

Speaking Out Briefing No.25 Small Grants Programme

In February 2008 the Speaking Out Small Grants Programme (SGP) was launched. It aimed 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; in order that they may deliver one-off projects or activities in their local communities. The programme has continued and this paper reports on the second round of funding, highlighting the significant amount of work that can be done for children and young people with very limited resources. In 2009 the recession deepened across England, thus making such work on a small budget even more crucial. The grants were set up to fund the implementation and development 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 five key themes: health, community empowerment, youth justice, homelessness and housing, employment, education and training. The grants, worth £1,000, were distributed to 16 different projects.

This briefing is part of the Speaking Out series.

Speaking Out

Speaking Out is a partnership between Children England 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 of Health, Communities and Local Government, Cabinet Office and HM Treasury) and the voluntary and community sector in delivering cross departmental policies that affect children and young people.

Speaking Out aims to support voluntary and community organisations that work with children and young people to better understand the impact of government policies on their service users and provide routes to influence policymaking.

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;
- policy and practice based research;
- 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 Rhiannon Jones, NCVYS's Information and Website Officer on 020 7278 1041 or email rhiannon@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

Within the funding spectrum small grants seem to sit at the polar opposite to large, long term and sustainable funding, yet both are equally crucial. Small grants especially benefit the smaller frontline organisations who would not qualify for large funds. Thus enabling them to work directly with children and young people. This briefing looks at the aims and objectives of the SGP and the application and grant distribution process. It 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

The impact of the economic downturn has meant that for many children and young people's voluntary and community sector organisations the funding arena has become increasingly competitive and a harder environment in which to obtain resources. In this context, the Speaking Out Small Grants programme provides a vital opportunity for voluntary and community organisations to apply for funding to enhance existing good practice and further support children and young people. The small grants application process aims to be simple and funding is distributed promptly so that organisations are able to continue working with children and young people and function in a more financially stable setting.

The Speaking Out project has been very successful in bringing together voluntary and community sector representatives with their statutory partners at national and regional levels. However, less has been done to empower local organisations to raise their voices within their communities and engage in debates at a local level. The Small Grants Programme aims to address this by providing a platform for local organisations to raise their voice and speak out on local 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. The second round has moved on from these themes to explore health, community empowerment, youth justice, homelessness and housing and employment, education and training. 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, residential, 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 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. The projects funded this year have explored a range of areas from self harm and body image to young people leaving care and looking for employment.

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 small grants were advertised through a number of mediums including NCVYS and Children England websites, networks, e-bulletins, newsletters and mailings. The call for applications was open for eight 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. There was the opportunity for organisations that were members of NCVYS or Children England to 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. It was also made clear that all safeguarding and child protection 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 make the process accessible and simple in order to encourage a wide range of organisations to apply.

Fundraising is vital to preserving the work and sustainability of an organisation. It can be very difficult for development workers to balance their time between their core work: delivering services to young people, and fundraising. Therefore it was important to make the SGP application process as simple as possible. To ensure accessibility, guidelines, terms and conditions and applications were written in plain English. Though policy themes were included, the criteria for the activity was left relatively open to allow for new creative approaches or to expand existing programmes. It was made clear that the ultimate goal was to raise the voices of children and young people on key issues that affect them. The SGP hoped to address this by supporting existing projects, that have been proven to work, as well as new initiatives.

4. The successful projects

The second round of the SGP received over 20 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 five 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 16 organisations that were successful received grants of £1000. Organisations came from a variety of English localities including Somerset, Birmingham, Warwickshire and London. Most projects focused on one theme while some covered two or three, two of the most popular being community empowerment and education, employment and training.

Funded activities

The activities that were funded included workshops, performances, residentials, group discussions, consultations, outdoor and indoor activities, research projects, film and radio productions, a fashion show, magazine production and 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 looks 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. Some of the funding went towards staffing costs for support and development workers who planned and ran workshops, activities and events and training professionals who delivered sessions (e.g. artists, film makers, musicians and trainers). Expenses also included the costs of hiring or purchasing equipment for editing films, producing music or radio shows. Material costs included publicity, stationery and tapes. Other costs included fees for external activities, volunteer expenses and child care costs for teenage parents attending the events as well as meals and refreshments.

5. Outcomes and achievements of the funded activities

Beyond the aims that were directly sought through the funding criteria, the activities created a whole spectrum of positive outcomes for children and young people. This section explores the achievements and activities of the different projects.

Discussing issues freely and openly

Often the children and young people were dealing with sensitive issues that they would not normally approach, therefore it was very important that they were in a comfortable and safe environment. In some projects the young people did this through a creative process, which enabled them to open up whilst feeling secure. For example, Action for Children used an animation project, as this enabled the young people to express their thoughts and feelings without having to put their face to it.

