

ONE Nottingham Neighbourhood Renewal
Small Grants Scheme

FINAL REPORT

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SUMMARY

In January 2008 Nottinghamshire Community Foundation commissioned an evaluation of the Neighbourhood Renewal Small Grants Scheme from independent consultants **mtl**. This report is the outcome of that study and is based on a survey of grant recipients and interviews with key stakeholders in its management and operation.

Headline Findings

- £884,221 to Q3 of 2007/08 has been invested over two years in activities to support neighbourhood renewal at a grassroots level across the city, with 133 community groups actively engaged in this challenging process. In 2007/08 to Q3, 42 of these grant recipients were part of the BME community sector.
- We estimate that 38,000 people across the city have benefited from activities funded by the SGS between July 2006 and August 2007.
- 1,724 volunteering opportunities have been created to further energise and sustain community-based activities.
- 510 groups have received advice, guidance and practical help in developing their groups and projects they are engaged in with 61 engaged in substantive capacity-building initiatives. Nottingham Community Network/Nottingham CVS have played a key role in this process.
- Around 60% of the projects funded via the scheme would probably not have gone ahead at all without SGS funding.
- A significant number of projects, and therefore investment, has been made in activities which contribute to Floor Targets for Neighbourhood Renewal [especially: Employment, Health and Children's Services] and to all the relevant Safer, Stronger Communities Targets [increasing volunteering opportunities; improving community cohesion; capacity-building the VCS; and engaging communities in decision-making processes].
- Projects have supported a broad cross-section of priority 'communities of interest', including: local residents, women, young people aged 14-24 and BME groups.
- There has been a reasonable degree of targeting of investment in the most deprived areas but there remain two exceptions [Bassford and Bestwood; and Bilborough, Aspley and Leen Valley] where the share of total SGS spend is relatively low in comparison.
- Community groups themselves have benefited in various ways from the grant-funding, in particular they have been able to improve the quality and accessibility of core services and to extend the range of activities and opportunities they provide. Better targeting of areas and priority communities has also been achieved in many instances and many groups feel the funding has enabled them to become more sustainable.
- Activities supported by the fund have empowered local communities, in particular by enabling local people to organize, join in and take part in the delivery of activities in their own communities.

Conclusions

1. Our main conclusion is that there is compelling evidence [quantitative and qualitative] from this evaluation to suggest that the SGS is achieving its core aim – it has enabled many grassroots groups [often for the first time] to take a more active role in neighbourhood renewal through engagement in organised activities whilst at the same time enhancing their capacity.
2. There is clearly a close correlation between SGS-funded activities and four of the Floor Targets and all of the Safer, Stronger Communities Targets. There has also been a reasonably good spread of applications across the City's Priority Areas although there is scope for improvement in terms of aligning funds to the most disadvantaged areas.
3. The grant funding model developed by NCF and the processes which underpin it are fit for purpose and effective although [and partly because] the decision-making process is quite resource intensive. Application, assessment, appraisal and communication procedures are well documented and the Grants Panel component is both rigorous and fair, much to the credit of the Panel members as well as NCF.
4. There is a need to revisit the structuring of the grant awards. Specifically, the definition of a 'strategic grant' is poor and in our view unnecessary. An upper limit of £10,000 for grant awards for a scheme of this kind appears to be unduly high in our view, whilst a lower limit of £50 is too small.
5. The outreach and support arrangements for the SGS appear to have worked well and are founded on a key relationship between NCF and NCN/NCVS. Substantial efforts have been made to promote the SGS, alongside other sources of funding, to priority communities and within priority neighbourhoods since 2006 and judging by the evidence with some success. NCN/NCVS are ideally placed to perform their outreach and support role given their experience, expertise, location and credibility within the community sector across the city. However there is scope to improve the specification of target outcomes associated with the outreach and support agreement between NCF and NCVS/NCN.

Recommendations

1. The future promotion of the SGS needs to clearly position it in relation to the new Grassroots Communities Fund as well as existing funding sources for the community sector, emphasizing points of similarity and of difference. This, together with the crucial issue of the targeting of investment in the most deprived/priority areas, should be the subject of detailed discussions with ONE Nottingham, NCVS/NCN, the City Council's Single Gateway Small Grants Team and other partners in Neighbourhood Renewal.
2. The SGS Application Form and Guidance notes are reviewed in an effort to further aid clarity for the applicant and ensure that the information collected is appropriate to the appraisal process and particularly the needs of Grant Panel members. We feel that a clearer distinction could be made between eligibility criteria on the one hand, and appraisal criteria on the other. The opportunity to access support from NCN/NCVS and/or NCF needs to feature more prominently and be explained more clearly. Perhaps some examples of how previous projects have made use of this support and addressed specific Floor/ Safer, Stronger Targets could be included in an 'application pack' together with the application form and guidance.

3. The SGS fund should set a lower limit of £1,000 and an upper limit of £5,000 [or possibly £6,000] for grant awards. References to so-called 'strategic projects' should be removed with all applications being assessed according to the same criteria.
4. The SGS Monitoring Form also needs to be reviewed to ensure it is fit for purpose in terms of the performance management information needs of ONE Nottingham and the Accountable Body Nottingham City Council. The views of grant recipients should also be sought regarding any proposed changes to the layout, wording and structure.
5. The feasibility of developing an on-line application and monitoring system should be explored, although of course this is an issue of relevance to other funds managed by NCF.
6. The SGS outreach and support agreement between NCF and NCVS/NCN needs to be carefully reviewed. There needs to be a more precise definition of key performance indicators and the data which must be collected to monitor against the agreed targets. These indicators should focus on what NCN does to promote the fund and their offer of support, the take-up and type of support provided to prospective applicants, capacity-building assistance and the number of groups assisted who subsequently submit applications for SGS funding.
7. Last year's celebratory event was accompanied by the publication of an excellent booklet. At this or possibly next year's event we would suggest that a DVD is produced featuring some of the projects and beneficiaries from a selection of those funded over the past two years and other people involved in the SGS such as NCN's Outreach Worker, NCF's Grant Support Worker and Grant Panel members. This could be shown at the event and also support future promotional and outreach activities.

I. STUDY PURPOSE AND APPROACH

Introduction

- I.1 In January 2008 Nottinghamshire Community Foundation [NCF] commissioned **mtl** to undertake an independent evaluation of the ONE Nottingham Neighbourhood Renewal Small Grants Scheme [hereafter referred to as 'SGS'] for the period July 2006 to August 2007. The brief for this assignment specifies the following four aims:
- Evaluate the impact the SGS within communities across Nottingham.
 - Assess the performance of the management and operational arrangements for the scheme.
 - Demonstrate how the outcomes achieved by the SGS could be used to deliver against the emerging priorities and themes of Nottingham City Local Area Agreement 2006 - 2009.
 - Produce a report with recommendations for consideration by ONE Nottingham and other key stakeholders.
- I.2 Lee Broughton, Susan Brown and John Norrington managed the study on behalf of NCF; Clive La Court led the **mtl** team.

Methodology

- I.3 The study aims were addressed by completing a series of activities during January and March 2008; these were:
- An inception and planning meeting.
 - Background research and preparatory work.
 - A postal/email survey of 132 community groups who received grants between July 2006 and August 2007 to which 71 responded, giving a response rate of 53.8%.
 - Interviews with the following people:
 - ▶ Lee Broughton, Susan Brown and John Norrington – NCF.
 - ▶ Jo Dean and Cathy White – Nottingham Community Network/ Nottingham CVS.
 - ▶ Jan Stapleton – Nottingham City Council.
 - ▶ Maggie Grimshaw – ONE Nottingham.

Structure of the Report

- I.4 This report is structured as follows:
- Section 2 describes what and who the SGS is for and how it operates.
 - Section 3 reviews the performance of the fund.
 - Section 3 sets out an analysis of the findings from the survey of grant recipients.
 - Section 5 provides six case studies of SGS-funded projects, undertaken by Beth Harvey on behalf of NCF.
 - Section 6 sets out key findings and recommendations.

2. THE SCHEME

Introduction

2.1 This section sets out relevant background information about the SGS.

Aim, Objectives and Eligibility

2.2 The aim of the SGS is to stimulate and support community activity in deprived areas so that more people can become involved in the renewal and development of their communities and neighbourhoods and building the capacity of the VCS to support this process and improve community cohesion.

2.3 The scheme is funded by ONE Nottingham, the Local Strategic Partnership for the city. The Accountable Body is Nottingham City Council and the fund has been managed and administered by Nottinghamshire Community Foundation [NCF] since April 2006. Additional outreach and support is provided by Nottingham CVS under contract to NCF.

2.4 Grants are usually up to £5,000 but for more 'strategic projects' awards can be made up to a £10,000 threshold. A strategic project is defined as one which offers a coordinated approach to an area of activity or geographic area and/or provides a sustainable solution to groups. The minimum grant available is £50. Projects and their associated activities must be completed within a year from receipt of funding.

2.5 Eligibility criteria for appraising grants are as follows:

- Groups must be not for profit with charitable aims and objectives and based in the city.
- Groups must have a set of rules or a constitution.
- Activities to be funded must correlate to one or more of the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund [NRF] Floor Targets¹ and one or more of the targets set out in the Safer, Stronger Communities Plan.

