

# Evaluation of Reaching Communities Findings from Year Four

Client: Big Lottery Fund  
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# Executive Summary

Reaching Communities programmes in England and Northern Ireland are designed to help those most in need including those people or groups who are hard to reach, and operate through two demand-led lightly prescriptive funding programmes focussed on the voluntary and community sector. The programmes provide funding of up to £500K for up to five years. Running from 2005-13 they support a series of outcomes, and in Northern Ireland, accompanying priorities and underlying principles. To date, approaching 2,000 projects have been funded through the two programmes delivering a range of more than 50 different types of activity to more than 50 different target groups.

Ecorys, with Boyd Associates in Northern Ireland have evaluated the two programmes since 2007 through a formative approach involving qualitative and quantitative research (surveys and case studies), and a programme of evaluation support for funded projects. In its first three years the evaluation explored how projects identified, defined and addressed 'need' and 'most in need'; findings on this were reported in 2009 (see [www.reachingcommunities.org](http://www.reachingcommunities.org)). In this, its final year, the evaluation focussed on new themes of volunteering, emerging impacts, and sustainability.

## Key findings: volunteering

The majority of projects in both programmes worked with volunteers to some extent (90%) and their roles were mainly around supporting the delivery of activities, with smaller proportions setting up and leading activities themselves (58%). Volunteers were recruited fairly informally, often through word of mouth, yet three quarters of projects went on to use more formal interview procedures. The majority of volunteers received training and this tended to be either 'on the job' or more formal. Volunteering brought benefits for volunteers around gaining skills, improving soft outcomes such as self confidence and often leading onto positive progressions into work. For organisations, volunteers provided essential additional capacity, enabling them to expand or sustain their service. Volunteers were often service users themselves and helped organisations reach target groups.

The key challenges faced by projects were ensuring the right volunteers were initially recruited, and that their motivation and commitment were maintained, as well as getting an appropriate gender or geographical mix. This required capacity and investment on the part of voluntary organisations to effectively support volunteers. Projects reported they had learnt lessons around effectively training volunteers and developed good practices as a result of the BIG funding.

## Key findings: emerging impacts

Evidence suggested that the programmes had funded projects working in some of the most disadvantaged communities in England and Northern Ireland and with individuals most in need. The clearest areas of impact were at the individual/beneficiary level. Projects in both programmes were confident they had improved the lives of individuals; and this was commonly evidenced via soft outcomes measures. In particular projects had helped to equip beneficiaries for life, reduce feelings of social isolation and improve health and general wellbeing<sup>1</sup>. The two programmes also impacted on funded organisations, giving them a secure financial footing from which to work, enabling them to develop new partnerships and raise the profile of their organisation.

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<sup>1</sup> Given the diversity of the programme it was not possible to collate this evidence. For example no overall measure of 'number or postcode location of beneficiaries helped' was available for the programmes and projects used a diverse set of soft outcome tools to capture this change.

The funding supported 'less well known' issues or causes, such as projects working with suicide, sex workers, violence and torture as well as 'hidden communities' such as hidden carers.

However some projects were less effective or struggled to meet outcomes. Some could not engage with the intended volume of beneficiaries, or had problems with capacity, staffing or volunteer numbers. Some of the lessons learned included projects not listening enough to beneficiaries when designing services and being flexible and responsive as needs and levels of demand change.

### **Key findings: sustainability**

Despite the current economic climate, most projects were optimistic about being able to continue at least part of their project beyond the lifetime of their Reaching Communities funding. In particular projects were most optimistic about sustaining a product or service they had developed (67%) and/or continuing the partnerships they had established. Projects were aware that using monitoring and evaluation to demonstrate impact, developing an exit strategy, testing options with stakeholders and raising awareness of their project through external communications were all important factors in planning for sustainability. Projects had used mechanisms such as revenue generation, community ownership, lobbying members of parliament, using cost benefit models to demonstrate impact and working with volunteers to sustain parts of their project. However, while it was uncommon for projects to have obtained funding to continue their project in its entirety after the BIG funding, a third of projects had secured some level of follow on funding, mainly from grant funding, donations or other fundraising.

Lessons learned were that planning for sustainability had to happen early on in the project cycle and an exit strategy was needed to achieve that transition effectively. High levels of interest in the sustainability sessions at our workshops illustrated desire in the sector to share learning on this topic.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

Overall the findings of this evaluation, from the 566 projects responding to the survey and the extensive series of case studies represent a significant sample of the voluntary and community sectors in England and Northern Ireland. In its final year the evaluation has illustrated the importance of the two programmes in supporting projects catering for those individuals most in need including hard to reach groups, and those groups not picked up by other funding streams or statutory funding, including 'hidden' groups. In particular the programmes have impacted at the individual level on softer outcomes. Harder outcomes have also been supported such as supporting people into work and improving mental and physical health. However, because of the diverse nature of the programme and the lack of a requirement to self-evaluate, outcomes and impacts were often captured locally and could not be amalgamated into a collective picture of impact.

The importance of volunteering and reliance of the voluntary sector on volunteer resource was evident from this evaluation; the majority of funded projects relied on volunteers to help deliver their activities to the level required. This created challenges for projects in terms of delivering best practices around attracting, retaining, and then training and supporting the right volunteers. These challenges reflect those being experienced by the wider sector, all of which will remain important as the coalition Government's Big Society develops and wider funding cuts take hold. Projects were already experiencing the varied effects of the economic downturn in relation to rising levels of need, for example around job support and debt advice but some were also experiencing a growing pool of potential volunteers to tap into.

The recommendations arising from the final year of the evaluation centre on BIG continuing to facilitate shared learning and good practices among new and existing projects around areas such

as attracting and retaining the best volunteers and planning an exit strategy. Additionally, lessons learned from this attempt to evaluate the impact of an open, demand led programme may inform future commissioning. Finally, BIG could use the learning to improve internal processes, for example around electronic data capture of more descriptive project information and monitoring data to help inform future evaluation activity.

# 1 Introduction

Ecorys (formerly ECOTEC Research and Consulting Ltd) and Boyd Associates in Northern Ireland are delighted to present this evaluation report which identifies emerging impacts of the Reaching Communities Programmes in England and Northern Ireland. This report follows the final report of the evaluation which was published in 2010 and can be found on the Reaching Communities blog website [www.reachingcommunities.org](http://www.reachingcommunities.org).

The Big Lottery Fund (BIG) is a distributor of National Lottery funding in the UK and the Reaching Communities programmes are part of the BIG's current portfolio of programmes. They are designed to meet the needs of communities in England and Northern Ireland. Reaching Communities is operating in England and Northern Ireland between 2005-2013. BIG has a stated undertaking to focus 80% of funding on the voluntary and community sector, and also to provide funding that is demand-led and lightly prescriptive. The two Reaching Communities programmes encapsulate this approach, and in fact the programme in Northern Ireland (NI) is only open to the voluntary and community sector (VCS).

## 1.1 Reaching Communities England

In England, the Reaching Communities programme was launched in December 2005. Reaching Communities England focuses on projects that target both geographic communities and communities with specific needs<sup>2</sup>. 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 and 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
- healthier and more active people and communities

Reaching Communities England is open to a range of organisations including:

- registered charities
- voluntary or community groups
- statutory bodies (including schools)
- charitable or not for profit companies
- social enterprises<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Known as communities of interest.

<sup>3</sup> 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.

Reaching Communities England has been extended until 2013 with up to £100 million available each year. By October 2010, just over 1,900 grants were awarded to projects amounting to over £454 million of funding. Reaching Communities grants are awarded in a rolling monthly programme of grant making. The programme provides capital and revenue grants 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 with a maximum of £200,000 for the total capital element where additional funds were raised.

## 1.2 Reaching Communities Northern Ireland

Reaching Communities Northern Ireland was launched in April 2006. Around £19 million was made available between 2006 and 2009. The programme made 45 grants to voluntary and community led organisations, where beneficiaries and the wider community were involved in all aspects of the project. The programme funded projects for between three to five years and the minimum and maximum grant sizes were £100k and £500k (the lower limit being significantly higher than in the England programme). Funding was mainly available for revenue funding; capital costs could not exceed 10%.

Reaching Communities Northern Ireland funded projects that aim to achieve one or more of the programme outcomes; all of the priorities under each of the selected outcomes and at least one of the underlying principles, (Figure 1).

