

Evaluation of Reaching Communities in England and Northern Ireland

The Big Lottery Fund

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C3330 / March 2008

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Executive Summary

Introduction

Reaching Communities is operating in England and Northern Ireland between 2005-2009. This report presents the findings from the first year of ECOTEC's evaluation of Reaching Communities in England and Northern Ireland. The evaluation is being undertaken by ECOTEC Research & Consulting in conjunction with Boyd Consulting in Northern Ireland. The central aim of the evaluation is:

To assess the effectiveness of projects within the Reaching Communities programmes in England and Northern Ireland in identifying, defining and meeting the needs of the people they aim to benefit.

Reaching Communities England

In England, the three-year Reaching Communities programme was launched in December 2005 and focuses on projects that target both geographic communities and communities with specific needs. The programme is working to bring about four outcomes: giving people better chances in life; stronger communities with more active citizens; improved urban and rural environments and healthier and more active communities. To date, 847 projects have been successful and over £180 million of funds have been awarded.

Reaching Communities Northern Ireland

Reaching Communities Northern Ireland is making approximately £18 million available between 2006 and 2009 to local communities. The programme is working to bring about four outcomes: giving people the opportunity to achieve their potential; active participation in communities; community ownership of better and safer environments and improved physical and mental health for all people. The funds will be distributed in five tranches between 2006-2009. To date 15 projects have been awarded funding to the value of almost £6.5 million, under two tranches.

Methodology

The methodology for the evaluation has included the development of an evaluation framework, consultation with stakeholders, an annual survey of funded projects, a series of case studies¹ and analysis of programme data provided by BIG. Throughout the evaluation, projects are being supported to self-evaluate through a self-evaluation toolkit

¹ There are no Northern Ireland case studies yet due to the longer lead-in time of those projects.

and support mechanisms including a website and email support. This report draws on the findings of each of these methods. For more details on the methodology contact Nicola Hall at ECOTEC (nicola.hall@ecotec.com).

Identifying need

Reaching Communities aims to fund projects that help those most in need including those people or groups who are hard to reach. Both programmes so far have a very broad scope in terms of the needs they are meeting. In terms of outcomes, projects in Reaching Communities England are more focused on outcome one (better chances in life) (77%) with relatively few projects addressing needs relating to outcome three (environments) (11%). In Northern Ireland there is more of a spread across the four outcomes again with less focus on the environmental outcome. Projects in both programmes are also generally addressing at least two outcomes. Projects tend to define 'need' and 'most in need' in terms of a target group with a particular need(s) coupled with an activity to meet that need. There is some clustering of focus around young people's needs and needs relating to health and disability. Projects generally define specific sub-groups within a broader category, for example specific groups of young people with educational needs. In both countries there is generally a good geographical spread in terms of where projects are delivering to meet needs.

To identify needs, projects have generally used their own experience and local knowledge, but have also used local deprivation data and local plans to help them formulate their project. So far only a small proportion of projects (5%) indicate that the needs they identified have changed and relatively few have had to adapt their project so far. In many cases commencing project delivery has enabled projects to gain a better understanding of the nature and extent of the needs locally. In terms of meeting needs, Reaching Communities is supporting a wide range of organisations to deliver projects, three quarters of which are either three or five years in length. The majority of funding is directed at the voluntary sector (70%) with a further third going to limited companies which includes community enterprises, credit unions and local branches of national charities as well as a small proportion of statutory bodies. Projects are using a range of activities to meet the identified needs ranging from advice and guidance through to specific service delivery (care, sports or youth services for example).

Involving beneficiaries

Reaching Communities supports projects which involve beneficiaries and local communities at all stages of a project from identification of the needs, through project planning, to delivery, management and evaluation. Early findings suggest a high degree of beneficiary involvement with three-quarters involving them to some extent in identifying the

needs the project should address (74%). Beneficiaries and local communities have also been involved in project activities once projects are up and running, and the evidence from the survey suggests this is happening to a significant extent in the programme. Involvement is at its highest around evaluation, as might be anticipated, projects are involving beneficiaries in formal feedback through surveys as well as more informal feedback. High proportions of projects also say beneficiaries are involved in project planning and delivery (93% each). Involvement in project planning includes involving the community as members of management committees (38%), and through user forums (6%). Involvement in delivery has taken the form of becoming mentors, through befriending schemes and by training as volunteers to help deliver services. However, involving beneficiaries in more strategic management and decision-making aspects of a project is less common (22%) and this is perhaps a more challenging area for projects. The case studies however demonstrate some innovative approaches to doing this.

Involving beneficiaries appears to be leading to some positive outcomes both for projects – who find it easier to meet their outcomes and more able to meet the needs of the local community – and for the individuals themselves who get involved in terms of improvements in confidence for beneficiaries and empowerment of local communities (78% and 54% respectively).

Meeting the needs

Given the rolling format in which grants are awarded in Reaching Communities and the length of funding available (of up to five years), to date, for the majority of projects it is too early to be able to assess whether the needs they identified have been met and whether they have reached those most in need. For example in the Reaching Communities England only 25 projects to date could potentially have finished and in the survey only 24 projects (8%) said they would be complete by the time of the next survey. In Reaching Communities Northern Ireland projects are only just getting under way. Similarly it is a little early to draw conclusions about whether Reaching Communities has contributed to reducing disadvantage or compare which approaches have been most effective in doing so. These evaluation questions will be addressed in the latter years of the evaluation.

Completed projects have used multiple sources to evidence their outcomes, including informal feedback from beneficiaries (88%), measures of attendance at events/meetings/activities (75%) and level of demand or take-up of services (63%). Three in five are using self-evaluation of some form (63%). Early feedback does indicate that positive impacts are beginning to show and that projects are meeting the needs they identified. Early indications point to positive health outcomes and improved community cohesion and capacity as a result of projects completed to date. Around half of completed projects say

they reached 'hard to reach' groups to a large extent (54%) and a further half (50%) feel they had to a large extent reached the 'most in need'. Since Reaching Communities is able to fund existing activity, many projects will be seeing continued positive impacts building on previous work, as in one of the case studies which has redesigned services to help rural family carers access support and befriending services.

Early evidence suggests that Reaching Communities is supporting activity which is additional to existing provision and many projects say they expect to see benefits of their projects beyond the life of the funding, although many feel they will need continued funding to achieve this.

Implications

Further work could be undertaken to promote a greater understanding among potential applicants and successful projects around the various levels of 'participation' and encouraging projects to facilitate a deeper understanding of this aspect and to encourage more innovative approaches to this. For example projects are most likely to be involving beneficiaries in identifying needs and in evaluation, but to a lesser extent in the management and decision-making processes. Further beneficiary involvement could perhaps be encouraged through ensuring good practice examples are circulated. Tools and mechanism for doing so effectively would be beneficial.

Currently the regional allocations of funding in England and Northern Ireland are fairly well spread, and most outcomes are being worked towards (perhaps less so the environmental outcome in both programmes). Big Lottery already provide information regarding these two issues to the programme committee on a regular basis, and we recommend continued discussion and monitoring of this distribution throughout the programme, with the opportunity to take appropriate action if required.

The evaluation needs to ensure that case studies provide further details on how projects are defining 'most in need' and deprived groups to gain further detail on this subject. It will be interesting to explore in more depth how projects have identified those 'most in need' among people from their target group who are accessing their project. In particular it would be useful to explore how the 'most in need' have been involved in identifying needs and designing, managing and evaluating projects to assess whether those needs have been met.

Over the course of the evaluation, the researchers will need to continue to explore with case studies the extent to which they feel they are contributing to reducing disadvantage in the local area. This will be drawn out in subsequent reports.

Self evaluation is a critical element in a programme of this size and further promotion of the self-evaluation materials available through the Toolkit and Website will be helpful in order to encourage projects to self-evaluate consistently and using more formal and appropriate mechanisms.

The vast majority of projects (70%) expect to continue after BIG funding. Providing support and advice on how to maximise opportunities for continuation is key to ensuring the on going impact of Reaching Communities funding. This could be in the form of a toolkit, events or good practice guidance.

1.0 Introduction

ECOTEC Research and Consulting Ltd is delighted to present this annual report of the Evaluation of the Reaching Communities Programme in England and Northern Ireland. This report presents the findings from the first year of the evaluation.

1.1 About Reaching Communities

The Big Lottery Fund (BIG) is the distributor of National Lottery funding in the UK. Reaching Communities is part of the Big Lottery Fund's current portfolio of programmes. It is designed to meet the needs of communities in England and Northern Ireland. Reaching Communities is operating in England and Northern Ireland between 2005-2009. Following a consultation and review of the way funds are allocated, in 2005, BIG now has a stated undertaking to focus 60-70% of funding on the third sector and provide funding that is demand-led and lightly prescriptive. Reaching Communities encapsulates this approach.

1.1.1 Reaching Communities England

In England, the three-year Reaching Communities programme was launched in December 2005. The England programme focuses on projects that target both geographic communities and communities with specific needs¹. The programme aims to fund projects that help those most in need including those people or groups who are hard to reach. The programme aims to support those projects which best meet their communities' needs. It also focuses on projects that actively engage with local communities and involve them in the project from start to finish. Projects that complement local plans, strategic programmes or initiatives are also particularly relevant.

Reaching Communities England is aiming to bring about the following outcomes:

- People having better chances in life, including being able to get access to training and development to improve their life skills;
- Strong communities, with more active citizens, working together to tackle their problems;
- Improved rural and urban environments, which communities are better able to access and enjoy; and
- Healthier and more active people and communities.

¹ Known as communities of interest.

Reaching Communities England is open to:

- registered charities;
- voluntary or community groups;
- statutory bodies (including schools);
- charitable or not-for-profit company; and
- social enterprises¹.

In its first year, Reaching Communities England awarded grants of approximately £100 million during 2006-7. The programme is now into its second year of grant allocation, with a further £100 million being made available in 2007-8. Grants are awarded in a monthly rolling programme of grant-making. The programme is focused on providing capital and revenue grants available of between £10,000 and £500,000, including a maximum of £50,000 for capital grants. There is a maximum overall project size of £750,000 and £200,000 for the total capital element within a project. Projects from one year in length up to five years can be funded. This means the size of grant available is larger than usual and over a longer time-frame than is normally available. Reaching Communities differs from its predecessors in that it is able to offer funding to existing projects – rather than only new ones – and that it can fund projects for 5 years.

To date, over 800 projects have been successful and over £180 million of funds have been awarded. The budget for year three of the programme will be announced in 2008 and grants will continue to be awarded on a monthly basis until March 2009.

There have been high levels of interest in the programme and it has been over-subscribed, often resulting in good projects being unable to be funded. BIG undertook a review at the end of the first year of the programme and have been making regular improvements to the outline and full application forms to ensure clarity and manage demand. The demand-led nature of the programme has led to an extremely diverse range of projects being supported.

1.1.2 Reaching Communities Northern Ireland

Reaching Communities Northern Ireland was launched in Northern Ireland in April 2006. Approximately £18 million is being made available between 2006 and 2009. The programme is making grants to voluntary and community led organisations, where beneficiaries and the wider community are involved in all aspects of the project. The programme will fund projects for between three to five years and the minimum and

¹ Defined as a business that is chiefly run for social objectives, whose profits are reinvested in the business rather than going to shareholders and owners.

maximum grant sizes are £100k and £500k (the lower limit being significantly higher than in the England programme). Funding is mainly available for revenue funding; capital costs must not exceed 10%.

Reaching Communities Northern Ireland is aiming to bring about the following outcomes:

- People have the opportunity to achieve their full potential;
- People can actively participate in their communities to bring about positive change;
- Community ownership of better and safer rural and urban environments; and
- Improved physical and mental health for all people.

The £18 million will be distributed in five discrete tranches over the 2006-2009 period. The first two tranches of funding took place in 2007 and 15 projects have been awarded funding (10 in tranche one and 5 in tranche two) with a value of almost £6.5 million. Reaching Communities Northern Ireland was reviewed internally in mid 2007 to ensure that Lottery grants are awarded to projects that best meet the needs of Northern Ireland's most disadvantaged communities. Revised application materials and guidance notes are now publicly available. The remaining three tranches of funding will take place in 2008. As with the Reaching Communities England, the programme has been heavily over-subscribed often resulting in very good projects being unable to be funded. A support and development contract, provided by NICVA, is in operation offering assistance to funded Northern Ireland programme projects.

1.2 Background

The Evaluation of Reaching Communities is a four year evaluation taking place between January 2007 and December 2010. The evaluation is being undertaken by ECOTEC Research & Consulting in conjunction with Boyd Consulting in Northern Ireland. The central aim of the evaluation is:

To assess the effectiveness of projects within the Reaching Communities programmes in England and Northern Ireland in identifying, defining and meeting the needs of the people they aim to benefit.

The specific objectives of the programme evaluation are:

Evaluation Objectives
To assess how projects have identified and defined: need, people most in need and hard to reach groups and individuals
To examine how projects have considered local strategies to produce evidence of need
To examine how projects have involved beneficiaries and local communities in identifying their own needs
To consider how beneficiaries and local communities have been involved in project planning and delivery
To assess if projects have met the needs of hard to reach groups and the 'most in need'
To look at the effectiveness of projects and the programme in reducing disadvantage and exclusion
To compare different project approaches to identifying and addressing need in order to reduce disadvantage and exclusion for hard to reach groups and the most in need
To compare the different approaches for addressing need in Northern Ireland and England

1.3 Methodology

The methodology for the evaluation has involved quantitative and qualitative research methods, as follows.

The first phase of the evaluation was to develop an **evaluation framework** which outlined the evaluation questions and key indicators which would be assessed for each. The evaluation framework was designed following consultation with programme stakeholders¹ and initial desk research. The evaluation framework was used to design all research tools.

Projects in England and Northern Ireland were invited to complete an **annual online survey**. In year one the survey took place during November 2007 and in total 325 responses were received (319 from England, representing a 42% response rate and 6 from Northern Ireland, representing a 60% response rate²). In addition, a desk research element of the evaluation involves the **analysis of programme management data** provided by BIG on each of the projects, collected from application and monitoring data³.

A series of **case studies** are being developed through project visits which are taking place throughout the evaluation in England and Northern Ireland. Visits involve desk research,

¹ Feedback from stakeholders is included as a separate section in Annex One of this report. Key findings are included in Chapter Five.

² Only the 10 projects from tranche one of the Northern Ireland programme were invited to complete the year one survey hence small numbers in the survey.

³ Data received up to the end of December 2007 has been used as the basis for this report.

in-depth interviews and focus groups with project managers, staff, partners and beneficiaries. In total 58 case study visits will take place, 45 in England and 13 in Northern Ireland. These will combine a mixture of *snapshot* case studies and *longitudinal* case studies where some projects will be visited up to three times. In year one, seven visits took place, all in England¹. Case studies are being selected to reflect the diversity of projects and communities being supported under the programmes.

Throughout the evaluation, projects are being supported to self-evaluate through a **self-evaluation toolkit** which is made available to all projects in hard copy and via an evaluation **website** (www.reachingcommunities.org). The website also contains examples of research tools for projects to download and use, and links to further advice and materials. ECOTEC is also providing self-evaluation support to projects through a series of annual **networking events**² and an **email helpline** (reaching.communities@ecotec.com). Projects that complete a self-evaluation are encouraged to send this to ECOTEC for secondary analysis and inclusion in the annual report.

The evaluation also contains a comparative aspect, which will take account of how projects in both programmes have successfully identified, understood, defined and met the needs of the people and communities they aim to benefit. Initial findings from all of the above strands of research have been used in the production of this report.

For more details on the methodology contact Nicola Hall at ECOTEC (nicola.hall@ecotec.com).

1.3.1 Timeline

Reaching Communities will continue to award funding to successful grantees until 2009 in England and through three more tranches in Northern Ireland; project activity is likely to continue for up to five years after the closure of the programmes. The evaluation of both the programmes will continue until December 2010, with much of the research methodology being undertaken each year (for example surveys and case study visits). This report is the first of four annual reports to the Big Lottery Fund drawing on the information collected so far. Further annual reports will be presented in 2008, 2009 and a final report in 2010.

1.3.2 Presentation of data

This report combines qualitative and quantitative evidence collected by the research. All figures are rounded to the nearest whole %. Figures relating to survey data in some tables

¹ No visits took place in Northern Ireland as the projects have longer lead-in times and the minimum project length is three years therefore snapshot case studies will be weighted towards the end of the evaluation.

² The outcomes from the event are available at www.reachingcommunities.org/events.asp

and charts may not sum to 100% due to multiple or non-response or rounding and. Responses to the survey from England and Northern Ireland have been analysed and presented together due to the small numbers of projects, and thus, responses in Northern Ireland which cannot be considered statistically reliable on their own. The full results from the annual survey are available in Annex Two. Throughout the report we refer to programme data provided by the Big Lottery Fund. This data is provided monthly and is presented separately for each programme.

We also make use of qualitative feedback from case studies. Where this is the case, it is important to note that qualitative research is designed to explore issues in detail and be illustrative but that it is not designed to be statistically representative. Views presented by participants are based on perceptions and opinions and do not always reflect the views of the whole group. Findings from the results of both the survey and the focus groups are presented alongside each other throughout this report, and sources are identified where appropriate.

1.4 Structure of this report

This remainder of this report contains four main sections which address the evaluation questions outlined above:

- **Section 2** explores how projects have identified and defined need, and how they designed their activities to meet those needs.
- **Section 3** contains a description of how Reaching Communities is involving beneficiaries and the effects and impact of this.
- **Section 4** looks at the early impacts of the programmes, assessing whether projects have met the needs they identified.
- **Section 5** provides conclusions and implications.

The Annexes contain a paper with feedback from stakeholders collected during the scoping stage of the evaluation (Annex One) and the marked-up results of the annual survey (Annex Two).

2.0 Identifying need

2.1 Introduction

Reaching Communities in England and Northern Ireland aims to fund projects that help those most in need including those people or groups who are hard to reach. This section of the report looks at the needs that projects funded to date are addressing (section 2.2), how they identified those needs (section 2.3) and what activities are being undertaken to meet the identified needs (section 2.4).

2.2 What needs are being addressed

To date, the Reaching Communities England has awarded 847 grants to projects amounting to over £180 million of funding. Fifteen grants have been awarded in Northern Ireland with a value of nearly £6.5 million.

2.2.1 Outcomes

The England and Northern Ireland programmes both have a very broad scope in terms of the needs and outcomes they are aiming to address. The following Table 2.1 illustrates the outcomes being addressed in the England programme. There is a clear trend towards projects meeting needs around ‘improving people’s chances in life’ with three quarters of projects addressing this need (77%). In contrast, relatively few projects (11%) are addressing needs around ‘improved rural and urban environments’. It is also clear that on average projects are addressing at least two outcomes each and that projects are therefore attempting to identify needs in a more rounded way.

