



growing up in the west midlands

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Regeneration case studies

Social regeneration in action

Four case studies from diverse organisations in the West Midlands, showing how their activities contribute to regeneration and the development of sustainable communities.

Defining social regeneration

Social Regeneration is a term employed to describe any activity that seeks to reverse the trends of social exclusion. It includes activities which tackle the combinations of linked problems including unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, ill health and family breakdown. It also encompasses the exclusion of people from the normal exchanges, practices and rights of society.

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G:up (Growing Up in the West Midlands) is an open regional network of voluntary and community organisations working with children, young people and families.

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Background

“Sustainable communities meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, their children and other users, contribute to a high quality of life and provide opportunity and choice. They achieve this in ways that make effective use of natural resources, enhance the environment, promote social cohesion and inclusion and strengthen economic prosperity.” (Egan Review, page 7)

We think social regeneration is embedded in sustainable communities, so we have chosen to focus on this. Growing Up in the West Midlands commissioned these case studies to:

- Influence regional strategy and policy around regeneration and sustainable communities
- Help build a picture of the contribution the voluntary children’s and youth sector makes
- Connect organisations’ work to the Every Child Matters outcomes and help other groups to do the same

We encouraged the four participating organisations to write things in their own way and in their own words, but to think about how their work relates to the definition of sustainable communities (below) and the Every Child Matters outcomes.

The aim of this was to help other organisations to think about how they can present their work in a way that might help them get funding. It also makes it easier to compare different work going on around the region. By collecting together information from different organisations we can also start to build a campaign to get more recognition of the contribution children and young people and voluntary and community organisations make to communities.

Defining Sustainable Communities

We’ve already done some work with children and young people’s groups around the region and explored the definition of sustainable communities given by the Academy for Sustainable Communities. We found it to be very comprehensive and so did not wish to add to it. We selected the following elements as being relevant to the work of our sector/ areas in which we felt we could demonstrate our influence:

Active, inclusive and safe — fair and tolerant with a strong local culture and other shared community activities.

Well run — with effective and inclusive participation, representation and leadership.

Well connected — with good transport services and communication linking people to jobs, schools, health and other services.

Thriving — with a flourishing and diverse local economy.

Well served — with public, private, community and voluntary services that are appropriate to people's needs and which are accessible to all.

In addition we felt that the following point was of over-arching importance:

Fair for everyone — including those in other communities, now and in the future.

We linked these to Every Child Matters and its five outcomes. As the table overleaf shows, there is a clear overlap.



	Being Healthy	Staying safe	Enjoying & achieving	Making a positive contribution	Achieving economic well-being
Active, inclusive & safe	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Well run			✓	✓	✓
Well connected		✓		✓	✓
Thriving	✓			✓	✓
Well served	✓		✓		✓

Fair for everyone — including those in other communities, now and in the future.



Newcastle Carnival: Measuring what you can't see

Case Study Submitted by: Rebecca Frankenberg, B Arts, North Staffordshire

Part one: Information about the organisation

Name of Organisation	B Arts (Beavers Arts Ltd)
Postcode	ST5 1LG
Type of Organisation	Frontline organisation
What does the organisation do?	B Arts is an independent arts and education charity, founded in 1985, based in North Staffordshire. We have a board of four trustees, a directorate of 3, an admin team of 2 and a worker team of 6. The company works closely and in detail with individuals and communities using creativity and imaginative projects to enable people to engage with and participate fully in life in the UK and Europe. We work with disadvantaged communities, the elderly, young parents, children, displaced people, young people, people facing discrimination and disenfranchisement, people who are artists, people who have no particular interest in the arts- in fact with anyone.
Is it one of the following types of organisations?	Black and minority ethnic organisation Disability organisation Faith based organisation Rural organisation Small community group Social enterprise <i>None of the above - or all of the above? Mixed arts and education project</i>
Area of Operation of Organisation	Local neighbourhood District, borough or unitary Sub Regional/County Regional Multi Regional <i>National (NB We could not find definitions. B Arts operates at all these levels and internationally)</i>
Total income from all sources in last financial year	£ 288,584



Part 2: Case study

Title

Newcastle Carnival Project—Measuring what you can't see

Summary

We have chosen to case study the Newcastle Carnival Project as it offers a snapshot of the ethos of B Arts and how two projects: The Bridge and Get It On, together are embedded in an active commitment to building sustainable communities.

In the Newcastle Carnival Project B Arts works with members of The Bridge, (*see below*), and residents of Knutton Cross Heath, through Get It On (*see below*), in order to create a joint entry to the annual Newcastle Carnival.

The Bridge is an ongoing project that B Arts has been running for 6 years. It works with young refugees and asylum-seekers, from the ages of 13 to 25, in a range of ways.

It is a support base for young people giving them advice and guidance in navigating life in the city, from bus journeys and bank accounts to simply knowing there is someone to talk to. It is a place where skills can be shared, art-works created and qualifications gained; it is a place where people can meet up, celebrate with each other, eat together or just be.

It is a context in which diverse people who share space in the city can (sometimes) share understanding. It is a context that enables each individual to contribute to the group, and, through co-operation with other groups creates a sense of being appreciated by, and connected with, the wider local area.

Knutton Cross Heath is one of the most deprived wards in the North Staffordshire conurbation and is receiving regeneration monies through a Housing Pathfinder programme. Local residents score highly across all of the indices of multiple deprivation and the area is 98% white British.

Through Get It On B Arts has been working with local residents for over 5 years on a range of arts and educational projects, and Sure Start programmes, community celebrations, intergenerational work and youth arts projects. The project has always aimed to promote and celebrate diversity within the area, involving adults from the local day services centre, elders and children in projects. Over the years, the company has built trust and friendships between artists and the residents and are local people's preferred partners for projects ranging from photography to lanterns with elders, children, young people and local volunteers.

Newcastle Carnival, with other B Arts projects, provides a context in which relationships can be built between people, where social cohesion and inclusion can be promoted.



Background/Objectives

All the participants mentioned in this case study have been, in some sense, displaced, even those from the Lower Milehouse Sheltered Housing Unit at Robertson Drive who have been 'living on here' for sixty-plus years. Impoverished 'regeneration' communities have had everything taken away from their lives that matters; industries destroyed, social connections broken, they've been disconnected from the history of their area. The shared experience of working towards and taking part in a community event like Newcastle Carnival starts to rebuild some threads between individuals, the area, a sense of history and a sense of the present and the future. It creates a context in which recognition of shared life experience can take place.

The needs were identified through the people and communities B Arts have met and worked with over 20 years in the area and through the close relationship and awareness of the refugee and asylum-seeker community they have built up over the past 5 years.

Newcastle Carnival Project objectives:

- To bring together and promote social cohesion and inclusion between participating groups of different ages, cultures and backgrounds and the wider community
- To celebrate and promote the culture, diversity, history, talent and vitality of the area
- To build confidence, skills and positive connection to community for the individuals involved
- To create a live work of art

The Bridge have been involved in the Newcastle Carnival for 5 years, and through Get It On, Knutton residents have been involved for the last 4 years.

The planning, preparation, group workshops and sessions for each carnival begin 4 months before the event.