2.6 Several fairly standard non-eligibility criteria are specified which include: individuals; core costs or repeat funding activities; political groups; groups with an annual income in excess of £250,000; and groups based outside the city.

2.7 Guidance indicates that the SGS is available in all areas of Nottingham but projects are required to help the most deprived communities, which are identified as: Radford and Park; Aspley; St Anns; Bulwell; Bridge; Bestwood; Bilborough; Arboretum; Dales; Dunkirk and Lenton and parts of Clifton; Berridge; and Mapperley.

2.8 The fund also seeks to target resources in support of marginalised communities which may include young people, disabled people, BME people, older people and lone parents.

¹ Floor Targets were first introduced in 2000 as the social equivalent of the Minimum Wage; they refer to quantitative targets that set a minimum standard for disadvantaged groups or areas in relation to public service delivery and several are directly related to the Government's National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal.

Process for Accessing SGS Funding

- 2.9 The process for accessing SGS funding usually has the following key steps/milestones:
- a. Initial enquiry or expression of interest made by a group made to NCF either directly or via NCVS or other sources.
 - b. Eligibility for the SGS is checked by a Grants Officer at NCF using an eligibility checklist.
 - c. Application form and guidance are released to eligible groups. Ineligible groups may be sign-posted to other sources of help [financial and non-financial].
 - d. Groups may be assisted in preparing applications, usually through advice and guidance rather than 'hands-on help' either by the GO and/or NCVS's Outreach Worker.
 - e. Completed applications are submitted to NCF, sometimes following assistance from the GO and/or NCVS.
 - f. Applications are reviewed at NCF and, where appropriate, clarification or additional information is sought from the applicant. Referee is consulted as required.
 - g. The Grants Officer prepares a summary report in advance of a Grant Panel meeting and circulates papers to members.
 - h. Appraisal of grant applications in accordance with an 'Assessment Template' and decision made to recommend for approval, to defer or to reject an application.
 - i. Final approval for grant awards is made at a meeting of the NCF Trustees.
 - j. Grant Agreement is drawn up, issued, signed and returned by the group.
 - k. Payment is released.
 - l. Monitoring procedures commence.
- 2.10 Applicants are notified of Grants Panel decisions within 10 weeks of receipt of the completed application. If unsuccessful, groups are provided with feedback and encouraged to access the support service with a view to reapplying if appropriate. If successful, award letters and conditions of grants are issued by NCF, and payments made on receipt of a signed undertaking to agree to the terms of grant. Our discussions with Grant Panel members suggest that the appraisal process is rigorous and fair and that they are well supported by NCF.
- 2.11 Monitoring involves the recipient submitting a six monthly Monitoring Report and, if monies have not been spent by then, they should also complete an End of Grant report. The Monitoring Report provides information about spend, numbers and types of beneficiaries and impact on Floor Targets and other outcomes achieved. ONE Nottingham require NCF to conduct a visit with every recipient of a strategic grant and to one quarter of a random sample of grant recipients under £5000 which equates to 30 monitoring visits in the current year. Variations in grant, including extensions, must be agreed in writing with NCF and be in line with the original application and award.
- 2.12 Since March 2007, appraisal criteria have been tightened and monitoring of outputs and spend has become more rigorous. Interpretation of the Floor Targets in terms of evidence collection and attribution has been somewhat problematic given the aims of the SGS and the types of activities it has supported but the Accountable Body are satisfied that the procedures put in place by NCF are now satisfactory.

- 2.13 Overall, the fund management process outlined above appears to be both appropriate and reasonably robust; the same conclusion **mtl** reached in regard to the Local Network Fund².
- 2.14 Our discussions indicate that there is felt to be scope, as perhaps there always is, to enhance the SGS Application Form and guidance bearing in mind the needs of Grant Panel members as well as applicants. Various additions and refinements have been made to these since the SGS came into existence of course but a further review was felt to be worthwhile. Interestingly though, the survey of grant recipients reported in section 4 of this report does not suggest that many groups find the application process arduous which must be borne in mind.

Outreach and Support

- 2.15 Outreach and support activity for the fund has been commissioned from NCVS by NCF; in this context:
- 'Outreach' involves the proactive promotion of the SGS, especially within the priority neighbourhoods and communities of interest. Activities include marketing and promotion, networking and direct 'cold call' contact with groups in the most hard to reach communities.
 - 'Support' usually involves extensive one-to-one work with individual groups to help them think through their ideas and develop them to a point where they are able to make strong grant applications. Emphasis is given to self-help in the main, with groups being sign-posted to mutually agreed sources of help where appropriate.
- 2.16 Key outcomes and tasks identified in the Outreach and Support Agreement between NCF and NCVS are specified as follows:
- Identify staff time to specifically carry out the work of the SGS.
 - Promote and develop appropriate publicity and information about the Small Grants programme.
 - Develop a measured Action Plan for the project.
 - Contribute to and support arrangements being made by Nottingham Community Network and NCF in respect of the celebratory event being planned.
 - Identify and make contact with 'hard to target' groups in Nottingham.
 - Identify and make contact with groups in the neighbourhood renewal areas identified within the summary extracts document.
 - Provide face-to-face support for target groups identified and to undertake development support activities and attend funding surgeries as appropriate.
 - Provide specialist support for these groups with special needs so far as is practical e.g. language support for groups that do not speak English.
 - Make an initial assessment about the nature of support that is needed by a group and who might best provide the support when working with groups wishing to make an application to the SGS.

² 'The Local Network Fund for Children and Young People – Evaluation'. NCF. September 2007.

- Disseminate information and actively market the funds to groups, using local channels, road shows, surgeries, housing associations, estate housing offices, community centres, libraries, local press, community workers – with an emphasis on direct personal contact.
- Hold specific workshops or any other relevant activities to ensure that identified priority groups have equal access to information concerning the SGS.
- Act as a central point of contact for groups who need support with their application.
- Ensure that Black and Minority Ethnic [BME] groups are actively encouraged to apply for funding and that funding received by BME groups reflects the make up of the area population.
- Ensure the Neighbourhood Renewal, Nottinghamshire Community Foundation and One Nottingham logos are used in all publicity and promotional literature.
- Submit all publicity and promotional literature for approval to NCF before it enters the public domain.
- Work with NCF to establish monitoring and reporting systems for the purpose of:
 - ▶ Assessing the impact of the outreach and support provision and ensuring that work activities are being appropriately targeted.
 - ▶ Identifying the barriers to the non-completion of application forms for groups who broadly meet the criteria and to work jointly to resolve any local barriers.
 - ▶ Complete and return monitoring forms to NCF.
 - ▶ Provide an audit trail of activities to help inform the operation of outreach and support.
- Meet regularly with NCF and other outreach workers where appropriate to ensure timely and constructive communication between local elements of the scheme.

2.17 The one quantitative performance indicator and target set out in the agreement is as follows:

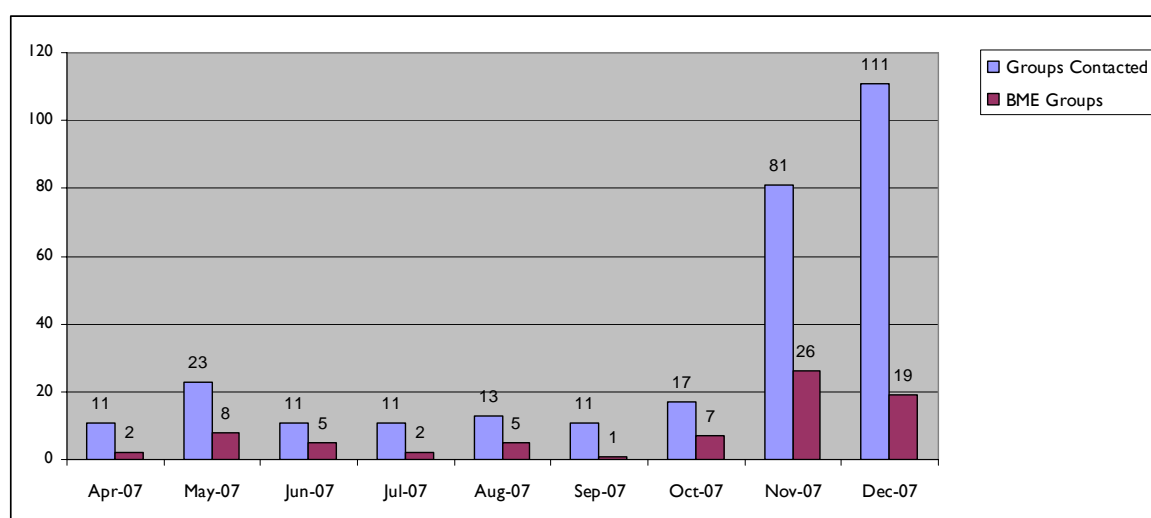
‘Assist 30 groups per quarter to complete eligible applications to the Small Grants programme - 50% [ie 60] of which should represent the BME community’.

2.18 The precise meaning of ‘groups assisted to complete eligible applications’ was not defined in precise terms by NCF. NCVS appear to have interpreted this to mean ‘contacts’ with groups and collected data accordingly – a contact with a group can be made by letter/mailshot, telephone or a face to face meeting. NCF also promote the SGS through their e-bulletin on a monthly basis and via their quarterly newsletter.