Table 2.1 All project outcomes, Reaching Communities England

Outcome	Number of projects	%
1. People having better chances in life	650	77
2. Stronger communities, with more active citizens	625	74
3. Improved rural and urban environments	93	11
4. Healthier and more active people and communities	449	53

Source: ECOTEC, based on programme data from Big Lottery Fund (2008)

The following Table 2.2 illustrates the programme outcomes being addressed in the Northern Ireland programme. In Northern Ireland the funded projects cover all four of the programme outcomes and projects are on average working towards between two and three outcomes. The first tranche of ten projects are all working towards two of the four outcomes, except one which is working towards only one outcome. The most common outcomes in the first tranche are outcomes one and two relating to 'helping people achieve their full potential' and 'active participation in the community to achieve positive change'. Only one project is working towards the outcome around 'community ownership of safer rural and urban environments'¹. Projects in the second tranche are all working towards three outcomes each, mainly outcomes one, two and four. This indicates projects funded in the second tranche may have a wider focus and greater range of needs being identified.

Table 2.2 All project outcomes, Reaching Communities Northern Ireland

Programme outcome	Number of projects
1. People have the opportunity to achieve their full potential	13
2. Active participation in communities to bring about positive change	12
3. Improved physical and mental health for all people	11
4. Community ownership of better and safer rural and urban environments	3

Source: ECOTEC, based on programme data from Big Lottery Fund (2008)

2.2.2 Target groups of needs

The Reaching Communities programmes in both countries are supporting a wide variety of projects with an extremely wide range of needs being identified; no single area of need currently stands out. Feedback from the annual survey of projects illustrates that instead the programme appears to be targeting a highly diverse range of needs. Projects were asked to explain in qualitative terms the needs their project sets out to address. Projects tend to define 'need' and 'most in need' in terms of a target group with a particular need(s) coupled with an activity to meet that need². For example projects identify a local geographical community with a need for better community facilities, or a community of interest such as young people or an ethnic group. Within that they identify the 'most in need' within that group, for example young people with educational needs, or young people from particular ethnic groups who need specific support. Some examples extracted from the survey are given below.

"The project aims to regenerate the central area of the village by providing a community facility in a converted part of the bell tower of the Church. This will allow isolated groups, e.g. elderly and mother and baby groups, to meet, socialise and self help. The facility will

¹ Source: Big Lottery Fund programme data, 2007.

² More detail on activities to meet the needs is provided in Section 2.4 below.

also allow the church to be used for concerts, exhibitions and plays for the benefit of the wider community".

"Many parents with children under 13 years are struggling to cope. Parents are in need of support and guidance that meets their individual needs in order to help them improve their relationships with their children, and their ability to understand and cope with their children's development and behaviour".

"Our goals are to make horticulture and growing your own food appeal to people of all cultures and ages. We have linked closely with local primary schools to enable children to gain the knowledge of how to grow your own food, which in turn they can pass onto parents and grandparents alike. This then promotes a healthier society through free exercise, a sense of achievement and well being and also the fact that eating healthily and cheaply can influence your life". (Reaching Communities projects, England)

"Individuals suffering from COPD/Chronic Respiratory conditions and their families. This under resourced and disadvantaged group suffer from social isolation, social stigma and social disadvantage, they need support, guidance, information, education, psychological, psychosocial and practical support, they need help on managing and understanding their condition. The communities they live in also need education and information about this condition, the impact of this and the trauma on the family network".

(Reaching Communities project, Northern Ireland)
Source: ECOTEC Survey 2007

This example from the case studies also demonstrates this approach: the Fusion project (run by London Symphony Orchestra) has identified the most 'hard to reach' groups as young people from single parent families, and the project is investigating ways to reach them by working with local youth clubs to advertise, promote and encourage them to participate.

The survey findings reveal that, while on the whole the programmes are targeting a very broad range of needs, and in England¹ there is some clustering of needs around young people's needs (13%), medical or health needs including mental health needs (10%), needs of minority groups such as black and minority ethnic groups (BME) (8%), disability (7%) and homelessness (7%). More specifically projects in England are targeting well-defined or very specific issues such as feelings of isolation, improving well-being or self-confidence and increasing participation. There are also a number of projects aiming to

¹ The NI sample size is too small to make observations on clustering

help people suffering from some form of abuse or violence¹. In Northern Ireland there are also a number of projects focussing on health needs such as respiratory conditions (as illustrated above), and people affected by cancer and mental health conditions.

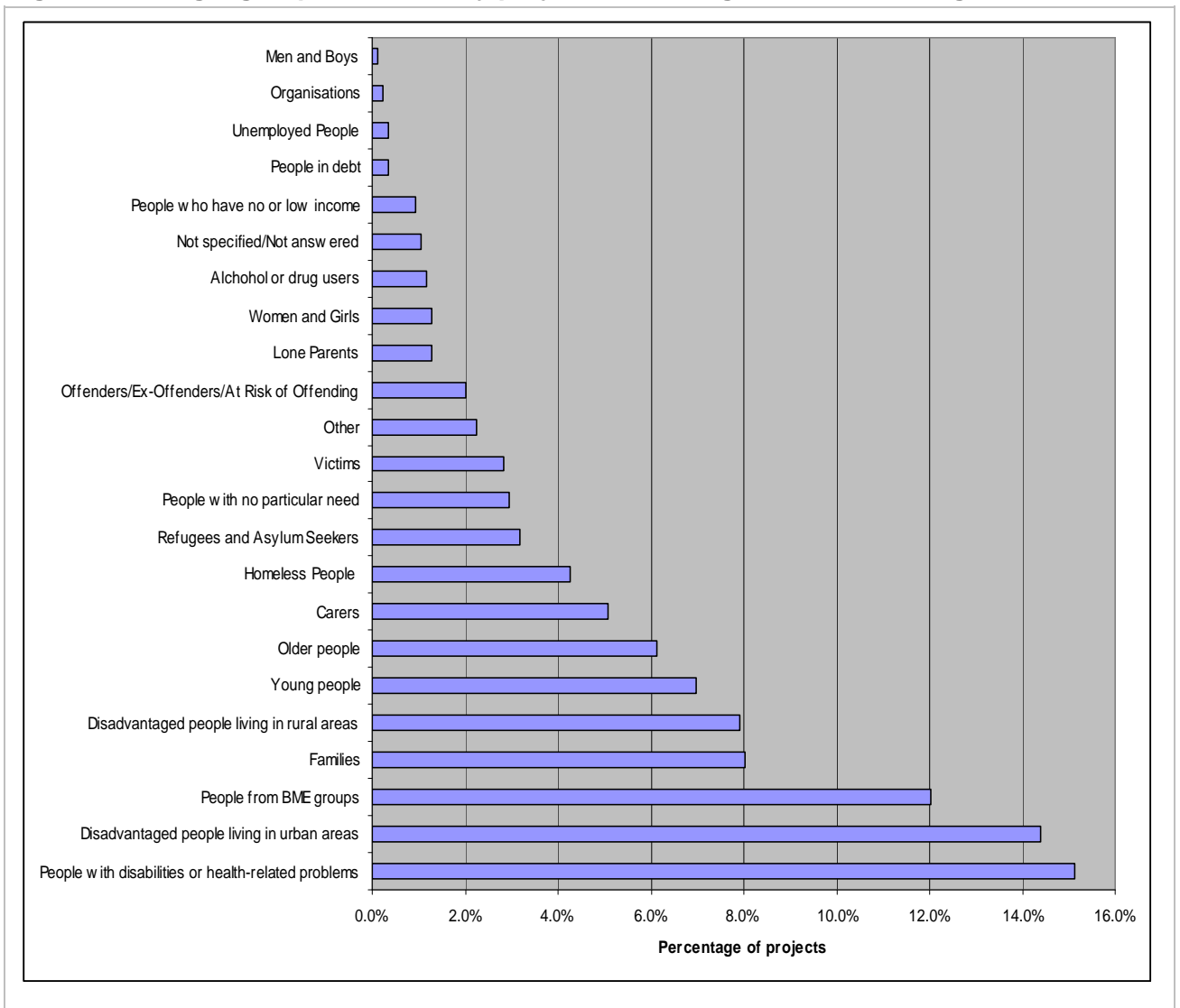
Programme level data collected by BIG provides further insight into the needs that have been identified through the programmes. In terms of target groups being identified, in the England programme projects are - on average - working with two target groups² and are generally targeting an identified target group (or groups) with specific needs, in a specific geographic area, for example Asian women in Oldham who need assistance in moving closer towards the labour market, or young people at risk of homelessness in Bradford.

Programme level data collected by BIG on the target groups that projects in England are working with are illustrated in Figure 2.1. As with the survey findings, this illustrates the wide variety of target groups being identified as having needs through the programme, with no single group being targeted by more than 15% of projects. Groups identified as having needs are diverse, ranging from those who have housing needs, through to health or disability related needs or educational and training type needs. As with survey findings, people with health problems or a disability feature strongly, as do people from BME groups, however projects targeting young people are less prominent in the programme as a whole. 'Disadvantaged people living in urban areas' and 'disadvantaged people living in rural areas' feature strongly across the programme as a whole; this is not surprising given the wide range of possible interpretations of this definition. It is to be expected that a significant proportion of projects will be seeking to meet the needs of disadvantaged people in its widest sense. The proportion of projects targeting those with no or a low income and projects around worklessness and unemployment are lower than might be expected; this is perhaps because projects in this area of work are typically funded under alternative funding streams.

¹ Please see responses to Q8 in the marked up survey in Annex Two for a full breakdown.

² Using the definitions used on the Big Lottery Fund application documentation.

Figure 2.1 Target groups identified by projects, Reaching Communities England



Source: ECOTEC, based on programme data from Big Lottery Fund (2008). Note: This figure uses the first target group identified by projects in application data held by Big Lottery Fund.

In Northern Ireland the 15 funded projects are each working with one stated target group, as the following table illustrates. Supporting the findings of the survey described above, one third of projects are working with target groups with health or disability related needs, the rest are covering a wide range of needs from drug and alcohol needs to the needs of carers.

Table 2.3 Target groups identified by projects, Reaching Communities Northern Ireland

Target group	Number of projects
People with disabilities or health-related problems	5
Disadvantaged people living in urban areas	2
Young people	2
Carers	2
People from BME groups	1
Older people	1
Alcohol or drug users	1
Not specified/Not answered	1
Total	15

Source: ECOTEC, based on programme data from Big Lottery Fund (2008).

2.2.3 Geographic patterns of need

In terms of the geographic spread of the identified needs, activity in both programmes appears to be relatively evenly spread across the respective countries. In England, projects are generally working to meet needs in a specific geographic area or locality, although a small proportion are working with communities of interest at the national or regional level (2% and 8% respectively, see Table 2.4).

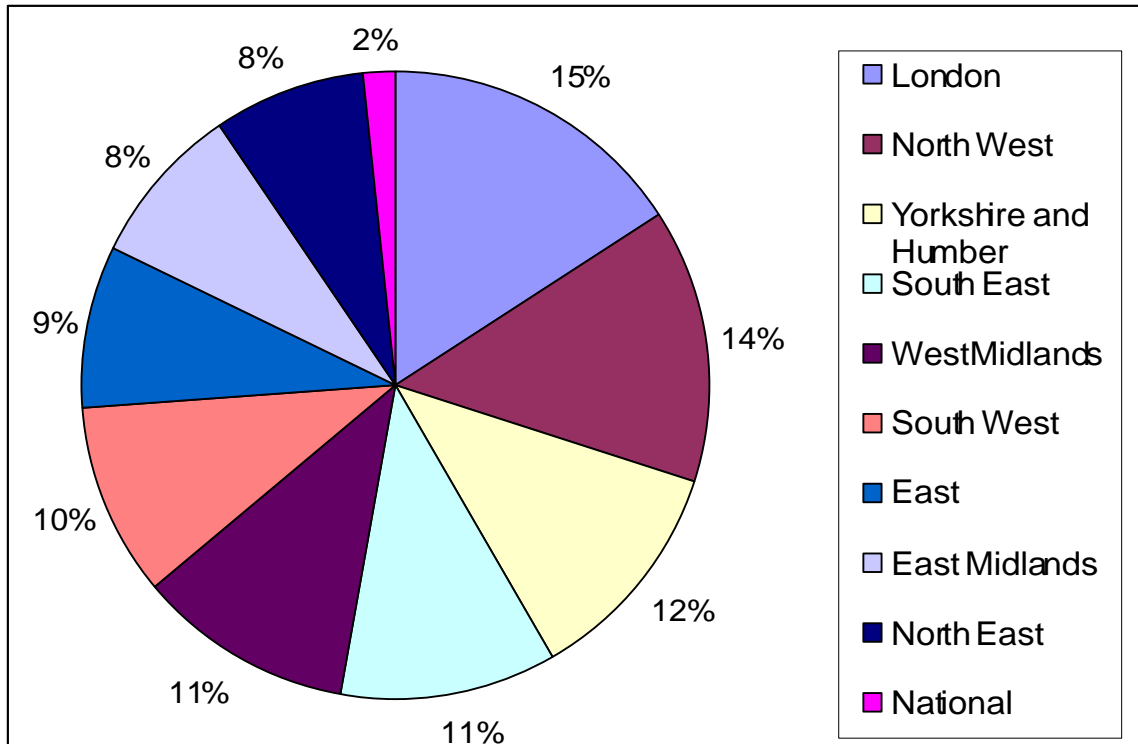
Table 2.4 Meeting needs at varying geographic levels, Reaching Communities England

	Number of projects	%
National (England-wide) level	14	2
Regional level (for example West Midlands, South West)	69	8
Local level (for example a specific town or city)	764	90
Total	847	100

Source: ECOTEC, based on programme data from Big Lottery Fund (2008)

In England there is also a relatively good spread between projects working in each of the English regions, as Figure 2.2 demonstrates.

Figure 2.2 Regions identified by projects, Reaching Communities England



Source: ECOTEC, based on programme data from Big Lottery Fund (2008)

All local authority areas in Northern Ireland are benefiting from at least one of the Reaching Communities projects that responded to our survey although some benefit from more than others - in particular: Antrim, Belfast city, Carrickfergus, Coleraine, Newtownabbey, Derry and Magherafelt (with three projects working in each of these areas)¹.

Feedback from the survey indicates that around two-thirds of the two programmes' funding is currently being directed towards tackling needs in urban areas (67%) with around a third targeting rural areas (37%) and a further third focussing on urban fringe areas (30%), with many projects tackling needs in both urban and rural areas².

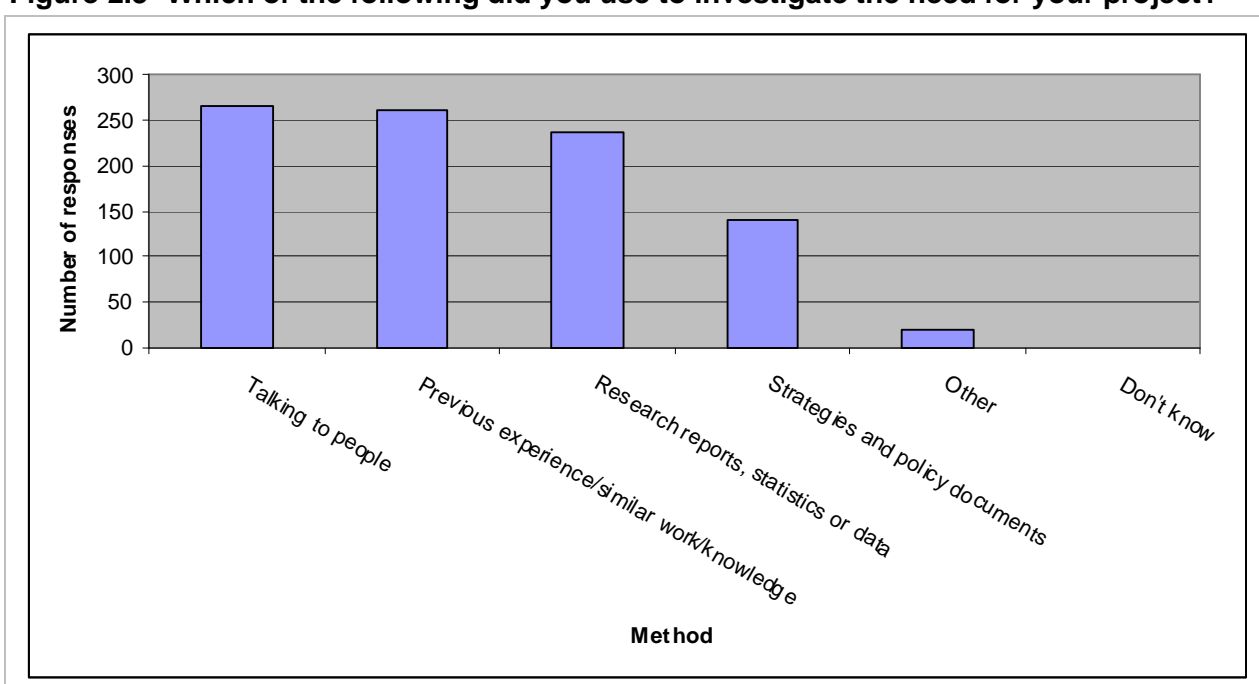
¹ Please see responses to Q7 in the marked up survey in Annex Two for a full breakdown.

² Projects were able to select more than one response to this survey question, therefore percentages do not sum to 100%.

2.3 Identifying the needs

Projects used a variety of methods to identify the needs, as illustrated in Figure 2.3 below¹. They generally combined at least two approaches to identify those needs, for example around four in five projects talked to local people (81%) and used past experience or knowledge to identify the needs (80%). While around three quarters used research reports or statistics (73%), less than half used strategic or policy documents to help them identify needs (43%). This suggests that 'home-grown' knowledge about local needs has so far been an important factor in identifying needs.

Figure 2.3 Which of the following did you use to investigate the need for your project?