Figure 1 Northern Ireland programme outcomes, priorities and principles

<b>Outcomes</b>			
<b>Outcome A</b> <i>People have the opportunity to achieve their full potential</i>	<b>Outcome B</b> <i>People can actively participate in their communities to bring about positive change</i>	<b>Outcome C</b> <i>Community ownership of better and safer rural and urban environments</i>	<b>Outcome D</b> <i>Improved physical and mental health for all people</i>
<b>Related priorities</b>			
<i>Improve essential skills to meet social and economic needs</i>  <i>Increase opportunity for community based learning</i> <i>Build community capacity</i>	<i>Increase opportunity for volunteering and engagement within and between communities</i>  <i>Build community and voluntary/statutory partnerships</i>	<i>Improve community facilities, access and services</i>  <i>Increase community involvement in protecting, restoring and sustaining the urban and rural environment</i>	<i>Help individuals and communities to develop skills to make healthier lifestyle choices</i>  <i>Promote mental health and emotional wellbeing at individual and community level</i>
<b>Underlying Principles</b>			
<i>Addressing disadvantage and promoting tolerance and social inclusion</i> <i>Contributing to the reduction of poverty</i>			

Source: RCNI Programme Guidance Notes, Sept 2007

The fund was distributed in five discrete tranches over the 2006-2009 period. To date 45 projects were awarded funding<sup>4</sup> with a combined value of around £19.14 million. The fifth set of awards was made in April 2009. As with Reaching Communities England, the programme was heavily over-subscribed. With a success rate of around one in ten this often resulted in very good projects not being funded. Following a programme review in June 2007, community involvement became a strict requirement for projects funded within the Northern Ireland programme and projects were required to clearly state why their project is needed, in the context of other services within the local area. A support and development contract, provided by the Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action (NICVA), operated to offer assistance to funded Northern Ireland programme projects, for example offering training and support to projects for recruiting and selecting volunteers, for working towards sustainability, and for evidencing impact<sup>5</sup>. The support and development contract with NICVA assists projects in Northern Ireland on many of the areas discussed in this report, and therefore will have an influence on them. However an evaluation of that contract was outside the focus of this study.

The Northern Ireland programme opened for two additional rounds of funding in 2010. Details of these projects were not available at the time of writing.

### 1.3 Background and Methodology

In January 2007 Ecorys in conjunction with Boyd Associates in Northern Ireland were commissioned to evaluate the Reaching Communities programmes in England and Northern Ireland between January 2007 and December 2010. The focus of this four year evaluation was to explore how projects identified, defined and addressed 'need' and 'most in need'. Findings on this have been presented, culminating in a final report in early 2010 and are available online.

This report presents the findings from the final year of the evaluation which explored the themes of volunteering and sustainability. While the original intention of the evaluation was not to measure the impacts of these incredibly diverse programmes, spanning two countries, the final year of the evaluation has attempted to look in greater detail at what evidence is available to indicate impact.

#### 1.3.1 Methodology

In the first three years of the evaluation a range of activities and outputs were completed including an evaluation framework, stakeholder consultations, an evaluation toolkit for projects, an evaluation website, three annual reports, annual web surveys of projects, a number of learning and sharing events, analysis of self-evaluations from projects, and analysis of a large dataset of Merlin consisting of 1,925 projects as at October 2010. To ensure the final year of the evaluation uncovered 'new evidence' to further help BIG in its future planning and decision making, the methodology was revised at BIG's request. The specific aim of re-focussing year four of the evaluation was to:

- focus on disseminating the learning developed through the first three years through activities designed to disseminate and engage projects and stakeholders
- ensure that information about the impact of projects (especially longitudinal change in communities) is still measured
- use the knowledge gathered about identification of need to advise BIG on their processes and systems

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<sup>4</sup> 10 in tranche one, 5 in tranche two, 16 in tranche 3, 5 in tranche 4 and 9 in tranche 5.

<sup>5</sup> See <http://www.nicva.org/>



The revised approach consisted of the following activities:

- a series of four sharing learning events for projects
- development of an online shared learning 'blog' website<sup>6</sup> offering continued support for self evaluation for projects
- a web survey of all funded projects on key areas of interest including volunteering and sustainability, which received 566 responses, giving an overall response rate of 29%
- seven longitudinal case study visits (5 in England and 2 in Northern Ireland) to collect impact and long term change at project level
- follow up telephone interviews with a sample of seven projects, all previously visited as case studies
- analysis of self-evaluation feedback and programme data held by BIG

Outputs from the final year of the evaluation included:

- this report
- a showcase brochure of selected case studies
- a top tips tool to share learning from the events
- four short film case studies

All these evaluation outputs are available at [www.reachingcommunities.org](http://www.reachingcommunities.org).

### *1.3.2 Presentation of data and data limitations*

This report combines qualitative and quantitative evidence collected by the research. All figures are rounded to the nearest whole %. Figures relating to annual survey data in some tables and charts may not sum to 100% due to multiple or non-response or rounding. An asterisk (\*) represents a value of less than half a per cent. Responses to the survey from England and Northern Ireland have been analysed and presented together<sup>7</sup>. The results from the survey are available in Annex One. Throughout the report we also make use of programme data provided by the Big Lottery Fund.

The qualitative feedback from case studies is also presented to illustrate findings. Where this is the case, it is important to note that qualitative research is designed to explore issues in detail and be illustrative. However it is not statistically representative, and views presented by participants are based on perceptions and opinions and may not always reflect the views of the whole group. Findings from the qualitative and quantitative evidence are presented alongside each other throughout this report, and sources are identified where appropriate.

The evaluation findings presented in this report have been based on results from a self-reported web survey of project leads, which despite a good response rate, must be treated with some caution as some positive bias might be expected. These results have been combined with qualitative work with a sample of projects including several 'longitudinal' case studies, visited two or three times. It should be noted that the methodology did not intend to provide any quantifiable assessment of impact nor did it allow any comparison with a control group. Finally, there was no requirement for projects in the England or Northern Ireland programmes to self-evaluate. Projects in Northern Ireland all had funding set aside for evaluation, however many of these projects were only in their first or second year of delivery of a five year project at the time of writing and impacts were

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<sup>6</sup> [www.reachingcommunities.org](http://www.reachingcommunities.org)

<sup>7</sup> Due to the small numbers of responses from Northern Ireland results cannot be considered statistically reliable on their own and it was not possible to test for significant differences between the England and Northern Ireland samples due to small base sizes.

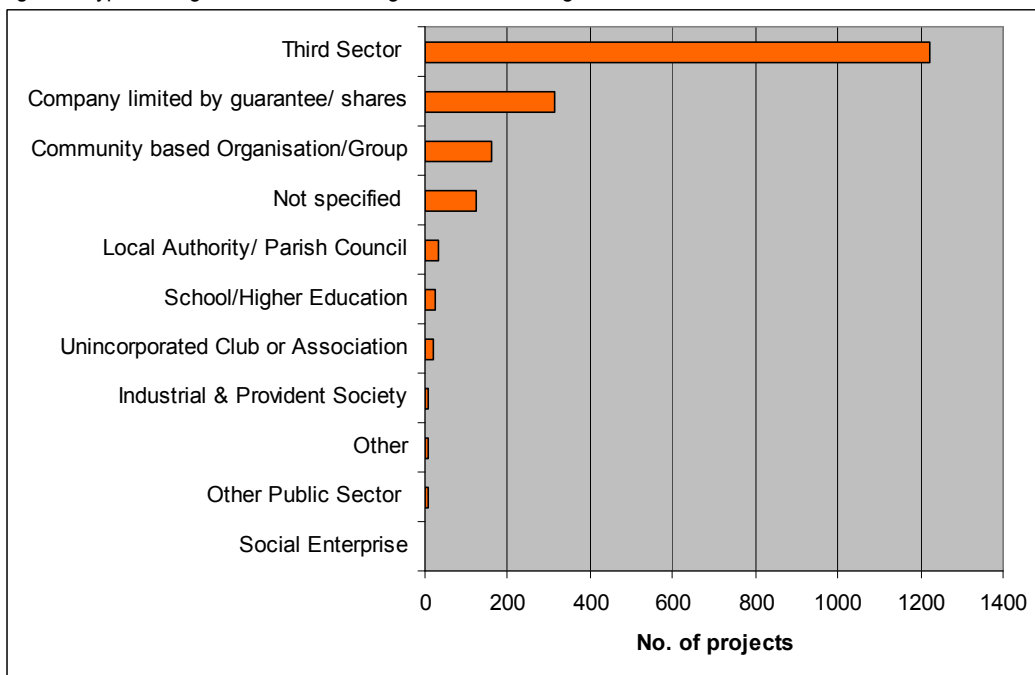
yet to emerge or be captured, and while projects in England were encouraged to share the findings of their self-evaluations with the evaluators, little material was received.

### 1.4 Review of the programmes in 2010

In Reaching Communities England, projects were most likely to be working towards *'people having better chances in life'* with 83% of projects (1,606) and *'stronger communities, with more active citizens'* at 78% or 1,495 projects. Two thirds (66%) were working towards *'healthier and more active communities'* with a much smaller proportion (9%) targeting *'rural and urban environments'*.

Funded organisations tend to be voluntary with approaching two-thirds of projects (64%, 1,224 projects) delivered by third sector organisations (see Figure 2). The rest of the projects include a mix of limited companies, statutory bodies, community based groups and private companies.