2.19 The Outreach Worker attends various events to promote the availability of a variety of funds and to ensure that groups are aware of the support available to them. The Outreach Worker also played a lead role in last year’s SGS celebratory event which was very well attended and provided a showcase for some of the projects and activities which have been supported. An excellent booklet was produced by NCF about the SGS to coincide with the event which includes several examples of projects and activities which have been supported. A second celebratory event is being planned at the present time and is due to take place in June 2008.

- 2.20 Monitoring data for April – December 2007 indicates that 289 groups had been contacted by the SGS Outreach Worker at NCVS against a pro-rata target of 90; and that 75 of groups were BME groups. So both targets have been exceeded. Figure 1 shows the monthly trend data. There is a clear surge of activity during the November and December period which jointly account for 66% of activity over the three quarters. NCVS indicated that this was primarily due to a mail/email shot to promote the availability of grant funding and to encourage groups to develop and submit applications well in time before the end of the financial year. The SGS is one of a cluster of funds which NCVS promote to the sector throughout the year.

Figure 1 : VCS Groups Contacted by NCVS/NCN Outreach Worker ~ April – December 2007



Source: NCN/NCVS

- 2.21 In principle, the outreach and support role played by NCVS could be undertaken by another organisation or by expanding the role of NCF's GO coupled with a 'hot desk' arrangement within the city. Neither are preferred alternatives in our view: NCVS are uniquely placed to engage with grassroots community groups across the city as a whole, have accumulated experience of this fund and others like it and have credibility and trust within the voluntary, community and public sectors.
- 2.22 Our discussions did indicate that there remains scope to enhance referrals and sign-posting of groups to NCVS and NCF and a need to ensure that outreach activities continue to work in conjunction with the City Council's Local Area Partnership Managers [or Ward Coordinators] at the local level and Self help Nottingham.

SGS Decision Schedule

- 2.23 As mentioned earlier, Grants Panels play a key role in the ethos and operational work of NCF. Table A reports on the dynamics of the application and appraisal process [the so called 'decision schedule'] for the SGS for the period July 2006 to August 2007. This shows that 81% of all applications presented to the Grants Panel were subsequently approved for funding.

2.24 Of the 163 applications appraised by the Panel, 82% were subsequently approved and 18% rejected. This data clearly indicates two important things:

- NCF Grants Officers do scrutinize applications to assess eligibility and robustness prior to them being put before a Panel.
- It is by no means a forgone conclusion that an application submitted to a Panel will be accepted or 'waved through' without careful consideration of its relative merits.

Table A : SGS Decision Schedule Outcomes ~ July 2006 – August 2007

Panel Date	Received	Withdrawn	Approved	Fast-tracked	Rejected	Cancelled
Jul-06	36	14	19	0	3	0
Sep-06	5	0	3	0	2	0
Oct-06	10	1	6	0	3	0
Dec-06	7	0	6	0	0	0
Jan-07	19	0	18	0	1	0
Feb-07	22	4	14	0	3	1
Mar-07	39	3	26	1	9	1
May-07	25	0	21	1	4	0
Jun-07	15	1	12	1	2	0
Jul-07	3	0	2	0	1	0
Aug-07	9	0	6	0	2	1
Total	189	23	133	3	30	3

Source: NCF

Key Developments

2.25 The SGS does not exist in a vacuum. The policy and funding context for neighbourhood renewal across the city, and for the VCS in particular, is always changing and two key developments to be aware of within this context are as follows:

- The Office for the Third Sector announced the launch of a 'Grassroots Community Fund' which will provide grants for VCS organizations with, it is anticipated, an annual turnover of less than £20,000. In addition, the programme will also help funders to build endowment funds to provide a continuous source of small grant funding. The programme is likely to start in June 2008, initially for a three year period.
- The Government announced the creation of a Working Neighbourhoods Fund which will provide resources to local authorities to tackle worklessness and low levels of skills and enterprise in their most deprived areas. "Reducing workless and increasing enterprise would thus become key priorities for the Local Strategic Partnerships and their partners in the private and voluntary and community sectors"³.

³ 'The Working Neighbourhoods Fund' Nov 2007. DWP and Communities and Local Government. Para. 40.

- 2.26 The forward strategy for the neighbourhood renewal and the SGS must take these developments, amongst others, into account as ONE Nottingham are well aware. ONE Nottingham's Community and Neighbourhood Partnership will be producing a new Delivery Plan in the next few months which will be in place in or before April 2009.

3. PERFORMANCE AND IMPACT

Introduction

- 3.1 In this section we review monitoring data relating to the delivery and outcomes of the fund. The following section also examines its impact based on the survey of grant recipients undertaken for this study.

Funding and Outputs

- 3.2 Table B shows SGS spend for the period 2006-07 and 2007 to Quarter 3 [April – December].

Table B : Small Grants Scheme - NRF Expenditure and Outputs ~ 2006 Q1 – 2007 Q3

Output Indicators		2006-07	2007-08	2006-2007 Q3
NRF Expenditure	Target	£500,000	£550,000	£1,050,000
	Actual	£500,000	£384,221	£884,221
Number of capacity building initiatives	Target	25	16	41
	Actual	34	27	61
Number of research studies/surveys completed	Target	8	0	8
	Actual	2	0	2
Number of groups receiving small grants support	Target	26	130	156
	Actual	60	84	144
Number of BME groups receiving small grants support	Target	0	52	52
	Actual	0	42	42
Number of volunteering opportunities created	Target	150	500	650
	Actual	1013	711	1724
Number of groups receiving support and advice	Target	126	190	316
	Actual	295	215	510

Source: Nottingham City Council – ONE Nottingham Accountable Body Team

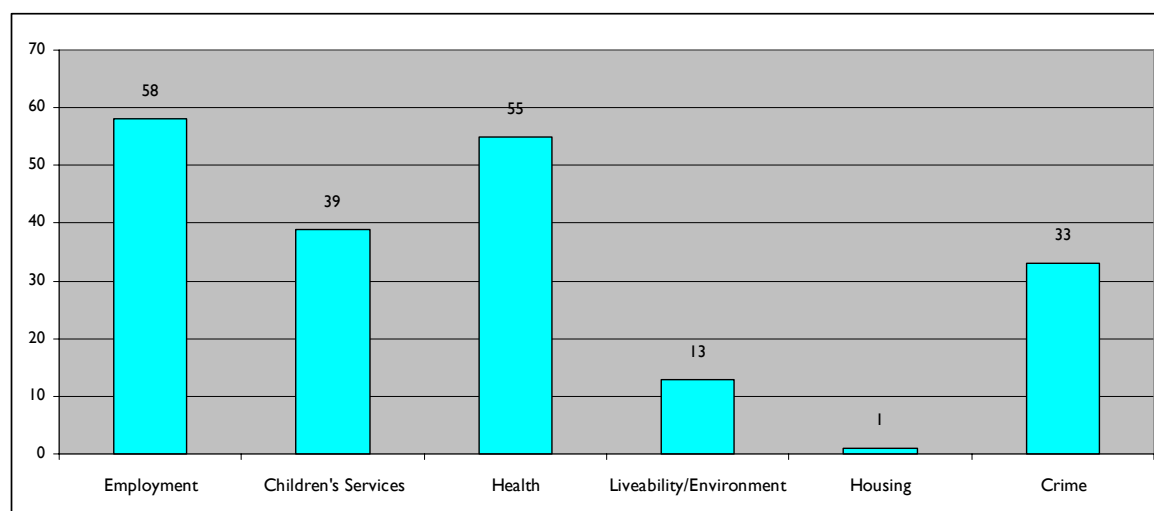
- 3.3 The total budget for the programme is £1,050,000. Of this:
- 85% is allocated in grant awards.
 - 10% is been allocated to cover staff, administration and associated costs of delivering the programme by NCF.
 - 5% is allocated to cover the costs associated with the provision of outreach and support services.
- 3.4 To the end of Q3 2007, actual expenditure was £884,221 of which £592,799 was allocated in grants. NCF confidently predict that the final out-turn will be in line with the target for the end of the programme period on 31st March 2008.

- 3.5 The average size of grant has been £4,457 [£592,779/133].
- 3.6 During the period July 2006 – August 2007 all but one of the 133 grants awarded were for £5,000 or less. Since September 2007 two ‘strategic grants’ of more than £9,000 have been awarded. Only three grants were of less than £1,000 and two of those fractionally so.
- 3.7 Key findings with regard to output performance to date are as follows:
- Targets have been exceeded in relation to three NRF outputs: capacity building initiatives, volunteering opportunities created and numbers of groups receiving support and advice. The number of volunteering opportunities created has been well in excess of the target set.
 - The number of groups in receipt of grants is likely to be in accordance with the agreed target as will the proportion of BME led-groups who have received grants

Correspondence to Floor Targets and Safer, Stronger Targets

- 3.8 Data provided by NCF enables us to map the correspondence of SGS-funded projects and activities with the Floor Targets [Figure 2] and Safer, Stronger Communities Targets [Figure 3].