The Bridge is funded by the Neighbourhood Support Fund, Connexions (through PAYP) and the Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund, with other occasional grants.

Get It On is funded by Knutton Cross Heath Pathfinder programme, Arts Council England, Comic Relief/Give It Sum (charitable trust)

Newcastle Carnival has been supported and organised by Newcastle Borough Council.



Policy Areas

We feel the Newcastle Carnival Project relates to all of the key elements of sustainable communities; Active, inclusive, and safe; Well run; Well connected; Thriving; Well served; Fair for everyone.

Below, I have given a detailed description of the ways in which the Carnival promotes inclusion, actively involves and connects participants and the wider community, and through positive identification and recognition promotes a safer community.

Ensuring the Carnival is *inclusive and fair* for everyone is at heart of the project (and the company). I feel this has been fairly well achieved by the way the project is run. Social cohesion does not work by shoving lots of diverse people into the same space. The space needs to be shaped in such a way as to create possibilities of connection and integration.

A focussed relationship with each group was built up prior to the Carnival. Each group had been working closely with one or more worker/ artist from B Arts—so they had a personal link. Workshops and sessions were run with each group to draw out what the Newcastle Carnival and the theme of ‘Home front’ meant to them and how they wanted to express it, creating a space for thoughts to be shared and for individuals and groups to connect in a personal way and put their own mark on the event. That way each group was an active part of the process, when they came together on Carnival day instead of being daunted by the large scale of the event, and all the other participants, they were secure enough in their own inclusion to see how their contribution fitted into the whole and were interested in how others had connected themselves and their expertise to the event.

Those who were not able to come to any sessions prior to the day were mostly included into the section of their choice. Anyone who did not want to actually be in the procession was encouraged to take part in another way. For example one young person, who felt a bit excluded by not having a clear pre-prepared role and did not want to join in the procession as a result, was encouraged to take digital pictures of the event instead. Not only did he take some fantastic pictures that the whole group greatly enjoyed watching together, but he also discovered how good at photography he was and has subsequently started working towards OCN accredited photography during Bridge sessions.

Of course a project like the Carnival has to be *well-run* in a more practical sense. The event itself needs to be very well organised and co-ordinated.

The project also meets all of the Every Child Matters Outcomes. I hope some of the ways in which it promotes and supports the young people staying safe, enjoying and achieving and making a positive contribution are clear.

The vitality the event gives to the area, the widening of experience, confidence and positive connections it gives to the people involved, and the skills developed from wickerwork and design to negotiation, dance and communication all contribute to the potential economic well being of the young people involved and the wider community.

All B Arts projects are run to try and promote the health of the participants and the wider community, through concrete actions like ensuring there is always plenty of healthy food available for participants during sessions and workshops, to the well-documented health benefits of building threads between people.



Location

The Bridge works with refugees and asylum-seekers living in North Staffordshire. Like elsewhere they tend to be housed in the most disadvantaged/ poorest areas of one of the disadvantaged/ poorest regions in the country.

Get It On participants are mostly from the Knutton Cross Heath neighbourhood.

North Staffordshire scores very highly across all indices of deprivation. The area is poor in many senses; residents have low levels of educational attainment, low aspirations, poor self image and low levels of civic pride. Communities are tight knit, inwardly focussed and tribal. There is little opportunity for access to positive cultural, social or leisure time activities, little visual stimulation in the built environment, and the predominant local culture is to encourage complacency, amateurism, the status quo, and mediocrity.

“You dunna want to be too clever.”

Who was involved?

B Arts: artists, leading the project, community engagement and development and creative workshops

Newcastle Borough Council: funding for carnival and organising Newcastle Carnival event

Bridge members: participating in workshops

Knutton Community Centre volunteers; promoting and taking part in workshops, organising after event celebration

Knutton Youth Teens: taking part in carnival

Newcastle Sure Start- staff supporting participants plus *Creative Parents Creative Children* project participants and funding for some workshops

Robertson Drive Sheltered Housing/ Aspire Housing: tenants who participated in the project, Aspire resourced worker time to support tenants to attend and transport for tenants

Arts Council England Connexions, NSF, Diana Princess of Wales, Knutton Cross Heath

Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder: funding



Implementation

Measuring what you can't see...

What you do see...

The room is buzzing. The theme is 'The home-front'. Along one side of the wall, are diagrams indicating the different sections of the procession; farm section, lines of cabbages made by children from Knutton and Cross Heath, the band, dancing bananas, tea-party... In one corner of the room Muriel demonstrates to the other Robertson Drive crowd (an older community from a pre-fab regeneration area of Cross Heath) how to tie a proper war-time headscarf, Dalia (a Bridge-member from Kurdistan) piles her younger sister's dark curls into a piece of flowery cloth, and transforms her into a war-time land-girl (well sort-of).

Meanwhile the Sure Start mums are glamming-up, pillar-box lips and stylish red-polka dot headscarves, tying peace doves and ribbon to the pushchairs of their little ones, along with dads and older children. Outside a group of Bridge boys swirl their flags, Aref (a Bridge-member from Afghanistan) gets quite an audience as Knutton-ites, Iranians, Kurds... gather at the window to watch his graceful, swooping circles. Two children from Knutton come in and want to know where their tractor is, the father of a young Bridge member from Vietnam who helped paint the tractor-wheels shows them... A group laughs at Peter-jan (dear) as he, and the rest of the dancing banana group, is 'yellowed up'...

Land-girls, cabbages, a tractor, dancing bananas, drummers, flag-wavers and one giant carrot take to the streets of Newcastle-Under-Lyme brandishing the banners, huge wicker-work models of 40s civilians, and that famous one of a girl and sailor kissing, that over the preceding weeks they have helped to make.

It is the day of the carnival. "It's my day"

8 hours later the Bridge leave 'their base' and arrive at the usually all-white Knutton Community Centre, the embracing hosts of the after carnival party. Halal food is barbequed. Football is played. 'Simply the Best' is fantastically performed on the karaoke. Everyone takes to the dance floor. It is the evening of the carnival. "We come out of our boxes"



Evaluation

Measuring what you can't see.

The Newcastle Carnival is an Event; it's memorable. It's 'officially' recognised as such by its inclusion in the local press and on signal radio. Throughout the day people are sharing space, experience, sense of achievement, atmosphere; a shared identity with the place and each other as they share and create and celebrate it on that day.

Each part of the procession builds into a big whole — comes together to give the big picture. And it's impressive. Everyone is part of something which looks good, which makes people happy, that people come to watch, that they ask their friends and family to come and watch. Something they can be proud of. It gives the group and individuals the pride and recognition of a public performance; they are contributing to a shared sense of civic pride and celebration. Groups of young people who are normally marginalized find themselves the centre of an appreciative local audience.

This has an immediate inclusive and connecting impact that makes them safer and also builds long-term inclusive and connecting effects. This was powerfully brought home to me recently; I was chatting with a (white, 'Stokey') taxi-driver when the subject of asylum seekers came up; instead of saying any of the negatives I was expecting he smilingly told me, "There's some take part in Newcastle Carnival you know and they're dead good at drumming...I think they might be Maori some of them." You don't just tackle racism by tackling racism.