Campsbourne Come Together and ALOVE - The Salvation Army for a new generation used a Residential in order to take the young people out of their normal environment and therefore make them feel able to express themselves and focus closely upon the project. It was in this setting that they decided upon running a week long children's project for young people and children on the Campsbourne Estate.

Barnardo's used a film and drama project to allow young parents to explore issues around teen pregnancy and parenting. This process created a much more dynamic way of interacting and helped to raise the young people's confidence. By the end of the project the young people were more able to express themselves. As a group, they wanted to move forward and create a DVD magazine around the themes of young parenting in order to help others.

Social and personal development

The funded activities gave the young people opportunities and experiences that they would otherwise not have access to. They were able to learn new skills and gain confidence in their abilities. For example ALOVE - and Campsbourne Come Together brought young people from deprived areas together, in order to deliver their own one week children's club, with each young person taking responsibility for teaching a certain area. They were able to develop their skills by putting on sports events and arts and crafts sessions. One of the leaders on the project felt the young people achieved the most when the leaders stood back and allowed the young people to take control of the project.

Southside Radio, based in South London, used the grant to continue their summer radio show and promote it. The young people involved were able to learn skills in all aspects of radio production and broadcast journalism but they also learnt PR skills. This culminated in 89% of the 175 young people saying that their self esteem had

been raised and 87% felt they had learnt new skills. The young people said:

'I loved it –it's teaching me a lot' – Emmanuel, aged 13

'It helped me be more confident' – Jessica, aged 13

'I really like the fact that you can express yourself freely' – Maraki, aged 16

13% of the young people involved had been excluded from school and these activities helped them to get involved in positive activities, with 95% of those surveyed saying they now felt more involved in the community.

Community Empowerment: Celebrating culture and diversity

Community Empowerment featured as a central aim for a lot of the projects. Poor African Refugee Community Association (PARCA) focused on a community event to bring together the diverse population of Peterborough. There were a number of newly arrived families that took part in the event and they said that their involvement enabled them to feel more a part of the community and less isolated.

Fitzrovia Fashion Fusion from Camden, used the grant to work with a group of young Muslim women to explore their sense of identity through clothing. The group blended different influences from Muslim, Western and African cultures. They used their clothing to send an empowered message, for example one of their t-shirt slogans read, 'Think I'm uneducated, trapped and repressed. Think again!'

Health and Wellbeing

In today's society we are inundated with images of idealised 'beauty'. These impossible ideas of perfection lead young people to increasingly desperate measures in order to achieve these ideals. The Wish Centre created a powerful piece of work on body image with a group of young women and two young men. They worked with young people that self harm and explored how this relates to body image and eating disorders by creating a film called 'What is Perfection?' The young people now want to take forward a local campaign to raise awareness of these issues.

Meaningful relationships with adults

The relationships between the adults and young people were central to all the projects. The children and young people planned and implemented the projects and adults facilitated and supported them in this process. The projects enabled the young people to interact with adults whom they could trust and rely on. This was an important experience for all, especially for those from disadvantaged backgrounds who may have found themselves at odds with adults and traditional figures of authority. These programmes would not have been possible without the development workers, who were integral in creating the space for children and young people to grow and develop.

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 positive engagement and achievement.

Developing involvement and participation

Young people from Skyway Street Leaders were responsible for coming up with the project and running it themselves. They wanted to show what can be done to actively solve problems and create a better environment for all. The young people came from three different boroughs in London in order to work together to deliver a fun day on the North Peckham estate for other children and young people.

“Our work with young people is very practical in the sense that when you ask a young person “how do you address problems in your community”, they will come up with a practical response rather than ‘let’s have a chat’. Our approach, therefore, was to support the young people concerned to develop a project where they did directly deliver an activity that benefitted their younger peers and then discussed the success of this and other previous projects immediately afterwards. This made the discussion and learning from one another more ‘real’.”

Joe Dobson, Fundraiser, SkyWay

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 children and young people.

6. Feedback

The feedback on the grants programmes was overwhelmingly positive. Organisations particularly appreciated the simplicity and ease of the funding process. The grant recipients valued the flexibility, freedom and trust with which they could utilise the funding.

“The flexibility of this scheme has been invaluable in order for this project to be successful. We have to work very flexibly with our young people and often time does not allow us to be able to complete our aims and objectives. This has given the young people we work with the opportunity to try creative activities, build skills and give scope for them to consider arts based career possibilities for the future.”