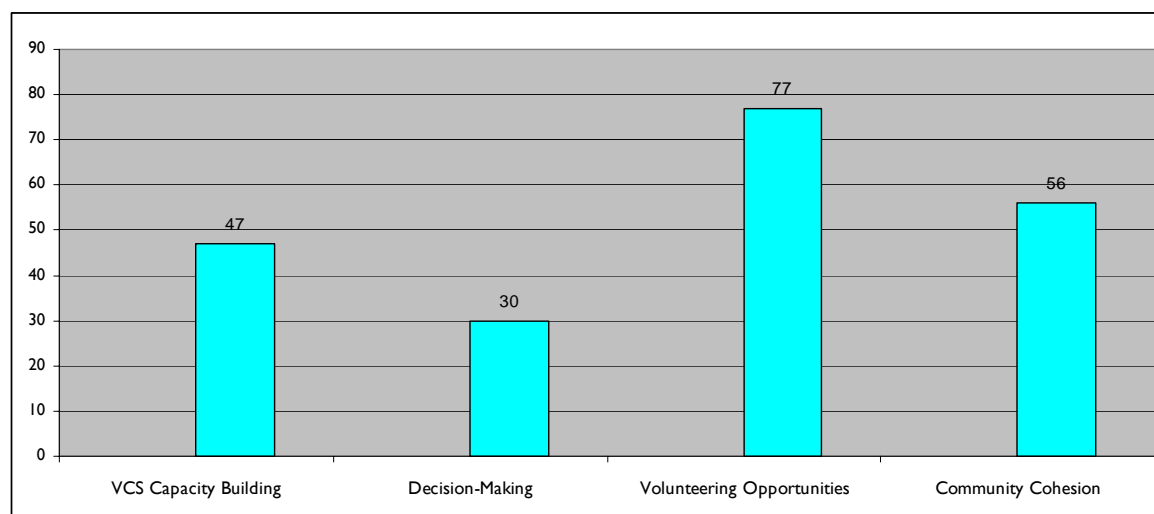
Figure 2 : Floor Targets Addressed by SGS-funded Projects ~ July 2006 – August 2007



Source: NCF

- 3.9 Altogether projects addressed Targets under the Employment, Health and Children's Services Targets. Although Crime and Liveability/Environment Targets were addressed by a minority of SGS-funded activities, only one project addressed Housing Targets.
- 3.10 It is important to note that:
- Several of the projects contributed to more than one target.
 - Several environmental projects have received funding from ONE Nottingham's Cleaner Greener Fund which is also managed by NCF.

Figure 3 : Safer, Stronger Communities Targets Addressed by SGS-funded Projects
~ July 2006 – August 2007



Source: NCF

- 3.11 A relatively high number of SGS-funded projects address all the Targets, but a considerable number help to increase the pool of volunteering opportunities and build community cohesion within relatively deprived areas.

Targeting of Awards by Area

- 3.12 Table C provides a breakdown of SGS-funded projects and spend by the nine Priority Areas and also identifies those projects which were principally city-wide. It also shows the ranking of these area in terms of the Index of Multiple Deprivation [IMD] for the years 2004 [the most relevant to this study] and 2007.
- 3.13 Although the 2004 data suggests there has been a reasonable degree of correlation between SGS expenditure and relative deprivation [ie more investment has gone into the most deprived areas and less into the least], there are some exceptions, notably:
- Priority Areas 2 and 3 are ranked 5th and 6th in terms of the SGS investment they have received; in other words, these two relatively deprived areas received £49,057 of SGS spend – 8.3% of the total and 11.6% of the spend in Areas 1 to 9 collectively [excluding city-wide projects].
 - The Priority Area 8 [Bridge, Dunkirk and Lenton] is ranked 8th in terms of deprivation but received the largest grant spend [£133,870].
- 3.14 It should be noted that several of the projects are not solely confined to a single Priority Area but serve more than one. Conversely, some of the projects described as ‘city-wide’ in practice target particular wards, often those in which they are based.

**Table C : Small Grants Scheme – Projects Supported by Priority Area ~
July 2006 – August 2007**

Priority Area	City Rank Average IMD 2004 Score	City Rank Average IMD 2007 Score	Number of Projects	Total Expenditure £ [rank 1 = highest, 9 = lowest]
1. Bulwell and Bulwell Forest	5	4	10	47,838 [4]
2. Basford and Bestwood	3	3	5	24,777 [5]
3. Bilborough, Aspley and Leen Valley [West Area]	2	1	8	24,280 [6]
4. Arboretum, Berridge, Radford and Park	4	5	14	65,195 [3]
5. Mapperley and Sherwood	7	8	4	14,020 [7]
6. Dales and St Anns	1	2	23	107,199 [2]
7. Wollaton West/East and Lenton Abbey	9	9	1	2,796 [9]
8. Bridge, Dunkirk and Lenton	6	7	29	133,870 [1]
9. Clifton North/South	8	6	1	4,095 [8]
Areas 1 - 9				424,070
City-wide	-	-	37	164,461
Total			132	588,531

Source: NCF/ Nottingham City Council

4. SURVEY OF GROUPS SUPPORTED BY THE SMALL GRANTS SCHEME

Introduction

4.1 This section of the report summarises the findings to emerge from a postal survey of Nottingham-based community groups who received SGS awards between July 2006 and August 2007. 71 groups responded to the survey. The survey findings are presented below using the same sub-headings as the questionnaire:

- Targeting of activities.
- Floor Targets.
- Safer, Stronger Communities [LAA] Targets.
- Groups Experience.
- Community Engagement.
- Additionality.
- Sustainability.
- Looking Ahead.

Targeting of Activities

Table D : Which of the following 'priority neighbourhoods' did your project address?

Table D – Priority Areas	Number
1. Bulwell and Bulwell Forest	6
2. Basford and Bestwood	3
3. Bilborough, Aspley and Leen Valley	3
4. Arboretum, Berridge, Radford and Park	7
5. Mapperley and Sherwood	2
6. Dales and St Anns	12
7. Wollaton West/East and Lenton Abbey	1
8. Bridge, Dunkirk and Lenton	14
9. Clifton North/South	1
City-wide	22
Total	71

- 4.2 This question was a multiple choice question since some groups prioritised more than one area but were not city-wide. Overall though, 29 groups [58% of those surveyed] were engaged in delivering activities funded by the SGS which were available to beneficiaries living in all or most areas of the city.

Table E : Which 'target communities' did your project help?

Table E – Target Communities	Number
Tenants	21
Local residents	47
Women	47
Men	38
Children 0-5 years	18
Children 6-13 years	27
Young people 14-24 years	41
People aged over 50	33
Black and Minority Ethnic people	51
People with a disability	35
People who are unemployed	39
Lone parents	26
Ex-offenders	13
Drug users	11
Refugees/asylum seekers	24
People who are homeless	7
People with basic skills needs	20
Gay men, lesbians, bisexual and transgender people	11

- 4.3 The projects engaged in activities which targeted a very broad cross-section of priority groups and communities specified in the SGS guidance. The communities of interest targeted by 40 or more supported groups were: local residents, women, young people aged 14-24 and BME.

Floor Targets

- 4.4 Evidence regarding the correspondence of SGS-funded activities and Floor Targets was set out in section 2 above. The survey of a sample of the projects shows how these activities support most [though not all] of the Floor Targets for Neighbourhood Renewal in Nottingham.

Table F : Which Floor Targets has your project addressed?

Table F – Floor Targets	Number
Employment	23
Children’s Services	23
Health	43
Liveability and environment	15
Housing	0
Crime	12

- 4.5 The Health, Employment and Children’s Services targets are addressed by the highest numbers of projects surveyed and Liveability/environment and Crime by smaller numbers. Housing was not a Target addressed by any of the projects surveyed. These findings mirror those in Figure 2 above.

Table G : If your activities addressed the Employment Floor Target, have they had any of the following outcomes?

Table G – Employment	Number
Reduced incapacity benefit/income support dependency	3
Improved basic skills	9
Increased people’s employability	16
Increase people’s confidence, aspiration and motivation	23
Other	2

- 4.6 Increasing ‘life/social skills’ [such as confidence, motivation and communication] and enhancing their employability were prevalent Employment outcomes whereas reducing dependency on benefits was not.

- 4.7 Other outcomes were identified as promoting skills and talent generally and developing IT skills.

Table H : If your activities addressed the Children's Services Floor Target, have they had any of the following outcomes?

Table H – Children's Services	Number
Improved achievement levels amongst BME people	12
Improved achievement at ages 14-19 amongst vulnerable/at risk young people	7
Reduced number and rate of under 18 years teenage conceptions	2
Other	H5

- 4.8 A significant number of projects were targeting BME communities in an effort to raise achievement levels and, to a lesser extent, achievement amongst at risk 14-19 year olds [generally]. Only two projects achieved a reduction in teenage conceptions.

- 4.9 Other outcomes were identified as:

- Raising aspirations, increasing confidence and changing the outlook of young people.
- Encouraging young people to engage in sport.
- Increasing young people's confidence through arts and crafts.
- Increasing their sense of belonging to the community.

Table I : If your activities addressed the Health Floor Target, have they had any of the following outcomes?

Table I - Health	Number
Reduced deaths due to cardio vascular disease	1
Increased physical activity amongst adults	27
Reduced smoking	7
Increased intake of fruit and vegetables	28
Reduced infant mortality	1
Other	9

- 4.10 Two types of outcomes stand out in regard to the Health Floor Targets addressed by the projects surveyed: increasing the intake of fruit and vegetables [and healthy eating generally] and increasing physical activity amongst adults.