The carnival (and any community event that captures people's imagination) creates a shared positive sense of identifying with the area; That's no longer just a street, that's where we wait to start the procession, that's where that little girl dropped her ice-cream when she saw the dancing bananas, that's where I started to get tired; that's where I watched the procession. Occupying an area with positive memories and connections regenerates individuals' and communities' 'placement', their sense of connection between their lived experience and the environment they live in, this forges sustainable communities. It creates something they can look back on and talk about with others. This vital connection is reinforced when following the actual procession everyone involved comes back and eats together, looks at photos of the procession and compares notes. There is almost a family atmosphere.

It creates a sense of belonging to and generating a local tradition both outside the group, we're taking part in the/ our/ a carnival that's been going for 30 years and creates traditions within the group to be revisited each year. What giant costume will William make this time?

The project is innovative in that it resists the normal boundaries that exist physically and culturally between people of very different ages, backgrounds and cultures (boundaries that are often reinforced by funding divisions). It is also innovative in its flexibility, taking workshops to groups and communities both in physical terms and in enabling groups to shape their take on the theme. The diverse range of people contributing to the carnival and combined breadth of experience means that the 'take' on the council-supplied theme is always imaginative and highly innovative.

Throughout this case study I have tried to draw out the benefits of the project that cannot be easily summarised as a list (measuring what you can't see) and how they relate to sustainable communities and Every Child Matters. It is quite hard for the soft outcomes I have described to be evaluated by an external body. The benefits I have tried to indicate have come from my own and others observations of the individual people involved and the wider community before, during and after the carnival, my own and other workers experience of the carnival and conversation with participants about their own experience and interpretation.



Challenges

Some racial tensions have been experienced during past Carnivals where a white participant made racist comments to another participant. This was resolved by the intervention of workers from all partners, including positive advice and support given by a Knutton Community Centre volunteer who had been provoked in the past into assaulting someone.

Misunderstandings due to language barriers and differing cultural customs sometimes arise but are usually redressed and learnt from.

Engaging some individuals / groups who lack confidence in themselves, the area, or any actual event materialising is often a challenge but one which we have overcome. The lack of confidence is often in the funders or the organisations that are perceived to have the power over people's lives (Local Council etc).

It's hard work (and a bit tense) pulling so many different strings together...but the result is worth it. Having an experienced artist as over-all director of the event and point of contact, enables groups and individuals to make sense of their contribution and to be part of something they know is going to work as a whole.

There's a twist in the tail though: the Council has cancelled this year's carnival, citing police costs and the need to spread their pitiful events budget across a longer summer period. Some of us suspect the new licensing laws have played a part, too. It's an unpopular decision with the public, but, well, we live in a democracy, so the elected members can do what they want.

Funding has also ended for the Get It On programme, which has only now really begun to have an effect locally, and Sure Start monies available for creative work with the same communities ends in March 2007, and the contract we have with them has been halve in value for 2006/07.

For whatever reason, Newcastle, North Staffordshire and some groups of people who were working towards understanding each other will be a little poorer this year. Which makes us all poorer.

Key Learning Points

Work on a communal public project like the carnival is powerful in many ways; it creates a context where people can come together in a shared endeavour that promotes understanding, fellow-feeling, a sense of self worth and communal pride.

Since the carnival was 'performed' in public before a local audience it was challenging and exhilarating for the participants and forged positive links with the local area and community that in itself contributes to building an appreciative environment for diversity.

Threads between individuals need to be encouraged to grow; the contact hypothesis is not enough. Some ways that have worked for us are:

- Building relations with individuals and groups before plunging them all in together
- Public civic community events can create a unifying buzz especially if everyone is contributing to a whole—give people space to develop their own way of taking part
- Costumes, imaginative live artworks are enjoyable, and get people talking
- Sharing food, reinforcing shared experience by looking at photos together, dancing all make social cohesion that little bit easier
- Sharing venues and showing willingness to branch out to other venues acknowledges the guts and commitment shown by the other groups coming out of their comfort-zones. It allows a mutual, very human, host/guest exchange to take place, which really creates a bond between groups.

Establish some routes for sustainable funding- not the easiest of learning points, and one which we have not currently succeeded with, however essential for continuation of the work and sustaining the communities.

Contacts

This article: Rebecca Frankenberg

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Resources and Documents

B Arts has a limited number of training resources relating to this work- we have not had the funding to develop them particularly for this type of multi-cultural project.

We will have an evaluation/ documentation publication available in 2006/07 about our work on The Bridge, funded by Diana Princess of Wales Memorial Fund.

However, Arts Council England can provide support, especially through the En Route National Carnival Network for carnival projects.





Central African Refugees Peace building Project

Case Study Submitted by: Central African Development Action (CADA)

Part one: Information about the organisation

Name of Organisation	CENTRAL AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT ACTION
Postcode	B7 4JH
Type of Organisation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Frontline organisation
What does the organisation do?	Bring together refugees and asylum seekers from the Central African region to rebuild their cross-cultural and cross-ethnic relationships that were broken during conflicts and wars, in order to integrate the UK society peacefully. - Beneficiaries are mainly Congolese, Rwandans, Burundians, Central African Republic, and Angolans.
Is it one of the following types of organisations?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Black and minority ethnic organisation <input type="checkbox"/> Disability organisation <input type="checkbox"/> Faith based organisation <input type="checkbox"/> Rural organisation <input type="checkbox"/> Small community group <input type="checkbox"/> Social enterprise <input type="checkbox"/> None of the above
Area of Operation of Organisation	Regional
Total income from all sources in last financial year	£ 28,993.65

Part 2: Case study

Title

Central African Refugees Peace Building Project

Summary

The project was initiated to get refugees from the Great Lakes Region together to work towards peace building and avoid transferring their hatred to their children, and get the children from Angola, Congo, Rwanda and Burundi involved in football activities and outings so that they can learn how to live together without fear.

The activities comprise a series of meetings and conflict resolution workshops, bringing together people from different backgrounds, who are divided by conflict and don't normally interact with each other, to work towards practical solutions. This was essential development to enable children from the different communities to come together and take part in shared activities. Prior to the intervention Rwandan and Burundian Children were not participating alongside the Congolese children.

This work contributes to regeneration and the development of sustainable communities through supporting parents to stop parents transferring hatred to their children and get children from conflict communities to start engaging with others through activities. A community where people live in fear of their neighbours and of pending conflict is neither safe, nor sustainable.

Because these people hated one another as their countries were in conflict and relatives from all sides was killed, so they blame each other. Once in England they are still living with their grievances and hatred and started avoiding their children to get a long with others.

These needs were identified during our one to one talks with parents and children, and also during our previous activities where we were unable to work with children from across the three communities.

Background/Objectives

The work was crucial as to avoid refugees to incubate their anger and hatred with them, which could make them become future perpetrators of violence in the UK.

The focus groups of parents went on over 3 months and the activities of the children still running since 2005. This provided us with evidence of the need for the work.

The parent' activities were funded by Allen Lane Foundation and the children's by the Children Local Network Fund and the Henry Smith Foundation.

People moved away from conflict but brought it here with them. They still live in fear of each other and in conflict.

We wanted people to feel a sense of relief and to be able to rebuild connections with other people.