Louise Thompson, Project Worker, Action for Children

Recipients reported that the application process was straightforward and clear. They also found the flexibility and help provided from staff valuable.

“The online application process was easy to follow and worked well. The application form itself was straightforward and simple to complete. Personal contact on the phone was a great opportunity to go into more detail about the aims of the specific project. Expectations and deadlines were clearly set out. It has been a pleasure to work with the staff at the SGP. The SGP was extremely useful in establishing this project in its formation and developmental phase... I experienced no difficulties. Thank you very much.”

Vanessa Cope, Teenage Pregnancy Advisor, Barnardo's

Feedback from recipients also referenced the fact that they were able to use the grant to train staff and therefore expand their projects to reach more young people whilst maintaining the quality of their service.

The funding was very beneficial to our organisation. Particularly useful was the fact that funding could be used to train staff. This ensures that the project has provided not just a service, but a higher level professional service to those who need it. This also enables the organisation to continue to benefit from the funding in the future, as more young people will access sport and advice on social issues as a result of this funding.

Alaina Bullock, Outreach Coordinator, Nacro

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. The following are just some of the examples of work that will continue to grow following the support provided by this programme.

The Somerset Rural Youth Project created a magazine 'See it, Say it, Change it'. They used the first edition of the magazine to address some of the issues for young people from living in a rural environment. They are now looking to the future and they are hoping to include case studies of communities finding solutions to rural issues. And to offer young people further opportunities such as how to find funding for their own youth projects with ambitions for it to be used as a guide all over the country.

The Together Trust work with children and young people with different emotional, behavioural, and physical difficulties. They used the grant to enable embodiment experiences for these young people, which involved music, dance, and arts and craft projects. Embodiment play is the play that a child engages in during the first two years of their life, as this creates a sense of self and understanding of the external world. For whatever reason, these young people have been denied this important play experience. Both projects gave the young people a new opportunity to express themselves. Since the workshops the staff have continued with this work and expanded on it, for example by using bongos in a 'physio disco'.

The National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (Nacro) used the grant to train five volunteers to expand their rural football programme, in the future they are hoping to grow further and reach more young people. They will work with the local council to identify where there is a need for evening work, based on crime reports and the numbers of young people in each area who are not engaged in employment or training. The trained volunteer staff will then provide sessions in these areas.

8. Conclusion

This review shows the impact that a relatively small amount of money can make within the voluntary and community sector. It is very important to celebrate this work, especially during the current economic challenges and the possibility of reduced funding in the future. These projects show what children and young people are capable of when supported by voluntary and community organisations to explore new opportunities and responsibilities. All the projects were as diverse as the children and young people themselves and yet they are clearly united in raising children and young people's self confidence, skills, sense of self efficacy and achievement; ultimately helping them to use their voice to make a positive difference in their community.

The Speaking Out project is running a third round of the SGP to extend these possibilities to other voluntary and community organisations working with children and young people in England. The next round will focus on how the Voluntary and Community sector can deliver a number of outcomes for young people in an efficient and cost effective way. We will share this new work with the entire sector in order to cascade the learning from the good practice on the ground.

9. Resources

In the current economic climate funding has become even more important to the voluntary and community sector. Therefore the following are links to further funding opportunities.

[Funding Central](#)

A free website for all third sector organisations designed to provide access to thousands of funding and finance opportunities.

[vinspired](#)

Funding for new youth volunteering opportunities in England.

[Mediabox](#)

Mediabox is a fund to enable disadvantaged 13-19 year olds living in England the opportunity to develop and produce creative media projects.

[Participation Works](#)

This website offers information, resources, news and networking around youth participation.

['Defending local grants: resources you can use.' Local Grants Forum. November 2009](#)

Resources to convince councillors, commissioning officers and procurement professionals that grants should continue to be used to fund local organisations.

[Youth Opportunity Fund and Youth Capital Fund](#)

This funding is designed to improve the provision of positive activities for young people, by giving them the power to decide how this funding should be spent in their area.

[Youth in Action – EU Programme](#)

With a total budget of 885 million euros for seven years (2007-2013), this Programme supports a large variety of activities for young people and youth workers encouraging young people to become active citizens.

[Poverty and injustice](#)

Comic Relief's UK Grant Programme aims to bring about positive and lasting change in the lives of poor and disadvantaged people in the UK by investing in work that addresses people's immediate needs as well as tackling the root causes of poverty and injustice.

[Access to Volunteering Fund](#)

The Access to Volunteering Fund Pilot aims to increase the number of disabled people in volunteer positions by breaking down the barriers they currently face when wanting to volunteer.