- 4.11 Other responses were identified by nine groups are therefore of particular significance; these fell into three main areas:

- Reducing alcohol and drug misuse – closely related to, if not overlapping with, the reducing smoking Target.

- Reducing loneliness and isolation.
- Stopping self-harm and reducing suicide.

Table J : If your activities addressed the Liveability/ Environment Floor Target, have they had any of the following outcomes?

Table J – Liveability/ Environment	Number
Reduced litter and detritus	3
Reduced fly tipping	0
Improved quality of parks and open spaces	5
Other	6

- 4.12 Improving the quality of parks and open spaces and reducing litter and detritus were alluded to, but not reducing fly-tipping. We should remember that several environmental projects have received funding from ONE Nottingham’s Cleaner Greener Fund which is also managed by NCF.
- 4.13 Other outcomes were identified by six projects and focused on two areas:
- Improving the home environment.
 - Gardens and allotments.

Table K : If your activities addressed the Crime Floor Target, have they had any of the following outcomes?

Table K – Crime	Number
Reduced criminal damage	6
Reduced thefts from vehicles	5
Reduced wounding	2
Reduced burglary	2
Other	7

- 4.14 Taken together, reducing criminal damage and thefts from vehicles were mentioned by eleven groups.
- 4.15 The most frequently mentioned ‘other’ outcome was reducing anti-social behaviour and making young people aware of its impact and consequences. In addition, reducing social/community divisions and reducing re-offending were mentioned by two respondents.

Safer, Stronger Communities Targets

- 4.16 Data regarding the correspondence of SGS-funded projects and the Safer, Stronger Communities Targets was set out in section 2 above. The survey provides information about this correlation for the project sample who responded.

Table L : Which of the following Safer, Stronger Communities target outcomes has your project achieved?

Table L – Safer, Stronger Targets	Number
Building the capacity of the VCS	39
Improving involvement in decision-making	20
Increasing opportunities for volunteering	45
Improving community cohesion	39

- 4.17 The sample broadly follows the pattern for the whole group of projects supported over the period [Figure 3] with increasing the number of volunteering opportunities being the Safer, Stronger outcome achieved by the majority.
- 4.18 Groups were also asked to state/estimate how many people had benefited from the activities associated with their SGS-funded activities to date. 61 groups responded and the total number of project beneficiaries was in excess of 17,786. This gives an average of 292 beneficiaries per project. Using this average, we estimate that the total number of beneficiaries associated with the SGS between July 2006 and August 2007 [when 132 projects/groups were funded] is in the region of 38,544 people.

Groups Experience of the SGS

Table M : From the group's point of view, did the SGS-funded activities achieve any of the following outcomes?

Table M – Group-based Outcomes	Number
Improved quality and accessibility of core group activities/services already provided	48
Extended/expanded the range of activities/services, by introducing new ones	48
Levered-in additional funding/resources from elsewhere	14
Enabled better targeting of the most deprived/target areas	37
Enabled better targeting on the most deprived/marginalised communities and groups	35
Helped your group to continue on a more sustainable basis	38

- 4.19 Grant recipients benefit from the funding and the activities it gives rise to in a number of ways, but two stand out in particular: improving the quality and accessibility of core activities and extending the scope of those activities by introducing new ones. The more effective targeting of priority groups and areas also feature as key outcomes in many instances also, but relatively few groups seem to benefit in terms of increasing their ability to lever-in additional funding or other resources as a result of having received a SGS grant, perhaps because of the relatively small amounts of funding involved and the 'stand alone' nature of the fund.

Table N : Were there any of the following problems stemming from your involvement with the SGS?

Table N – Problems	Number
Application process is too complex and time-consuming	4
The criteria as to what funding can be used for is too narrow/inflexible	4
Too much time is involved in the monitoring process	4
The funds committed the group to activities which were not sustainable once it ended	16
Other	2

- 4.20 Relatively few respondents referred to any problems at all regarding their involvement with the SGS. As indicated, the only area of concern mentioned by more than a few groups was that the funding may have committed them to activities which may prove difficult to sustain; although important this is not a criticism of the fund in a technical sense of course.
- 4.21 The other two problems alluded to were envy by other local groups who had not secured funding and staffing problems.

Engagement

Table O : In what ways did your project empower local people and communities?

Table O – Engagement	Number
Developing the idea and proposal with you	30
Consulting other people about the idea/proposal	33
Helping construct and develop the project application for the SGS	16
Organising and managing the activities/project	37
Taking part and running or delivering the activities	49
Being involved in the monitoring and feedback process	23
Other	3

- 4.22 The activities supported by the SGS appear to have empowered local communities in several ways, and most especially through enabling local people to actually join in, take part and deliver activities within and for their local communities, similarly a significant number of projects have engaged local people in organising and managing projects themselves. This represents a significant degree of empowerment realised through self-reliance and mutual effort and collaboration.
- 4.23 Interestingly, around 30 projects consulted locally had engaged people in the development of project ideas although a smaller number of people took the lead in the detailed development of the project application as perhaps might be expected given the specialist skills and experience required to do so. The other issues mentioned were making friends and socialising together and stimulating learning.

Additionality

Table P : What would probably have happened if the SGS had not existed?

Table P – Additionality	Number
The activity/project could not have gone ahead at all	46
The activity/project would have gone ahead but been delayed	12
The activity/project would have gone ahead but on a smaller scale	18

- 4.24 Although this question clearly asks the respondent to consider a ‘what if’ scenario, it does provide some insight into additionality. Of those people who responded to the question [76 in total] we found that 60% believed their project would not have gone ahead at all without SGS grant. 24% felt it would probably have gone ahead but only in a scaled-down version ie in a smaller area and/or involving fewer beneficiaries.

Sustainability

Table Q : Since the SGS is ending, are any of the activities which have been funded by it still continuing?

Table Q – Sustainability	Number
Yes, all of them are continuing	33
Some, but not all, are continuing	23
None of them are continuing, the project has ended	8

- 4.25 Of the 64 respondents who answered this question, around half indicated that the activities which had been supported were continuing at the time of the survey; only eight had ceased. It should be remembered though that several projects are still operating within their 12 month SGS ‘grant window’.

Looking Ahead

- 4.26 We asked all the respondents whether, in its current form, any part of the SGS be could improved?
- 4.27 The vast majority [over 80%] of groups indicated that they felt the scheme had worked so well that there was no real scope for improvement. Amongst the others, the two main areas identified were as follows:
- Simplifying the application form and guidance notes.
 - Increasing the level of grant funding and the period over which it can be spent.

4.28 With the current phase of SGS programme scheduled to end on 31st March 2008, we ended the survey by asking respondents what they felt should happen thereafter. The overriding response was for the SGS to continue much in its present form, as typified by these comments:

“It is essential that the fund continues in some form. Projects such as ours would find it difficult to access funds from elsewhere”

“It should be expanded. The help given to our project was invaluable and we really appreciate the work carried out by NCF”

“It is a shame it has to end as it has enabled small groups like ours to have our voices heard and make a difference in young peoples live and the community”

“I think it is a very valuable source of support for small groups like ourselves and should continue or be replaced”

“This is a valuable resource for small/medium groups and can and should be available to provide advice, resources and support so that further work within communities can be sustained and progress”

“We hope that due to the SGS ending on 31st March that something is able to take its place because without the support of this grant we would not have been able to carry on much longer”

4.29 In addition to the above, two other suggestions identified by most people who responded to the question, these were:

- Produce and circulate a report, including case studies, which demonstrates how the funding has been used and shares good practice.
- Provide more information about other sources of funding available to small and newly emerging community groups across the city.

4.30 It should be noted however that NCF do actually provide the above already.

5. CASE STUDIES

Introduction

- 5.1 This section of the report provides six case studies of projects which have received funding from the SGS since July 2007.

THOMAS HELWYS BAPTIST CHURCH – TOMMY'S LUNCHEON CLUB

Floor Target : Health and Employment

Background

- 5.2 Thomas Helwys Baptist Church is a faith-based community group, deeply rooted in the local area with a strong commitment to serve, empower and build relationships in the local community of Lenton. The Church run a toddler group, a children's club, Sunday services and a drop in lunch club. All of the activities and projects are accessed by a diverse group of people including parents and young children, black and ethnic minority people, ex-offenders and adults within the local community

The Project

- 5.3 Grant received: £4,360
- 5.4 The group was funded to employ a co-ordinator to work ten hours a week for one year to develop Tommy's drop in luncheon club which is situated in the heart of the community at the Thomas Helwys Baptist Church. The group has run Tommy's for seven years on a Monday and Tuesday 12 noon to 2pm using volunteers only. A simple nutritious menu with tea, coffee and biscuits is served. The Club has become so popular that the volunteers have been struggling to cope with the demand. The role of the Tommy's co-ordinator is to carry out practical tasks to include shopping for weekly ingredients, setting up and clearing up, publicity and to build up the volunteer team and further develop the project into a healthy eating centre. The project provides a vibrant meeting place for a wide and diverse range of people in the community and is open to the whole community regardless of culture or faith.
- 5.5 The demand for the luncheon club has been very high with many people attending on a regular basis. New people are coming through the doors all the time. The local parents and toddlers group meet just before the lunch sessions and are increasingly accessing the luncheon club for a simple, nutritious, and economical meal. There was a clear need for a co-ordinator to enable the smooth running of the club, to sustain a focus on healthy eating, and to develop the volunteer team.
- 5.6 Tommy's is a perfect venue for providing volunteer opportunities and experience. Local people need help in developing confidence and aspiration and volunteering is a first step for many. There are significant health needs in this community and Tommy's wanted to play its part in helping to encourage healthier lifestyles.