The aim was to make communities safer for families including children, but it was felt that the initial work needed to be targeted at parents.

We wanted to work beyond the Congolese community, to include children and young people from Rwanda and Burundi in our activities (art, music and sport)





Policy Areas

Which of the key elements of sustainable communities does the work relate to? inclusive and safe; Well connected

Which outcomes of Every Child Matters does the work relate to? Staying safe

Location

The project included people from across the city of Birmingham and surrounding conurbation. The city has diverse cultures and a large refugee population. People who have been in conflict are now housed close to each other and have little choice over where they live. This work was essential so that they didn't need to live in fear of their neighbours.

Who was involved?

Parents and children from the Rwandan Community, the Burundian Community and the Congolese Community

Implementation

The idea of the project was marketed among the above communities and those who were interested in peace registered their interests. One lady was responsible of the focus group with the remit of booking the venue, briefing participating about the work of the day, helping participant to make ground rules, conducting discussions, avoiding direct attack, making sure people achieve positive outcomes. She is herself from the conflict zone and has direct experience of conflict and canspeak a common language shared by the conflicting communities. Her local knowledge and past experience put her in a good position to encourage people to overcome their differences and to work together towards a better future.

This was the first initiative of this kind for refugees in Birmingham and participants did appreciate it. We are looking towards developing a "Refugees Coalition for Peace" with the Funding that Commission of Racial Equality has promised to give us this year. We are hoping to involve others groups such as Iraqis and Kurdish, Ethiopians and Eritrean, and Somalis.



Evaluation

This project has brought positive outcomes amongst the above communities:
 One Rwandan Lady has volunteer to work with Congolese in order to promote peaceful living;
 Rwandans, Burundians and Congolese children have been involved in group activities and this has built a lot ties amongst children. The connection amongst children has brought parents from different communities together.
 Parents and children have said that they don't fear anymore to live with others.
 Parents demanded that more activities should be initiated around peace building.
 A Sustainable community is where people live in peace, where there is inclusion and safety for everyone, and where people are better connected.
 People have felt a great relief after participating and admitted that before talking part they feared that the same conflict they had experienced in their own countries could be repeated here.
 Participants said this was the first opportunity they had had to reflect on these issues and move forward
 Strong ties have been built between participating families – children are going to sleep over at houses of families from other communities
 The work began with people who were more open to reconciliation and building on that success progressed to include more people. They became agents for change
 People are now socialising together in public places in the city more than before.
 The desire to build a refugee coalition for peace, where peace-minded refugees will work within their own communities to promote the culture of peace and reconciliation. This will share this idea nationally.

Challenges

The main challenge that exist is to get those who still being reluctant to forgive and reconcile with others, to move towards developing a culture of peace and reconciliation.
 Some people wanted to fight and were aggressive in meetings, but the issue was looked at in the big picture as a shared problem, rather than as a collection of individual problems
 People from all sides were encouraged to express their views, but clear ground rules were set by the group to avoid clashes
 It would not have been possible to bring together children from these different communities because of the fear held by parents. Through this conflict resolution we are now able to work with children from all communities and bring them together.

Key Learning Points

Participants have learned that people are different and that conflict can be transform into positive outcomes rather negative ones.
 Children should enjoy life, and grow in a safe society and not to engage them into conflicts

Contacts

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Resources and Documents

Resources and documents, useful to other bodies undertaking a similar project – for example, service level agreements:

We used “Working to Live Together: Building Skills, Values and Attitudes for the 21st Century” by Margaret Sinclair, Unesco 2004.





First Class Youth Network

Case study submitted by Nathan Dennis

Part one: Information about the organisation

Name of Organisation	First Class Youth Network
Postcode	B21 9BN
Type of Organisation	Frontline organisation
What does the organisation do?	FCYN provides a service to young people between the ages of 13-25, predominantly within the West Midlands. FCYN delivers events for young people in the form of debate shows/youth forums; provides mentoring sessions on a one to one and group basis and acts as a signposting agency by referring young people to other organisations within the network, who are able to offer services to individual young people, based on specific needs.
Is it one of the following types of organisations? <i>Tick all that apply</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Black and minority ethnic organisation <input type="checkbox"/> Disability organisation <input type="checkbox"/> Faith based organisation <input type="checkbox"/> Rural organisation <input type="checkbox"/> Small community group <input type="checkbox"/> Social enterprise <input type="checkbox"/> None of the above
Area of Operation of Organisation <i>Tick ONE only</i> <i>See section 3 for definitions</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Local neighbourhood <input type="checkbox"/> District, borough or unitary <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sub Regional/County <input type="checkbox"/> Regional <input type="checkbox"/> Multi Regional <input type="checkbox"/> National
Total income from all sources in last financial year	£8,415.00



Part 2: Case study

Title

First Class Youth Network

Summary

First Class Youth Network was birthed in 2004, as a result of five, young enthusiastic people combining their ideas, passion and skills. The five founder members – Leon Moses, Nathan Dennis, Melissa Shervington, Nkrumah Sinclair and Joanna Grant all derive from inner city areas within Birmingham and all have a personal testimony to share with young people, as an inspiration to change their lifestyles and mind sets. Each founder member has a strong passion to create a positive change for young people, who are growing up in disadvantaged environments – living ‘the struggle’.

Based on personal positive and negative experiences gained by all five individuals, throughout their personal journeys in life, each person felt empowered and able to engage with young people, in order to share these experiences and help them to identify better lifestyles for themselves. Being young certainly was and still is an advantage, in terms of being able to relate to other young people and identify with their personal needs and desires.

As a result of combined ideas and visions within different capacities, the five founders decided to set up an organisation and named it ‘First Class Youth Network’...

FCYN makes initial contact with young people via the events ‘The Struggle Debate Shows’, which are delivered on a bi-monthly basis. These events provide young people with the opportunity to collectively unite and discuss issues, which they feel are affecting them, within an open forum. Each debate show has a significant topic (e.g. teenage pregnancy). Issues such as discriminatory behaviour and social exclusion are addressed and awareness is raised within the young people, in a positive manner. The provision of these events meets the needs of young people, particularly deriving from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds.

Some of the outcomes achieved as a result of these debate shows are as follows: -

- Barriers faced by young BME people on a daily basis are effectively broken
- Young people are able to network and improve upon their social skills
- Young people are able to express their views and feelings, which are valued

Following the debate shows, young people are given the opportunity to apply for membership within FCYN, which then allows them to access further services and benefit from mentoring sessions and accessing signposting services. This enables the young people to identify their personal needs and develop their personal skills into a positive future. FCYN also operates an outreaching service, whereby a team of volunteers will go out into the local communities and engage with young people, when distributing promotional material for an event, for example.

As a result, the BME community in particular benefits, due to an increase in young BME people addressing social exclusion, amongst other negative issues affecting the community, and promoting community cohesion - with an aim to developing the community into a more sustainable position, whereby this best practice can be duplicated and continue to grow. The services, which FCYN provides, are a vehicle to social regeneration, as positive initiatives within the community are highlighted and developed as an ongoing practice.



Background/Objectives:

FCYN carried out an immense amount of research, before becoming an active organisation, in terms of service delivery. It was clear that there was and still is a need for young BME people to be provided with more opportunities and made aware of what services they are able to access in order to create a more positive future for themselves and their peers.

