Some members of the community are now working directly with the young people to develop a plan to enhance the facilities in the community.

The young people who have participated in the project have increased in self-esteem and self-efficacy; they have also gained the confidence to express themselves, their feelings and opinions to their peers and others within their communities.

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Young Explorer Voyage - Tall Ships Youth Trust

As part of a Tall Ships Residential voyage in autumn 2008, 28 young trainee crew, aged 14 to 16 years, took part in a discussion workshop on three different topics, with the help of a youth mentor. Young people selected their preferred topic for discussion from: 1) gangs; 2) rural vs. urban living; and 3) respect. The groups then gathered together and exchanged views on each others' topics. The Captain of the Ship remarked on his surprise that the young people gave so much attention for so much of the time.

The young people comprised of 12 females and 16 males aged 14 and 15 years, from different parts of the country including the Isle of Wight, South Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, East Sussex and West Sussex. The group was diverse with young people from rural as well as urban settings. They came from varying backgrounds and a few of the young people were very challenging.

By taking part in the exercise, the young people were able to reflect on their mind sets and prejudices of others from outside of their peer group. For example, the urban contingent considered young people from rural areas to be 'farmers' and the rural youth considered the urban young people to be 'chavs'. Despite these initial prejudices, the young people formed lasting relationships with those from outside their peer groups and the general feeling of the group, evident from their work, was that of belonging and acceptance.

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Active Citizen Programme - Young Cumbria

Young Cumbria organised two consecutive training days for youth work staff and young people. The objects of the training was for the participants to understand the differences in levels of participation and to identify how and why young people should take part in the decision-making processes in their youth clubs and within Young Cumbria itself.

The training involved 11 adults and 14 young people aged 13 to 17 years living in the rural South Lakes District of Cumbria. The training consisted of training involving young people in participation and decision making processes. Fun activities were also incorporated into the workshop for the young people.

As a result of this project, a joint statement was created for the young people, staff and the organisation setting out how and why it is important for young people to take part in decision-making processes with their club, providing a better understanding and more realistic expectations on both sides. Staff members also have different tools to use in their daily work with young people and a better understanding of the impact on young people their involvement will have.

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Rural Activities Consultation - Young Gloucestershire

As part of the funded activity organised by Young Gloucestershire, 12 young people aged 13 to 18 years from Gloucestershire's rural villages were taken to Mallards Pike, a county council outdoor education site, where they engaged in a variety of team building activities and a consultation session. The purpose of the consultation was to identify issues that rural young people have living in their community and to inform Young Gloucestershire and local parish councils.

The groups, made up of equal numbers of boys and girls, were split and took part in canoeing, orienteering and problem solving activities. Each group did each activity once. The activity was undertaken at Mallards Pike in the Forest of Dean and was supervised by staff from the Wilderness Centre.

The outcomes of the consultation highlighted the problems that young people in rural locations have to gaining information about important subjects such as sexual health and drug advice. Transport is also a problem due to not being frequent enough and because of its low standards.

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Guyhirn Speeding Project - Young Lives

Young Lives worked with a core group of 6 young women aged 10 to 13 years in making a film to raise awareness of the local issue of speeding and the wider issues faced by rurally isolated young people, such as no or poor public transport, in Guyhirn, Fenland. The group would consider themselves to be of white British origin and belong to the 'rurally isolated' category.

The catalyst to making the film was the death of one of the group's peers in a road traffic accident and the continuing issue of speeding cars through their village. The group felt unsafe due to this and wanted to raise awareness of the issue and felt that film was an excellent medium through which to do this.

The project consisted of a series of film making and editing workshops with the young people so they were able to be completely involved in the process of making their film. With support from adult youth workers and volunteers, they participated in story-boarding, filming and editing their film using a mini-DV camera, and software and technical support from the multimedia resource, the Jam Van.

The young people held screenings for the community in Guyhirn as well as showing the film to the Parish Council to raise awareness and try and effect change in relation to speeding traffic through Guyhirn.

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