Impact

- Tommy's caters for up to 65 people over the two days and has the capacity for increased numbers. The majority of people who attend are from the Lenton area and they include people from BME communities, lone parents, and a mixture of gender and age groups.
- Six volunteers are currently working with the project and this has provided stimulation and skill development which in turn is increasing the confidence of individuals. Volunteers help with preparation, cooking, serving, and clearing up. The two co-ordinators offer training and support to volunteers and are working on increasing the pool of volunteers. They have registered with the university for volunteer opportunities.
- The focus on good nutritional food has increased a general awareness of healthy eating and free fruit is on offer at each session. Menus are planned with healthy eating in mind and fresh ingredients are used in the cooking.
- One of the most important aspects of the club is that it brings people together who would not necessarily know each other or mix together. As relationships are formed, it affects the way people feel about their community and their neighbours. A meeting place like Tommy's helps to break down isolation and other local barriers.
- Tommy's staff members have created a notice board at the centre called "Tommy's Gallery" which is available to anyone for information, notices, comments, and photographs. As the staff and volunteers get to know their customers they are often able to signpost them to other services that are needed.

5.7 A regular luncheon club user called Simon posted this poem on Tommy's Gallery:

"Dear Tommy's!

I've been visiting you for over a year

I'm so glad that you are still here

There's always a fresh smiling face,

It's comfortable here in this place.

There's no fuss and there's no stress

And you definitely cost so much less

You're professional the way that you cater

And Nottingham's No.1 Tater!

I only wish that you could open a couple more days

Or diversify into cooking in different ways

Amidst all this squalor, this muck

I wish you all the best of luck.

If there's one request could I say please,

Do you think we could get Rice and Peas?

I know that you all work so hard

Just wait for your Christmas card!"

Sustainability

- 5.8 Tommy's Co-ordinators' have plans to approach the local Hindu temple to encourage new members from the community. Publicity is an ongoing activity using posters, newsletter articles, and leaflets. The group also have links with the volunteer Crocus Café which offers vegetarian and organic food. Also it is hoped that a computer can be made available for Tommy's users and for volunteers and IT tasters could be offered for those who are interested.
- 5.9 Tommy's intend to continue to look for new ways to fund the luncheon club. There is a charge for the lunches of 80p/adult and 60p/child which helps towards costs. Thomas Helwys Baptist Church is very supportive and helps in kind in a variety of ways.

TANC

Floor Target : Employability

Background

- 5.10 TANC was set up in 1992 and is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity. TANC is also a social enterprise established to promote education, training, advice, consultancy, technical assistance and research for and with communities that are high on the index of multiple deprivation.
- 5.11 TANC trades and fundraises to generate income to provide free services to beneficiaries wherever possible. Profits from TANC's trading arm are gift aided to the charity to reduce costs or to provide free services to beneficiaries. TANC hosts the Nottinghamshire Social Enterprise Support Partnership and is its accountable body.

The Project

- 5.12 Grant received: £10,000.

- 5.13 TANC received a grant for a social enterprise training course supporting five new social entrepreneurs from priority areas of the city of Nottingham. The course provided the opportunity for beneficiaries to gain a Level 5 qualification in either Leadership or Social Enterprise Support from the Institute of Leadership and Management.
- 5.14 The curriculum covers all aspects of small business establishment including financial, legal, marketing, funding, planning and strategic needs in addition to specialist social enterprise modules. It looks specifically at social impact, measurement, reporting and quality standards. The fourteen day training took place between September 2007 and February 2008 and was held at New Brook House in Radford.
- 5.15 The need for good quality training was highlighted by research carried out by Social Enterprise East Midlands in 2004 and by a survey undertaken by the Nottinghamshire Social Enterprise Support Partnership in 2005. Both pieces of research revealed gaps in support for social enterprises. 85 social enterprises within the county were surveyed and there was a significant expression of need for training and mentors for social entrepreneurs. In 2006/7 over 60 businesses took part in a needs analysis and nearly 50% of new, established or embryonic social enterprises were from priority wards and 25% of this group were BME social enterprises. The development of this project stemmed from this work.
- 5.16 Four beneficiaries from BME communities are registered on the course. 18 students are participating altogether from a variety of priority areas including the Meadows, Arboretum, Aspley, Basford, Hyson Green, and Sneinton.

Impact

- 5.17 The aim of the training is to promote the development of social enterprises in areas of high multiple deprivation. The training has made a difference in the following ways:
- Provided eighteen budding social entrepreneurs with the skills, confidence, and knowledge to take forward their entrepreneurial ideas or activity.
 - Provided a good preparation to help these individuals to find and keep employment via social enterprise.
 - Helped develop the ability of individuals to engage in sound decision making and to develop leadership skills which in turn will benefit their communities.
 - Helped individuals to establish new social enterprises.
 - Promoted small business start ups and provided information on what support is available.
 - Helped to reduce the trading risk for established and new social enterprises through training and acquisition of knowledge, skills and expertise.
 - Raised aspirations.
 - Brought together individuals from a variety of communities and has provided an important social and business support network of like-minded people.
 - Contributed to an enterprising society in which small firms of all kinds can thrive and has promoted the potential for more enterprise in disadvantaged communities.
 - Encouraged volunteering activity as new social enterprises may be run initially by volunteers.

5.18 This support and training for social entrepreneurs has a wider effect in strengthening the communities in which they live and work. Individuals with improved business and leadership skills contribute to the economic and social capital of an area. Helping individuals to become more employable reduces a reliance on benefits and raises confidence and aspirations within communities.

5.19 The following quotes were taken from BME students on the course.

“I want to start a business as a business adviser for social enterprises. The course has been very helpful and packed with information.”

“The course has helped me to apply my learning to practical situations and has provided me with tools, formulas, and techniques for managing a business. Also the social networking aspect has been important and learning about leadership skills.”

”The course has been very interesting and has helped to clarify the definition of social enterprise which will help me to advise others.”

Sustainability

5.20 Successful funding bids will determine if the training course continues in the future. At present the NSESP along with TANC and other partners are looking at the possibility of a programme offering “peer support networkers” who would continue to support those who have started or are starting enterprises after training.

5.21 TANC will continue to provide its services across the City and County.

BLACK ACHIEVEMENT SCHOOL FOR EXCELLENCE [BASE]

Floor Target: Children’s Services

Background

5.22 BASE was established in 2003 and is a supplementary school under the umbrella of the Full Gospel Revival Centre and was set up to meet the educational and cultural needs of minorities but not exclusively. Tuition is provided in literacy, numeracy, IT, and cultural studies. BASE provides an after school facility at Riverside Primary in the Meadows during term time, a Saturday school at the Gospel Revival Centre, music tuition on two evenings a week, and all day holiday provision.

5.23 BASE is governed by a management committee of seven local people and the day-to-day management is overseen by the Centre Co-ordinator. The school is run by a qualified teacher, teacher’s assistants and volunteers.

5.24 The aims are to:

- Promote and aid educational opportunities to children and young people.
- To provide a safe learning environment where children and young people can learn and develop academic and non academic skills and where they can enjoy and achieve.
- To support what is taught in schools plus provide Afro-Caribbean cultural studies.

- To aid/assist in lifelong learning, training, and cultural activities.
- To promote healthy eating and physical exercise in line with the national eating programme for children.
- To ensure that BASE meets and exceeds the National Standards for Out of Hours Childcare in line with government extended schools agenda.

The Project

5.25 Grant received: £5,000.

5.26 A grant was awarded to enable BASE to run a specialist language course for children of Caribbean descent called Keskidee which is designed to aid children who have difficulty with language skills and grammar. It is offered over a period of 38 weeks for 20 children at Key Stages 2 and 3. These children who need additional help have been identified through the supplementary school and through parents. The grant covers the fees for a specialist literacy teacher, administration assistant hours, pupil and teacher books, posters, recruitment costs, and general costs for printing, paper, pencils, and stationery.

5.27 The Keskidee course is carried out at the Gospel Revival Centre in the heart of the Meadows community on Saturday mornings from 10.00am to 1.00pm. Thirty-two children and young people are registered for Saturday mornings aged between 4 and 16 years and they come from all over the City to attend. The tuition is managed in age groups with a qualified teacher or assistant leading each group. The children and young people work through a specialist curriculum using individual workbooks and are provided with a lot of one-to-one support. They are tested before they begin the course and tested at the end of the course to identify need and to measure progress.

5.28 The need for this course was identified through work already done with children and young people attending other sessions of the supplementary school or through parents who were concerned about poor attainment at school. Also national studies have shown that the relative performance for black Caribbean pupils begins high, starts to decline in Key Stage 2, tails off badly in Key Stage 3 and is below that of most other ethnic groups at Key Stage 4. The majority of the pupils who attend the school are from deprived areas or communities and it was recognised that these pupils need to do well at school so that they do not become disengaged and so they don't lose out on gaining the skills needed for future employment. This is one of the ways of breaking the cycle of deprivation.