Figure 2 Types of organisations, Reaching Communities England

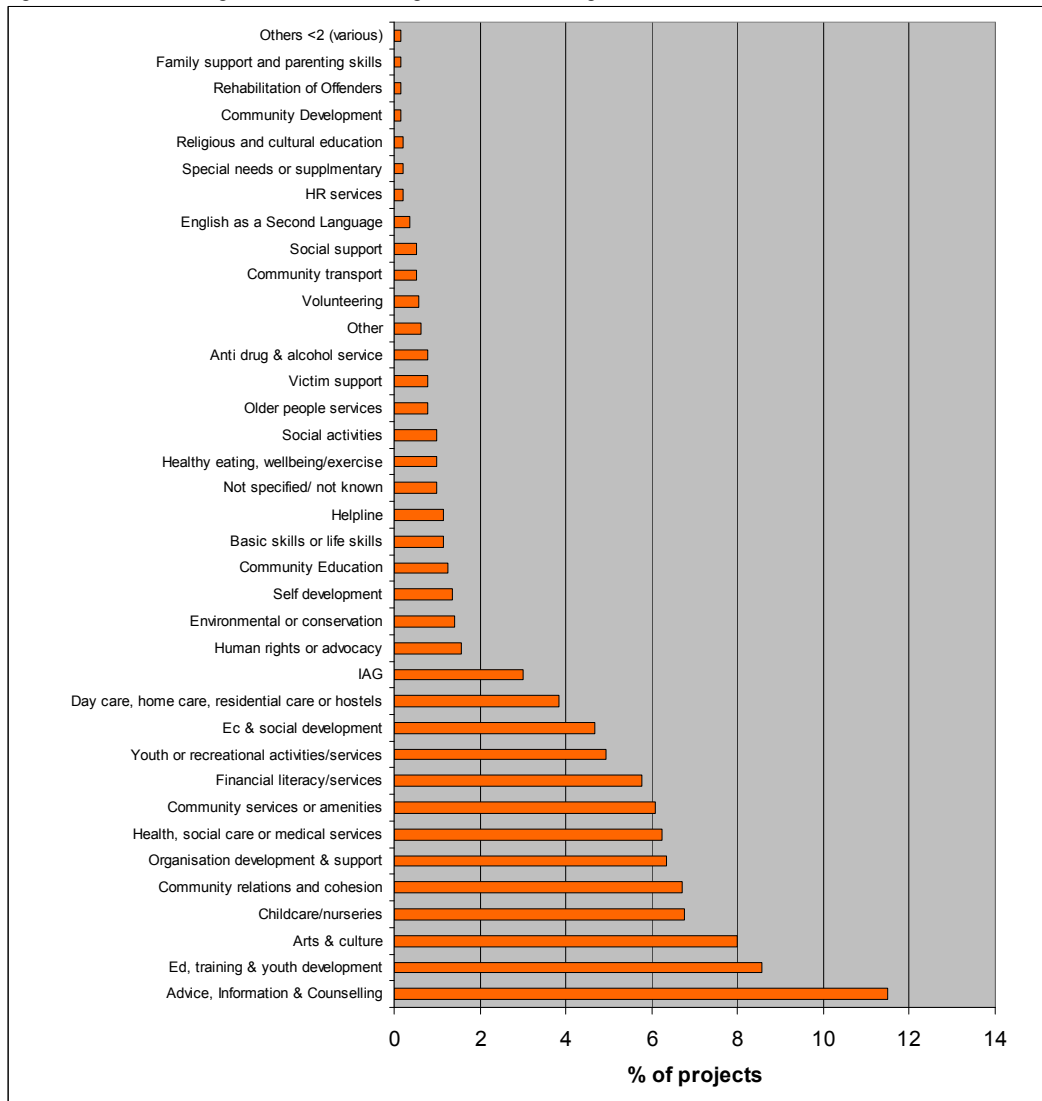


Source: Ecorys, based on programme data from Big Lottery Fund (2010)

Projects ranging from one year in length, and up to five years are funded. This means the size of grant available is larger than is common and over a longer time-frame. Reaching Communities differs from its predecessors in that offers funding to existing projects, rather than only new ones. In addition, community involvement is a requirement for projects funded within the England programme.

A wide range of different activities were delivered by Reaching Communities projects in England (see Figure 3) in order to meet the needs of communities with more than 50 different types of activity being delivered.

Figure 3 Activities being delivered, Reaching Communities England

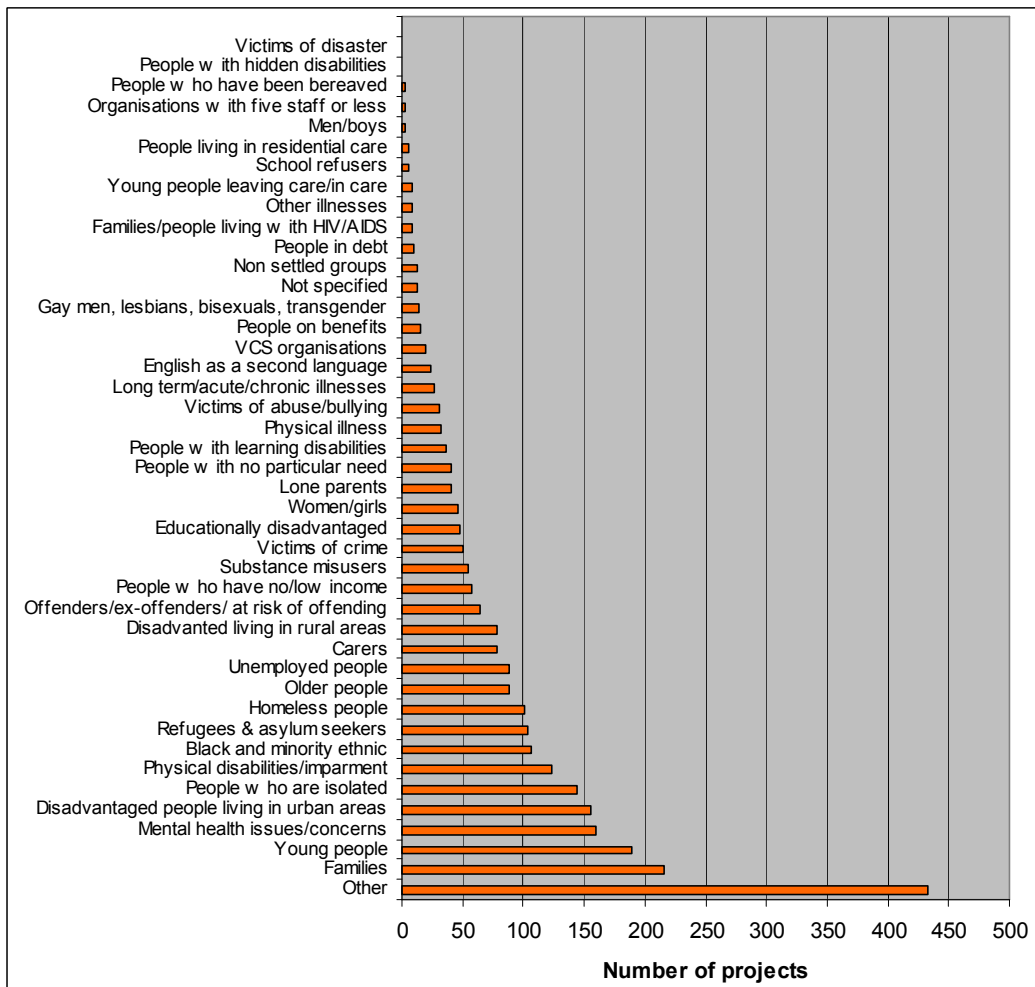


Source: Ecorys, based on programme data from Big Lottery Fund (2010)

Projects were generally delivering one or two main activities. Activities ranged from advocacy to artwork; languages to life skills; recycling to respite care and youth diversion to volunteering. The top three most popular activities were Advice, Information and Counselling (11%, 221 projects), education, training and youth development (9%, 165 projects) and arts and cultural activities (8%, 154 projects). Projects in both programmes commonly reported in the survey that one to one support was the most effective method of meeting beneficiaries' needs (56%). One to one support enabled projects to offer tailored support direct to beneficiaries and gave the most direct means for projects to meet needs. However one to one support was a more time and resource intensive approach to offering support. Provision of information or advice on a much wider - and less cost intensive - scale was most commonly reported as being undertaken (see Figure 3 based on programme data) and was also reported as being effective (48% based on survey responses). This covered provision of information, advice and guidance to enable projects to attract beneficiaries and offer support in a more 'light touch' way.

Programme data held by BIG classifies the 'beneficiaries' or 'target groups' projects identified in their applications. The BIG programme data for Reaching Communities England illustrated in Figure 4 shows the very wide variety of target groups that projects were targeting.

Figure 4 All target groups, Reaching Communities England



Source: Ecorys, based on programme data from Big Lottery Fund (2010)

The list of target groups is extremely long and varied reflecting the open, demand led structure of the programmes. This is further reflected in the large 'Other' category consisting of 433 different target groups. More common target groups included families (around 11%); young people (around 10%) and people with mental health issues or concerns (8%). While many categories have remained constant over the last year, the proportion of projects targeting people with mental health concerns has increased. The programme targeted groups as diverse as people leaving care, victims of disasters, lone parents and people with a variety of illnesses and physical disabilities.

In the Reaching Communities programme in Northern Ireland, projects tended to work towards "improved physical and mental health for all projects" with 71% (32 projects) and "people have the opportunity to achieve their full potential" with 69% (31 projects). Nearly two thirds of projects (64%; 29 projects) aimed to encourage "active participation in communities to bring about positive change" with only a small number of projects (18%; 8 projects) focusing on "community ownership of better and safer rural and urban environments". Projects in Reaching Communities Northern Ireland also had to meet one or both of the programme's underlying principles. Of the 45 Northern Ireland projects nearly all of them (42 of the 45) targeted the underlying principle 'addressing disadvantage and promote tolerance and social inclusion'. In contrast 19 of the 45 projects targeted

the underlying principle 'contributing to the reduction of poverty' (with 16 projects addressing both principles).