CSJ Awards

The CSJ Awards recognise and reward effective poverty fighting groups from across the UK.

Access to Volunteering

Access to Volunteering aims to increase the number of disabled people volunteering by providing grants to supporting organisations.

Community Learning Champions Development Fund

A community learning champion promotes the value of learning to others and encourages them to get involved.

Comic Relief - sport

Funding for sports projects that promote positive community change

BBC Children in Need

This funding provides grants for up to three years to properly constituted not for profit organisations working with disadvantaged young people aged 18 or under.

Community Voices

As part of the Media Trust, Community Voices aims to engage and empower communities who feel disadvantaged or isolated with inspiration, confidence, skills, and access to resources and funding to help them find their voice and make it heard, using digital media.

Home Office – violent crime

The Office for Criminal Justice Reform and the Government Equalities Office have joined forces to create a single fund for voluntary sector organisations that provide support to victims of sexual violence and abuse.

BIG Lottery Fund Reaching Communities

At least £100 million a year is to be invested across England by the BIG Lottery Fund in a new improved version of its flagship Reaching Communities programme for each of the next five years.

10. Other briefings

Please follow the links to read the briefing papers:

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](#)

Briefing 18 [Small Grants Programme](#)

Briefing 19 [Healthy Lives, Brighter Futures - Health Strategy](#)

Briefing 20 [Financial capability](#)

Briefing 21 [Education, employment and training](#)

Briefing 22 [Health and wellbeing](#)

Briefing 23 [Community Empowerment](#)

Briefing 24 [Housing and Homelessness](#)

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 Rhiannon Jones, 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 0207833 3319 or email sophie@childrenengland.org.uk.

Appendix: Case studies of the funded projects

Southside Radio – Church Community Projects

Founded in 2005 Southside is a youth-led summer radio station, based in South London, that engages young people in planning, producing and broadcasting live radio shows. The organisation wants to challenge negative stereotypes of young people in the media. Their projects aim to ‘inspire hope’ and ‘motivate ambition’ through ‘...giving quiet people voices.’

Southside used part of their grant to expand their current work, with a promotional tour to encourage other young people to take part in Southside’s projects. The tour involved the use of a double-decker bus and young people distributed the latest issue of Southside magazine which included an ad for the radio station.

Over 175 young people from a diverse range of backgrounds were involved in the radio project itself. Of these 20 young people attended one of four AQA accredited training courses on offer. These courses covered the different aspects of radio production and broadcast journalism.

Through the project the young people were encouraged to engage with the following issues in order to give them more confidence in their own choices: social networking, illegal downloads, sexually explicit text messages, binge drinking. They also explored the relationship between music and violence, youth politics and transition from primary to secondary school.

The project culminated with an awards ceremony where certificates were given to those who had completed their training. These awards included, ‘most committed’, ‘best interview’, and ‘most encouraging’. Southside conducted a survey of the young people, this was completed by 38 young people of these 26% were not in education employment or training (NEET) and 24% struggled in education. The feedback for the project was positive with 95% saying that their experience made them feel more involved in their community and 92% said it had given them more confidence.

For more information contact: Dom Ridout, Project Manager, Church.co.uk Community Projects
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See it, Say it, Change it – Rural Youth magazine – Somerset Rural Youth project

A group of 30 young people from South Somerset worked on a magazine highlighting issues of rural exclusion and ways to address these through developing community based projects. The young people from Stanchester School, Somerset, worked on the project through the summer term and were all aged between 11 – 15.

Of these participants two of the young men had behavioural problems including Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and one young woman had a parent that abused alcohol.

The project gave young people the opportunity to interact with their peers and interview those in a position to affect positive change such as a parish councillor. They were able to get to grips with the local politics and find out what is involved in creating a community based project. They also learnt IT skills, presentation and interview skills, editing and design software.

Through the project the participants had the opportunity to survey other young people on how to improve their area. The young people are now deciding how to move forward, one suggestion was to create a second edition of the magazine this time giving case studies of communities finding solutions to rural issues.

The aim of the magazine was for it to serve as a tool through which young people can identify further opportunities, such as local funding for youth projects. The young people want the publication to be used as an information guide for groups all over the country. The project had positive results such as improving one young boy's self image and helping another to a healthier lifestyle

For more information contact: Annie Diffey, Project Worker, Somerset Rural Youth Project
E:anniediffey@syrp.org.uk

Outer West Gateshead Football Project – Nacro

Nacro used the grant to start a football project in Outer West Gateshead, a rural area. This work has ensured that the Nacro team reach more vulnerable young people in this area, by providing volunteer staff with valuable training and support.