Research, such as the following was obtained – in the form of facts and figures, as hard evidence to demonstrate the need for the work carried out by FCYN: -

“Ethnic minorities make up 5 percent of the population but 19 percent of the prison population. If you are from an ethnic minority you are four times more likely to be excluded from school, and will earn £129 less a month than a white person with equivalent qualifications.”

“A growing amount of young black people give up and turn to crime, due to poverty, deprivation, and constantly being shown what they feel they cannot achieve. Many young BME people are alienated from control over their lives. When youth unemployment falls, youth crime falls. Black youth suffer 40 percent unemployment.”

“When people have alternatives, less turn to crime, but the alternatives are constantly being prohibited by people in power, with tuition fees, for example.”

A new generation of young people is growing faster than ever before. They are facing new problems and they need new solutions. They do not want to be treated like children but yet they do not have access to the world of adults. As a result, they are ‘caught in the middle’ - the only group in society without places of their own or a real active voice within the community.

The main objective for First Class Youth Network is to tackle these issues on behalf of young people, providing them with a voice and enabling their voices to be heard & recognised. In order to achieve this effectively, partnership working is essential, which is why FCYN aim to create the largest network of organisations offering a variety of positive services and activities for young people. This will in turn, open doors to new opportunities for young people, enabling them to have a more positive future.

FCYN have actively been providing a service to young people since June 2005, on an ongoing basis.

FCYN has received minimal funding in order to achieve this, in the form of small grants.

Policy Areas

FCYN aim to work in line with Government policies and agendas, in order to form partnership working with a view to obtaining better results and sustainability within the services provided. FCYN have worked closely with Birmingham’s Youth Service, who has effectively engaged with many young people as a result.

In respect of the above policy areas, capacity building, service delivery, workforce development and partnership agreement are the most applicable in relation to FCYN’s work.

The work delivered by FCYN relates to each key element of sustainable communities and each aspect of Every Child Matters is also taken into consideration – these outcomes are addressed closely, due to the Green Paper identifying them as the key areas to improve upon, in order to create a better change for young people.

FCYN constantly consults with young people, with a view to exploring their views on the above policy areas, the Every Child Matters outcomes in particular – the feedback gained, whether positive or negative, is then fed back to the local and regional authorities, in order for them to gain an insight into the results of their decision making around these key elements and outcomes.



Location

The events (debate shows) provided by FCYN are delivered within central locations, i.e. Birmingham city centre – due to the need to utilise suitable venues, within a neutral environment.

The focal and accessing point for FCYN is currently within two areas of Birmingham – Handsworth & Newtown. However, due to the needs and requirements of the young people within Birmingham, FCYN strive to engage with young people within their own environments, via the outreaching service. There is not an area within Birmingham, which FCYN will not enter, in order to effectively engage and provide a quality service.

The majority of the young people who currently access services from FCYN, reside in socially deprived areas, particularly within inner city areas, such as Newtown, Hockley, Handsworth, Nechells etc. The rates of unemployment are significantly higher within these areas, which in turn has a negative effect on many other social issues, such as crime, anti social behaviour etc. The condition of housing is generally poorer and of a bad condition within these areas, predominantly being Local Authority and Registered Social Landlord stock. There are many families with absent fathers, suffering emotionally and physically, depending on Government benefits which can also have a negative affect and act as a social 'trap' in terms of being able to 'break free' from the cycle and social trend and creating a better, independent lifestyle.

Many of these issues around social deprivation clearly have a negative affect upon many young people growing up within these types of environment, who are attracted to crime as an escape mechanism, in the hope of achieving a better lifestyle.

People who work within these areas are generally from a working class background and have jobs such as factory work, due to their being a lack of opportunity around education and employment. These issues are slowly being addressed, by Government initiatives such as 'Pertemps' being put into place, although many people are still not aware of what help and support is available, FCYN strive to create this awareness amongst young people.



Who was involved?

FCYN currently consists of nine main members of staff within a hierarchy structure and approximately 27 volunteers. Other external members of staff are also involved during different aspects of the service delivery.

Each person who has direct involvement in the service delivery of FCYN, whether it be of a management position or general team work at events, are all between the ages of 14-25 and derive from BME backgrounds.

There are various departments within the organisation, ie Operations - Outreach & Entertainment, Administration, Mentoring, Finance, Policy & Procedures (HR), Motivational & Development and Marketing. Each department has its own manager, all of which of overseen by the Chief Executive – within the hierarchy structure. A team of volunteers have generic roles mainly within the Outreach, Mentoring and Admin departments. These young people within the volunteer's team share the vision of FCYN and are all trained accordingly.

FCYN do not currently have any formal partners, although work is frequently carried out through partnership involvement, with organisations such as: -

- WIN – working in neighbourhoods
- Newstlye Radio
- Disarm Trust



Implementation

As described above, FCYN offers services on an ongoing basis, provision of events being the initial and focal point, in terms of capacity building and effective engagement with young, disadvantaged people in particular who live within deprived areas throughout Birmingham.

Outreaching and mentoring has also proved to be an effective tool for engaging with young people, delivered by young people in particular as it has become clear that young people listen to other young people in particular, whom they feel that they can relate to more effectively and share similar experiences and build relationships with. The difference being, in these situations, is that the young people who are outreaching and peer mentoring other young people, have already made positive changes to their lives and are able to share this with other young people - mainly in the form of personal testimonies, in some cases acting as role models for other young people. This encourages young people who are leading destructive lifestyles to identify a positive element within themselves and with the help and support of their peer mentor, work to change their lives for the better and transform.

The conditions attached to the provision of receiving small grants were all achieved, in terms of effectively engaging with and encouraging cohesion amongst young people, with a view to breaking down social barriers amongst them and demonstrating employment and training opportunities. These were achieved through the delivery of the youth debate shows, which are completely innovative within themselves. The debate shows are designed and delivered by young people, therefore, the entire format for the events are completely geared towards meeting the needs of the young people – other attractive elements such as entertainment in the form of singing, drama, comedy, dance etc are all incorporated into the events and various giveaways are provided throughout the events, such as FCYN pens, bags, sweets, music CDs with local talent etc. The events are both educational and enjoyable for all, within a positive, innovative and energetic environment.

The events delivered by FCYN are unique, due to the fact that there are not any other facilities within Birmingham, where young people can collectively unite and receive positive information in such an innovative way. Many young people attend these events for a variety of reasons, whether it be to socialise, enjoy the entertainment, gain knowledge, have fun etc – however, the majority of these attendees leave the events having gained a positive feature, to varying degrees. A positive seed, however small or large, is planted in each young person's mind, with the potential to grow. As facilitators and organisers of the events, every event is delivered with meaning and values, based upon the key focus of 'empowering the youth'.

FCYN also has an highly innovative website www.fcyn.co.uk, which many young people access and utilise on a regular basis – where they can obtain information on forthcoming events, access the gallery of previous events, enter to form and chat with other users etc.