In the Northern Ireland programme the average grant size was much larger at over £425,000 per project. This is because the programme funding parameters include minimum grant sizes in Northern Ireland which, at £100k, are much larger than in the Reaching Communities England, and projects are funded for a minimum of three years. This means Reaching Communities Northern Ireland projects tended, on average, to receive greater sums of funding. In Northern Ireland around half the funded projects (24 of the 45) were five-year projects, 11 were three-year projects and seven were four-year projects<sup>8</sup>. Northern Ireland projects targeted more than 19 different target groups, with the most commonly targeted groups being carers and people with learning disabilities (7 projects each) followed by people with an illness and people with a physical disability (5 projects each). This reflected the focus of a significant proportion of Northern Ireland projects on health and wellbeing issues described above<sup>9</sup>.

## 1.5 Structure of this report

The remainder of this report contains four sections which address the aim of this report outlined above:

- Section 2 looks at the role of volunteers in the two Reaching Communities programmes and the results of volunteering
- Section 3 explores the outcomes and emerging impacts of the two Reaching Communities programmes for beneficiaries, communities and organisations
- Section 4 considers the plans and methods of sustaining projects within the two programmes and the effects of the economic downturn
- Section 5 concludes the report and sets out recommendations for the future.

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<sup>8</sup>Source: Big Lottery Fund programme data up to 2010. Data was missing for 3 projects.

<sup>9</sup>Source: Big Lottery Fund programme data (2010)

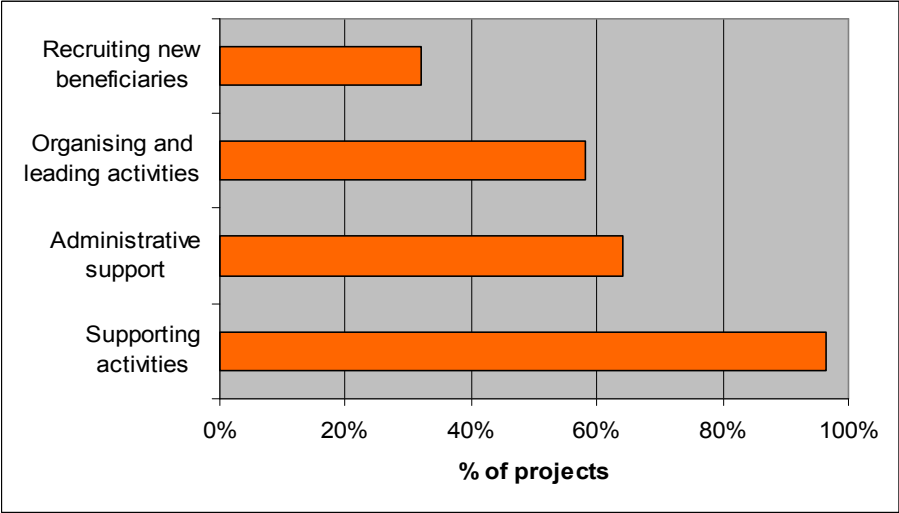
# 2 Volunteering

In its final year, the evaluation aimed to explore the role of volunteers in Reaching Communities projects. This was done through a set of questions in the annual web survey and during case study visits.

## 2.1 Volunteering roles, recruitment and training

The majority of Reaching Communities projects surveyed used volunteers to some degree in their projects; 90% of those surveyed (500 out of 562 projects)<sup>10</sup>. Volunteers played a number of roles in a project (Figure 5) and generally helped to support the activities projects were delivering (97%). Volunteers were also providing administrative support (64%) and taking responsibility for organising and leading activities (58%).

Figure 5 What roles have your volunteers played in your project?



(Base: 500 projects, England and Northern Ireland programmes combined, multiple answers allowed)

In terms of recruitment and training of volunteers, projects tended to opt for multiple methods (see Figure 5). Approaching nine in ten projects (88%) had an informal chat with prospective volunteers. Three quarters (73%) conducted a formal application and/or interview process which indicated that many projects followed up on informal processes with a more formal recruitment process. Just over half of projects (57%) formally advertised volunteering roles, suggesting many volunteer roles were discovered by other methods such as word of mouth. As the case study below shows the key to recruitment is finding an approach that suits the project.

<sup>10</sup> In Northern Ireland NICVA provided support to projects on recruiting volunteers, through the development support contract (see Chapter One for information). This support was not evaluated as part of this evaluation, but it may have played a role in influencing results in this chapter.

Figure 6 Case study

**Couper's Collection work experience project, Battersea, London**

**Reaching Communities England**

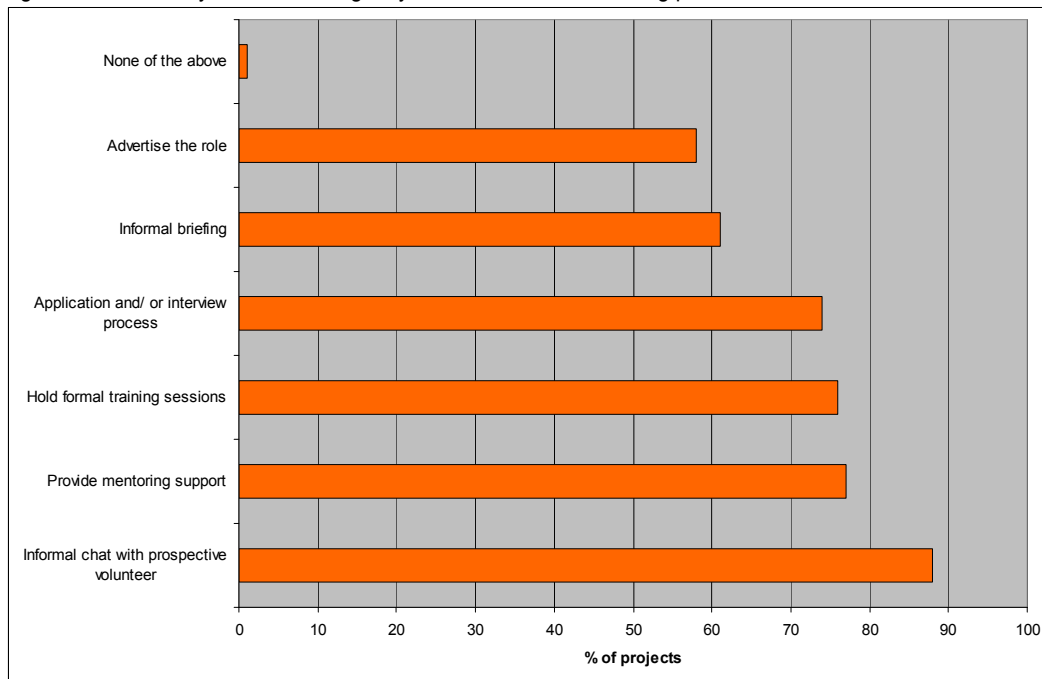
Couper's Collection is an arts space set on a group of barges on the River Thames. Reaching Communities funding is being used to support a five year work experience project, ending in 2012. The project aims to provide practical skills to unemployed people and ex-offenders who learn how to help maintain the barges and construct disabled access to the barges. In addition to beneficiaries who are referred to the project, volunteers are recruited to help fundraise and to deliver art education projects.

Couper's Collection has developed a recruitment process that suits the needs of the project. They recruit new volunteers on an ongoing basis to ensure they have adequate support. The project has a pool of volunteers consisting of 'experts' who provide technical advice and 'stalwart' volunteers. The key to recruiting suitable volunteers is the strong working relationship with local volunteer centres in Wandsworth and Hammersmith who explain the project to prospective volunteers and act as the link between the volunteer and the project.

*"Without them [the volunteer centres] we wouldn't work well with volunteers." (Staff member)*

Projects recognised the importance of training the volunteers they had recruited. The most popular approaches taken were providing mentoring support whilst the volunteers worked (77%) and delivering formal training sessions (76%), see Figure 7. Only a small proportion of projects did not provide any training (3 projects or 1%).

Figure 7 Which, if any, of the following do your recruitment and training processes for volunteers include?