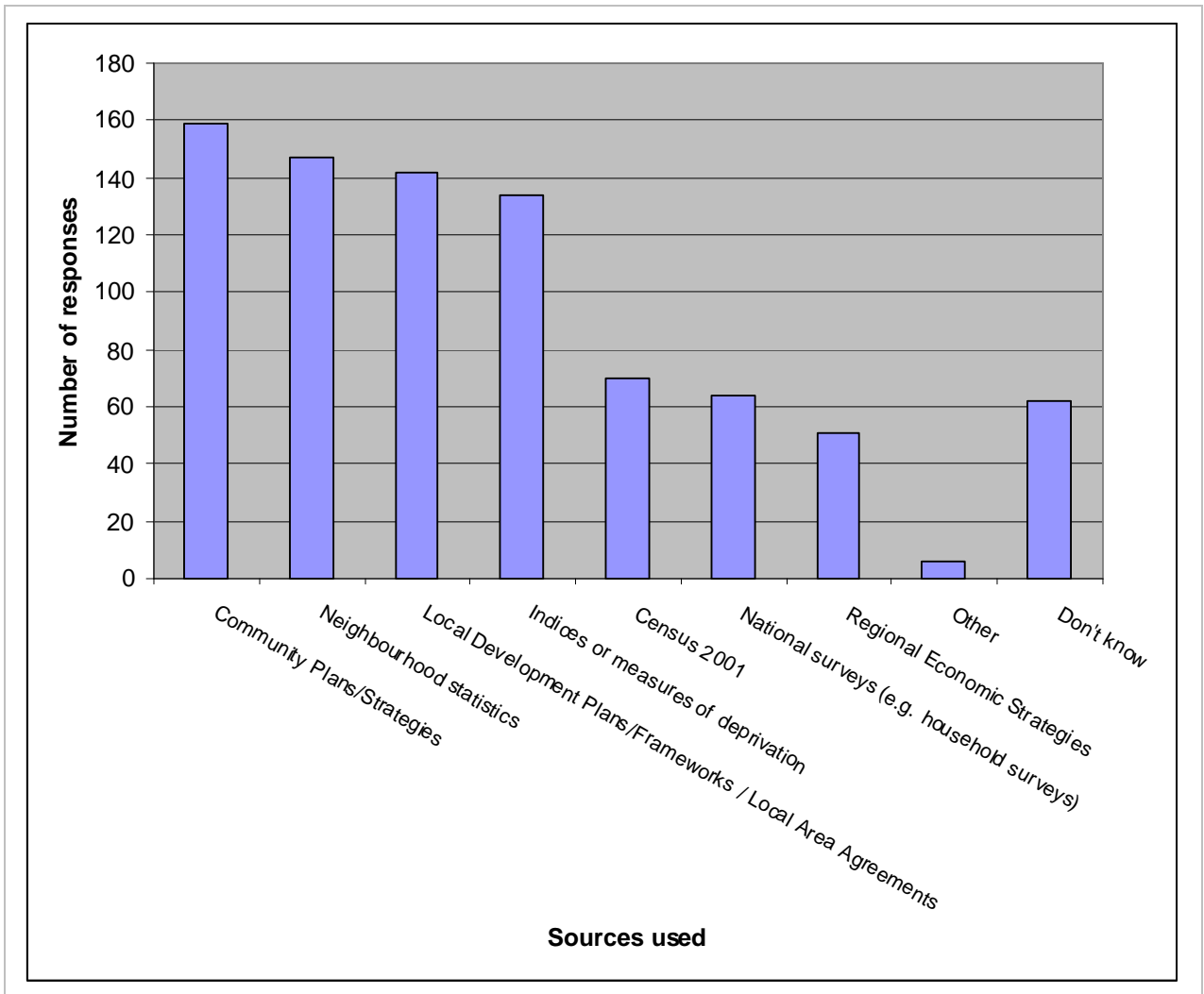


Source: ECOTEC Survey 2007, Base all projects, 325

Of those using research and statistics and/or policies and strategies, the most commonly used documents were: community plans/strategies (49%), neighbourhood statistics (45%) and local area agreements/local development plans (44%). Only around a fifth used national survey statistics or the Census (22%) – and this reflects the rather smaller proportion of regional and national projects being undertaken – however wider use was made of deprivation indices which provided 41% of projects with background statistics on the level of deprivation in their local area (see Figure 2.4).

¹ The NI sample size is too small to make statistically significant observations regarding NI in isolation.

Figure 2.4 If you used strategies, policies and research/statistics in investigating need, which of the following did you use?



Source: ECOTEC Survey 2007, Base all projects, 325

For example, a Reaching Communities grant awarded to Relate for a England-wide project, has used a number of mechanisms to identify a need among the couples and families they work with in relation to domestic violence and abuse, as illustrated in Figure 2.5.

Figure 2.5 Case Study: Relate

Location: England-wide

Relate offers guidance, relationship counselling, sex therapy, workshops, mediation, consultations and support face-to-face to couples, co-parents, families (however defined) and children. Relate is a federated charity with 80 local centres distributed nationally. These centres are local charities which use the Relate brand. The organisation was founded in 1938 as the marriage guidance council and re-branded as Relate in 1988. Relate has been awarded £480,285 by Reaching Communities over 3 years to deliver a project to improve the recognition of, and response to, incidences of domestic violence and abuse (DVA). There are two stages to this process, the implementation of the 'Responsive Model' is being developed and tested in 16 Relate centres and the implementation of a 'Therapeutic Consultation Model' is being developed as a pilot in four Relate centres. Relate will deliver on two programme outcomes; people having better chances in life and healthier and more active people and communities in both rural and urban areas. As a result of the project Relate aims to assist 40,000 people.

Identifying the need

Relate invested in research and identified the needs of their beneficiaries prior to receiving Reaching Communities funding. Since the mid 1990's, Relate has been developing its response to DVA through additional training for practitioners. Relate's supervision system had highlighted that DVA was becoming a critical factor in their sessions. In 2004, Relate decided to dedicate a project to take this further. In identifying the need, Relate benefited from its links to local communities:

"Our structure is very bottom up so we understand local communities; we have centres which are very locally based. We also developed strong working relationships with specialist DVA agencies both at a national and local level. Through these, we identified the danger for vulnerable individuals in sessions with couples where they felt they couldn't speak up about DVA. This demonstrated the need to provide individual interviews in a confidential setting".

Relate carried out research with clients who had previously been to a centre, and who had since left a violent relationship. They collected feedback from them on the proposed pilots and found that respondents felt that they would have been more likely to disclose DVA (especially sexual violence) during more structured interviews. Previously, clients felt that there were things they were unable to say. Relate established that even perpetrators (a group Relate did not work with before the Reaching Communities funded pilot) said that they would have felt relief at being able to talk about DVA in their relationship. One of the key concerns raised by clients was confidentiality, as clients felt unsafe talking about DVA in front of their partner. Relate also established the real extent of DVA cases through a

snapshot survey carried out nationally on a single day. All practitioners across Relate identified how many cases they had seen where DVA was an issue, this established that DVA was an issue in one in five cases. This provided strong evidence of the need for a change in practice to deal with DVA issues more effectively.

2.3.1 Identifying changes in need

Given the length of Reaching Communities funding of up to five years, it is anticipated that some projects may experience changes in the needs they are seeking to address or that local circumstances may change during the course of the project leading to changes in the needs that were originally identified and the methods of meeting those needs. Given the early stage of funding for most projects this does not yet appear to have been a particular issue to date. The survey feedback indicated that, so far, 16 projects (5%) (all of which were in the England programme) have experienced a change in services in the target area that has impacted on how they will address the needs of their target group. Changes have included, amongst others, a change in statutory service provision (11 projects); the introduction of new or expanded services (9 projects); or the development of a partnership with other voluntary groups (5 projects). Ten projects (3%) have identified a change in the actual needs of their target groups. This was often due to gaining an improved understanding, or because their monitoring had indicated a slight change in needs. For example projects came to better understand the needs of their target group, or realised needs were more acute than anticipated, once their project started. A small number (6 projects) said they had experienced an increase in demand over and above what they had anticipated and others noted demographic changes in the local area¹.

So far, seven projects said they had changed their project to meet the emerging changed needs. Of those, five said they had started to provide additional or extended services, and smaller numbers said they had adapted services to suit, or had sought additional funding to meet the needs (2 each).

2.4 Meeting the needs

This section looks at how projects are meeting the identified needs including: what format projects are taking, what types of organisations are delivering the activities, what size and length projects are being delivered, and what activities are being undertaken to meet the identified needs.

¹ Please see responses to Q11a and Q12a in the marked up survey in Annex Two for a full breakdown.

2.4.1 Types of organisation

Reaching Communities is supporting an incredibly diverse range of organisation types across the two programmes. Responses to the survey indicate the most common type of organisations across both programmes is voluntary and community sector organisations of varying types (70%)¹. The survey indicated that around 6% of respondents are umbrella organisations or networks and 14% are local organisations, part of a wider voluntary sector body. According to the survey, only a relatively small proportion of the funding to date has been awarded to statutory organisations (4%) all of which are through the England programme since statutory bodies cannot lead funding applications in the Northern Ireland programme. Programme data from the Big Lottery Fund also confirms this, indicating that statutory sector recipients in England include 16 local authorities, 17 educational institutions (schools and higher education institutions), 1 statutory health body and 1 fire brigade. Four Parish Councils have also been funded. In addition, in England around 270 grants (34%) have been made to companies limited by guarantee which includes a wide variety of community enterprises, credit unions and local branches of national charities, as well as 12 grants to private companies, such as a church and a community radio station.

In Northern Ireland the programme data confirms that the majority of the tranche one grantees are companies limited by guarantee, (mainly national/regional charities), with tranche two being more focussed on smaller and more local voluntary and community sector groups. Of the Northern Ireland projects responding to the survey, two of the six said their project was delivered by a partnership which their organisation led. Only one of these two respondents provided details of their partner organisations – all of which were in the community and voluntary sector.

The survey also indicates that in England, the majority of organisations receiving grants are relatively small in size with fewer than ten full time and ten part time staff (68% and 66% respectively). There is a fairly even spread in terms of the number of years grantee organisations have existed for; a third have existed for up to ten years (36%), with a further third (34%) existing for 21 years or more. In Northern Ireland, two of the six organisations are larger in size, one with 54 full time/86 part time and another with 100 full time/20 part time employees. These organisations have also existed for much longer; with 90 years experience between them. The remaining organisations are much smaller and newer organisations with between 1-5 full time and 3-7 part time employees and each having existed for 7-8 years².

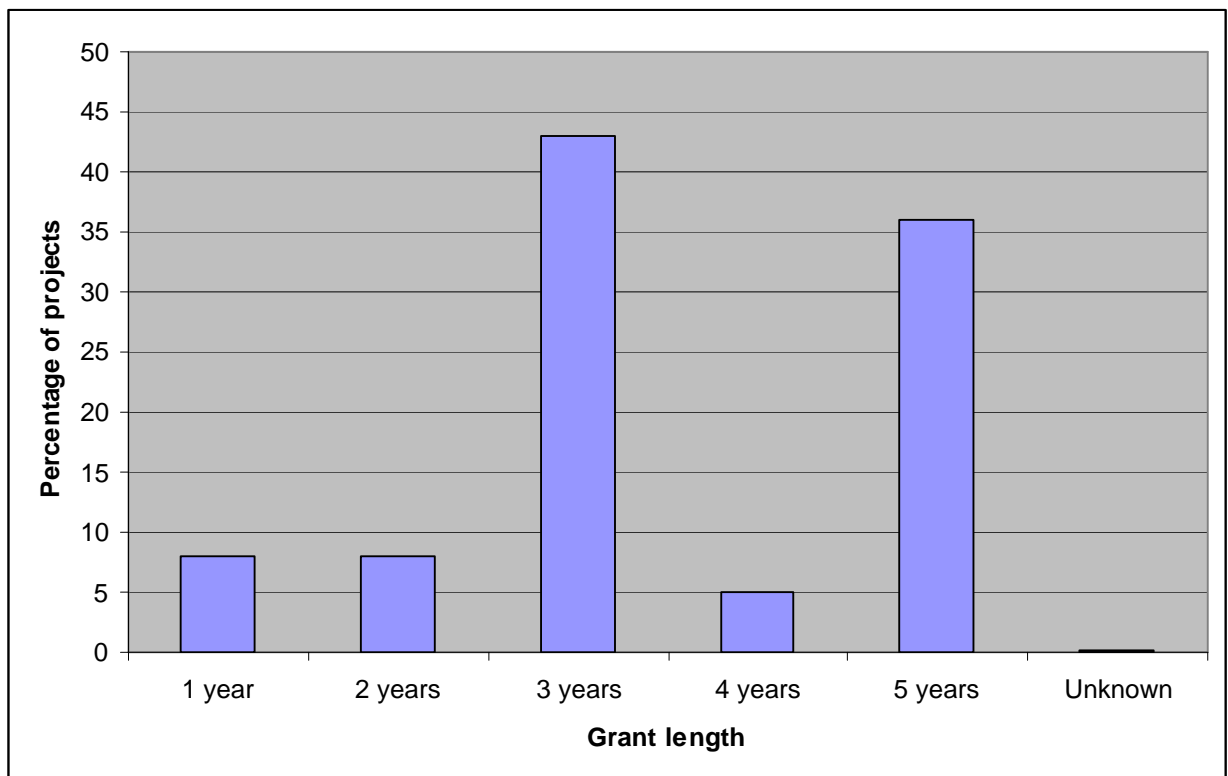
¹ Please note the Northern Ireland programme is open only to voluntary and community sector bodies.

² One organisation did not respond to this question.

2.4.2 Project size and length

The average grant size in England is approximately £215,000 although grants cover the full range of available sizes from a grant of £10,000 to a Parish Council through to four grants at the upper most size limit of £500,000 to, amongst others, a women's refuge project and a community arts forum. In England project length is focussed around the three or five year mark (43% and 36% respectively) with three quarters of projects falling into one of these two categories. Many of the shorter projects tend to be those focussed on community buildings and restoration type projects under outcome four (see Figure 2.6).

Figure 2.6 Grant length, in years, Reaching Communities England



Source: ECOTEC, based on programme data from Big Lottery Fund (2008)

In Northern Ireland the majority of projects (8 of the 15) are five-year projects, the remaining projects are split fairly evenly between three-year and four-year projects. The average project size is just over £433,000 and this demonstrates the relatively larger size of the projects being supported in Northern Ireland compared with England.

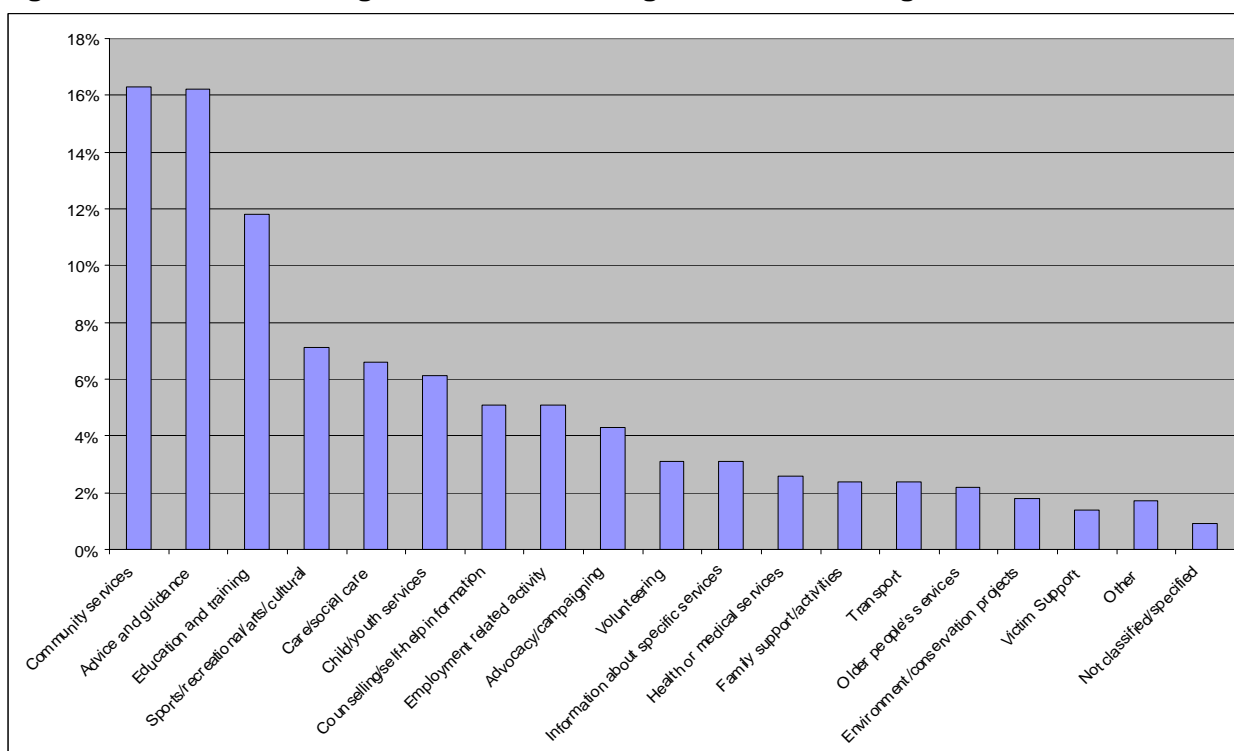
2.4.3 Project activities

The breadth of the programme is reflected in the diverse range of activities that projects are using to tackle the identified needs.

Programme data collected by Big Lottery Fund indicates that activities across both programmes are wide-ranging and cover provision of information, advice, counselling and support across a wide variety of fields, through to specific service delivery such as provision of training, transport, play, activities, sports or personal social or health care. Other more practically-focused projects involve building, upgrading or restoring community buildings or facilities. Information for activities being delivered in Reaching Communities England is below in Figure 2.7.

Projects are generally delivering one main type of activity although with broad definitions each category most likely covers a wider range of sub-activities. For example one of the case studies 'Fireside' in Birmingham, intends to provide more structure to the volunteering that takes place, attract new volunteers, retain volunteers, promote the development and training of volunteers and improve communication with volunteers. The two target groups are the volunteers themselves and service users. Service users include socially excluded people, unemployed people, the homeless and the vulnerably housed. This demonstrates the complexity and variety within these very broad categories.

Figure 2.7 Activities being delivered, Reaching Communities England



Source: ECOTEC, based on programme data from Big Lottery Fund (2008)

In Northern Ireland the programme is delivering a more concentrated range of activities as illustrated in Table 2.5.

Table 2.5 Service provided by projects funded, Reaching Communities Northern Ireland

Service	Number of projects
Community services/amenities	5
General information, advice and guidance	5
Health, care or medical services	3
Youth services or recreational activities	2
Total	15

Source: ECOTEC, based on programme data from Big Lottery Fund (2008)

The survey also provides some more detailed feedback on activities to meet the needs. It indicates that the range of activities is variable and is dependent on the target group being addressed. For example, projects aiming to meet young people's needs vary widely, ranging from information and guidance, advocacy work through to education. Similarly projects targeting health and disability related needs include activities such as self-help, information and advice, and improving access to services. In other areas the type of activity required to meet the need is highly specific and in response to a particular type of demand. For example activities targeted at carers are focussed around providing respite, as well as training and advice and guidance, as the below example illustrates. Another example is educational work with ex-offenders and prisoners to improve skills levels.