They specifically used the money to train five more volunteers and to support these volunteers by increasing staff hours. The staff helped the volunteers by providing advice and support with any issues that arose regarding behaviour management and social issues.

A total of 44 children and young people have become engaged in sport through the funding. The children and young people live in rural areas and would otherwise not have access to evening activities. The children and young people who have been involved have also received factual advice from Nacro staff and volunteers regarding sexual health, drug and alcohol abuse, housing, benefit application and training opportunities available to them.

Nacro are hoping to expand their football program in Outer West Gateshead by offering more sessions. The team will continue to attend Steering Group meetings with the local council in order to identify where there is a need for evening work, based on crime reports and the numbers of young people in each area who are not engaged in employment or training. The trained volunteer staff will then provide sessions in these areas.

For more information contact: Alaina Bullock, Outreach Coordinator, Nacro
E: alaina.bullock@nacro.org.uk

Young Parents Drama Group – Barnardo's

Barnardo's set up a creative media project for teenage and young parents to explore their experiences of parenthood. The final result was a film that would enable the group to give advice to other young parents. The film also worked to challenge the negative stereotypes of young people and especially young parents.

In total 15 young parents aged between 16 and 22, and 6 of their children were involved over the projects duration. The majority of the young parents involved in the project were living independently or semi-independently, with some being estranged from their families. Only 1 participant was living at their parents' home. All of the participants were not in education, employment or training. Many had not been regular school attenders before becoming parents and had lost confidence in their ability to work as part of a group and to learn new skills.

As the project developed, the group felt that a film and not a live performance would best allow for all the young people to be incorporated in the final piece. The group now wish to take this final product further buy creating a video magazine that can be used a tool for peer education of other young parents. The practitioners realise that in the future they could encourage the more committed and confident members of the group to recruit other young parents; and involve them in further funding bids.

The sessions worked on communication skills, team working and creative skills in drama and filming. The group especially enjoyed the warm up exercises and these were fun and allowed them to relax. The young people felt that their confidence increased and their ability to work effectively as a group. This was measured by their attendance and group outputs. The young people felt able to express themselves and the majority wished to work towards the future aims of the project to produce a DVD video magazine.

For more information contact: Vanessa Cope, Teenage Pregnancy Advisor, Barnardo's

E: vanessa.cope@barnardos.org.uk

Fashion Fusion – Fitzrovia Youth in Action

Fitzrovia Youth in Action Girls Group devised a project to design clothes combining Islamic dress requirements with contemporary fashion. The project culminated in a fashion show as part of the annual Fitzrovia Street Party and Community Dinner.

The group consisted of eight girls between the ages of 16-19 years old, five were of Somali background, two were of Bangladeshi heritage and one had a Pakistani background. The young women decided on a fashion project; this decision came from various discussions and experiences the members of the girls group had around the way they dress. As a group they thought about ways to explore their experiences and their needs and decided that a fashion project could share their experiences with others. Through working with a tailor and a designer, the members of the Girls Group designed and made clothing items inspired by their Muslim religion, culture and their British upbringing.

The young women began with bringing in their own cultural and religious clothes, and discussing elements of the outfits and why they were designed as they were. Between the Bengali clothes and Somali clothes they came up with ideas of fusing them together. They also explored and bought in western clothes and outfits they personally liked and used those to influence their designs.

They decided on 4 different clothing ranges the Abaaya range, the African/Asian Inspiration range, the western mix range and the Bold T-shirts range. The t-shirts included slogans such as, 'Think I'm uneducated, trapped and repressed. Think again!' The Girls group went on to showcase their designs to over 350 people. Whilst presenting their clothes they offered explanations for the inspiration behind them, commenting on the issues that affect them as young British Muslim women.

Through the project all participants received an AQA in Fashion Design. The group felt they gained skills in presentation, event management, design and tailoring. The activity also contributed to heightened community awareness and understanding of cultural identity.

For more information contact: Andre Schott, Director, Fitzrovia Youth in Action
E: Andre.Schott@fya.org.uk

The Journey and Halloween Embodiment Session – The Together Trust

The Together Trust used the grant to create two different projects to provide embodiment play and experiences. Embodiment play is that which a child begins to engage with in the first two years of their life; through this they learn about their physical abilities, limitations and senses. The young people were aged 10 – 25, they had different emotional and behavioural difficulties including, autistic spectrum conditions and complex physical and learning difficulties.