(Base: 500 projects, England and Northern Ireland programmes combined, multiple answers allowed)

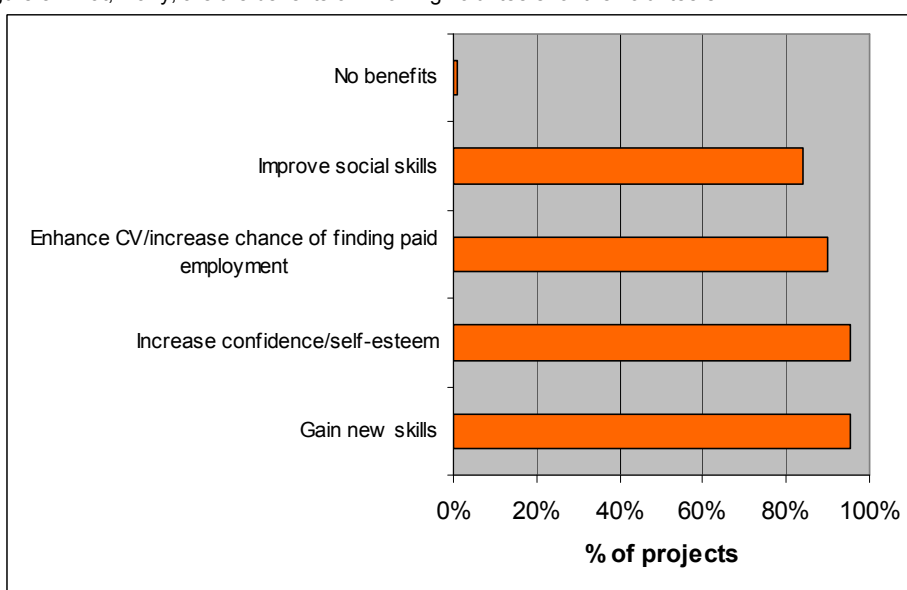
## 2.2 Impacts and benefits of volunteering

Volunteering had a number of impacts on both the volunteers and the projects themselves, as follows.

### 2.2.1 Benefits for volunteers

The majority of projects across the programmes in England and Northern Ireland identified benefits of volunteering for volunteers (see Figure 8) including the opportunity to gain new skills, gain work experience and increase soft outcomes like confidence or self esteem. For example one project which worked with volunteers for befriending people with Alzheimer's said: '*Several volunteers have left volunteering because they have found full-time employment – often because of the added benefit to their CVs of volunteering with [us]*'. Only four projects (1% across the programmes) could not identify any benefits of volunteering for individual volunteers and thought volunteering was only beneficial for the project.

Figure 8 What, if any, are the benefits of involving volunteers for the volunteers?



(Base: 500 projects, England and Northern Ireland programmes combined, multiple answers allowed)

Volunteers also agreed that they had benefited from their involvement.

***"I have learnt a lot of things through Reability and I have done different training courses and gained new skills."***

***(Volunteer, Reaching Communities Northern Ireland project)***

Some particular benefits for volunteers were identified in the survey around volunteering helping to improve perceptions and attitudes and raising awareness of particular issues or causes.

***"[Volunteering] increases the skills and knowledge of volunteers and changes their attitudes and behaviours towards disabled children and young people."***

***"Volunteers learn about our client group in working with us, increasing the number of people in the community who understand our client group, which is one of our targets."***

***(Reaching Communities England Projects)***

Benefits around improving this sort of empathy as well as improving listening skills were also identified in the 'Talk and Support' scheme operated by Suffolk Family Carers' Telephone Befriending Service (Reaching Communities England) (Figure 9).

Figure 9 Case study

**Suffolk Family Carers 'Talk and Support', Suffolk**

**Reaching Communities England**

Talk and Support was set up to target isolated family carers who find it difficult to access the services of Suffolk Family Carers. The premise of the service is that a family carer receives a weekly phone call from a volunteer, who is either a former or existing family carer, to provide support and conversation. Prospective volunteers are subject to a screening process. All successful volunteers receive a handbook and attend regular training sessions. The volunteers report their role is *"rewarding and it's a privilege to support other family carers"*. The combination of the training they receive and their role as a volunteer helps to improve their listening and empathy skills.

In addition projects felt that volunteering had supported individuals in entering or returning to the labour market as the experience can enhance individual's CVs; and many projects were able to act as referees for volunteers. This finding is supported by other research which highlights the benefits of volunteering around gaining work experience and a reference<sup>11</sup>.

The following example illustrates the wide range of benefits brought through volunteering including soft and harder outcomes.

*'Our key outcome is to register and match a minimum of 500 volunteers [into a placement]. Getting people involved in volunteering, we find that they are more engaged within the local community, are able to share their skills sets whilst gaining new ones, make more friends, it helps improve their confidence and by being mentally and physically more active it does have an overall impact on their well being. Also during these tough economic times when jobs are hard to come by, volunteering is proving overall very beneficial as way of ensuring that people gain new skills and further improve their CV.'*

**(Reaching Communities England project)**

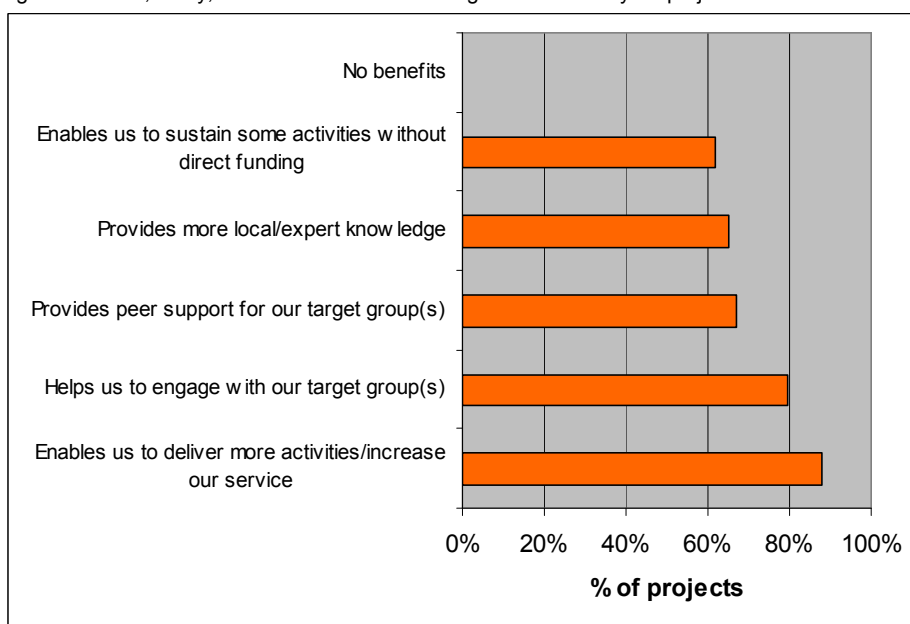
### 2.2.2 Benefits for projects

All projects that used volunteers believed that the involvement of volunteers was beneficial in a number of ways. Most commonly, volunteers contributed by enabling projects to deliver more capacity or increase service delivery (see Figure 10) with nearly nine in ten projects (88%) agreeing. For example the volunteer resource supported some projects in offering 'round the clock' support which would not have been possible without the help of volunteers.

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<sup>11</sup> Institute for Volunteering Research (2006) 'Assessing Voluntary Experiences: A portfolio of skills learned through volunteering', [http://www.ivr.org.uk/NR/rdonlyres/546077B9-3C92-4145-BF55-5A386D768A2C/0/Assessing\\_Voluntary\\_Experiences\\_Sept\\_06.pdf](http://www.ivr.org.uk/NR/rdonlyres/546077B9-3C92-4145-BF55-5A386D768A2C/0/Assessing_Voluntary_Experiences_Sept_06.pdf)

Figure 10 What, if any, are the benefits of involving volunteers for your project?



(Base: 500 projects, England and Northern Ireland programmes combined, multiple answers allowed)

Many projects used volunteers to support the delivery of activities which could not have happened otherwise. For instance Sports Recycler (Reaching Communities England) relied on volunteers to support their activities *"I am proud to say that without volunteers the project would be defunct"*. Another project stated in the survey that they were *"totally volunteer run - wouldn't exist without."* Similarly volunteers played an important role for Devenish Partnership Forum (Reaching Communities Northern Ireland) (see Figure 11) and over the period of the funding and the case study research<sup>12</sup> the numbers of volunteers have risen. Previous research<sup>13</sup> suggests that many voluntary and community sector organisations would not exist without their volunteers and evidence from Reaching Communities supports that.

Figure 11 Case study

#### Devenish Community Support and Further Development Project, Enniskillen

##### Reaching Communities Northern Ireland

The Devenish Partnership Forum (DPF) is an umbrella community development group, working in four of the most densely populated and deprived housing estates in County Fermanagh. The Forum was established in 1994 to combat disadvantage in the four estates, with the aim of working in partnership to achieve and sustain social and economic regeneration for the populations in these four estates. One of the main aims of their 4 year Reaching Communities project has been to involve volunteers in the Community Support Project. After two years of Reaching Communities funding up to ten volunteers were involved in a range of activities including assisting with maintenance work, sitting on the Forum's allotment sub-committee, and helping at the Homework Club. The volunteers play an important role in helping to sustain the Forum's activity.

Another key benefit of volunteers for four in five projects (80%) was the extra help to engage projects' target groups, for example because volunteers were often members of the target group themselves and had direct and unique insight into the needs or could inspire and motivate beneficiaries.

<sup>12</sup> Two visits were conducted with a 12 month intervening period.

<sup>13</sup> Institute for Volunteering Research and Volunteering England (2007) Volunteering Works: Volunteering and Social Policy [http://www.ivr.org.uk/Migrated+Resources%2fDocuments%2fv%2fFinal\\_Volunteering\\_Works.pdf](http://www.ivr.org.uk/Migrated+Resources%2fDocuments%2fv%2fFinal_Volunteering_Works.pdf) (p6)

***"Many of our volunteers are visually impaired and are role models."***

***"Volunteers are recruited from service users who make positive changes to their lives in social employment and health areas of their lives and the lives of their family members."  
(Project Staff, Reaching Communities England)***

For some projects involving volunteers was not only essential for the running of the project, but helped them plan for the sustainability of their project beyond the life of the funding. As one project said: *'provides longevity to the project, as they can continue the healthy walks programme after this project has finished'*. This aspect is explored further in Chapter Five. Attracting and retaining the quality and range of volunteers recruited was the most commonly reported factor in a series of things which affected projects' ability to achieve their intended outcomes and impacts (24% agreed it was a factor)<sup>14</sup>.