"Carers of terminally ill patients can become isolated, and often feel unappreciated and forgotten. Our Carer's Lifelines project provides them with information and support which helps them to provide better care for the patient, as well as giving them a bit of time for themselves. It gives them an opportunity to meet with others in a similar situation and to share experiences and build a support network, so reducing the feelings of isolation. It makes them feel that their contribution is valued" (Reaching Communities project, England) Source: ECOTEC Survey 2007

In other cases the activity is required due to a lack of current provision; or to meet a gap in statutory services. For example, one project in the survey identifies a lack of service provision with regard to anti-social behaviour and is aiming to provide a specific service to meet that need locally. Four projects are also meeting IT literacy needs in the local population through offering training. Other projects are targeting isolated local people not only through advice and support but also through practical solutions such as transport schemes.

"We work with homeless people in Chesterfield and the surrounding areas. There has been a lack of provision for the homeless, e.g. hot meals, laundry, advice, information and support. We were set up to try and bridge that gap" (Reaching Communities project, England) *Source: ECOTEC Survey 2007*

The survey feedback also indicates that across both programmes a significant proportion of projects focus on activities to improve softer outcomes (67%) with most common areas of activity including work around self-esteem, confidence, relationships, behaviour and feelings.

3.0 Involving beneficiaries

3.1 Introduction

The Reaching Communities programmes in England and Northern Ireland aim to support projects which involve communities and assessing the level of community involvement forms part of the evaluation questions. This section of the report looks at where and how local communities and beneficiaries have been involved in projects in both programmes, and explore what has worked well and less well in this area.

3.2 Involving local communities and beneficiaries

Reaching Communities supports projects which involve beneficiaries and local communities at all stages of a project from identification of the needs, through project planning, to delivery, management and evaluation.

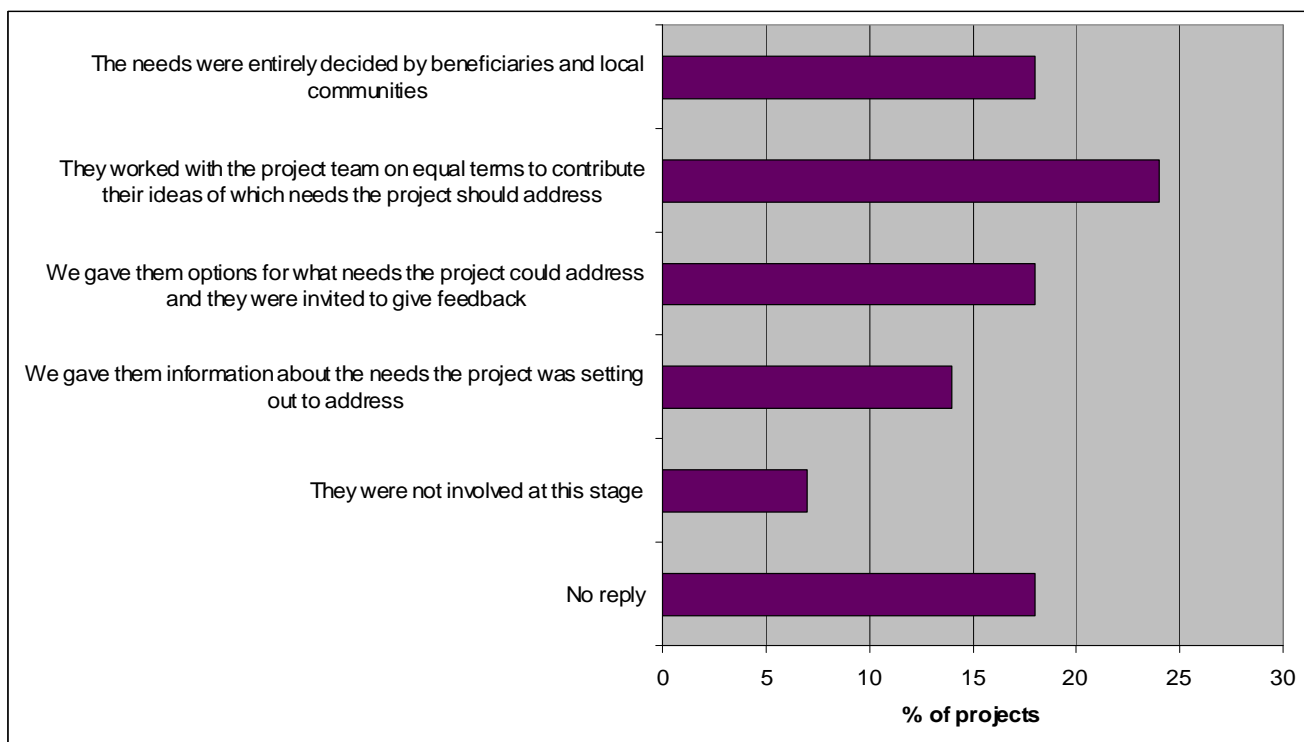
In terms of involving beneficiaries in identifying the needs to be addressed, early findings suggest a fairly high level of involvement; with a significant proportion of projects involving beneficiaries to some degree in this process (see Figure 3.1). A quarter of projects across both programmes responding to the survey said that beneficiaries or local communities were involved in the project on equal terms with the project team to identify the needs to be addressed (24%). One in five projects said the needs were entirely decided by local communities (18%) which demonstrates a clear commitment to listening to the needs of local people and drawing on local knowledge and experience to identify needs, although in a smaller proportion of cases. In Northern Ireland, of the six projects responding to the survey, two said they involved their users on equal terms; one project said needs were entirely decided by users and one project said they were not involved.

However a sizeable proportion of projects across both programmes – nearly one in five – did not respond to this question indicating that none of the options were applicable to their project (18% of survey respondents)¹. In Northern Ireland two projects did not respond to this question. This implies that a sizeable proportion across both programmes did not feel that involving beneficiaries was relevant, appropriate or perhaps possible within the initial stage of identifying needs for their project (and also see page 28). We can also infer from

¹ This raises a methodological point. Closer analysis of survey results indicates that projects not responding to this question did then go on to answer other, later survey questions. This indicates that they felt this question was not applicable to them or did not understand the question. In the year two survey consideration may be given to adding new options to this question, including 'not applicable to my project' and/or 'not possible in my project' followed up with an open ended question 'why do you say that?'

this that some projects identified needs in a more ‘top down’ way, based on the organisation’s past experience rather than direct involvement with beneficiaries at the early stages.

Figure 3.1 How were beneficiaries and local communities involved in identifying their own needs?



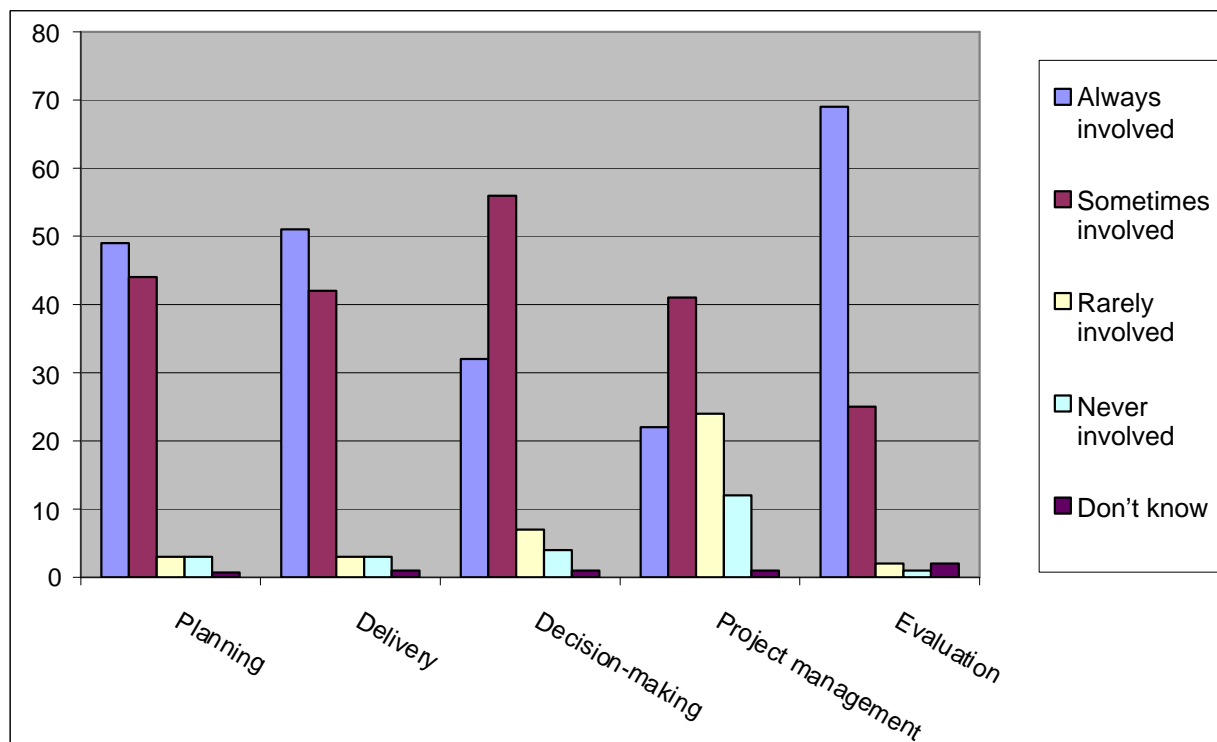
Source: ECOTEC Survey 2007, Base all projects, 325.

The case studies also illustrate the extent of informal consultation with beneficiaries to help identify needs. For example at the ‘Fireside’ project in Birmingham the need for the project was identified by Fireside’s workers and volunteers through the use of surveys, informal consultation and discussion groups with users. At ‘Sports Recycler’ in South Tyneside, the team were keen to consult with potential users about what they wanted from the company so they consulted informally across the community with people about the kinds of things they would be interested in. The company also records and follows up any suggestions for improvements from beneficiaries and therefore provides a service which is responsive to needs locally.

3.2.1 Involving local communities in project activity

Beneficiaries and local communities have also been involved in project activities once projects are up and running and the evidence from the survey suggests this is happening to a significant extent in the programme, as Figure 3.2 illustrates.

Figure 3.2 How often were/are beneficiaries and local communities involved in the following aspects of your project?



Source: ECOTEC Survey 2007, Bases vary (Respectively: 280, 279, 277, 277, 276)

The majority of projects are involving local communities to a large extent in project **evaluation** and also to some extent in project **planning** or **delivery**. Local communities are most likely to be involved in evaluation (69%/25% always/sometimes involved) followed by project delivery (51%/42% always/sometimes involved) and project planning (49%/44% always/sometimes involved). The majority of remaining projects say they sometimes involve communities in these areas. Survey feedback indicates that common areas of involvement in **evaluation** are formal feedback such as questionnaires, surveys, and interviews (120 projects). Involvement in project **planning** includes involving the community as members of management committees (104 projects or 38%), in attending meetings (45 projects or 14%), or through user forums (21 projects or 6%). A further 53 projects involve local communities through more 'informal feedback' mechanisms including discussion and/or 'consultation'¹. In terms of involvement in project **delivery** local communities are becoming involved as mentors, through befriending schemes and by training as volunteers to help deliver services. A small number of projects (28) involve beneficiaries in the day to day running and delivery of services.

¹ Please see responses to Q13a in the marked up survey in Annex Two for a full breakdown.

Overall this evidence provides a fairly positive picture of the efforts projects are making to involve communities, not just in evaluation – where involvement might be expected and where there is more readily available good practice and guidance (including the self-evaluation toolkit produced by the evaluators for projects funded through Reaching Communities) – but in actual project planning and delivery of activities.

Local communities are least likely to have been involved in project **management**, (see Figure 3.2 above) with one in five projects (22%) always involving them in this area, compared with 36% of projects saying they *rarely* or *never* involve them in this area, the highest of any area of activity. A further third (32%) involve communities in **decision-making** for example by involving them on the board as trustees. Involving beneficiaries and local communities in the more strategic management and decision-making aspects of a project is perhaps a more challenging area for projects which is least likely to have been developed further. The following project case study (Figure 3.3) illustrates how young people are being involved in making decisions relating to the staffing and management of the 'Bradford Nightstop' project.

Figure 3.3 Case study: Bradford Nightstop

Location: Bradford, Yorkshire

Summary of project

Bradford Nightstop (BNS) is a community based organisation primarily working with homeless young people in the Bradford area, established in 1993. This three year project is completely new and aims to expand the organisation's current provision. The project targets young people, particularly in schools, between the ages of 13 and 25 predominantly in urban areas, but also covering some large rural areas, to deliver preventative educational work. The project fits within the 'people having better chances in life' outcome.

Identifying the need

BNS have been delivering small pieces of work in schools for a number of years and they have always received positive feedback from the schools and teachers involved. In particular, teachers found that the education work was very relevant to their young people as it was very much tailored to the Bradford context.

However, the main way in which need was identified was through statistics collected by BNS between 2004 and 2005. All young people that are referred to BNS are asked which school they attended. They expected that they would find 8 or 9 schools where particularly high numbers of young people ended up needing BNS. However, it emerged that 27 of the 28 schools in the district had had someone referred. All the schools therefore needed this preventative work.

Involvement

Young people included in this project are from a range of socio-economic backgrounds and the team have worked hard to engage the widest audience possible. In partnership with the Youth Service, young people were involved with the appointment of the Education Worker. Together they wrote questions for the interview, decided on the selection criteria and had a say in who was appointed. As part of the selection process candidates had to deliver a 'session for young people' to the young people themselves, who then gave feedback. The Youth Service gave a heavy weighting to the young people's views and took the time to sit down with them and discuss, prior to the interviews, what they thought would make a good Education Worker. Going forwards, teachers and young people will be involved in the evaluation of the project through completing evaluation forms which will look at any changes in attitude and knowledge.

In some cases it is not possible for projects to involve beneficiaries to any great extent given the nature of the project work. For example the Relate case study project is dealing with issues of domestic violence and abuse which means that beneficiaries do not wish to be identified for reasons concerning their safety and the safety of their children. This therefore limits the extent to which they can be approached for feedback by external agencies however a significant proportion of participants are providing feedback to the evaluation aspect of the project not only by completing questionnaires but also by participating in detailed interviews with the Relate Institute researcher. Another case study has found that informal feedback has proved so far to be the most effective means of involving users. The 'Fireside' project has not yet established a user panel and have no systematic way of consulting with users, however, staff and volunteers have strong relationships with, and understandings of the client base. The volunteer organiser has consulted users in a one to one setting and in small groups with volunteers in order to gauge their expectations and perceptions of the programme. Much of their feedback received is gathered anecdotally, and 'Fireside' has found this to be an effective way of involving the client group because it is non-threatening and non invasive. Other case studies have plans to involve users more going forwards; for example 'Sports Recycler' in South Tyneside hopes to eventually set up a user group of beneficiaries.

3.3 Impact of involvement

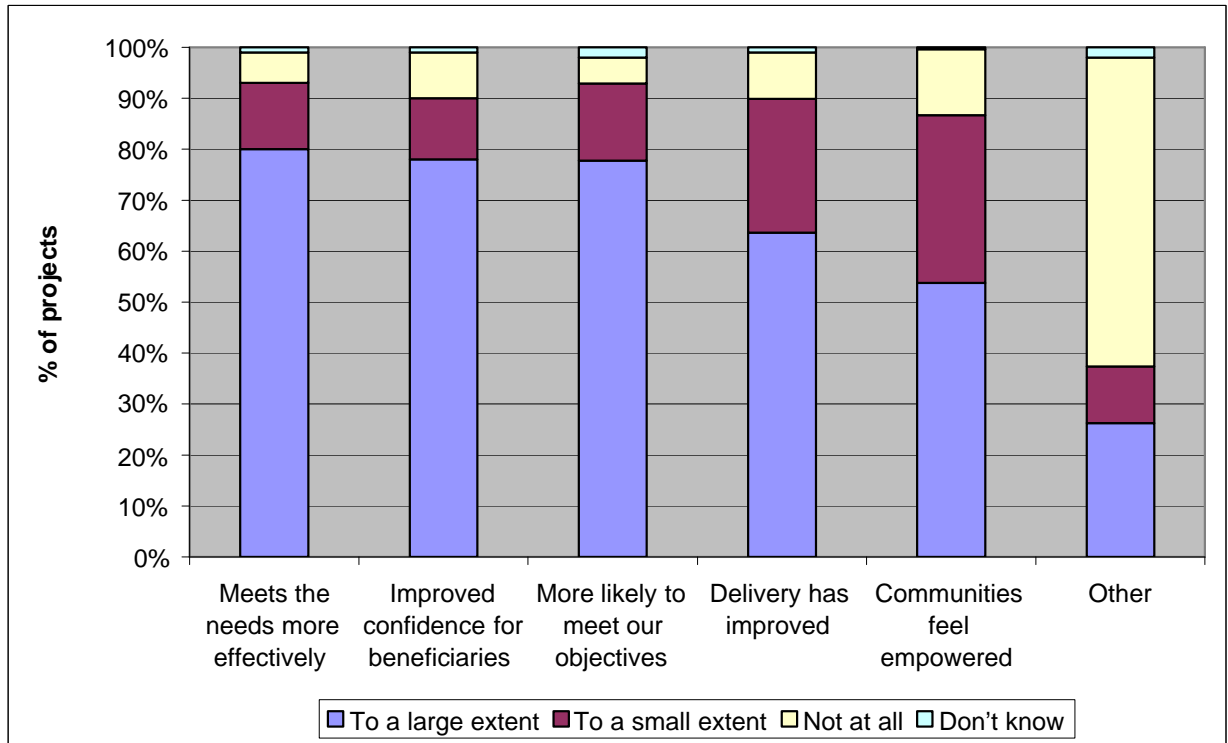
Involving beneficiaries appears to be leading to some positive outcomes both for projects and for local communities and the individuals themselves who get involved.

The key positive outcomes for projects mentioned in the survey are that the project meets the needs of the local community more effectively (80% to a large extent) and that the project is more likely to meet its objectives (77% to a large extent). A further two thirds of projects feel that project delivery itself had improved as a result of involving beneficiaries (63%) (see Figure 3.3). Other positive outcomes for projects include that the project becomes more reflective and understanding of actual needs and that the project becomes more inclusive as a whole. Overall, the benefits for projects of involving beneficiaries and local communities are clearly linked to having a better understanding of local needs and being better able to meet those needs effectively.

Involvement is also leading to improved personal outcomes for those involved. The key improvements for beneficiaries are mainly around improvements in confidence for beneficiaries and empowerment of local communities (78% and 54% respectively). Other

improvements for beneficiaries who get involved include reduced isolation, personal development and improvements in health.

Figure 3.4 Please specify what outcomes have been achieved as a result of involving beneficiaries?



Source: ECOTEC Survey 2007, Bases vary (Respectively: 265, 264, 266, 264, 96)

4.0 Meeting the needs

4.1 Introduction

Given the rolling format in which grants are awarded in the Reaching Communities programmes and the length of funding available (of up to five years) to date, for the vast majority of projects it is too early to be able to assess whether the needs they identified have been met and whether they have reached those most in need. Similarly it is a little early to draw conclusions about whether the programme has contributed to reducing disadvantage or compare which approaches have been most effective in doing so. These evaluation questions will be addressed further in the latter years of the evaluation. This section presents the early emerging evidence on these issues, but should be treated with caution given the small numbers of projects that have been completed to date. The section refers solely to projects in the England programme as all projects in the Northern Ireland programme are running for a minimum of three years.