Impact

5.29 The Keskidee language course has impacted on the children and young people in the following ways:

- Provided one-to-one support for children having difficulties with language skills in a safe learning environment.
- Raised levels of achievement in reading and writing.
- Increased confidence and aspirations.
- Helped children to identify with their cultural background.
- Helped children to understand dialect as part of their heritage and its appropriate use.

- Provided positive Afro Caribbean role models.
- Supported parents in engaging more easily with schools.
- Helped to encourage good behaviour.
- Provided an understanding and better skills for communicating with others.
- Provided links with schools and parents and children.

5.30 The wider benefit of the Keskidee language course is that the strengthening of skills helps children to stay engaged at school. In turn this has a ripple effect in the community by raising achievement levels among BME pupils. More confident and aspirational young people are less likely to become involved in anti social behaviour and more likely to have a brighter future.

5.31 Here are a few quotes from the young people:

“When I come here, I know I can ask a question and not feel stupid.”

“I like it because if I am a bit slow, I can get help.”

“I like doing the creative writing.”

Sustainability

5.32 The bespoke Keskidee programme will need further funding to continue as a separate language course but the course material and books will be integrated within English lessons where possible.

5.33 BASE is well supported in kind by the Full Gospel Revival Church with rent, utilities, and other services all free of charge to the organisation. This ensures stability and enables BASE to apply for funding for the resources and equipment that it needs to run its educational programmes. BASE will be seeking help to refurbish the existing building in the future.

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE YOUTH ORGANISATIONS NETWORK [NYON]

Safer Stronger Communities- Building the capacity of the voluntary and community sector

Background

5.34 NYON was established in 2001 and acts as a specialist infrastructure youth network supporting groups across the City and County. They have an established membership of youth groups and the service they offer provides timely information, training, support and advice. The network acts as a link between statutory and other organisations and is a voice for the voluntary youth sector locally, regionally, and nationally. Forums are facilitated to enable member participation and best practice is promoted in the sector.

The Project

- 5.35 Grant received: £ 8940.75.
- 5.36 A grant was awarded to enable NYON to:
- Update current information held on the database and to research new groups, particularly those working in BME communities.
 - Set up an e-bulletin to be sent out bi-monthly to all organisations on the database.
 - Set up forum meetings or network events.
 - Employ a part-time co-ordinator to carry out this work.
- 5.37 The need for the above work emerged as a result of three pieces of research conducted by NYON over the past two years on Quality Standards, Youth Participation, and BME Groups in Nottinghamshire which identified the need for further work to be carried out to support youth organisations marginalised in areas of deprivation in the City.

Impact

- 5.38 The database has been updated and 255 organisations are now registered with NYON. One-third of the registered groups are from BME communities and most of these are new to the database.
- 5.39 Two network forum events were held with a programme of speakers on relevant issues for young people. An email bulletin is sent out to all registered groups on a bi-monthly basis disseminating a wide range of information.
- 5.40 This project provides wider benefit in that it:
- Encourages good practice and better management which leads to stronger youth organisations.
 - Increases network opportunities and bring groups together across the City.
 - Provides a central resource point for information and advice concerning youth issues for other voluntary or statutory agencies.
 - Aids in the development of stronger more effective youth groups which in turn has an impact on crime, health, employment, and the well-being of local neighbourhoods.
- 5.41 Here are two quotes from the Forum meeting held in November 2007:
- “The youth forum was helpful to me because it helped me to find out what some of the other provision was in Nottingham and also, what problems some of the other providers are having with regards to funding etc.”
- “It was great to catch up with some people I haven't seen for a while and see what they are doing now.”

Sustainability

- 5.42 NYON has secured other funding which will enable the network to continue after this project is completed.

NOTTINGHAM ELDERS FORUM

Floor Target: Health

Background

- 5.43 Nottingham Elders Forum was established in 2003 and formally constituted in May 2006 to improve the social activity and quality of life of all people aged 50+ in the city of Nottingham. The Forum endeavours to enable people aged 50 and over to access educational, cultural, social and health welfare, and leisure. It also works to eliminate age disadvantage and discrimination.
- 5.44 The organisation is run and managed by older people with a growing membership of up to 900. It acts as a representative body dealing with issues that affect the elderly across the City of Nottingham. The Forum produces a newsletter that provides important topical information and highlights issues that affect older people. The newsletter also publicises the various events, activities, and meetings available to the members. The Forum works very hard to raise the profile of older people's issues, to enable older people to have a voice, and to keep its members well informed.

The Project

- 5.45 Grant received: £3353.
- 5.46 A grant was awarded to enable the Forum to run a weekly tea dance class held on Thursday afternoons at the Sherwood Community Centre. Over forty older people attend the class on a regular basis with numbers growing all the time and they enjoy a variety of dances and music. Refreshments are served during a short break time. Members come from across the City but more locally from Top Valley, Bestwood, Sherwood Rise, Mapperley, and Sherwood.
- 5.47 The idea of setting up regular tea dance sessions came from the members of the Forum who repeatedly asked for them. The radio station WMCA closed down its dance sessions and there seemed to be no other provision. To make it possible to hold the tea dances funding was required to hire a hall, for a music centre and CD's, and for refreshments.

Impact

- 5.48 On the face of it this activity may not seem to be a high impact project. However, this regular dance provision has made a big difference to the lives of the older people who attend. Many of the participants have lost their partners and are now on their own. They often feel that there is nowhere for them to go and experience a great sense of isolation and many have suffered from depression.

- 5.49 The tea dances provide a safe and welcoming place to go where older people can mix with their peers. It gets people out of their houses and socialising with others. This encourages new friendships and support networks within the community, boosts morale, reduces the sense of isolation and makes people feel a part of their community. It also introduces them to other activities and services for older people.
- 5.50 These regular sessions are not only good for mental and emotional health but also provide vital regular exercise appropriate to this age group. At least a third of the members are men who are at risk of cardio vascular disease and the dances encourage them to stay active. One of the members is a diabetic and since attending the class since it started in September, her sugar levels have stabilised. Another person suffers from osteo-arthritis and finds that the exercise helps him to forget about his problems for a short while and helps to keep him mobile. The more active older people are, the fewer health problems and a better quality of life which in turn reduces the call on health services.
- 5.51 The Forum holds dances in the Council House from time to time and has planned an Easter Bonnet Parade and Dance in March to be held at the Mechanics Institute in the City. They hope to reach out to older people in other areas with these events.
- 5.52 Quotes from participants:
- “What else would we do on a grey day like this? This is somewhere to go to meet other people, to get us out of the house, and to get some exercise.”
 - “I have been coming from the beginning and really enjoy dancing. I have diabetes and my doctor is really pleased with my sugar levels since I have been doing this.”
 - “We used to enjoy dancing when we were younger and this gets us out of the house.”
 - “Everyone is so friendly and you don’t have to know all the dances to take part and someone is always happy to show you if you want to learn.”

Sustainability

- 5.53 Now that the Forum has had help in setting up the tea dances, they intend to continue when the funding finishes. Members now pay a nominal fee for each session which will contribute towards future rent costs. The sessions have been so beneficial and popular that the members feel it is important that they continue in future and the management committee are committed to finding the resources to carry on. They are also considering applying for funding to hold dance sessions in other older people’s centres located in deprived areas in the City.

HERI KWETU

Floor Target: Reducing Crime, Employability

Background

- 5.54 Heri Kwetu was established in 2001 and its main purpose is to provide support and guidance to African refugees helping them to integrate into UK society. The organisation provides information and signposting for individuals and families, a variety of activities to aid in integration, relevant training, and has recently established a learning resource room. The organisation is located in the Forest Fields Advice Centre in a Neighbourhood Renewal priority area and has approximately 75 members using the service.
- 5.55 The idea for the service began with a local person who had originally come to the UK as a refugee and who now works as a community development officer. Through his own experience he understood the need for information and guidance when adjusting to a new country and a different culture and he found that many local people were coming to him for help and support. A management committee was formed to develop the group and consists of seven members who have all been African refugees themselves at one time but who are now employed or in full-time education.
- 5.56 Heri Kwetu has formed important partnerships with a variety of service providers in the City including Refugee Action, the Housing Service, and Social Services.

The Project

- 5.57 Grant received: £5000.
- 5.58 A grant was awarded for a Refugees' Driving Support Programme. This enabled the group to:
- Equip a learning resource room with six PC's.
 - Provide computer training including basic skills leading to a driving support programme over a period of 26 weeks for 4 hours a week.
 - Cover the rent for the 26 week training period.
- 5.59 The learning resource room is located in the Forest Fields Advice Centre and the training is offered on Thursdays and Saturdays with flexibility for individual needs.
- 5.60 The need for the programme became evident when over a two month period the Chairman had to accompany 18 people to recover vehicles from the police. All of these vehicles had been seized as a result of the driver not having a licence. It also became apparent that Heri Kwetu members lacked confidence in taking the driving test due to English being a second language.
- 5.61 Twenty-two people have benefited from the training programme to date and the majority are from the Radford area. They are all African refugees.