## 2.3 Challenges and lessons learned

While projects identified clear benefits of working with volunteers, most had experienced some challenges (97%) (Figure 12). A key challenge faced by over four in five projects (82%), was ensuring they recruited the right volunteers in the first place, often in relation to being able to maintain the motivation and commitment of the volunteers they worked with. A quarter of projects (25%) experienced high turnover of volunteers, for example volunteers not being as committed as they might be to a paid role, juggling volunteering with other work or commitments or because projects found it hard to continually motivate volunteers to participate.

Some projects also identified challenges such as: getting an appropriate gender mix (for example having trouble attracting male volunteers into caring roles); getting a good geographical spread; and difficulties with travel and travel expenses, for example finding people who were willing to travel necessary distances or difficulties covering the costs of travel.

Three in four projects (77%) found the time needed to train and support volunteers was challenging. Wider evidence suggests this was more likely to be the case for smaller organisations with less capacity to train volunteers (for example those without a dedicated volunteer manager) and who may be less likely to be aware of the support available to them for example through local Volunteer Centres and the Council for Voluntary Services<sup>15</sup>. Encouragingly, approaching half of projects stated that organising effective staff or volunteer training was an area of good practice they had developed as part of their Reaching Communities project (48%) and this had led to benefits for volunteers and beneficiaries. For example one project stated: *'We have learned that, with good practices in training and matching, befriending volunteers often gain as much from this service as beneficiaries of the service do. It has been a joy to be able to evidence this benefit.'*

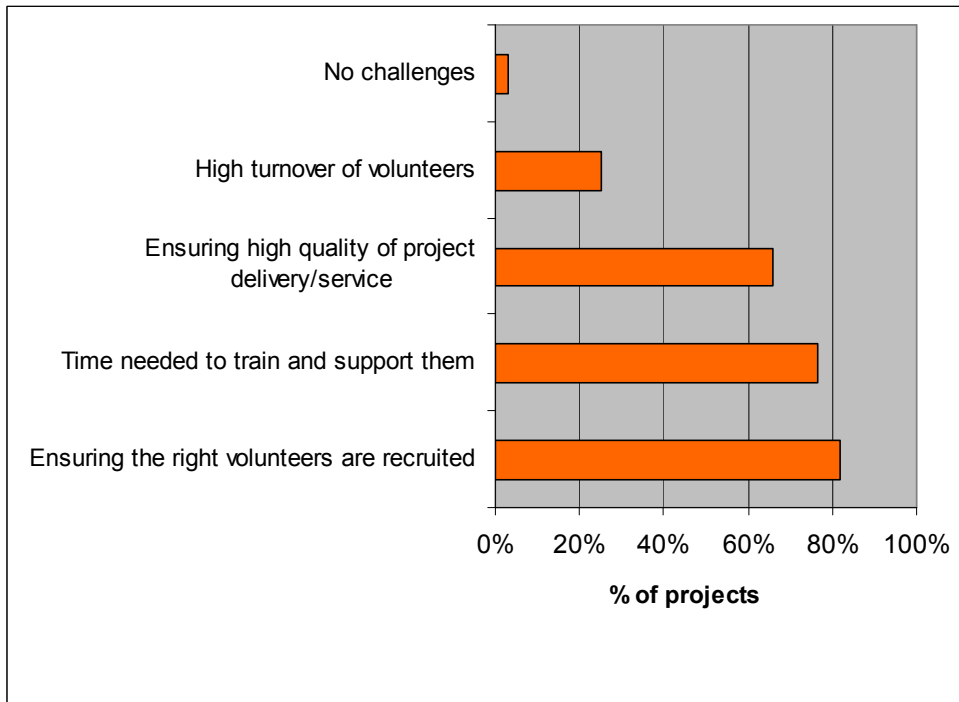
Finally, dealing with difficulties or delays with paperwork such as criminal record checks were also a challenge for some projects.

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<sup>14</sup> See responses to Q28 in Topline in Annex One.

<sup>15</sup> See evidence from Institute for Volunteering Research for Cripplegate Foundation (2010) *Unlocking the potential: Volunteers in Islington* (p27) <http://www.ivr.org.uk/Migrated+Resources%2fDocuments%2fU%2fCripplegate+full+report.pdf>

Figure 12 What challenges, if any, are there around involving volunteers in your project?



(Base: 500 projects, England and Northern Ireland programmes combined, multiple answers allowed)

### 3 Outcomes and emerging impacts

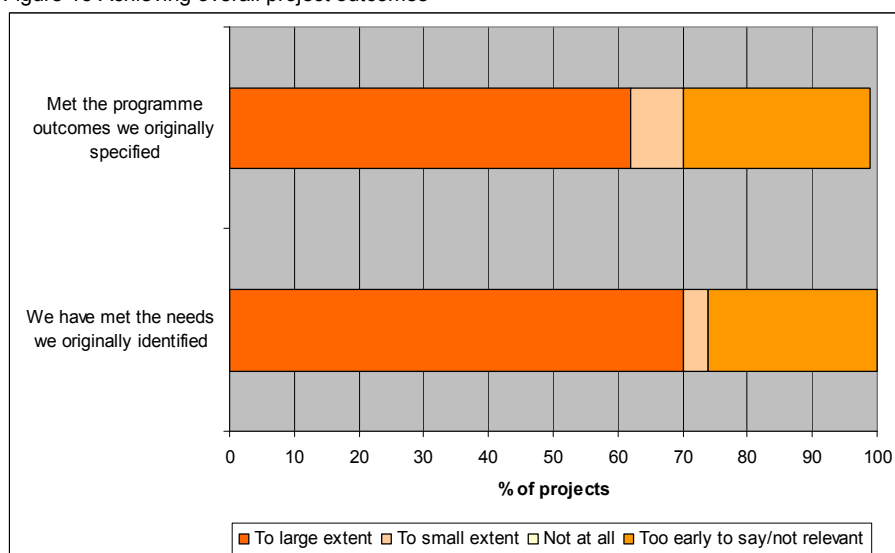
While the evaluation was not originally designed as an impact evaluation (see Chapter One) research in the final year has attempted to explore some of the outcomes and any emerging impacts at the individual, local and organisational levels. This chapter draws on feedback from the survey of projects coupled with case study evidence from longitudinal case studies<sup>16</sup>.

#### 3.1 Achieving programme outcomes

Projects in the two Reaching Communities programmes worked towards a series of programme outcomes, and towards the priorities and underlying principles in Northern Ireland. Previous findings of the evaluation<sup>17</sup> have shown that the programmes' outcomes were broad, and that projects targeted an incredibly diverse range of needs. A quarter of projects responding to the survey were getting started or still in progress (for example 265 projects responding to the survey were in their first year) and therefore felt it was 'too early to say' (26% across both programmes). For example one project said: *'While there is a small amount of evidence of initial impact, it is too early to say what the principal impacts will be'* and another indicated that many of the beneficiaries were yet to complete the course or leave the programme as yet: *'Too early to be specific. No-one has yet 'graduated' from the programme, but all those registered with it are making progress'* (see Figure 13).

Of the remainder, most projects were relatively confident they had met or were meeting most of the intended outcomes for their project (see Figure 13). Three in five projects (62%) reported they had met their original outcomes to a large extent, and seven in ten stated they had met the needs they originally identified to a large extent (70%), although this feedback should be approached with some caution as it was based on subjective reporting by project staff rather than 'hard' data.

Figure 13 Achieving overall project outcomes



Base: 511 (England and Northern Ireland programmes combined)

<sup>16</sup> In Northern Ireland NICVA provided support to projects on evidencing impact, through the development support contract (see Chapter One for information). This support was not evaluated as part of this evaluation, but it may have played a role in influencing results in this chapter.