4.2 Have projects met the needs

In the England programme to date, of the 847 funded projects, 57 had a duration of one year (7%). Of those only 17 were awarded grants before December 2006 and therefore have the potential to have completed at the time of writing (2%). The majority of these smaller one year projects were linked to building or renovating community buildings, and a small number were short 'one-off' type projects such as developing a DVD to raise awareness of dating violence or setting up a radio station.

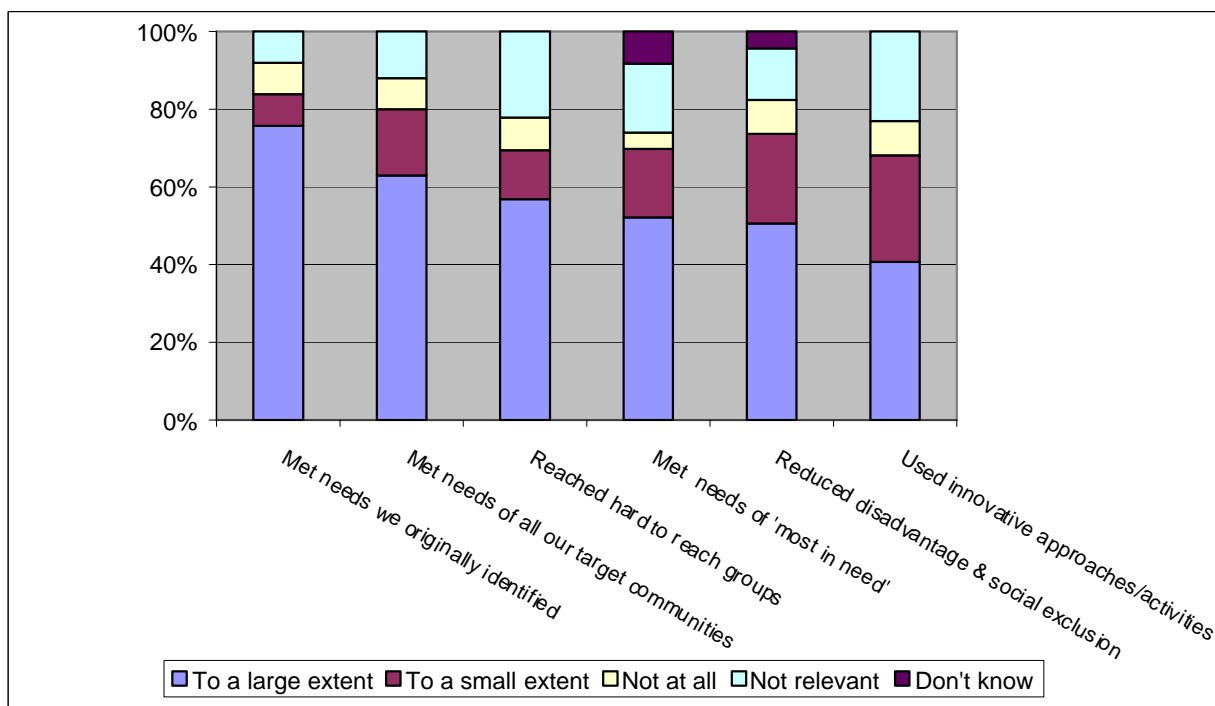
In the survey, 24 projects (8%) said they are due to be completed by summer 2008¹. Completed projects have used a range of sources of evidence to assess the effectiveness of their project in meeting needs, with many using multiple forms of evidence rather than relying on one source. Sources of evidence include informal feedback from beneficiaries (88%), measures of attendance at events/meetings/activities (75%) and level of demand or take-up of services (63%). A further three in five had undertaken some form of self-evaluation (63%) or performance measure against outcomes (54%). Five of the 24 completed projects had commissioned an external evaluation (21%) upon which they based their assessment of effectiveness.

Completed projects generally feel they have met their objectives, with three quarters being likely to say that they had met the needs they identified (75%) to a large extent and a

¹ The time when the next survey is due to take place.

further 8% saying they met the needs to some extent. The majority of projects were also likely to report that their project met the needs of all their target groups (63% to a large extent) (see Figure 4.1). A small number of projects however said they had difficulties and did not meet their objectives or the needs of target groups (8% each), as might be expected in such a varied and lightly prescribed programme.

Figure 4.1 If your project is due to be completed by summer 2008, to what extent do you feel that your project has achieved the following?



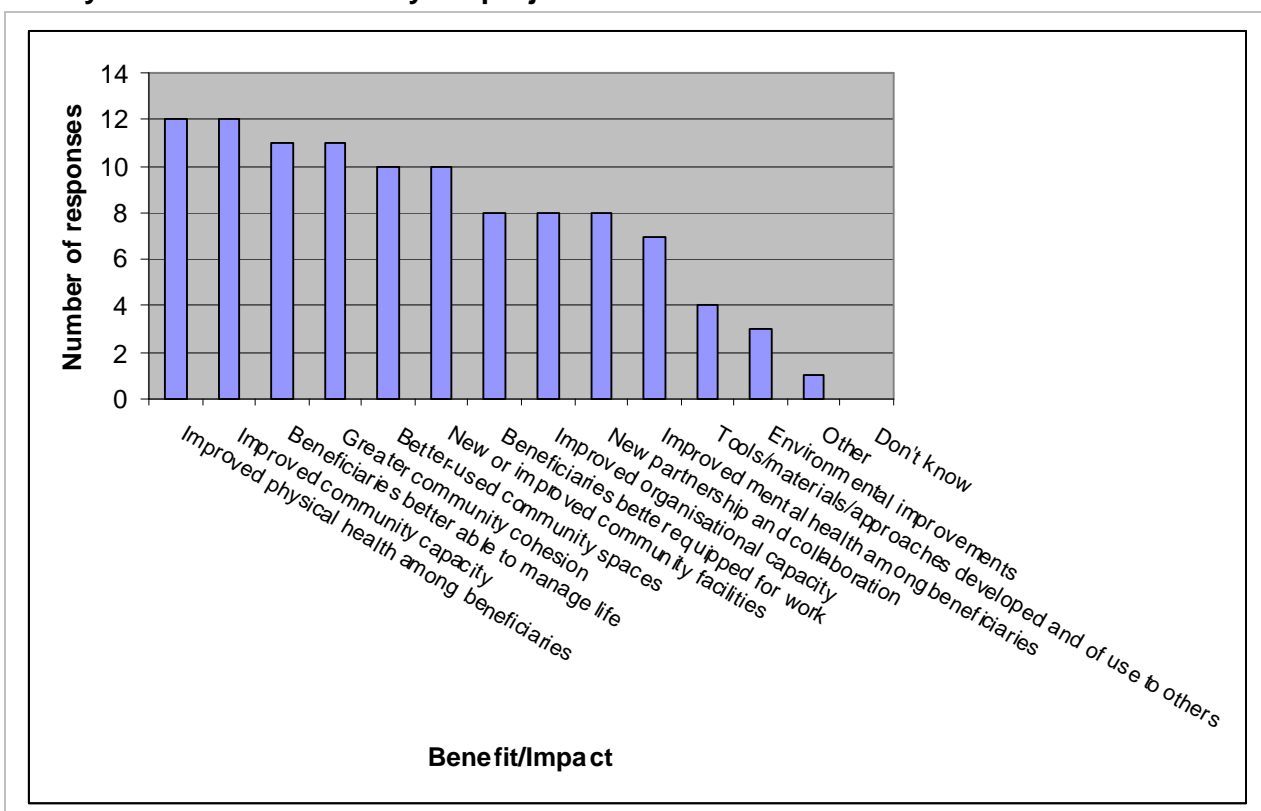
Source: ECOTEC Survey 2007, Base all projects completing by summer 2008, 24

Around half of completed projects say they reached 'hard to reach' groups to a large extent (54%) and a further half (50%) feel they had to a large extent reached the 'most in need'. However about a fifth of projects feel that the categories 'hard to reach' and 'most in need' were not relevant to their projects (21% and 17% respectively). This is perhaps surprising given the focus of the Reaching Communities programme on hard to reach communities, however the definitions of those categories can be confusing for applicants and definitions can vary, as described in Chapter 2 above. This may also be because the programme supports improvements to 'whole' communities, or geographical areas which projects may not view as being 'most in need' or 'hard to reach'. A further half of projects (47%) felt their project had to a large extent reduced disadvantage and exclusion.

4.3 Impact

The following Figure 4.2 illustrates the impact of completed projects. Again the breadth of the programme is reflected in its diverse impacts, with most common impacts relating to improved physical health or beneficiaries (12 projects), improved community capacity (12 projects) and community cohesion (11 projects), improving life skills to help beneficiaries manage life (11 projects) and better used community spaces/improved community facilities (10 projects each).

Figure 4.2 If your project is due to be completed by summer 2008, what benefits/impacts have you seen as a result of your project?



Source: ECOTEC Survey 2007, Base all projects completing by Summer 2008, 24

Early feedback on the outcomes of project case studies also shows some positive impacts. The 'Highway to Opportunities' project in Oldham, provides a unique women only service in the form of a double-decker bus, supported by two outreach centres and a town centre base. This is where Asian women (Bangladeshi and Urdu speakers) with little English, can access vocational information, advice, guidance, ICT tasters and job search activities. Although it is too early into the life of the project to see any definite impacts or whether the project is meeting needs, it is clear that the project has been able to make effective links with partners to enable the participants to progress. A number of the target beneficiaries report that their engagement in the project has made a significant improvement to their English: especially listening and reading. As a result of their improved language skills, the

women have increased confidence when speaking to doctors, school teachers and helping their children with their home work. Figure 4.3 below also illustrates some early positive impacts from another project case study, working with family carers.

Figure 4.3 Case study: Suffolk Family Carers (SFC) Location: Ipswich

Suffolk Family Carers received £495,848 funding from Reaching Communities over five years. The project is an extension of an existing service which aims to address the difficulties faced by family carers in Suffolk related to being a family carer and rural disadvantage. The organisation is an independent charity with one permanent centre in Ipswich and five outreach centres in surrounding rural areas. SFC has always served family carers across Suffolk, but feedback suggested that some family carers struggled to travel to the permanent centre at Claydon, just outside Ipswich, and that there was demand for centres closer to family carers' homes. The money provided by Reaching Communities is being used to fund five outreach centres in rural locations and to assist family carers with transport needs in attending the centres. The outreach link centres provide a range of services and activities on a monthly basis, and the main target groups are family carers, BME groups, disadvantaged people and people living in rural areas. In addition to the outreach centres, SFC organises a telephone befriending scheme. Family carers play a key role in the befriending part of the project, because carers befriend carers.

Meeting the need

Family carers are tracked via questionnaires and anecdotal evidence: 97% of all family carers who attend the outreach centres feel that SFC supported them and their needs in order to attend and 98% consider it to be a good break from caring. One of the key services offered by the SFC Outreach Centres is support. For one family carer, she felt that the most important thing was no longer feeling alone, *"I always come out of a meeting a lot better than when I come in."* It provides an opportunity for family carers to meet others in the same situations and share their problems. Before the project one beneficiary said *"I was stressed out....my mother is dependent on me and I felt trapped in the situation"* but afterwards they felt less isolated and more 'normal'.

Family carers who attend experience reduced isolation. One family carer stated that their needs had been met and that attending the outreach centres makes her *"feel like a person again, you lose this; when caring for someone, you become nothing"*.

So far, 16 family carers have been matched to a telephone befriender and SFC have received positive feedback. The telephone befriending project specifically targets family carers in very rural areas; half of the family carers who have been befriended have been from very rural areas and therefore addresses the needs of the most isolated. Through the

telephone befriending scheme, one family carer felt that they were able to help someone else from all the help that she had received through the project.

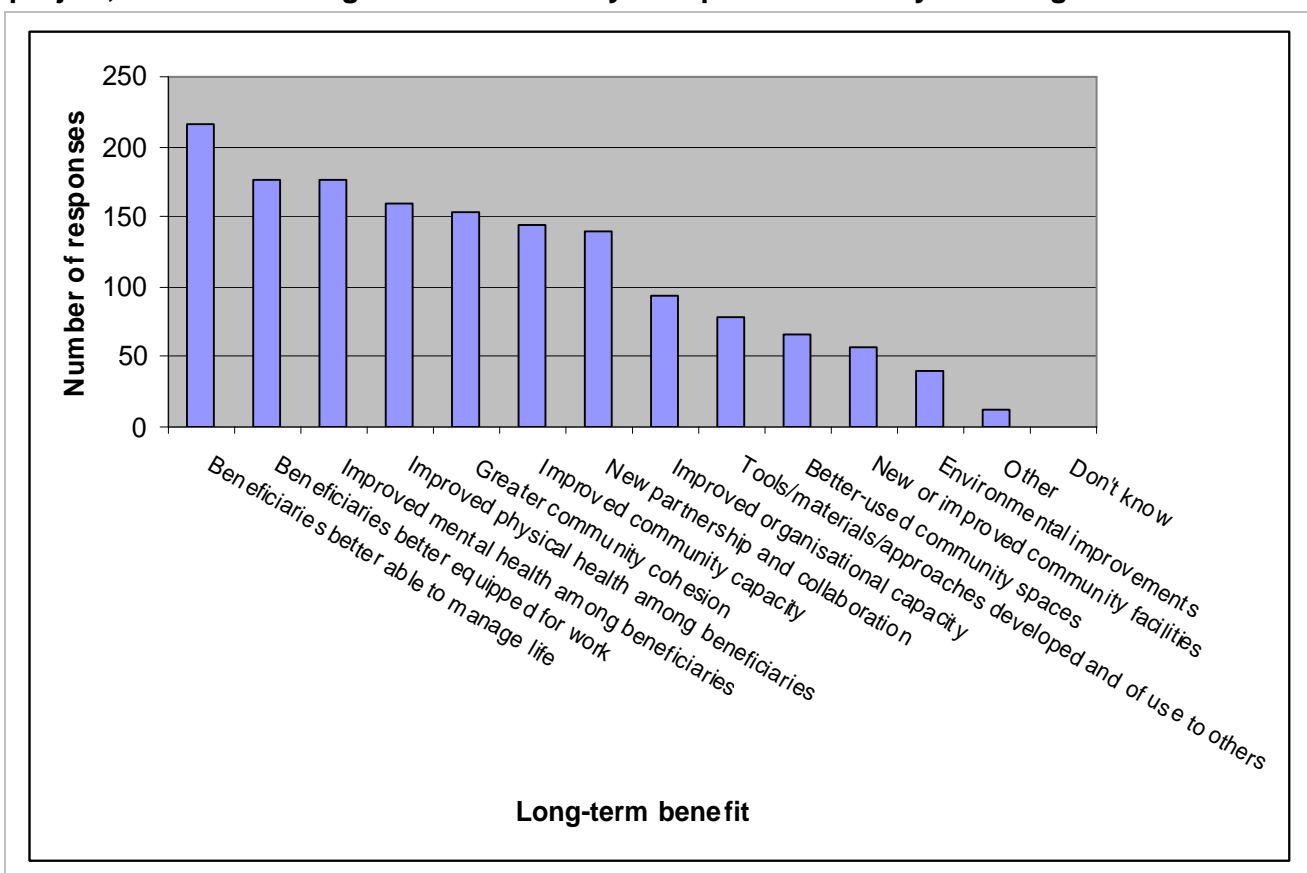
Added value from the project

A number of family carers felt that the project was unique and that no other such service was available. A number of family carers noted that there was no similar service before the project and that even where other services are available SCF provides a better service. The project team say this project would not have taken place without Big Lottery funding, and will not be able to continue without further funding at the end of the Reaching Communities programme. There are also some additional outcomes of the project. One family carer ran an art activity in one of the outreach sessions; the support and confidence that she gained from SFC helped her to gain a position teaching art at a local college.

4.4 Longer term impacts

It is anticipated that projects may continue to see benefits beyond the life of the funding, so called longer term impacts. Figure 4.4 below illustrates the early evidence of the longer term impacts projects expect to be seeing or are already seeing. Key impacts include a lasting improvement in how well beneficiaries are able to manage life (82%) and beneficiaries better equipped for work (66%). Improved mental and physical health is also an important lasting impact (66% and 60% respectively). Improvements to premises or buildings leaving a lasting improvement in the local community facilities were also mentioned but by relatively fewer projects given the smaller numbers of projects supported with this outcome.

Figure 4.4 If you are seeing/expecting to see benefits continuing beyond the life of the project, what sort of long-term benefits do you expect to see/are you seeing?



Source: ECOTEC Survey 2007, Base all projects, 325

Other projects are aiming to continue to see benefits by becoming self-sustaining by the end of Reaching Communities funding, as in the following case study example (Figure 4.5).

Figure 4.5 Case Study: Sports Recycler Location: South Tyneside

Sports Recycler is a company limited by guarantee working in the most deprived areas of South Tyneside in the North East of England. This is a new three year project (value of £74,922) which has developed a range of services and activities using recycled and refurbished equipment donated by local organisations, for example, household waste recovery centres. It encourages communities to participate in sporting activities such as cycling and using fitness equipment, and particularly those members who currently lack the confidence, equipment and experience to be able to engage. The company also has some brand new bikes for hire which can also be used for guided rides. Sports Recycler

also runs bike maintenance courses, offers a bike MOT service, and has a minibus, bike trailer, camping equipment, rickshaw and electric van for hire.

The project is working under the 'healthier and more active people and communities' programme outcome.

Meeting the need

The company was incorporated in January 2005, and over the summer months of 2007 in excess of 200 bikes were donated, rebuilt or refurbished, and sold on at very low cost. Sports Recycler has also had interest from other areas in what they do, for example a furniture reclaim and delivery enterprise in Stockton came to visit and learn from the organisation; they had been told to throw away donated bikes. The company was also approached by Groundwork South Tyneside to work in partnership with South Tyneside Recycling Village and re-use discarded sports equipment, as well as with Sita UK Waste Management and the landfill site at Gateshead.

Without the Big Lottery Reaching Communities funding, Sports Recycler would have had to apply elsewhere meaning the commencement of the administration post, which has been vital to get the company up and running, would have been delayed significantly. It was critical to the project that they had the administrative back-up in place early on to set up and develop systems.

The ultimate plan for the organisation is to become self-sustaining. They intend to achieve this through continuing to secure contracts such as that with the Great North Forest who have contracted Sports Recycler to provide a two year programme of guided bike rides. They also plan to become involved in procurement and tendering for statutory services. Sales will prop up the underlying ethos of the company – recycling.