Initial potential problems, in terms of engaging with young people and encouraging them to attend the events, were quickly overcome – by using effective outreach and promotional strategies. The events were promoted in an effective way, using bright, glossy flyers, 'catchy' radio advertisements and general word of mouth – which all proved to be highly effective methods of promotion, measured by the turnout of young people at each event.



Evaluation

As a result of the combined services, which FCYN have provided to date, a database of approximately 900 FCYN members exists. All of these young people, deriving from all areas of Birmingham have signed up to become an FCYN member, in order to gain the benefits on offer. This growing amount of young people continually receive mail outs, updating them on forthcoming events and newsletters, keeping them informed of what FCYN have been doing and plan to do as an organisation, as well as benefiting from discounted rates at events.

Benefits achieved by FCYN have been realised on an ongoing and organic basis, through general engagement with a growing amount of young people. They are evaluated through reports which are compiled after each event delivered, as well as on a monthly basis through internal departments of the organisation, for example, statistics within the Outreach department show that a growing number of young people are being engaged with on a monthly basis, many of whom have expressed an interest in becoming more involved within FCYN as an organisation.

Many of the young people who originally expressed an interest in terms of becoming more involved with FCYN via the events, are now registered volunteers and have a direct impact and influence on the service delivery of the organisation. Many of these young people's lives have been transformed since joining FCYN, they feel that they are a part of something positive, which they enjoy as it brings about a sense of self-satisfaction and achievement.

These young people have benefited from accredited training and self-development workshops, which are skills for life and can be used to benefit others.

The changes achieved by these young people are very apparent and in turn meets the objectives of the organisation, as young people's lives have been transformed, which acts as an ongoing message for other young people within the community as these volunteers then become role models for them.

Evaluations have been carried out by an external body, at each event, the outcomes of which are incorporated into reports and recommendations made by the evaluator are taken into consideration, when planning the following events.

All young people who attend the events are also encouraged to complete an evaluation questionnaire, in order to gain feedback and suggestions from them for future areas of improvement.

A major benefit which has been achieved by FCYN on an ongoing basis, is the fact that the BME community – young people in particular are becoming more aware of and understanding the negative impacts of social deprivation and the importance of working towards sustainability within their community – as a result of the work carried out by FCYN, the debate shows in particular. Raising awareness is the key starting point towards achieving a permanent, positive change for the future. These benefits are achieved in conjunction with addressing the sustainable communities definition and many of the outcomes of Every Child Matters are addressed through the process of achieving these benefits.

In relation to the 'sustainable communities definition' – FCYN contributes well to the 'active, inclusive and safe' segment in particular as the work carried out by FCYN on a daily basis promotes this message to young people. FCYN continues to encourage young people to become more active within their communities; by undertaking community based voluntary work or training for example. Young people are also encouraged to stay safe in many aspects, whether it be in relation to health and general well being and then demonstrating this to other young people as an ongoing message. FCYN also demonstrates the 'well run' aspect of the definition, due to continually engaging with young people and participating in community based initiatives, representing young people and advocating their needs, demonstrating leadership skills in the process.



In relation to 'Every Child Matters', FCYN does hit each outcome, yet the work achieved is predominant within the 'Enjoying & Achieving' and 'Making a Positive Contribution' elements. Through positive resources and information, FCYN encourages all services users (young people) to identify an element of their lives whereby they can make improvements and create a change – enjoying and achieving being a key aspect of this process. Every staff member of FCYN makes a positive contribution, measured by all aspects of the work delivered, as all is done on a voluntary basis, with an aim to building a more sustainable community.

Challenges

Engaging with the 'hard to reach' young people has proved to be a challenge, as many of these young people need much more than general outreach and service provision, in terms of support – with regards to what FCYN can offer. Many of these young people have serious underlying issues, which may affect them both mentally and emotionally, yet they are unaware of how to deal with these issues and break free from their mental state. FCYN feel that these young people require intense support, in the form of counselling, in order to take them to the stage where they are able to progress independently, with some support from FCYN. In order to achieve this, FCYN needs to form strong working partnerships and maintain effective referral systems with external statutory agencies, such as the NHS and counselling services, focussing on having an impact on young BME people in particular, as a client group – by delivering workshops, as an example.

Key Learning Points

The major key learning points, in respect of effective engagement with young people, is the fact that young people engage with who they can relate to – i.e. young people with similar backgrounds and experiences.

It has become apparent, when delivering events and undertaking consultation methods amongst young people, they too must benefit – this can be achieved by making the events more innovative and desirable for them to attend and enjoy the event, which then provokes them to contribute to discussion and voice their opinion.

Change within communities begins with raising awareness and creating an understanding of the underlying issues, which are having a negative affect upon young people and society as a whole. Effective solutions can then be identified and developed further.

Contacts

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Resources and Documents

The website www.fcyn.co.uk can provide further information.





Honeybourne Youth Club

Case study submitted by Angela Herbert

Part one: Information about the organisation

Name of Organisation	Honeybourne Youth Club
Postcode	c/o WR11 7XU
Type of Organisation	Frontline organisation Voluntary organisation
What does the organisation do?	We currently run a youth club for 11 – 17 year olds inclusive for one day a week. We organise trips, band nights, holiday activities both educational and fun and work with a local uniformed group (Scouts) to provide activities to keep the youth interested.
Is it one of the following types of organisations?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Rural organisation ✓ Small community group
Area of Operation of Organisation <i>Tick ONE only</i> <i>See section 3 for definitions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Local neighbourhood
Total income from all sources in last financial year	£



Part 2: Case study

Title

Honeybourne Youth Club/drop in centre at The Gate Inn

Summary

Two of the club committee members are also involved in producing a Village Action Plan and one of the main areas highlighted by the returned questionnaires was the massive lack of facilities for the youth in the village. The local primary school provided after school activities for those up to middle school age but after that there was nothing. There is not even a play area for the over 5's in the area of the village with the highest proportion of this age group.

In order to begin addressing this identified need we organised a committee to open a youth club one night a week from 7.30pm to 10pm. We regularly have attendances of 30 – 40 youngsters, although it can drop some weeks to as few as 10. We provide activities such as darts, table tennis, uni-hockey, pool (3 tables – 1 full sized, 2 smaller ones), air hockey table, games consoles, plus many others each week.

In addition we organise trips out including ice-skating, Alton Towers, paintballing, and @Bristol and have also arranged for an evening with the local Scouts group using their shooting range and also a Youth Hostelling residential trip with the Do It 4 Real activities.

We have also organised holiday activities where we open the village hall for the day as a drop in centre. We had a day of craft activities where the youth had the opportunity to try mosaics, calligraphy, glass painting, ceramic painting, plus many other arts and crafts projects. They also had the opportunity to use a potter's wheel.

It is also envisaged that in the future the club may be able to take advantage of the schools facilities to provide sports activities such as basketball. We have also had two workshops provided by the Youth Service to raise drugs awareness for both the club members and organisers. We publish a programme of activities list so that the youth can attend when there is something of interest to them.

We also have a group of youngsters who are working with YouthWorcs Rural to have a say in their village environment and nationally. Some are due to go on a trip to Slovenia to assist in the youth in that country also having a say with their government policies. This group came into existence before the youth club opened via YouthWorcs Rural to have a say in the Village Action Plan and, after producing a report, gave a presentation to the Parish Council and Community Plan Committee so that these groups would know exactly what they want in their village.