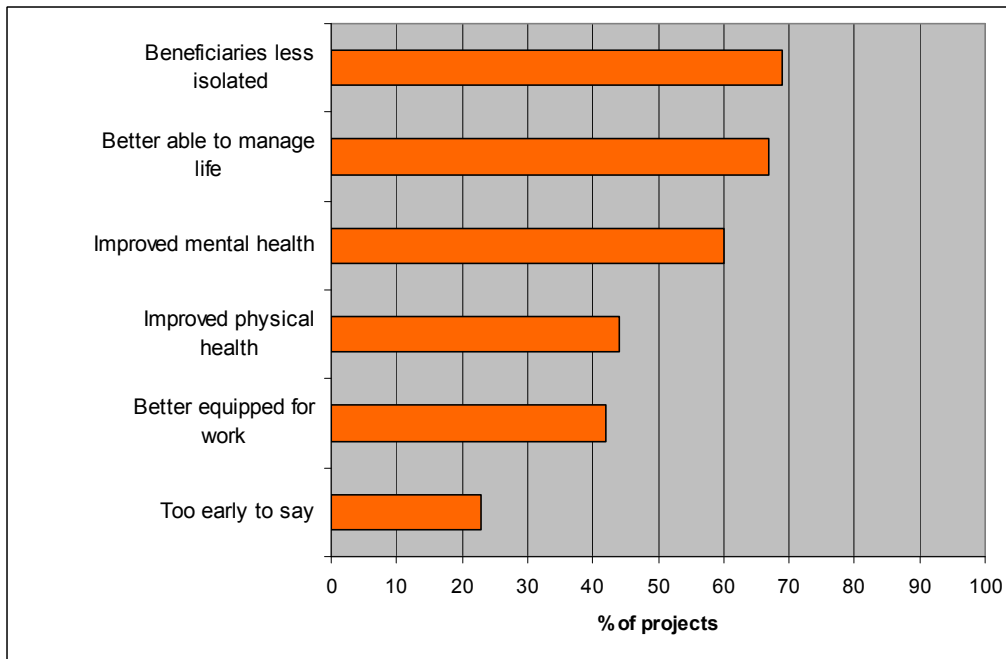
<sup>17</sup> Source: Ecorys (2009) 'Evaluation of Reaching Communities – Final Report' available at [www.reachingcommunities.org](http://www.reachingcommunities.org)

The Reaching Communities programmes translated into a series of outcomes<sup>18</sup> for individuals, communities and organisations themselves. Given the diversity within the programmes the outcomes were wide ranging (for example projects spanned more than 50 target groups and more than 50 types of activity - see Chapter One). Outcomes might then lead onto longer term economic or social impacts. It is beyond the scope of this evaluation to attempt to quantify these in detail, because of the breadth of the programmes. Instead, we have grouped outcomes and emerging impacts into three broad categories in this chapter: for beneficiaries, communities and organisations and their partners.

### 3.2 Outcomes and emerging impacts for beneficiaries

Of the three areas of outcome explored – at beneficiary, community and organisational level – it was at beneficiary level that the projects reported the greatest success (see Figure 14). Many Reaching Communities projects were targeted at *individuals*, rather than whole groups or sub-groups. Seven in ten projects (69% or 354) felt they had helped beneficiaries to feel less isolated and a similar proportion (67%) felt they had left beneficiaries better able to manage life. Improvements in mental and physical health were also common<sup>19</sup>.

Figure 14 Impacts for beneficiaries



Base: 511 (England and Northern Ireland programmes combined; multiple responses allowed)

Whilst only a small proportion of projects identified 'reducing isolation' as a direct/intended outcome over the past four years (4% or 29 projects)<sup>20</sup> this has clearly been an additional or sometimes unexpected positive outcome for many beneficiaries as a result of attending activities or receiving services. In the example below, while the primary impact has been around improving wellbeing through diet and exercise, beneficiaries have also experienced reduced social isolation.

<sup>18</sup> BIG describes outcomes as the changes or difference that a project can make over time. They are the result of an output. They are the result of what is done, rather than the activities or services provided. For people, this might be things like improved health, new skills, more confidence or self esteem, or getting a job. Impacts are seen as the overall effects, intended or unintended, of the programme on wider social, economic or environmental conditions (Online glossary BIG, accessed Jan 2011).

<sup>19</sup> Only a small proportion of projects (4%) cited 'other' suggesting most impacts on beneficiaries fitted into the given categories.

<sup>20</sup> Source: Ecorys (2009) 'Evaluation of Reaching Communities – Final Report' Pg 22.

*'The project has brought about considerable improvements to the local Chinese community. The health talks have played a significant role in improving people's wellbeing and health. The beneficiaries...often encourage one another to adopt a healthier life style... People are very active in participating in the centre's activities and using the activity room's facilities, thereby reducing much social isolation. Many have improved their social skills, and developed good relationships with friends.'*

**(Reaching Communities England project, in final year of a five year project)**

Helping beneficiaries 'to manage their lives' was also a key outcome reported by two thirds (67%) of all projects. This in particular included projects that aimed to help people manage a health condition (commonly reported since two thirds of England projects targeted the outcome *'healthier and more active communities'* and 71% of Northern Ireland projects (32 projects) targeted the outcome *'improved physical and mental health for all people'* – see Chapter One). This covered projects helping beneficiaries with coping mechanisms for illnesses like cancer, stroke or long term health conditions and helping people lead healthier lifestyles, for example healthier eating or sleeping patterns.

*'The feedback we receive from centre visitors consistently highlight an improvement in their ability to cope with cancer and many identify long-lasting improvements in their lives, such as increased household income, ability to manage stress, fatigue and nausea, ability to return to work after a long spell of sick leave, and positive changes in family relationships.'*

**(Reaching Communities England project)**

*'Those that have moved on include: a stroke client whose mobility had been improved to a level where he felt he could cope on his own. He no longer uses our clinical services but volunteers his graphic design skills for our newsletter and attends fundraising events.'*

**(Reaching Communities England project)**

Helping beneficiaries to manage life also included a wide range of types of assistance to beneficiaries to help them cope with chaotic lifestyles or life changes, such as losing a job or becoming homeless. Projects routinely helped beneficiaries to access systems or services that helped make positive improvements to their lives and increased people's resilience.

*'Some beneficiaries are feeling less stressed and more able to cope with complex paperwork and everyday life.'*

**(Reaching Communities England project)**

The projects reported they also impacted positively on health outcomes. Three in five projects reportedly helped improve beneficiaries' mental health (60%) and two in five improved physical health (44%). The following case study (Figure 15) illustrates how one project in the England programme is having an effect on mental health outcomes.

Figure 15 Case study

### York and District Mind, 'Circle of Friends'

#### Reaching Communities England

The Circle of Friends Befriending Service supports people suffering from mental ill health and emotional distress. Reaching Communities awarded £195,769 to York and District Mind to deliver this three year project. The service aims to enable social inclusion and help people with mental health problems to play a greater part in their local community. Befrienders provide information, advocacy and support to undertake training and employment opportunities and social activities, while a 'network of friends' offer further practical and emotional support. As a result beneficiaries have reported feeling happy where they had previously been depressed and isolated. Demand has been high, so their feedback has led the project to shift its focus away from offering 'low level' support to more people. Instead, greater numbers of volunteers offer more in depth and longer term quality provision to fewer beneficiaries. Beneficiaries have reported becoming involved with community events which wouldn't have been possible without the support of the project.

GP commissioners, the Primary Care Trust and the Mental Health Forum have highlighted the positive impact of the project on local communities, who have helped beneficiaries to become more involved. For example, local businesses provide 'in kind' donations such as tea, coffee and free cinema tickets. The project has developed positive relationships between volunteers, befrienders and referral agencies. It has attracted support from high profile political patrons from across the three main parties.

Two fifths of projects (42%) reported they had made beneficiaries 'better equipped for work'. This included support for people in a range of situations in relation to the job market, helping people become job ready and helping people into employment. However the impacts of the economic downturn had made it more challenging for projects to find suitable work placements for their beneficiaries (see Chapter Four for more details).

As explored in Chapter One projects in both programmes most commonly reported that one to one sessions were the most useful means of supporting outcomes for individuals (56%) and this reflected the 'personalised' nature of a lot of the work of the projects. A key factor affecting projects' ability to achieve impacts with beneficiaries was where needs had changed or where projects had issues engaging beneficiaries. For example 10% of projects in both programmes cited engagement with beneficiaries as a key factor and a further 8% indicated that needs were more complex or that they had found it slower or harder to engage beneficiaries than anticipated.

#### 3.2.1 *Soft outcomes*

A significant proportion of Reaching Communities projects aimed to improve softer outcomes for beneficiaries, such as confidence and self esteem, or relationships. Soft outcomes can often be harder to capture and measure, can be qualitative in nature and often need to be tracked over time to show impacts.

Overall, the majority of projects noted that soft outcomes were improving as a result of their project (56%) with 6% of all projects stating soft outcomes were improving at the expected rate and 7% reporting that outcomes were improving faster than expected. Only 1% of projects overall felt soft outcomes were improving slower than anticipated (5 projects across both programmes). Five per cent of projects (5%) noted that improvements in soft outcomes happened at very varying rates between different beneficiaries, with one project observing particular differences in rates of improvement between volunteers and beneficiaries, with those involved in volunteering making faster progress.

More than three quarters of projects from the two programmes (78%) were using formal mechanisms to gather feedback on soft outcomes from beneficiaries, such as surveys. Some projects were using soft outcomes tools including the Outcomes Star, or 'TOPS' - an adapted outcome measure - or a more simple 'confidence scale' to capture changes in soft outcomes. One project (in the England programme) reported that it was working with young women which included those at risk of sexual exploitation and those working in the sex industry, birth mothers of adopted children and women at risk of having negative body images. They used a self-rating survey before, during and after involvement in the project to measure changes. Another project (England programme) used a mix of different methods to measure soft outcomes, as illustrated below.