4.5 Good practice

Completed projects also say they have identified examples of good practice from within their project activities. These were around effective project management techniques such as clear planning and having identified staff responsible for particular workstreams. Close partnerships with other agencies including joint working between third sector and statutory bodies is also key. Effective means of involving young people in the project, giving them ownership and real 'say so' over the projects direction was also highlighted.

“Working in partnership with a number of agencies bought a whole range of expertise and skills to the table. This proved crucial to the projects success. Youth workers and YOT workers engaged young people in the initial stages, and some of the expertise behind the

technical aspects of the project were done by radio presenters and engineers, who did training workshops for the young people involved." (Reaching Communities project, England) Source: ECOTEC Survey 2007

4.6 Added value from project activities

Early evidence suggests that Reaching Communities is supporting activity which is additional to existing provision. Looking at survey evidence from completed projects, the majority (16 projects) say their project would not have taken place without Reaching Communities support and a further 4 projects indicate their project may have taken place but in a reduced form. Furthermore, in the survey, the majority of *all* projects (70%) said they expected their project to continue after the life of the Reaching Communities grant, primarily through seeking continuation funding from a wide range of sources (for example charities and trusts as well as tapping into statutory funds), or through aiming to enter into service delivery agreements, or through aiming to be self-sufficient or income generating. This suggests that going forwards the programme has the potential to contribute towards a legacy of community initiatives, some of which are sustained beyond the life of the funds.

4.7 Comparing approaches, what works?

A limited amount of feedback has been received to date on what works in terms of meeting the identified needs, from the 24 projects that are complete¹. Projects are finding that particular activities work well with specific groups, for example one project is finding that the mixture of computer classes, reading group and tai chi are meeting the needs in their particular local community. Other projects have found that the core activity they had planned such as developing a radio station or building a play area has led to the outcomes they had anticipated. There is also evidence that in some cases the combination of regular activities with 'big splash' or 'show case' events or activities also works well to raise the profile of a project.

Feedback from one of the case studies, a project run by the London Symphony orchestra has illustrated that creative activities for young people can assist in developing self-confidence and personal skills, as illustrated in Figure 4.6.

¹ Please see responses to Q23 (and Q27) in the marked up survey in Annex Two for a full breakdown.

Figure 4.6 Case Study: London Symphony Orchestra – Fusion

Location: London

The London Symphony Orchestra (LSO) has received £22,700 from Reaching Communities for a one year project called 'Fusion'. The LSO was established in 1902, and the Fusion project was established in 2005. Fusion aims to give people an opportunity to work alongside LSO players and adult musicians drawn from the local community who are being trained as music workshop leaders to create music in a range of styles without traditional notation. The target group of beneficiaries are young people (aged 10-18) from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Fusion aims to address the following outcomes:

- stronger sense of community created by bringing people together in a creative environment through community group activity;
- people having better chances in life through increased self confidence amongst participants who may never previously have participated in live music making;
- increased skill and knowledge both in terms of musical ability and awareness of different cultures;
- more young people participating in quality groups music-making by increasing the core membership of the group, encouraging transient members to return and increased integration and awareness of LSO Discovery amongst members of EC1, feeding back into other parts of its programme.

The project is designed to offer an opportunity for local young people to work together at grass roots level to create their own work on their own terms. It aims to boost levels of community involvement and to achieve personal outcomes for individuals including an increased sense of self worth, self esteem and the development of life skills.

Meeting the need

The questionnaire feedback forms completed at the end of projects shows that 79% of participants reported increased self confidence as a result of taking part in the Fusion Orchestra. All parents who were asked the same question following the project in October 2006 felt that their child had demonstrated increased self-confidence as a result of attendance. Young people and their families are engaged with the main work of the LSO, and this is evident in the number of them taking up the offer of subsidised concert tickets for the Barbican Concert immediately after their first performance. The project has found that music sessions were the most effective method for achieving outcomes for young people and performances or concerts were most effective in engaging parents and communities.

On the other hand some projects report in the survey that they struggled with attracting and engaging with specific target groups (communities of interest) and difficulties in encouraging their identified target groups to take part. For example one project struggled to get young people to attend, another found it difficult to attract and retain volunteers over the longer term. One project said it had difficulties getting certain parts of the local community to engage, though was not specific on which. Some projects have had difficulties with statutory and other partners in getting them involved effectively with the project. Projects also report they found that specific activities they implemented did not work as well as planned, for example a health and fitness mini project and a series of woodcraft workshops. Others struggled to get all the facilities they had planned in operation during the timescale.

4.8 Dissemination

While dissemination is not a required aspect of being awarded a Reaching Communities grant, many projects do undertake some form of dissemination activity. The majority of projects which will complete by summer 2008 propose to undertake some form of activity, mainly some media publicity (62%) or a written report such as an evaluation report (50%). Around a third of projects say they are using a website or leaflets to publicise their project (33% each). Feedback from the case studies also illustrates a commitment by some projects to sharing their learning. The 'Bradford Nightstop' case study say they plan to train other members of organisations working with young people using the methods and learning from their Reaching Communities project to disseminate the activity more widely. It is also hoped that by presenting the findings of the evaluation they are undertaking at the Nightstop UK conference the project can be rolled out nationally.

5.0 Conclusions and Implications

5.1 Conclusions

Reaching Communities in England and Northern Ireland aims to fund projects that help those most in need including those people or groups who are 'hard to reach', through projects which best meet their communities' needs. To date, Reaching Communities in England has awarded 847 grants to projects amounting to over £180 million of funding. In Northern Ireland fifteen grants have been awarded with a value of nearly £6.5 million. A very diverse range of organisations are being supported with the majority being in the voluntary and community sector, although a large proportion of limited companies are also being supported such as community enterprises, credit unions and local branches of larger national charities. Broadly speaking, projects are operating over three or five years, although around one in five are operating for 1,2 or 4 years.

The Reaching Communities programmes have been well-received by stakeholders consulted as part of the evaluation in both England and Northern Ireland. Stakeholders felt that the programme was meeting a clear need and that the bottom-up and demand-led structure of the fund was appropriate. Other aspects of the grants such as the longer project lengths and larger budgets available (especially in Northern Ireland) were also welcomed. Stakeholders feel the complex funding structure in Northern Ireland means that the generality of Reaching Communities often meets needs which are not addressed through alternative funding sources. Stakeholders are aware that demand had outstripped supply in both programmes, and feel that budgets for the programmes ought to be higher. Stakeholders in England feel there is a lack of clarity around the geographical location and regional distribution of projects – the 'fair share' issue ought to be made more explicit to applicants. There are also mixed views about the application process and forms – with some saying the outline proposal stage was confusing for applicants whereas others feeling it was helpful in streamlining the process.

The programmes to date have had a very broad scope in terms of the needs they are aiming to meet and the outcomes they are hoping to achieve. The programmes' broad outcomes mean that projects are able to work in holistic way to improve things for their local communities. This also means that it is hard to generalise about the types of target groups and activities that the programmes are supporting. So far, meeting health related needs and the specific needs of young people are two prominent areas of work however broader work around reducing disadvantage across both urban and rural areas is also important. As the programmes continue to develop and other funding programmes come on-stream, the areas of focus may also change. Projects also tend to be meeting the

needs of two or more target groups and delivering multiple activities. Many projects are designed to meet a perceived gap in statutory provision or to deal with specific needs of target groups and many are dealing with softer outcomes such as well-being, mental health and inter-personal skills. In both programmes funding to date has been relatively well spread geographically, however with only a small proportion of activity focusing at the national level.

In identifying needs, projects appear to be relying somewhat on local, home-grown knowledge and experience and to some extent on other locally relevant statistics, particularly deprivation data.

Given the relatively early stage of much activity, few projects have yet had to cope with changes in the local situation or changes in needs, although this could be expected to increase over coming years. Some however are improving their projects based on the better understanding of the needs that they have benefited from upon commencing.

Early findings indicate a relatively high proportion of projects are attempting to involve beneficiaries in their project in some way, primarily in the evaluation of their project as might be expected. Rather fewer projects are 'going the extra mile' and fully involving beneficiaries in identifying needs, and in delivering services and helping to manage aspects of projects, for example through helping to recruit project staff or sitting on user panels or management committees. Only a quarter of projects are involving beneficiaries on equal terms with the project team (24%), and a further quarter did not respond at all to a question on involvement; these proportions could be improved upon during the course of the programme. Some projects struggle to involve beneficiaries in their need to respect their anonymity or their need to appear non-invasive. Where beneficiaries *are* being involved there are benefits for both projects – in terms of achieving their outcomes more effectively – and for beneficiaries in terms of gaining confidence and skills. It is also giving projects a better understanding of the needs they are dealing with.

Given the rolling format in which grants are awarded in Reaching Communities and the length of funding available (of up to five years), to date, for the majority of projects it is too early to be able to assess whether the needs they identified have been met and whether they have reached those most in need. For example in the Reaching Communities England only 25 projects to date have the potential to have actually been completed. In Reaching Communities Northern Ireland projects are only just getting under way. Similarly it is a little early to draw conclusions about whether the programme has contributed to reducing disadvantage or compare which approaches have been most effective in doing so. These evaluation questions will be addressed further in the latter years of the evaluation.

However early feedback suggest some positive impacts are beginning to show and that projects are meeting the needs they identified through the activities they suggested. Again given the breadth of the programme it is difficult to summarise outcomes, however early indications point to positive health outcomes and improved community cohesion and capacity as a result of projects completed to date. Since the programme is able to fund existing activity, many projects will be seeing continued positive impacts building on previous work, as in one of the case studies which has redesigned services to help rural carers access support and befriending services. Early evidence also suggests that Reaching Communities is supporting activity which is additional to existing provision and many projects say they expect to see benefits of their projects beyond the life of the funding, although many feel they will need continued funding to achieve this.

5.2 Implications

Further work could be undertaken to promote a greater understanding among potential applicants and successful projects around the various levels of 'participation' and encouraging projects to facilitate a deeper understanding of this aspect and to encourage more innovative approaches to this. For example projects are most likely to be involving beneficiaries in identifying needs and in evaluation, but to a lesser extent in the management and decision-making processes. Further beneficiary involvement could perhaps be encouraged through ensuring good practice examples are circulated. Tools and mechanism for doing so effectively would be beneficial.

Currently the regional allocations of funding in England and Northern Ireland are fairly well spread, and most outcomes are being worked towards (perhaps less so the environmental outcome in both programmes). Big Lottery already provide information regarding these two issues to the programme committee on a regular basis, and we recommend continued discussion and monitoring of this distribution throughout the programme, with the opportunity to take appropriate action if required.

The evaluation needs to ensure that case studies provide further details on how projects are defining 'most in need' and deprived groups to gain further detail on this subject. In particular it will be interesting to explore in more depth how projects have identified those 'most in need' among people from their target group who are accessing their project. In particular it would be useful to explore how the 'most in need' have been involved in identifying needs and designing, managing and evaluating projects to assess whether those needs have been met.

Over the course of the evaluation, the researchers will need to continue to explore with case studies the extent to which projects feel they are contributing to reducing disadvantage in the local area.

Self evaluation is a critical element in a programme of this size and continued and further promotion of the self-evaluation materials available through the Toolkit and Website will be helpful in order to encourage projects to self-evaluate consistently and using more formal and appropriate mechanisms.

The vast majority of projects (70%) expect to continue after BIG funding. Providing support and advice on how to maximise opportunities for continuation is key to ensuring the on going impact of Reaching Communities funding. This could be in the form of a toolkit, events or good practice guidance.

Annex One: Stakeholder feedback

Stakeholder feedback on the Reaching Communities programme

Summary

This paper provides an overview of the views of key stakeholders of the Reaching Communities programmes in England and Northern Ireland and is based on a series of in-depth interviews conducted by the research team during March-September 2007. It presents stakeholders' views on the reception and structure of the fund, and then suggests some implications for the evaluation. Stakeholders included sector representatives such as umbrella bodies and government departments.

Key findings were that overall Reaching Communities has been well-received in both England and Northern Ireland. Stakeholders felt that the programme was meeting a clear need and they felt the bottom-up and demand-led structure of the fund was appropriate. Other aspects of the grants such as the longer project lengths and larger budgets available (especially in Northern Ireland) were also seen as beneficial. The complex funding structure in Northern Ireland meant that the generality of Reaching Communities often met needs which were not addressed through alternative funding sources. Stakeholders were aware that demand had outstripped supply in both programmes, and felt that budgets for the programmes ought to be higher. Stakeholders in England felt there was a lack of clarity around the geographical location and regional distribution of projects – they felt that the 'fair share' issue ought to be made more explicit to applicants. There were mixed views about the application process and forms – with some saying the OPF stage was confusing for applicants whereas others feeling it was helpful in streamlining the process.

The key implications for the evaluation of these findings are around:

- How do factors such as organisational size/capacity/experience and the length of funding awarded affect outcomes?
- Rurality – how is this taken into consideration in the evaluation?
- How are projects handling sustainability and additionality as their projects progress?

A1.1 Introduction

This paper provides an overview of the views of key stakeholders of the Reaching Communities programmes in England and Northern Ireland. It was initially presented for consideration at the fourth quarterly meeting of year one of the Reaching Communities programme evaluation on 12 December 2007. The paper is based on interviews with 7 stakeholders from a variety of organisations in England and 9 stakeholders from five organisations in Northern Ireland. All views have been anonymised to respect confidentiality. The paper starts with feedback from stakeholders in England (Section 1.2), and presents their views on how Reaching Communities has been received within the sector, and views of the funding structure of the programme, including regional distribution, the funding of statutory bodies, and the application process. The second part of the paper presents feedback from stakeholders in Northern Ireland (Section 1.3). Finally the paper explains how the findings have been taken into consideration in the evaluation (Section 1.4).

A1.2 Feedback from England stakeholders

1.2.1 Reception of the Reaching Communities Fund

Reaching Communities has been received positively by the sector, who felt there was a clear need for such funding. The fund was welcomed by stakeholders for being broad in scope and appearing to follow a similar style to the previous Community Fund type support. Stakeholders recognised that Reaching Communities (RC) can support many types of work/activity and felt that support for community type activities at a neighbourhood level were important because these activities are not always supported elsewhere. In particular stakeholders were positive about the programme's support for preventative services which are not easily funded through other streams. Stakeholders felt that this was especially the case when there is pressure on core funds and preventative work is sidelined in order to make room for crisis services.

Stakeholders felt that the popularity of the fund was inevitable given its style but, as might be predicted, they also felt that there were insufficient funds in the current budget to meet demand¹.

1.2.2 Feedback on funding structure

Stakeholders praised the demand-led nature of the fund; being bottom up, and with an emphasis on softer outcomes. Such outcomes are often harder to measure and not always tackled by other funding programmes. However with the themes and outcomes fairly firmly

¹ Further discussion of the over subscription is provided below.

set, stakeholders expressed concern that some needs or sectors may be marginalised. It was felt that some projects with outcomes which would match RC may have failed to secure funding because they targeted *individuals* and not communities. For example, the 'Wheels to Work' project which matches RC outcomes of getting young people into work and education, but did not qualify for funding because, stakeholders believed, it is based on individuals rather than communities and it is focused on infrastructure as well as direct delivery.

There was some misunderstanding among stakeholders as to whether the programme focussed solely on geographical communities or whether it included communities of interest. Stakeholders felt strongly that there should be a focus on funding communities of interest as well as geographical communities. Stakeholders feared that some key groups may miss out because they did not fit with geographical boundaries, for example it was suggested that the programme could focus more on faith organisations, target groups such as Afro-Caribbean men or disabled groups who may be more geographically dispersed.

Stakeholders appreciated that BIG are looking for applications which are linked into wider strategies or policy initiatives however there was concern that it can be difficult for smaller organisations to do this successfully because they are unable to produce applications which are as sophisticated as larger organisations.

The new fund allows *existing* projects to be funded and this was seen as positive by stakeholders. The funding of existing work means that organisations do not feel under pressure to invent new projects or split into new organisations (which can result in fragmentation in the sector) in order to win funds. However, one stakeholder expressed concern that some new or innovative work and work that meets current priorities may go unfunded because of allowing existing work to go forward.

Stakeholders were positive about the flexible grants available in the form of the maximum funds per year arrangement and funds available over several years. It was felt that the flexible funding offered has had a positive impact on encouraging diverse groups and because projects have been permitted to change as they developed, this has meant that more sustainable projects have been funded.

Stakeholders were critical of short term funds in general, they felt that the 5 year funding available through RC allowed for more learning and delivery and this was desired by the sector. In contrast, with a typical three year fund, it often takes a year to set up, a year to deliver and then a year to look for other funding. One stakeholder observed that there are fewer projects on the 2 or 4 year funding arrangement than the 3 or 5 year, and organisations may have a tendency to push their application to fit the funds available.

1.2.3 Context and local awareness

Stakeholders were concerned about the geographical element to funding. They acknowledged that BIG needed to ensure a geographical spread to funding but they felt that the regional approach taken by BIG was not explained in a fully transparent manner. For example, they accepted that BIG need to ensure that they are not funding two community centres in the same village but stakeholders still felt that if a project is good then it should have as much chance as other good projects of receiving funding regardless of the local context. They were unclear as to how BIG balanced these two concerns. Some stakeholders felt that there should be no weighting for deprived areas because local authority funding already follows deprivation measures such as IMD scores. It was recognised that funding should broadly reflect the population but it was seen as important that BIG were clear about how they address the 'fair share' issue.

1.2.4 Statutory bodies

Some stakeholders held the perception that allowing statutory organisations to apply for funding has impacted on the volume of bids received and the success rate for the voluntary and community sector. Conversely, others said that they had no concerns about the funding of statutory organisations because they were aware that in reality few statutory organisations had been funded. Most thought that additionality needed to be emphasised and that it was important to get the message to the voluntary sector that very few statutory organisations have actually received funding from BIG.

Furthermore, there may be a need for some clarification over the definition of statutory and voluntary organisations. For example, one stakeholder questioned whether Parish Councils were eligible for funding; they are classed as statutory bodies but BIG tend to recognise them as VCS.

1.2.5 Application process

Feedback on the application process was mixed. While some highlighted difficulties with the process, particularly the Outline Proposal Form (OPF) stage, others did not experience any problems.

The application guidelines were criticised by some for being too lengthy, but the two stage application process overall was praised. The two stage process was felt to be useful to the applicant because stage 1 obtains core information without the applicant having to write a complete bid. The process itself was felt to be easily accessible and the questions and clear spaces provided prevented answers from being too long winded. The upper project size limit was viewed as positive in ensuring that smaller projects are not swamped by huge projects,

however it was felt that larger projects require a more detailed application process which the RC programme does not have.