Many of the young people involved had for various reasons missed out on the early experiences of embodiment play. The workshops enabled the group to engage in age appropriate embodiment play. The Journey workshop on 21st Aug 2009 consisted of a day of dance music and art workshops based on the cultures of Brazil, Egypt and West Africa. The art workshop involved making masks from these regions. The music and dance workshops were facilitated by Bang Drum and focused on teaching the young adults to play drums such as the djembe and the dhol. They also learnt traditional dances. The day culminated in a performance of dance and music by the children and young people.

In the Halloween Embodiment Session on 26th October 2009, the young people had the opportunity to make pumpkin lanterns, chocolate apples and bath bombs. There was also a pamper corner with face masks and nail painting. There were sensory trays with items such as rice, lentils and shaving foam and a range of sensory equipment that could be used on the body. They also took part in making sound effects for a scary story.

The Journey workshops enabled embodiment experiences by allowing the children and young adults to get messy through the art workshops. The music provided auditory and tactile stimulation through the music and drumming respectively. The dancing allowed for a better understanding of their bodies. Both projects gave the young people a new opportunity to express themselves.

Since the workshops the some of the staff have extended their experiences of the workshop by including the use of bongos in their 'physio disco'.

For more information contact: Keeley Morris, Play Therapist, The Together Trust

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Street Leaders – Sky Way

The Sky Way project brought together 30 young people from three boroughs to deliver an activity day for other youths on the North Peckham Estate. The young people were from three different youth groups, SkyWay, Ocean Somali Community Association (OSCA) and United AllStars Football Club.

The 30 young men had been trained as Community Sports Leaders; several of the young people achieved the final volunteering part of their Sports Leader Award qualification. The day took place at the United All Stars Football Club; the young people worked together to deliver activities to over 100 other children and young people including cricket, football, athletics, rounders and trampolining.

In the evening there was an awards ceremony for young people who had achieved positive things for their community. This included the young people that had achieved their sports leaders award. The awards were followed by a discussion between the young people around the different project they had undertaken in their respective neighbourhoods. They discussed how they could work together and learn from one another in relation to this work. A summary of this dialogue was written up and distributed to each participating youth group in order to share ideas about projects.

Subsequent to this, there were 3 follow up events held in Burgess Park staffed by the young volunteers from Southwark and Hackney. They delivered community football sessions for 360 primary school children over 3 weeks. They received very positive feedback; the schools which nominated their children to take part in the Burgess Park football coaching sessions were so impressed with the young volunteer coaches in week 1 of the coaching sessions that in weeks 2 and 3 they expressed their disappointment when the professional sports coaches from Fulham Football Club were allocated to their group. For their next project Sky Way hope to recruit more young women as young leaders.

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Speaking Out Warwickshire and Coventry NEETs Conference - WCVYS

The funding was used to put on a conference addressing the issues for young people who are not in education, employment and training (NEET). A small planning group was set up, including workers from WCVYS, WCYP and Warwickshire Youth and Community Service. The group established the main issues they felt were appropriate for the conference.

The youth workers from WCYP and Youth Service talked to young people in their setting, to find out what the real issues were for them. As a result of this, they decided to make film, interviewing young people about their experiences of being NEET and asking them what support and help they need to help them move on. This then led them to deciding that one of the main issues they wanted to focus on was unemployment, particularly in young males aged between 17-19. The young people were involved in the planning and delivery of 3 out of the 4 workshops.

There were 4 workshops, Supporting young parents who are NEET, Supporting young unemployed men, Alternative provision for young people who are NEET and Qualifications framework and promoting positive progression routes. The Conference was attended by 47 adults and 15 young people. 4 of the young people helped to plan and facilitate the workshops, two of whom were also involved in making and appearing in one of the films shown.

Through the project young people gained skills in planning and facilitating workshops. One of the young people, Jasmine said, *"I found the day very rewarding, with lots of contacts that may come in useful to me."* The young people were able to make contributions and see how their input can affect the ways in which people plan services.

WCVYS hope to continue to facilitate conferences on this topic, bringing together wider partners, and encouraging partnership working. They are doing a conference focusing on participation next year and will involve young people in planning and delivery in order to continue learning from this project.

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Irlam and Cadishead Youth (ICY) –Spurgeons

In Irlam and Cadishead, ICY and Spurgeons created a project with young people to look at issues surrounding bullying and self esteem. The young people were referred to the project from local schools and local delivery partnership groups. The young people were aged 11 + from a largely white working class area facing disadvantage through, poor income family breakdown drug and alcohol issues and involvement with statutory services such as Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and youth justice teams.

ICY organised sessions facilitating the young people to mc and record a CD. The group also worked on a photo shoot, designing a CD cover, writing up lyrics and performing. Of the 30 young people involved 14 were taken on a team building weekend in Castleton Derbyshire where they took part in outdoor pursuits, team games and visits to caves and the Buxton show.