After a few months it became clear that although the younger ages (11-15) enjoyed attending we were only attracting the older ones when trips were organised out of the village. We tried setting aside a room for the older youth but this was not entirely successful. This led us on to our latest project – a drop in centre at The Gate Inn.

We have secured commissioning to progress this project but have encountered problems in opening. The landlord, who was initially all for the project, has left and a new landlady is not so keen to give the youth the room on a permanent basis. She is happy, however, to let us set up the project, in a portacabin, in an adjoining field that the brewery owns. We are at the stage of trying to obtain planning permission to do so. Eventually when this is hopefully obtained we hope to provide a safe environment for 14 – 19 year olds to meet mostly without adult supervision. They will be monitored via CCTV and a web cam. Access to the premises will be via an electronic swipe card system after they have successfully applied for membership. The youth have devised their own code of conduct that everyone must sign up to and should the rules be broken by a minor incident



they will have 3 chances then membership would be suspended. If it is a major incident then their membership will be withdrawn immediately until further notice. The building will be theirs to run as they want with Linda Judge and myself being the main people to monitor and agree activities. The idea behind this is to encourage the youth to meet in a safe and appropriate environment where they can be monitored and their needs can be addressed.

The less affluent families would be able to gain access to the internet for homework research therefore addressing a disadvantage for those who do not have access from home. The youth decided that the computers would be used on a booking time basis. This would then allow everyone the opportunity to book a time appropriate to that person. It is hoped that the environment will be conducive to networking to assist the older youth to hear of opportunities open to them within the community. A part time youth worker is also hoped to be provided to assist with addressing any issues the youth may have and to provide information as to where help can be found in an informal environment.

Once established it is hoped that the youth club would also be integrated into the building because our operation in the village hall is not entirely compatible with the building. Our equipment uses up floor space and storage that is at a premium in this public building. We would be able to provide the youth with more equipment if we had room to store it securely.



Background/Objectives

The initial opening of the youth club was to provide a safe, stimulating environment for the children and young people to meet and socialise.

Worcestershire Children's Fund identified the area as one of rural deprivation through initial studies by consultants working towards developing priority areas for work in Worcestershire. In 2003 funding was made available for groups to bid into the Children's Fund to provide services in the area. However, there were no existing groups with the infrastructure in place to take up this offer. A partnership with two district organisations initially came forward to provide a number of 'activity sessions' during the school holidays based in the village, which had a great response from the children, young people and adults alike, who expressed interest in this continuing. The following year 2004 a similar scheme funded through the Children's Fund was organised through Millennium Volunteers with support from a number of local parents. Around that time, initial work was being done on our Village plan which highlighted the lack of facilities for children and young people. A short term project funded by Worcestershire Youth Service Rural Team, around involving young people in Village Action Plans highlighted the need for some service provision, and the young people themselves produced a report and gave a presentation to the Parish Council and Community plan Committee. Some of these young people continue to work with the rural team and are due to go on a trip to Slovenia to assist the youth in that country also having a say with their government policies. Two of the now existing committee members were responsible for the plan and so decided to organise a committee to open a youth group. With initial support from Worcestershire Council for Voluntary Youth Service, both with policy development and financial support, the club was opened one night per week at the local village hall.

Fund raising events are also organised and membership fees are set at £5 for annual membership for an individual or £7.50 for a family (regardless of how many children) and a weekly admission charge of £1 per member and £1.50 per non-members is charged to cover the costs of hiring the village hall. We also sell produce in a tuck shop.

The work is ongoing and evolving, as described above, to meet continuing needs and wishes of the different age groups.

New developments include

- a drop in centre at The Gate Inn, a local public house, which is funded via commissioning from the Youth Service over a 2 ½ year period. Approximately £23,000 has been awarded to provide this service for young people to access a facility more than one evening per week

- involvement in the Worcestershire Targeted Youth Support pathfinder Scheme



Policy Areas

We address some of the elements of the sustainable communities in that we run the club to be as inclusive and safe for the youngsters who use the facility. We provide opportunities for the youth to be active in sports activities and also to get involved in new opportunities that they would possibly not have the opportunity to do in other circumstances. We are forging connections with the local uniformed groups – Scouts - and are in contact with the Worcestershire Council for Voluntary Youth Service for advice, guidance and some financial assistance, and have been involved in engaging the young people in the development of Worcestershire Children’s Plan through events organised by the Children And Young Peoples Strategic Partnership. All volunteers have Enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checked and regular committee meetings are held to ensure that any issues are addressed as a matter of urgency. We have different members who are First Aid trained, Child Protection trained, Basic Food Hygiene trained to ensure the safety of the “clients” and one of the committee members is also a Parish Councillor and primary school governor so that information sharing is done on an active basis.

- Every Child Matters that this work relates to are as follows:
- **Being Healthy** – in an informal setting the club allows us to encourage the youth to participate in organised sports activities to improve on their health.
- **Staying safe** – the club currently allows the youth to meet in a safe and appropriate environment once a week. The new project at The Gate would further enhance this by providing a safe environment for them to meet on a more regular basis. We also provide information and access to professionals on a confidential basis. We are also diffusing tensions causes within the community by the youth meeting in inappropriate places such as the Church porch and a disused quarry on private land.
- **Enjoy & Achieve** – We already have some of the youth involved with YouthWorcs Rural that has expanded from the initial “Breakfast in Paris” project and has evolved into some on them having a say nationally and some even internationally. The youth were currently awarded a “Tryangle Award” for their community work. We intend to encourage further involvement in these projects and other opportunities that may arise in the future.
- **Positive contribution** – we inform the youth of the opportunities to get involved in projects such as the Millenium Volunteers (who have worked in the village for the last two years providing summer play schemes for the 5 – 10 year olds) and YouthWorcs Rurals’ ongoing projects looking at youths opportunities/schooling/employment issues within Rural environments. They have already positively contributed to their community by highlighting the lack of facilities in their community and this has led directly to the opening of the youth club and the attempt to open a drop in centre.
- **Economic Wellbeing** – the youth club allows us the opportunity to pass on information to the youth. The new drop in centre will further enhance this service to the older youth who may also be able to establish networking contacts to inform them of opportunities when they arise. Internet access will also provide a service to the less fortunate youth who do not currently have access to this mode of information sharing.

We also contribute to the Children’s & Young Peoples Strategic Partnership priorities in the following ways:-

- The youth have ownership of their club and are encouraged to be involved in how their club evolves.
- They are encouraged to get involved in a variety of activities, including sports. In addition they will have access to changing rooms and a sports field alongside the Gate Inn project.
- The club provides a safe and appropriate place for the youth to meet and get involved in interesting activities therefore removing the temptation to get involved in antisocial behaviour. This will be further addressed when the new club opens and provides this on more evenings.

- Both clubs also provide informal opportunities to learn and obtain information, such as the drugs awareness workshops.
- The clubs give them access to qualified and experienced help as soon as they need it.

We are building up our networking to provide exciting activities for the youth to get involved in.





Location

The work is taking place in a rural location, Honeybourne, in Worcestershire. The nearest town is Evesham and we are right on the bottom right corner of Worcestershire, bordering Gloucestershire and Warwickshire.