The OPF was felt by other stakeholders to be confusing for some applicants; many wrongly thought that getting through the OPF stage meant that they had been approved for funding. (BIG have continued to provide information on this to inform applications.) Some felt the time frame for hearing back from BIG was unclear and some stakeholders suggested that this stage seemed to take too long. There was some concern that if an application goes to the board in a month where there are a number of very good competing projects, then it is less likely to be successful than in a month with fewer or poorer quality bids.

The capital limits which are applied to the programme were criticised by some, for excluding some projects and therefore permitting some to fall through the gaps. For example, some stakeholders felt that there should be more support for the 10k-80k projects. Projects up to £10,000 can opt for 'Awards for All' but once past that mark, they are in competition with 'big players' who know the application process very well, therefore some stakeholders felt that there should be a weighting system to support the smaller projects. Some had received feedback from their networks that applicants had been directed to the wrong place for funding, for example, some who applied to RC had been directed to 'Advice Plus' and then latterly rejected. It was felt that some of the staff who were answering calls were not well enough informed and consequently, applicants received inappropriate advice. It was felt that there was a need for greater transparency to help inform the decisions of applicants. It was suggested that BIG staff should continue to endeavour to make clear where there are other programmes where applicants may apply instead.

1.2.6 Oversubscription

The issue of oversubscription was raised a number of times in discussions with stakeholders. Stakeholders believed that the rejection rate of 80% is a significant waste of time for both BIG and applicants. It was suggested that a more stringent procedure at stage 1 could prevent applicants having to go through stage 2 unnecessarily. This could be achieved through identifying the key characteristics of a fundable bid and assessing whether applicants match these at stage 1.

Stakeholders felt that information about who is applying for funding, at what stage and whether they have been successfully funded needs to be made publicly available to better inform potential applicants, including access to the year one overall success rate figures.

In response to some of the above concerns, BIG have reviewed and adapted the forms which are being used and version RC/2 has now been launched¹.

1.2.7 Rural issues

Stakeholders expressed a view that projects cannot be delivered in the same way in rural and urban areas and that different delivery models are required in rural areas. An example included the use of 'community champions' in rural areas, these intermediates have the skills and knowledge to deal with local issues and signpost people to the more specialist services. Some rural groups need targeted intervention, and approaches cannot always be replicated for all groups.

It was suggested that holistic outcomes are more suitable in rural areas, priorities are smaller in scale and impacts are felt differently. It was felt that Lottery funds should look at social, economic and environmental factors rather than having separate resource streams, in order to better reflect holistic outcomes in rural areas, and the RC fund had a broad enough remit to be able to do this.

Concern with the nature of data used to measure 'rurality' was expressed by one stakeholder. They believed that BIG used per head of population as an indicator; this meant that urban areas require more funds because they have greater populations. However, rural areas were believed to have different needs and issues compared to urban areas, and one stakeholder felt the RC fund should adequately reflect this. Some of the key issues identified for rural areas which stakeholders would like to see funded by the programme were: affordable housing, rural post offices, community governance and transport.

1.2.8 Alternative funding

It is clear that the RC fund is impacted by the availability of other funds. For example:

- SRB funds have been wound down and projects previously funded by SRB are seeking continuation funding. This will have an impact upon demand for Reaching Communities funds.
- ESF funds are reducing which may lead to increased demand for RC funds.
- There is a lack of funding programmes which provide 5 year funds, or large funds of 300-500k.
- 'Advice Plus' is very narrowly defined and not appropriate for many projects.
- Trusts and Foundations give out funds, but much smaller amounts.
- Capacity Builders and Basis are for capacity building organisations, therefore not applicable to all.

¹ Please note, since the time of writing RC/3 has been published.

- One stakeholder pointed out that the 'Basis' programme for infrastructure organisations crosses over with the 'Capacity builders' programme.
- DEFRA's funds for Rural and Social and Community programme ends in 2008, this may affect RC, and stakeholders predicted a 'scramble' for other sources of funding.

In the light of this, stakeholders felt that there is a reliance upon Lottery funds in the sector and BIG needed to continue to ensure that they signpost effectively to other opportunities.

1.2.9 Sustainability of funding

Stakeholders suggested that BIG should look at how projects use their funds to make themselves self-sustaining, so that they are not relying upon a second term of BIG funding. Many organisations have to close, or make staff redundant due to the lack of ongoing funds. The long term nature of the RC fund means that projects are forced to think differently than they would for smaller or shorter pots of funds, and therefore one would expect to see stronger and more sustainable projects receiving RC funding. This will be worth exploring in the evaluation.

1.2.10 Added value of projects

It was felt that organisations have trouble understanding how to explain whether what they do is additional to statutory funds or not, and therefore it was felt that the issue of additionality is vague. It was found to be hard to define, because for example, some projects are carrying out statutory work because it is not provided by their local authority. Again, this will be worth exploring in the evaluation.

1.2.11 Olympics

As might be expected, stakeholders expressed concerns about the diversion of funds from Big Lottery projects in the voluntary sector to support the 2012 Olympics. They felt that this may have a disproportionate impact on the voluntary sector because funding may be diverted to the statutory sector. BIG has responded by making clear that they will be able to meet all the grant commitments they have made, deliver the funding allocated to current projects and maintain their commitment to provide 60-70% of funding to the Third Sector at planned levels. Generally stakeholders in the North felt more strongly about this than the London based organisations.

1.2.12 Alignment with Government/capacity for policy influence

Overall, many felt that due to the size and scale of Big Lottery Fund and its impact on the voluntary sector, its role in advising policy is vital and stakeholders felt that BIG could further

extend their policy influence. Others felt that BIG should not be too closely aligned to government and that because it is not public money which is being spent, Big Lottery should "be bold" and take more risks. It was acknowledged by stakeholders that because BIG are an NDPB, the organisation has to build good public relations and therefore needs to balance its interests.

One key area in which stakeholders saw some potential for BIG's involvement in the policy debate is through the use of the data held by the Lottery. Stakeholders felt that the Lottery's unique access to information about the needs of the sector, trends and local knowledge could be used more effectively to inform policy development.

A1.3 Feedback from Northern Ireland stakeholders

In mid-2007 an internal review of Reaching Communities Northern Ireland (RCNI) processes was undertaken, which included extensive consultation with both successful and unsuccessful applicants from the first funding tranche. The findings of this review were considered by the Northern Ireland (NI) Committee and resulting changes to RCNI processes have since been made public.

As a result of the internal review of processes being undertaken, it was agreed that stakeholder consultation within the RCNI evaluation would be limited to organisations that could best advise on strategic positioning issues. Accordingly, in addition to consultation with NI Committee members, interviews were completed with representatives of the Northern Ireland Council For Voluntary Action (NICVA), the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM), the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) and the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB). At the time of writing arrangements were also being made to interview representatives of the Department of Social Development (DSD).

The strategic positioning issues discussed will be considered under the following headings:

- context;
- reception of RCNI;
- grant scope;
- grant distribution;
- outcomes and priorities.

1.3.1 Context

The period during which the RCNI came online has been particularly fluid in terms of community and voluntary sector focus and funding. The outworking of the Task Force on

Resourcing the Voluntary Community Sector (the government's Positive Steps document, 2005) outlined an ambitious development path to a sustainable sector working in close partnership with government. Key issues to be addressed included a move towards longer-term funding arrangements with NGOs providing contracted service delivery to government wherever possible; NGO service provision was to be set within strategic long-term development frameworks; and the sector itself was to be assisted in a modernisation programme to improve the effectiveness, agility and sustainability of community and voluntary organisations. Although DSD's 2007 evaluation of progress on implementing Positive Steps is largely positive, that view was not universally held across the sector. In fact several consultees felt that BIG had taken the process much further forward than government, which was languishing behind in its strategic commitments.

At the same time, the 2000-2006 EU financial perspective was drawing to a close, and the 2007-2013 arrangements were being formulated. EU structural funding represented over £1bn of additional resources for NI over the 2000-06 period, with some 20-30% of that ultimately making its way to funding the community and voluntary sector¹. The delivery model for the 2007-2013 period involves SEUPB distributing large scale grants to regional thematic delivery agents, and commissioning "strategic partners" (voluntary LA groupings) to act as funding intermediaries at a sub-regional level. Some £200m of funding is set to be distributed via EU programmes in NI over the 2007-2013 period, although this is not expected to start reaching beneficiaries until mid 2008, and at this point it is unclear what proportion of that will pass through the community and voluntary sector.

Also at the same time, significant structural shifts have been occurring regarding domestic funding of the community and voluntary sector. The 36 Neighbourhood Renewal area-based action plans are now reaching the implementation phase (with £56m having been earmarked for the 2006-08 period), alongside an additional £5m for the Areas at Risk Programme for the same period. In addition to the other pre-existing domestic funding programmes for the sector, £33m was allocated to the Renewing Communities Programme in late 2006 and the £15m Modernisation Fund has also recently been operationalised. While all of the above presents a complicated picture for the sector, it must also be born in mind that the outcome of the 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review is expected early in the new year, which may increase the level of flux even further.

1.3.2 Reception of RCNI

All consultees welcomed the establishment of RCNI and its structure. In particular non-governmental consultees praised BIG for having consulted extensively in the design of their programmes and for having listened to the resulting feedback. Whilst strategically the sector

¹ DTZ Piedad, (2003) Mid-Term Evaluation of the 2000-2006 CSF

was moving (albeit slowly) towards longer-term, larger scale service delivery contracting, consultees highlighted a continuing national and regional demand for flexible funding to address activity that would struggle to fit under service delivery models (e.g. preventative social development work, or advocacy NGOs that were not comfortable receiving funds from governmental 'clients'). It was also felt to add value as a safety net for laudable projects that may 'fall between the stools' of more targeted programmes. Consultees generally felt that this demand far exceeded the RCNI budget (as evidenced by the level of over-subscription to date), but was definitely assisting to meet an important need in the sector.

1.3.3 Grant Scope

The 3-5 year project length and £100-500k grant levels were felt to be highly appropriate to the target market in NI. In particular it was pointed out that in the new EU funding period, small scale project funding (i.e. <£100k) for the community and voluntary sector was expected to be provided via SEUPB's strategic partners, but there was a perceived gap at the slightly higher level that RCNI targeted. The time period of projects was also felt to fit well with needs of the sector, allowing strategic organisational planning. However, it was highlighted by some consultees that as RCNI was open to existing projects, BIG needed to be careful to avoid being used as a core funding solution when "all else failed".

1.3.4 Grant Distribution

At the time of interview consultees were unaware of how the first tranches of RCNI funding had been distributed (in terms of applicant organisations/partnerships, geography and grant size). However when the question was raised of whether greater impact could be achieved by targeting RCNI more tightly across these dimensions the general consensus was that it was impossible to generalise. The issue of statutory agencies being part of applicant partnerships was not necessarily seen as a significant issue, and indeed having such agencies 'plugged in' to the project could deliver significant additional value in many circumstances. It was only felt to present a risk if the RCNI funding was allowed to substitute the statutory agency's existing budget, and consultees assumed that this could be controlled through the grant application and monitoring process. In terms of whether RCNI should favour smaller community and voluntary organisations, consultees generally suggested that organisational size could be a misleading indicator and that each case should be judged on its individual merits – smaller did not automatically mean more deserving, or that there was a greater need for capacity development. Consultees generally agreed that RCNI should not be geographically targeted.

1.3.5 Outcomes and Priorities

As previously mentioned, consultees were very supportive of the broad nature of RCNI, and particularly the fact that the structure of the outcomes, priorities and underlying principles were not highly prescriptive. However it should be noted that some external consultees suggested

that the outcomes, priorities and underlying principles were so open to interpretation (and therefore so flexible) that there seemed to be little point in having them at all (i.e. they merely represented unnecessary but easily overcome hurdles for applicants to jump over). Given that the vast majority of funding programmes for the community and voluntary sector were relatively specific in their targeting (and RCNI's value lay in its flexibility), some consultees asked whether it would be easier on both applicants and BIG to just remove the outcomes, priorities and underlying principles altogether (or at least to drastically rationalise them)¹.

Consultees also welcomed the broad interpretation of 'community' applied in RCNI, which was felt to add a wider dimension which again allowed promising projects that did not quite 'fit' elsewhere to be included.

1.3.6 Strategic Positioning

A minority of consultees felt that the 10% capital limit was unnecessarily limiting, while most others felt that it further complemented existing funding programmes in NI such as the Modernisation Fund and Neighbourhood Renewal Programme which specifically targeted capital investment. On the whole consultees felt that the need for investment in the community and voluntary sector in NI far exceeded the total level of funding available, and therefore displacement of government funding was not considered to be a significant issue, and the necessity of community organisations leading applications reduced it even further. In any case consultees felt that there was no easy or logical way to determine whether a particular project 'should' have been funded elsewhere, and that the most straight forward approach was to do that which RCNI already does – considering each application on its individual merits and asking applicants to articulate the project's 'fit' within local and regional intervention strategies. One other point of note raised by SEUPB was that all EU programmes in the 2007-2013 period would automatically attract match funding from central government sources, thereby reducing any demand on BIG funding to fill that gap. It was felt that this was likely to offset any increased pressure on BIG programmes given the reduction in overall EU funding available to NI in the 2007-2013 period.

A1.4 Implications for the evaluation

The above highlights some key issues for the evaluation, many of which have already been taken into account during the design of the evaluation framework and research tools. For example the evaluators have ensured that questions around rurality (in terms of the locations of beneficiaries), and organisation size and experience have been included in the survey of grantees and in the case study visits to enable an exploration of any differences by these

¹ It should be noted that the Northern Ireland programme review clarified the link between outcomes and related priorities and thereby tightened the focus of bids from Round here onwards.

factors. In addition to the core evaluation questions outlined in the Introduction to this report, the evaluators are also exploring a number of other issues including sustainability and additionality qualitatively with participants.

Annex Two: Marked-up annual survey responses

Marked-up annual survey responses

Technical note: Results are based on 325 online surveys carried out with Reaching Communities grantees in the England and Northern Ireland programmes. 319 respondents were from the England programme and 6 from the Northern Ireland programme. The survey took place between 1-30th November 2007. In total 783 projects were invited to participate in the survey, this included grantees from the England programme (with May 2006 to October 2007 award committee dates) and 10 projects from the first tranche of Northern Ireland funding. The survey will be repeated annually.

All individual results are rounded to the nearest whole percent. Where a questions' results do not sum to 100%, this may be due to multiple responses, computer rounding or the exclusion of 'don't know/not stated' response categories. An asterisk (*) represents a value of less than one percent, but not zero. 'Tick all that apply' or multiple responses mean that respondents can give more than one answer to a question and results may therefore total more than 100%.

Figures are given in % unless the sample is less than 100, in which case figures are given refer to number of respondents.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Please enter your unique project reference number (this is the number beginning RC/ which is stated on all the project documentation from Big Lottery Fund).

2. Which part of the programme was your project funded under?

(Please tick one only) (Base all, 325)

	Number	%
Reaching Communities England	319	98
Reaching Communities Northern Ireland	6	2
Total	325	100

YOUR ORGANISATION

3. Which, if any, of the following characteristics describes your organisation? *(Please tick all that apply)* (Base all, 325, multiple responses allowed)

	Number	%
Independent voluntary sector organisation	227	70
Local organisation - part of wider national/regional voluntary sector body	46	14
Umbrella organisation or network	20	6
Statutory organisation	13	4
Parish Council	2	1
Town Council	1	0
Virtual network	1	0
None of the above/Other	23	7
Total	333	-

4. Please indicate the following details about your organisation. (Base all, 325)

Number of years your organisation has existed for	Number	%
0-5 years	53	16
6-10 years	66	20
11-15 years	54	17
16-20 years	24	7
21 years or more	109	34
Don't know	19	6
Total	325	100

Number of full time staff your organisation employs	Number	%
0-9	220	68
10-19	31	10
20-49	19	6
50-99	11	3
100-249	10	3
250 or more	4	1
Don't know	30	9
Total	325	100

Number of part time staff your organisation employs	Number	%
0-9	214	66
10-19	29	9
20-49	31	10
50-99	7	2
100-249	9	3
250 or more	5	2
Don't know	30	9
Total	325	101

5. Which if any of the following describes the areas you work with?

(Tick all that apply) (Base all, 325 – multiple answers allowed)

	Number	%
Located in urban areas	219	67
Located in rural areas	121	37
Located in urban fringe areas	99	30
Don't know/not applicable	24	7
Total	463	-

6a. [Northern Ireland projects only] Are you part of a partnership delivering a Reaching Communities project? *(Please tick one)* (Base all Northern Ireland projects, 6)

	Number
Yes	2
No	3
Not answered	1
Total	6

6b. [Northern Ireland projects only] If yes, please indicate if your organisation is the lead partner or not? *(Please tick one)* (Base Northern Ireland projects who are part of a partnership, 2)

	Number
Lead partner	2
Not lead partner	0
Total	2

6c. [Northern Ireland projects only if yes at Q6a] Please indicate how many partners there are in your project partnership in each of the following categories?