Impact

5.62 Local benefit demonstrated by this project:

- The reduction of driving offences in the area in relation to lack of a licence.
- The acquisition of new IT skills.
- The building of confidence in the ability to communicate and learn new skills.
- The building of interest and confidence to continue with further training.
- Employment opportunities as a result of passing the driving test

5.63 These quotes have been taken from two of the beneficiaries who have been involved in driving related crime on many occasions and have completed the training, passed both theory and practical test, and secured employment.

"I was referred to this programme by a police officer who arrested me due to a driving related offence. I have been driving for many years without the appropriate license documentation as I did not have much relevant information about driving in the UK. On this programme, the trainer has really helped me understand why it was important to have the appropriate training and documents before driving a car in the UK. He also made me understand that by driving legally I could increase my chance of being more employable. Now that I have passed my driving test, I have managed to secure a long term job in Grantham and got off benefit. I can now drive to and from work without fearing the police. I would like to thank Nottinghamshire Community Foundation for having given me this opportunity and chance to enlighten my life and future through the project."

"This programme has helped me switch from a bad boy to a good boy. I have been arrested on more than one occasions due to my involvement in car robbery and illegal driving. I spent many months in jail, and when I left jail my mother's pastor referred me to Heri Kwetu for guidance and support with integration. The project worker told me that there was a number of projects that could help me integrate in the society and become an active citizen. I attended a number of training courses on offer but was particularly interested in the driving related one as I always wanted to work as a folk lift driver. I was offered a place on this training which helped me gain more confidence and pass both theory and practical tests. After the training I have managed to secure a temporary job in Derby, which I wouldn't have secured without a UK full driving license, while taking my folk lift driving training. Many thanks to the funder of this project and Heri Kwetu."

Sustainability

5.64 Heri Kwetu hope to join with other partners in seeking funding including the Nottingham Refugee Forum and Refugee Action. They will also continue to pursue other funding streams such as the Paul Hamlyn Foundation.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

- 6.1 This final section of the report draws out our main conclusions and recommendations.

Conclusions

- 6.2 The SGS is essentially about ‘narrowing the gap’ between the more deprived and marginalised areas and communities and the average, or indeed, the least deprived and most affluent. There are a range of initiatives and programmes which share this goal operating in Nottingham of course, but the distinctive feature of the SGS is that it engages small, grassroots community groups and their members and volunteers in the neighbourhood renewal process.
- 6.3 A key strength of the SGS is that it enables groups to become self-directing and self-reliant, facilitates the engagement of priority communities and groups and is flexible and accessible to grassroots groups with little prior experience of accessing and using external funding. Another distinctive feature and attribute of the SGS is that it is purely activity driven since the funding cannot be used to cover core costs. Although a disadvantage in some respects, given the low overheads of the majority of community groups and their reliance on volunteering, this seems appropriate.
- 6.4 Our major conclusion is that there is compelling evidence [quantitative and qualitative] from this evaluation to suggest that the SGS is achieving its core aim – it has enabled many grassroots groups [often for the first time] to take a more active role in neighbourhood renewal through engagement in organised activities whilst at the same time enhancing their capacity. One significant headline finding is that we estimate that in the region of 38,000 people within the city may have benefited from activities funded by the SGS since April 2006. Another, is that almost half of the projects and activities which have been funded may not have gone ahead at all without the SGS financial and associated support.
- 6.5 The activities supported by the SGS appear to have empowered local communities in several ways, especially through enabling local people to actually join in, take part and deliver activities within and for their local communities, similarly a significant number of projects have engaged local people in organising and managing projects themselves. This suggests a significant degree of empowerment realised through self-reliance and mutual effort and collaboration.
- 6.6 Groups themselves have benefited from access to funding in terms of being able to develop and deliver projects which increase the quality and accessibility of their activities and services within deprived areas coupled with developing and introducing new kinds of activities and resources which address local needs very directly. Their capacity has also been enhanced through involvement in application, delivery and monitoring processes as well as access to advice and guidance from NCN/NCVS and NCF support workers.
- 6.7 Our second conclusion is that there seems to be quite a close correlation between SGS-funded activities and four of the Floor Targets – Employment, Health, Children’s Services and Crime. The fund seems to be supporting activities which contribute to all four Safer, Stronger Targets – VCS capacity-building, involvement in decision-making, volunteering opportunities and community cohesion. But at a spatial level, there is some scope to target some of the most deprived areas in the city.

- 6.8 A third conclusion is that the grant funding model developed by NCF, and the processes which underpin it is fit for purpose and effective although also resource intensive in some respects. Application, assessment, appraisal and communication procedures are well documented and are now tried and tested. There are several steps in the chain from application to grant award and then monitoring thereafter, but they are appropriate and efficiently managed by and large. The Grants Panel component is the most innovative feature and has proven to be a mechanism which is both rigorous and fair, much to the credit of the Panel members as well as NCF. Where there does seem to be scope for improvement, however, is in regard to the application and monitoring forms and the guidance issued in relation to both by NCF.
- 6.9 The NCF have proved to be an effective fund manager and have a reputation for being knowledgeable, independent and reliable. Despite not being based in the city they are also regarded as accessible. They are widely regarded as being a 'safe pair of hands' in managing the fund, efficient administrators and accountable to their key stakeholders. The costs associated with performing their role are not unreasonable given the range of tasks time-intensive tasks involved, the size of the fund and the large number of applicants and funded groups.
- 6.10 Fourth, there is a need to revisit the structuring of the grant awards. Specifically, the definition of a 'strategic grant' is poor and in our view unnecessary – we see no real value or justification in introducing an additional kind of eligibility/appraisal criteria for applications in excess of £5,000. Moreover, an upper limit of £10,000 for grant awards for a scheme of this kind appears to be unduly high. On the other hand a lower limit of £50 is clearly too small – the very small number of awards above £5,000 and below £1,000 suggests to us that these would serve as an appropriate banding for the fund.
- 6.11 Fifth, the outreach and support arrangements for the SGS appear to have worked well and are founded on a key relationship between NCF and NCN/NCVS. Substantial efforts have been made to promote the SGS, alongside other sources of funding, to priority communities and within priority neighbourhoods since 2006 and with some success. NCN/NCVS are ideally placed to perform their outreach and support role given their experience, expertise, location and credibility within the community sector across the city. Given the levels of activity the costs associated with this work appear reasonable in our view.
- 6.12 Where there does appear to have been a shortcoming is in relation to the limited specification of target outcomes associated with the agreement between NCF and NCVS/NCN. Greater clarity and actually more target outcomes would seem appropriate in the future. There is also scope to improve sign-posting and referral arrangements and to jointly promote and coordinate the SGS support available to groups from both NCN and NCF.

Recommendations

- 6.13 It is our understanding that ONE Nottingham are likely to allocate £500,000 towards the continuation of the Neighbourhood Renewal Small Grants Programme for 2008 – 2009 but that this is also a transition year since their Community and Neighbourhood Partnership Group are to be engaged in developing a new Delivery Plan during the year. This is a welcome development and would seem to be supported by the evidence gathered in the course of this evaluation.

6.14 Against this background, we would like to make the following recommendations:

- I. The future promotion of the SGS needs to clearly position it in relation to the new Grassroots Communities Fund as well as existing funding sources for the community sector, emphasizing points of similarity and of difference. This, together with the crucial issue of the targeting of investment in the most deprived/priority areas, should be the subject of detailed discussions with ONE Nottingham, NCVS/NCN, the City Council's Single Gateway Small Grants Team and other partners in Neighbourhood Renewal.
- II. The SGS Application Form and Guidance notes are reviewed in an effort to further aid clarity for the applicant and ensure that the information collected is appropriate to the appraisal process and particularly the needs of Grant Panel members. We feel that a clearer distinction could be made between eligibility criteria on the one hand, and appraisal criteria on the other. The opportunity to access support from NCN/NCVS and/or NCF needs to feature more prominently and be explained more clearly. Perhaps some examples of how previous project's have made use of this support and addressed specific Floor/ Safer, Stronger Targets could be included in an 'application pack' together with the application form and guidance.
- III. The SGS fund should set a lower limit of £1,000 and an upper limit of £5,000 [or possibly £6,000] for grant awards. References to so-called 'strategic projects' should be removed with all applications being assessed according to the same criteria.
- IV. The SGS Monitoring Form also needs to be reviewed to ensure it is fit for purpose in terms of the performance management information needs of ONE Nottingham and the Accountable Body Nottingham City Council. The views of grant recipients should also be sought regarding any proposed changes to the layout, wording and structure.
- V. The feasibility of developing an on-line application and monitoring system should be explored, although of course this is an issue of relevance to other funds managed by NCF.
- VI. The SGS outreach and support agreement between NCF and NCVS/NCN needs to be carefully reviewed. There needs to be a more precise definition of key performance indicators and the data which must be collected to monitor against the agreed targets. These indicators should focus on what NCN does to promote the fund and their offer of support, the take-up and type of support provided to prospective applicants, capacity-building assistance and the number of groups assisted who subsequently submit applications for SGS funding.
- VII. Last year's celebratory event was accompanied by the publication of an excellent booklet. At this or possibly next year's event we would suggest that a DVD is produced featuring some of the projects and beneficiaries from a selection of those funded over the past two years and other people involved in the SGS such as NCN's Outreach Worker, NCF's Grant Support Worker and Grant Panel members. This could be shown at the event and also support future promotional and outreach activities.