Young people completed evaluation forms and they said that the project had helped to raise their self-esteem and confidence. They also felt they became more involved with the organisation and decision making. They developed increased knowledge and understanding of working within a group and learning about various aspects of music and creative arts.

In the future the group would like to make a film, working as a team to identify the themes and issues that are important to them.

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Empowerment project – Campsbourne Come Together (CCT) and ALOVE

CCT in partnership with ALOVE brought together thirteen young people aged 16-18 from the Haringey area. The young people were from a range of backgrounds with the majority being BME. They were involved in an Empowering Communities project on the Campsbourne Estate, from inception to completion. The group decided upon their project (a one week's children's club) and applied for funding. They planned, advertised, delivered and evaluated the project. The purpose of which was to develop leadership and event management skills. The project also focused on fostering communication skills, presentation skills, and team work skills.

The Speaking Out grant was specifically used for a weekend away to Woodrow High House in Buckinghamshire. This enabled them to have a focused workspace outside of their normal environment to provide training, decide the project and achieve the first stages of the planning process. On this weekend they took part in team building activities, a session on presentation skills, support in developing an understanding of the requirements of delivering a project. They also took part in a session on dreams which has been followed in order to support the young people in achieving these.

From this time away the young people decided to deliver a one week children's club during the summer holidays. They produced a required budget for sports event, arts and craft session, and a community day.

One of the leaders on the project felt the young people achieved the most when the leaders stood back and allowed the young people to take control of the project.

The project as a whole enabled the young people to learn skills in time keeping, teamwork, communication, budgeting, interpersonal relations and their confidence. The young people came away from the project with the desire to do something similar again.

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Youth Club - Poor African Refugee Community Association (PARCA)

PARCA is a refugee community organisation set up by refugees and asylum seekers who have been dispersed around the East of England. PARCA was created to help refugees out of poverty and to build a bridges between the diverse communities within Peterborough.

PARCA used the grant to hold their Hot Youth Event as part of their Youth Club, in order to celebrate Refugee Week 2009. The aim of the event was to bring together members of the local Peterborough community including refugees and asylum seekers from different countries as part of an integration and cohesion agenda. The young people recycled materials such as newspapers by making them into clothes to wear for the event. The event was the biggest celebration for Refugee Week 2009 in Peterborough.

This project was also aimed at empowering young people to speak out by building their confidence and self-esteem. The event helped the young people develop their public speaking and organisational skills. The occasion was hosted by two young women, and many other young people participated in the day as dancers and entertainers.

Having brought the community together, PARCA were able to assess the positive impact of their work. There were a number of new families that took part in the event and they said that their involvement in this community event enabled them to feel more included in the community and make new friends in an informal, friendly environment.

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Animal Welfare Residential – Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) Mallydams Wood

RSPCA Mallydams in partnership with Hastings Youth Offending team (YOT) and Sussex Wildlife Trust held a weekend residential. The 9 young people involved were from Hastings, Lewes and Brighton, aged between 12-17 and were all engaged with a YOT team.

The weekend was designed to give young people the chance to learn about animal welfare and to take away practical skills and knowledge that they could apply in everyday life. Staff responded to the interests of the young people and allowed them to spend as much or little time as they liked on the different activities on offer. Young people were given the chance to film what they were doing, interview others and use their artistic skills to create posters that will help spread their experiences after the event itself.

The weekend started with the young people settling in to the residential centre and finding out a bit more about Mallydams and the RSPCA. Then they went outside to the woodland nature reserve and spent the day learning woodland skills such as making fire, campfire cooking, and shelter building. Whilst out in the woods they had the opportunity to learn more about the wildlife living there and how they can help – from making bird feeders to reducing littering. In the evening the group went badger watching and then played a game of manhunt out in the dark – which turned out to be one of the most exciting and popular activities of the weekend as many had never been out in a wood after dark before!

On Sunday the group started out with a recap of the things learned the day before and began to look at the animal welfare issues raised in more detail. They had a cooked breakfast with free range eggs and bacon, before moving on to a variety of games and activities that gave them the chance to learn about wildlife and pet animals and their welfare.

The residential was evaluated using a paper questionnaire, through 'diary room' style interviews on the camcorder and through the YOT staff feedback. This has also given us useful information to take forward to any future courses. 7 of the 12 young people felt they had learnt 'loads' and 4/12 said they would change their behaviour e.g. buying free range eggs.

Throughout the weekend YOT staff and young people filmed the activities and will be making this into a film that the young people can show at their schools and to friends and family. The young people also chose to make posters that would educate others about animal welfare as they were keen to share what they had found out from the weekend and pass on their experiences.