(Please insert the number of each type of partner) (Base Northern Ireland projects who are lead partners, 2)

	Number
4 partners, all in voluntary or community sector	1
No reply	1
Total	2

7. [Ask all Northern Ireland projects only] Which of the following Council areas are your target groups from? *(Please tick all that apply)* (Base all Northern Ireland projects, 6 – multiple answers allowed)

	Number		Number
Antrim Borough Council	3	Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council	1
Ards Borough Council	2	Fermanagh District Council	2
Armagh City and District Council	1	Larne Borough Council	2
Ballymena Borough Council	1	Limavady Borough Council	2
Ballymoney Borough Council	2	Lisburn City Council	2
Banbridge Borough Council	2	Magherafelt District Council	3
Belfast City Council	3	Moyle District Council	1
Carrickfergus Borough Council	3	Newry and Mourne District Council	1
Castlereagh Borough Council	1	Newtownabbey Borough Council	3
Coleraine Borough Council	3	North Down Borough Council	1
Cookstown District Council	2	Omagh District Council	2
Craigavon Borough Council	1	Strabane District Council	2
Derry City Council	3	Other (please specify)	0
Down District Council	1	Don't know	0

IDENTIFICATION OF NEED

8. Please briefly describe (one or two sentences) the need which your project sets out to address? (200 words max) (Base 287 projects)

Need / Target group	Number	%
Young people / Youth Needs	36	13
Medical condition (including mental health needs)	30	10
Minority groups (i.e. bme, non native speakers, asylum seekers, refugees)	22	8
Disability	21	7
Homelessness	19	7
Community relations	16	6
Children and Families	15	5
Isolation	15	5
Carers	12	4
Deprivation	11	4
Excluded groups	10	3
Older people	9	3
Parents	8	3
Vulnerable groups	8	3
Disadvantaged	7	2
Domestic violence sufferers	7	2
Women and children	6	2
Improve confidence and or skills	5	2
Rural needs	5	2
IT literacy	4	1
Ex-offenders / Prisoners	3	1
Financially excluded	3	1
For extended services	2	1
Hard to reach groups	2	1
Improve wellbeing (mental, physical, health)	2	1
Older people and disability	2	1
Organised violence	2	1
Restoration	2	1
Lack of service provision	1	*
Low participation	1	*
Racism	1	*

8. Cont'd. Please briefly describe (one or two sentences) the need which your project sets out to address? (200 words max) (Base 287 projects)

Activities / Action	Number	%
Support / guidance	47	16
Training	23	8
Advice	22	8
Education	22	8
Activities	20	7
Encourage Community Involvement	17	6
Promote Health / Wellbeing	17	6
Improve Access to services	14	5
Improve Skills and or confidence	13	5
Practical Help	13	5
Volunteering	8	3
Advocacy	7	2
Encourage Independence	7	2
Refurbishment / facilities	6	2
Transport	6	2
Address anti-social behaviour	5	2
Mentoring	5	2
Provide routes to employment	5	2
Creative Arts	4	1
Increase Opportunities	4	1
Promote Rights / Raise awareness	4	1
Provide respite	4	1
Befriending	3	1
Personal Development	3	1
Self help	3	1
Sport	3	1
Research and prevention	2	1

Q8 Need versus activity	Activities / Action																											
Need / Target group (Base Size = 287)	Activities	Address anti-social behaviour	Advice	Advocacy	Befriending	Creative Arts	Education	Encourage community involvement	Encourage independence	Improve access to services	Improve skills and / or confidence	Increase opportunities	Mentoring	Personal Development	Practical help	Promote Health / wellbeing	Promote Rights / Raise awareness	Provide respite	Provide routes to employment	Refurbishment / facilities	Research and prevention	Self help	Sport	Support and Guidance	Training	Transport	Volunteering	
Carers			1															3						6	2			
Community relations	3	2				1	1	4							2									1	2			
Deprivation	1			1			4	2							1	1											1	
Disability	1			1		1	1	2		1	3	1		1	1					1	1			1	1	2	1	1
Disadvantaged							3					1											1	1	1			
Domestic violence sufferers				1			1			1					1							1		2				
Excluded groups				1			1				2			2	2									1	1			
Ex-offenders / Prisoners											2													1				
Children and Families				2			2			1	1				2	1	1				1			3	1			
Financially excluded				2																				1				
For extended services	1																										1	
Hard to reach groups							1													1								
Homelessness	1			1	1				2		2				3	4								5				
Improve confidence and or skills				1												1									2		1	
Improve wellbeing (mental, physical, health)	1																										1	
Isolation				2		1		2	1	1	1	1				1					1						4	
IT literacy																										4		
Lack of service provision			1																									
Low participation																								1				

Q8 Need versus activity	Activities / Action																										
Need / Target group (Base Size = 287)	Activities	Address anti-social behaviour	Advice	Advocacy	Befriending	Creative Arts	Education	Encourage community involvement	Encourage independence	Improve access to services	Improve skills and / or confidence	Increase opportunities	Mentoring	Personal Development	Practical help	Promote Health / wellbeing	Promote Rights / Raise awareness	Provide respite	Provide routes to employment	Refurbishment / facilities	Research and prevention	Self help	Sport	Support and Guidance	Training	Transport	Volunteering
Medical condition (including mental health needs)	4		6		1		2		1	2	1	1				1					1	3		5	1		1
Minority groups (i.e. BME, non native speakers, asylum seekers, refugees)	1		3	1			1	7		2						2							1	3	1		
Older people				2					1	1						2		1						1		1	
Older people and disability	1								1																		
Organised violence																									2		
Parents			1							1						1								4	1		
Racism																								1			
Restoration										2																	
Rural needs	1		1																		2					1	
Vulnerable groups	2				1				1	1			1			1									1		
Women and children											1								1						2	2	
Young people / Youth Needs	3	2		1		2	5			1			4		1	2	3		2	1				5	2		2

9. Which of the following did you use to investigate the need for your project? (Please tick all that apply) (Base, all 325, multiple answers allowed)

	Number	%
Talking to people	264	81
Previous experience/similar work/knowledge	261	80
Research reports, statistics or data	237	73
Strategies and policy documents	141	43
Other	20	6
Don't know	1	0
Total	924	-

9a. [Ask only those who used strategies, policies and research/statistics in investigating the need; who ticked options iii and iv at Q9] Which of the following did you use? (Please tick all that apply) (Base all, 325 multiple answers allowed)

	Number	%
Community Plans/Strategies	159	49
Neighbourhood statistics	147	45
Local Development Plans/Frameworks / Local Area Agreements	142	44
Indices or measures of deprivation	134	41
Census 2001	70	22
National surveys (e.g. household surveys)	64	20
Regional Economic Strategies	51	16
Other	6	2
Don't know	62	19
Total	835	-

10. How were beneficiaries and local communities involved in identifying their own needs? (*Please tick one box*) (Base all, 325)

	Number	%
They were not involved at this stage	22	7
We gave them information about the needs the project was setting out to address	45	14
We gave them options for what needs the project could address and they were invited to give feedback	60	18
They worked with the project team on equal terms to contribute their ideas of which needs the project should address	78	24
The needs were entirely decided by beneficiaries and local communities	60	18
Don't know	0	0
Sub-Total	265	-
No reply	60	18
Total	325	100

11. During the life of your project, have there been any changes to services available in the target area which have had/will have an impact on how you will address the needs of your target group? (Please tick one box) (Base all, 325)

	Number	%
Yes	16	5
No	1	0
Don't know	0	0
No response	308	95
Total	325	100

11a. If yes, please describe? (200 words max) (Base all describing changes to services, 42)

	Number	%
Response to changes in statutory provision	11	26
Introduction of new / expanded services	9	21
Partnership with other voluntary groups	5	12
Financial / legislative changes	4	10
Adjustment according to changing need	4	10
Response to improved knowledge / understanding	4	10
Monitoring and adjustment	2	5
Increase in demand	2	5
Demographic / beneficiary changes	1	2

12. During the life of your project so far, have there been any changes in the needs of your target groups? *(Please tick one box)* (Base all, 325) (The Big Lottery Fund accepts that it is possible that the focus of your project might change during your funding. There is no problem with this, as long as the outcomes you are working towards remain the same.)

	Number	%
Yes	10	3
No	0	0
Don't know	0	0
No response	315	97
Total	325	100

12a. If yes, please describe? *(200 words max)* (Base all describing a change in target group needs, 18)

	Number	%
Need for extended / expanded service	5	28
Increase in demand / number of beneficiaries	4	22
Demographic changes	3	17
Change in requirements of target group	3	17
Target group has a more specific need	2	11
Issues have become more acute	1	6

12b. If yes, have you changed your project to meet these emerging needs? *(Please tick one box)* (Base all those who have seen changes in needs at Q12, 10)

	Number	%
Yes	7	70
Plan to do so	0	0
No	0	0
No response	3	30
Total	10	100

12c. If yes, please describe? *(200 words max)* (Base all describing changes to projects to meet the needs, 12)

	Number	%
Additional services	5	42
Adapted services	2	17
Extended service availability	2	17
Sought additional funding	2	17
More contact with beneficiaries	1	8

INVOLVEMENT OF BENEFICIARIES

13. How often were/are beneficiaries and local communities involved in the following aspects of your project? (Please tick one box for each) Base sizes vary, given below.

	%	%	%	%	%
	<i>Always involved</i>	<i>Sometimes involved</i>	<i>Rarely involved</i>	<i>Never involved</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Project planning (Base, 280)	49	44	3	3	1
Project delivery (Base 279)	51	42	3	3	1
Project decision-making (Base 277)	32	56	7	4	1
Project management (Base 277)	22	41	24	12	1
Project evaluation (Base 276)	69	25	2	1	2

13a. [Ask all those answering all those who answered always/sometimes to Q12] Please briefly describe (one or two sentences) how you are involving beneficiaries e.g. 'They are involved through regular meetings with the community; they are included as members in our management committee; they are involved through a survey'. (Base all those answering at Q12 always/sometimes, 261)

	Number**
Formal feedback (this includes evaluations, surveys, questionnaires, interviews)	120
Project Management (i.e. on board as trustees, involvement in management committee)	104
Meetings	45
Informal feedback (including 'discussion')	33
Active involvement (beneficiaries involved in delivery, recruitment, day to day running)	28
User forum (including forums, focus groups)	21
Consultation	20
Publications (including newsletters, website etc)	13
Partnership working (continuing contact with beneficiaries through a partner – e.g. a school)	6
Follow up contact (contacted after project)	3
Mentoring	2

(** Equates to number of projects doing each activity, please note each project has up to 2 codes allocated)

14. Please specify what other outcomes have been achieved as a result of involving beneficiaries? *(Please tick one for each) Base sizes vary, indicated below.*

	%	%	%	%
	To a large extent	To a small extent	Not at all	Don't know
Our project meets the identified needs more effectively (Base 265)	80	13	6	1
Project delivery has improved (Base 264)	63	26	9	1
Project is more likely to meet its objectives (Base 266)	77	15	5	2
Improvement in confidence for beneficiaries (Base 264)	78	12	9	1
Communities feel empowered (Base 264)	54	33	13	*
Other (please specify – see below) (Base 96)	26	11	60	2

Other, please specify. (Base all specifying at Q14, 22)

	Number
More reflective of need	3
Improved project management / monitoring	3
Better understanding of need	1
Reduced isolation	1
Secured other funding	2
Personal development of beneficiaries	7
Health improvement	2
More inclusive	1
Beneficiaries role in running project	1
Increased ownership by beneficiaries	1

SOFT OUTCOMES

Soft outcomes from your project are those which cannot easily be directly 'counted' or quantified such as improved levels of community engagement or changes in attitudes of participants.

15. Are you measuring soft outcomes and/or distance travelled (e.g. increased confidence, changed feelings about local community) as part of your project?

(Please tick one only) (Base all, 325)

	Number	%
Yes	218	67
No	30	9
Don't know	18	6
Not applicable	13	4
Not answered	46	14
Total	325	100

15a. If yes, please describe what you are measuring? (e.g. 'Measuring improvements in confidence of young people through surveys')

(200 words max) (Base all measuring soft outcomes, 218)

	Number	%
Confidence / self esteem	73	33
Wellbeing	27	12
Relationships	12	6
Skills	11	5
Feelings	10	5
Perceptions	9	4
Experiences of project	7	3
Attitudes	6	3
Personal development	5	2
Behaviour	4	2
Independence	3	1
Educational improvement / knowledge gain	2	1
Financial capability	2	1
Employability	2	1
Safety	2	1
Understanding	1	0
Tolerance	1	0
Barriers	1	0
Increased Opportunities	1	0
Not specified	39	18

16. Are you/do you plan to track the progress of beneficiaries once they leave your project (Base all, 325)
(Please tick one only)

	Number	%
Yes	102	31
No	72	22
Don't know	55	17
Not applicable	43	13
Not answered	53	16
Total	325	99

16a. If yes, please describe how you are tracking beneficiaries?

(200 words max) (Base all tracking beneficiaries, 91)

	Number	%
Follow up contact (3, 6, 12 months after finishing project)	30	33
Continuing work with target group	18	20
Tracking / monitoring system in place	11	12
Work with other agencies (i.e. if project linked to a school, follow up carried out by / in connection with the school)	7	8
Feedback on exit	6	7
Ongoing events	6	7
Using a database	5	5
Still developing a system	3	3
Newsletter	3	3
Tracker group / sub group	1	1
Monitor people who return to project	1	1

PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY

17. Are you seeing/expecting to see benefits continuing beyond the life of the project?
(Please tick one only) (Base all, 325)

	Number	%
Yes	265	82
No	0	0
Don't know	12	4
Not answered	48	15
Total	325	101

17a. If yes, what sort of long-term benefits do you expect to see/are you seeing? *(Please tick all that apply)* (Base those answering yes to Q17, 265 multiple answers allowed)

	Number	%
Beneficiaries better able to manage life	216	82
Beneficiaries better equipped for work	176	66
Improved mental health among beneficiaries	176	66
Improved physical health among beneficiaries	159	60
Greater community cohesion	153	58
Improved community capacity	144	54
New partnership and collaboration	139	52
Improved organisational capacity	94	35
Tools/materials/approaches developed that are of use to	78	29

	Number	%
other projects		
Better-used community spaces	66	25
New or improved community facilities	56	21
Environmental improvements	40	15
Other	12	5
Don't know	0	0
Total	1509	-

Q17a) Others, please specify. Coding of others at Q17a. (Base Size = 11)

	Number	%
Improvement in achievement	2	18
Improved quality of life	2	18
Personal development of beneficiaries	2	18
Improved access to services	1	9
Knowledge development	1	9
Empowerment	1	9
Increased awareness	1	9
Development of key skills	1	9

18. Are you expecting your project to continue beyond the life of the Reaching Communities funding? (Please tick one only) (Base all, 325)

	Number	%
Yes	226	70
No	9	3
Don't know	36	11
Not answered	54	17
Total	325	101

18a. If yes, please describe how you will do this and from where you intend to secure future funding. (200 words max) (Base size 122 projects)

Method of continuing effects of project	No.	Where will funding be secured from	No.
Work with other organisations / partnership working	15	Specifically Big Lottery	6
Commission services / enter service agreements	11	Private Trusts / grant giving organisations / charities	22
Self sufficient / sustainability / develop income generation	26	Unitary / Local Authority	11
funding for individual projects / parts of projects	4	PCTs	6
generate income and need grant	5	Central Government	4
need to raise further funding	15	Statutory Sector	14
not yet decided	7	Multiple (statutory, and trusts)	17
Cut costs (staff, i.e. train up volunteers)	3	Regional public agencies	2
networking	4	NHS	1
Social enterprise	4	Town Council	1
Appoint staff member for funding	5	Fundraising	9
Promote success of project	14		
Project complete / one off capital spend	5		
Already have funding from other organisations	4		

Note: For each response potential for one 'how' code and one 'where' code. For each category only one code allocated per answer. The 'how' and 'where' on each row do not relate to the same answer.

PROJECT COMPLETION [Ask England projects only]

19. Is your project due to be completed by summer 2008?

(Please tick one only) (Base all England projects, 319)

	Number	%
Yes	24	8
No	243	76
Not answered	52	16
Total	319	100

FOR PROJECTS FINISHING THIS YEAR ONLY

If your project is due to be completed by summer 2008, please answer the following questions.

20. To what extent do you feel that your project has achieved the following? ? (Base all projects that will finish by summer 2008)

	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)
	To a large extent	To a small extent	Not at all	Not relevant	Don't know
We have met the needs that we originally identified (Base 24)	18 (75%)	2 (8%)	2 (8%)	2 (8%)	0 (0%)
Our activities have met the needs of <u>all</u> our target	15 (63%)	4 (17%)	2 (8%)	3 (12%)	0 (0%)

	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)
communities (Base 24)					
We have reached hard to reach groups (Base 23)	13 (57%)	3 (13%)	2 (9%)	5 (22%)	0 (0%)
We have met the needs of the 'most in need' (Base 23)	12 (52%)	4 (17%)	1 (4%)	4 (17%)	2 (9%)
Our project has reduced disadvantage and social exclusion (Base 23)	11 (48%)	5 (22%)	2 (9%)	3 (13%)	2 (9%)
Our project has used innovative approaches/activities (Base 22)	9 (41%)	6 (27%)	2 (9%)	5 (23%)	0 (0%)

21. What sources of evidence have you used to assess the extent to which needs have been met? *(Please tick all that apply)* (Base all projects that will finish by summer 2008, 24 multiple answers allowed)

	Number	%
Informal feedback from beneficiaries	21	88
Level of attendance	18	75
Level of demand for activities	15	63
Self-evaluation	15	63
Performance against programme outcomes	13	54
Formal feedback from beneficiaries (e.g. responses from beneficiary questionnaire)	10	42

	Number	%
Performance against programme milestones	6	25
External evaluation	5	21
Tracking beneficiaries	2	8
Other	2	8
Don't know	0	0
Total	107	-

22. What benefits/impacts have you seen as a result of your project?

(Please tick all that apply) (Base all projects that will finish by summer 2008, 24)

	Number	%
Improved physical health among beneficiaries	12	50
Improved community capacity	12	50
Beneficiaries better able to manage life	11	46
Greater community cohesion	11	46
Better-used community spaces	10	42
New or improved community facilities	10	42
Beneficiaries better equipped for work	8	33
Improved organisational capacity	8	33
New partnership and collaboration	8	33
Improved mental health among beneficiaries	7	29
Tools/materials/approaches developed that are of use to other projects	4	17
Environmental improvements	3	13
Other	1	4
Don't know	0	0
Total	105	-

23. Which of your activities were most and least effective in meeting the needs you identified? (Base all projects that will finish by summer 2008, 24)

Most	Least
Additional worker (1)	Woodcraft workshop (1)
Extension to building (1)	Getting young people to attend (1)
Expansion of recruitment (1)	Health and fitness project (1)
Computer classes, reading group and tai chi (1)	
Drugs awareness activities and visits (1)	
Having a high profile goal (1)	Attracting long term volunteers (1)
The football frenzy group (1)	
Projects which involved children (1)	
Community capacity (1)	
Peer education programme (1)	Getting statutory agencies involved (1)
completing site and installing play equipment (1)	
Mutual help groups (1)	
Combination of regular programmes and show case opportunities (1)	Difficulties with partners delivering participants (1)
Facilities that enabled greater social inclusion (1)	Only some of facilities are in operation (1)
Training workshops with professionals and delivery of radio station (1)	Some groups difficult to engage (1)
Children somewhere to play and meet (1)	
No reply (8)	
<p><i>Table lists all relevant responses – frequency of each = 1 and the most and least rows match to one project response. (e.g. one project answered additional worker most effective AND woodcraft workshop least effective)</i></p>	

24. Do you plan to do any of the following to disseminate the results of your project?
(Please tick all that apply) (Base all projects that will finish by summer 2008, 24, multiple answers allowed)

	Yes	Yes
	Number	%
Media publicity	15	62
Written report / Evaluation report	12	50
Distribute flyers/brochures	8	33
Publicise through website	8	33
Hold an event/workshop	6	25
Present at conferences	1	4
Other	1	4

25. Would your project have taken place without support from Big Lottery?
(Please tick one only) (Base all projects that will finish by summer 2008, 24)

	Number	%
Yes	1	4
Yes but in a reduced form	4	17
No	16	67
Don't know	2	8
Not answered	1	4
Total	24	100

26. Please describe any good practice relating to how you have met or addressed need, that you have identified through your project. (200 words max) (Base all describing some examples of good practice, 14)

	Number	%
Communication and consultation	5	36
Staff / volunteer training and organisation	3	21
Management / monitoring	2	14
Innovative delivery	1	7
Working in partnership	1	7
Evaluation of need	1	7
Embedded in community	1	7

Your responses have been saved. Thank you for your feedback.