There are approximately 650 houses in the village and the village was originally two villages – Cow Honeybourne and Church Honeybourne. A newer housing development was built approximately 5 years ago which in effect has split the village into 3. There is a very fast road that runs through the centre of the amalgamated village that is officially 30mph but a speed survey indicated that some have gone through at 70mph. This then makes it extremely dangerous for youngsters to move from one side of the village to the other. There is a small village primary school, a post office, a Spar shop, 2 pubs, 1 club, 2 garages – one selling petrol, hairdressers, greengrocers and a number of small businesses. There is also a holiday park and the Domestic Fowl Trust who are both well established.

Public transport is fairly good with both buses and a train service, the train service having been improved to give the villagers more trains that stop on the main line from Malvern to London Paddington. Unfortunately the youth do not find the public transport services particularly suitable to their needs, as it does not match their requirements. Evenings are not so well serviced as daytime and this is the time that they need to use it.

Within 3 miles, there is an industrial estate (ex RAF airfield) that is involved mainly with warehousing and distribution activities and also has some smaller light industry units.

Who was involved?

- Worcestershire Children's Fund-initial funding of the summer activities
- Evesham Adventure Playground/Borrowers Toy Library-2003 summer activities
- Millennium Volunteers -2004/5 summer activities
- YouthWorcs Rural – initially with their “Breakfast in Paris” project, continuing with their voice for Rural youth in government green papers etc. Ongoing.
- Worcestershire Council for Voluntary Youth Service – information, grant giving, support and advise.
- Worcestershire Youth Service -drugs awareness workshops. Ongoing /funding for Gate project.
- Badsey Scouts group – sharing of facilities. Ongoing.



Implementation

The details of the projects have been written above. Funding for the youth club was obtained in the way of a start up grant from the Worcestershire Council for Voluntary Youth Service of £200. We initially started the youth club with loaned/donated equipment kindly given by committee members. When the equipment grant £500 came through from Worcestershire council for Voluntary Youth Service we then purchased equipment such as pool tables, table tennis tables, televisions, play stations, ice hockey table, dart board etc. This allowed us to return some of the loaned equipment. It has, however, also created problems of storage. This is especially true of the table tennis table that will not fit in the garage, the full sized pool table also takes up valuable space in the village hall that other users do not appreciate, and a cabinet to store the televisions in. This problem is ongoing but would be solved by moving into our own premises.

We feel that the partnership working that we have established is particularly innovative in that we have been able to use facilities of others that we would not have been able to source anywhere else, such as working with the scouts organisation to organise a shooting night. The youth in the village would most likely never have had the opportunity to have a say in government policy or the chance to influence international governments policy. A project that they have been involved in has recently been presented to organisations in New Zealand. Some of the village youth are about to go to Slovenia to influence their government's policy. None of this would have been possible if it were not for the continuing involvement of the networking that some of the committee members are actively encouraging.

Our major problems are with the new project at the Gate Inn. We set up in partnership with the landlord, brewery and ourselves to secure a facility in which to set up the drop in centre. This was thrown in to jeopardy with the departure of the landlord and the arrival of a landlady who is not so keen to turn the room over to the youth and has plans to use the room for functions. She is however happy for us to use their field to site a portacabin. We have approached Wychavon District Council who have advised us of the areas that we need to address, such as a flood risk assessment report and cesspit installation due to lack of mains sewerage access. We are currently informing the residents, who might raise objections, our plans in order to try to secure their support. We feel if we can overcome all the hurdles that are currently being placed in our path that we will resolve some of the problems encountered in running the youth club at the village hall, such as storage space, accessibility of the village hall (it is right at the far end of the village whereas the field we hope to use is very central), and availability of the rooms at the village hall. As stated previously, we have obtained commissioning to provide this service over the next 2½ years of approximately £23,000. Much of this is needed for start up equipments such as the computers, televisions, electronic door entry system, CCTV, rent and wages for the part time youth worker. Paying the part time youth worker is proving difficult as we do not have employer status but we are looking into paying the wages through the Youth Service and we reimburse them. As it is only envisaged that the hours would be approximately 4 hours per week we may have difficulty in finding a suitable person but we did have some people interested in November last year so hopefully this will not be the case.



Evaluation

We opened the club 12 months ago and it has been very successful in providing a weekly meeting place for the younger age group. It was identified that we were failing the older youth as they were not attending on a regular basis. Some of this is because of work commitments so we could not address that issue but some were due to the stigma attached to attending a "Youth Club". As this was a major group that we wanted to attract to ensure their safety away from the inappropriate meeting places they were currently using (disused quarry on private land, church porch) we felt we needed to address this in another means. We had used the room at the Gate Inn for a skittles evening and felt it was a waste for both the landlord and us because it was not being used on a regular basis and could be used to address both the need for a safe meeting place and provide a regular income for the landlord. Everything was in place to do this when in January but the landlord left suddenly and we no longer have the premises available to us in the manner we had hoped. The youth club has not been evaluated in a formal manner but it was clear that we were not attracting the more senior youth other than on band nights. Once the new project is established the Youth Service will formally evaluate this with us having to provide data as to usage, contacts made, etc. We have informally evaluated the youth club by its continued use by the youth. Records are kept indicating the successfulness of the uptake on trips, open days, craft days and it is clear which areas are more successful than others. The open days during the summer holidays were extremely unsuccessful with very poor attendance which may indicate that the youth are not present in the village during the daytime of the holidays possibly because of parents working or perhaps because they look after their younger siblings who are not eligible to attend. We have used feedback sheets to evaluate the success of all the summer activities that were involved and these were passed on to the Youth Service for their formal evaluation because we had secured funding in order to provide these activities.

Challenges

The main challenges that exist at the moment is attracting the older youth. This can be addressed by providing a more regular meeting place that they have ownership of – The Gate Inn project. This involves us overcoming hurdles placed in front of us by planning legislation but we are currently attempting to address these.

We are also experiencing difficulty in getting volunteers to get involved in this worthwhile work. Many do not wish to commit to regularly attending and assisting in running the youth club and our committee has vacancies for more volunteers. Parents are very active in supporting their children until they begin to attend middle school but getting parents involved in this very rewarding work is an ongoing challenge.



Key Learning Points

All the way through our projects we have found that the majority of the work falls on to two very committed people with only limited support from others. Many of our volunteers have fallen by the way and we are struggling to get others involved.

There are many opportunities to get other organisation involved in assisting with fundamental things such as funding but also in other areas of information sharing as to what is available out there. Networking is key to sourcing assistance from various places. Grants are readily available if you have someone on your team with the time and commitment to apply for them. Some grant forms are incredibly complicated and some surprisingly simple, but all require time to complete.

Working with the youth of the village can be hugely rewarding but sometimes totally frustrating as regards the lack of support from parents at times.

Becoming members of specialist groups offered discounts on such things as insurance and also provides us with a large amount of information that we would not otherwise hear about. It has proved to be money very well spent and a good source of grant information.

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Resources and Documents

Worcestershire Children's Fund Consultation Documentation

Worcestershire Youth Service Commissioning

Worcestershire Targeted Youth Support Pathfinder