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My Body Not Any Body – The Wish Centre

The Wish Centre - Women's Integrated Services Harrow works for local women and young people to ensure access to services & support for those who need them most. They used the grant to work with a group of young women and men in order to explore the issues surrounding self harm.

Over 1 in 5 teenagers self harm and numbers are growing. This is a health issue often caused by young people trying to cope with the impact of family violence, abuse, neglect or bullying and is linked to issues such as eating disorders and body image.

In this project, a group of eight young self harmers age 14-18 explored the issues and pressures of being a young person with a particular focus on body image and eating disorders. Meeting weekly with intensive holiday project work, they researched the issue and explored personal experiences through a series of creative workshops including spoken word and visual arts (see below). They finished the project by making a film to raise awareness of health issues for young people today called "What is Perfection?". Training on presentation skills enabled one of the group to present the film and the issues to a multi-agency meeting at the Civic Centre as part of White Ribbon Day in November.

The project helped the young self harmers to break through some of the stigma attached to their coping strategy by exploring the issue through visual arts and spoken word and many talked about their eating disorders in depth for the first time.

In terms of the future, the young people involved in the project want to take forward a local campaign to raise awareness of the issues. A shortened version of the film will be shown in schools and local community groups. They are also inviting participants plus a wider group of youth at risk to join a new WISH project which will involve a youth debate at the Civic Centre in March, and the issues raised in this project plus the film will be one of the key areas discussed.

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Birmingham Employability Project - Action for Children

Action for Children has partnered with Birmingham leaving care services and other local partners in order to create opportunities to discuss and identify barriers to young people being able to access education, employment and training. The small group of young people were aged between 14 and 21, and were leaving care.

The young people who were involved in this project had a vast range of abilities and experiences. They may have come into contact with drugs, alcohol, domestic violence and mental health issues. In the group there were young people who have an offending history, which had a huge impact on their employability and was an added obstacle, which in some cases has had a great influence on their choice of future career.

The group chose to use animation as the medium to explore the potential barriers when seeking employment. This creative outlet allowed them to share their thoughts without having to put their face to it. Over a period of three months the young people have had the opportunity to work alongside a professional animator and film maker to produce a short animated film.

The project has had intervals, which has stopped the momentum of the workshops, due to unforeseen circumstances. From this the young people became disinterested and de-motivated. Therefore they learnt early on that the sessions needed to run on a regular basis quite intensively in order for the workshops to be successful.

The young people had the time and space to explore and express their views and experiences of the difficulties in gaining work experience or employment. The leaders felt this to be particularly relevant in today's current economic climate, which they saw as exacerbating an already difficult situation for young people and those leaving care. Through the project young people were able to share ideas and experiences and have the opportunity to educate others in a dynamic and creative way. Those involved on the project felt it gave the young people a sense of achievement which is especially important in gaining the confidence necessary to go out into the jobs market.

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Social Mobility – British Youth Council (BYC)

The BYC activity supported young people from across England, aged 25 and under, to express their opinions on the issues of 'Social Mobility' and 'Skills development and the transition into employment' to Ministers and MPs in Parliament at two meetings of the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Youth Affairs. The funding was specifically used for a consultation meeting with young people to increase their self assurance in debating skills and confidence in the topics.

BYC promoted this opportunity through their Online Action Network members. The Online Action Network is a flexible online way for young people to campaign on issues that affect them. BYC wanted to be able to fund an experience for young individuals who had not experienced an APPG debate in Parliament or who had perhaps not had the opportunity to meet with groups of young people from different backgrounds before.

Young people from BYC met with young people from YMCAs, Foyers, NCVYS National Youth Forum and the Prince's Trust, and worked with them in a 'pre meet' before the meeting itself to devise their own questions on these issues in groups to put to the Ministers. Having the funding to organise a 'pre meet' gave the young people a feeling of ownership, enabling them to have the confidence to put their questions to the Ministers and MPs present

The young people were able to put their own view across but also learn about how policies on social mobility and skills development and the transition into employment impact on others. Lara (18) a participant, spoke about this when discussing her experience of the BYC project,

"This event really informed me about the different lives different young people lead. It highlighted how certain sections of society can have such a different experience of social mobility. The whole experience was so inspiring, particularly meeting with such a diverse range of young people." Lara, 18, London.

BYC then supported the young people involved to communicate their experiences to a wider audience through BYC communications such as their website and e-newsletter the BYC Project. This funded activity has established a model of engaging young people in the APPG of Youth Affairs that BYC will aim to put in place for each of its meeting, depending on funding availability.

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