***'We use a mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods to track beneficiaries' soft outcomes, and have found strong improvement in beneficiaries' soft outcomes so far. A large proportion of beneficiaries reported a better understanding of other members of their community or new, positive relationships with people from different backgrounds that they had come into contact with through the project. The majority of beneficiaries identified improvements in confidence, self esteem and other soft skill areas including communication and team-work. '***

**(Reaching Communities England project)**

In terms of the types of soft outcomes being measured, common aspects included self confidence, self esteem and wellbeing<sup>21</sup>. Nine in ten projects in both programmes reported they were measuring increased confidence or self esteem as part of their project (90% across both programmes). Large proportions of projects in both programmes were measuring improved wellbeing (83% overall), reduced isolation (79% across both programmes) and developing 'soft' skills (77%) like team working<sup>22</sup>.

Other outcomes that projects had tried to capture included community level issues of cohesion, respect and advocacy, which were all softer outcomes that are harder to measure quantitatively. Some projects also reported they had attempted to measure the extent to which awareness had been raised for specific issues, or improved personal relationships, parenting skills, social interaction or language skills, all of which are challenging to measure but may not directly be termed as 'soft' outcomes. Some examples of the evidence projects have collected around soft outcomes as well as wider outcomes, are below.

***'We are achieving outstanding results from our new drop-in supported study centre funded by the Big Lottery Fund. We are seeing a rapid increase in confidence, community engagement, and a reduction in isolation. We have a number now attending workshops writing CVs and finding a job. Their language skills have improved immensely, as has their confidence. Others are joining local clubs, going to the library and accessing services. We have seen lonely, isolated people bordering on mental health problems with poor English skills turn into happy, animated, chatty people with ambitious plans for their future – very rewarding!'***

**(Reaching Communities England project)**

***'Our feedback from service users suggests that the majority consider that our support has improved their general wellbeing and confidence. The rate of this feedback has been increasing over the past 10 years and remains consistently high (circa 97%).'***

**(Reaching Communities England project)**

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<sup>21</sup> See Question 15 in the Topline (Annex One).

<sup>22</sup> See Question 7 for a breakdown of projects in rural versus urban areas, in the Topline (Annex One).

***'Through our monitoring and evaluation we can assess service users' progress in a wide range of key factors which are fully compliant with the NHS evaluation criteria. In over 90% of our service users, the past 12 months has seen an overall marked improvement in wellbeing, improved health and increased self esteem.'***

**(Reaching Communities England project)**

Further examples of case studies and outcomes for beneficiaries are available in the parallel case study publication, available at [www.reachingcommunities.org](http://www.reachingcommunities.org).

### **3.2.2 Tracking beneficiaries**

A smaller proportion<sup>23</sup> of Reaching Communities projects were tracking beneficiaries using a variety of mechanisms. Projects generally managed this via informal contact (62%) and did not have a specific method in place. Informal methods included newsletters and inviting people to social events. Some projects used social networks, text message or email to stay in touch, for example *'we stay in email contact with former [beneficiaries], send tips and updates'*. More than half of projects (51%) invited beneficiaries along to project events as a means of following up with beneficiaries.

Some projects had a more formalised research methodology in place; almost half said they used a follow up survey (48% or 257 projects) and more than 100 projects were using some sort of tracking database to follow up beneficiaries or doing so via partners (101 and 130 projects respectively).

***'We have built a four year external consultation into our project and that keeps evaluation high on our agenda. For a kid's programme that we have undertaken we took video footage and interviewed the children on what had changed since participating.'***

**(Reaching Communities Northern Ireland project)**

***'We are developing a tracking system currently to follow whether beneficiaries have joined existing clubs within the town after participating in our project. So far [in year one of three] we have simply made direct contact with these clubs to find out who have joined.'***

**(Reaching Communities England project)**

However many of the methods used to track beneficiaries were unlikely to elicit much robust evaluation evidence. Instead projects appeared to be using tracking to maintain contact with beneficiaries in case they needed help again in future, rather than to see if the impacts of their work were sustained beyond the life of the project. Many projects noted they found tracking beneficiaries challenging or were not attempting to do it at all. For some projects this was because beneficiaries tended to stay with the project and not leave, but for others it was because of the nature of the groups that they worked with meaning maintaining contact over a longer period was difficult. For instance one project that worked with homeless people to help them access employment, housing and volunteering opportunities said: *'We lose track of some of our beneficiaries: chaotic lives sometimes result in mobile phone numbers changing, people leaving the city or moving around from area to area'*.

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<sup>23</sup> Some projects said they were not doing this because their beneficiaries did not ever leave the project, but continued to receive support on an ongoing basis or until the end of their life.

### 3.3 Outcomes and emerging impacts for communities

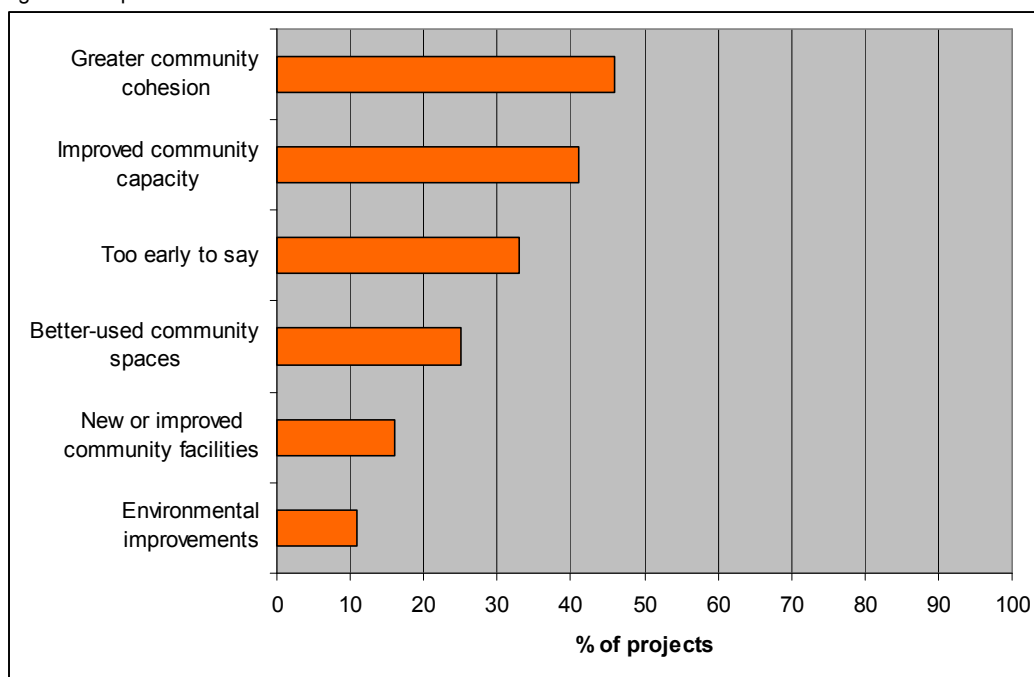
Projects aimed to meet the needs of a local community such as a geographical community or a community of interest. Less than two thirds of projects felt they were meeting the needs of *all* their intended target communities (62%) and around one in ten felt they only did this to a small extent (11%).

Community level outcomes were reported to be lower overall than those for beneficiaries indicating the individual focus of much project work (see Figures 16 and 15). This was probably because projects were more likely to be working with communities of interest rather than geographical communities and therefore their target groups did not necessarily experience any collective benefits.

Some projects noted there were emerging impacts of their work for local communities, such as reductions in offending or anti-social behaviour<sup>24</sup>. These were more likely to be occurring over the longer term and measuring them for the two programmes as a whole was beyond the scope of their evaluation.

Where projects were working with local communities, outcomes included greater 'cohesion' (46%) and improved community 'capacity' (41%) (see Figure 16). A quarter of projects (25%) felt they had developed better use of community spaces and a further 16% reported leaving a legacy of new or improved community facilities. These proportions were higher than might be expected when compared with the relatively small proportion of projects targeting the outcome '*improved rural and urban environments, which communities are better able to access and enjoy*' (9%).

Figure 16 Impacts for communities



Base: 511 (England and Northern Ireland programmes combined; multiple responses allowed)

<sup>24</sup> See the Showcase Brochure published as part of the year four evaluation for further examples taken from longitudinal case studies. Evidence was reported in the survey and based on projects own self-evaluation.

The following case study (Figure 17) illustrates how one Reaching Communities project in Northern Ireland has effectively worked with communities to tackle serious and complex issues around suicide prevention.

Figure 17 Case study

#### **Suicide Awareness and Support Group, West Belfast**

##### **Reaching Communities Northern Ireland**

The Suicide Awareness and Support Group (SASG) was awarded £213,000 by Reaching Communities Northern Ireland to deliver a three year project, supporting those left bereaved after a suicide and working preventatively on pre suicide intervention and awareness raising. The funding increased the volume and quality of existing services and allowed the project to move to free premises with a high street presence. The project provides monthly support sessions, a telephone support service, individual counselling, at home support, therapy sessions and complimentary therapies such as massage, aromatherapy, acupuncture and reflexology.

West Belfast has seen a rising suicide rate and high demand on local services providing support for groups at risk of suicide or who are affected by it, who can be difficult to reach because of isolation and stigma. However, the suicide support group has seen an average of 30 people a month attending over the past year, while an average of 20 men have attended the male support group. The project has taken around 250 support calls for advice and crisis support; around 40 people receive counselling each month; roughly 20 people each month receive visits at home, and an average of 75 people use SASG therapies.

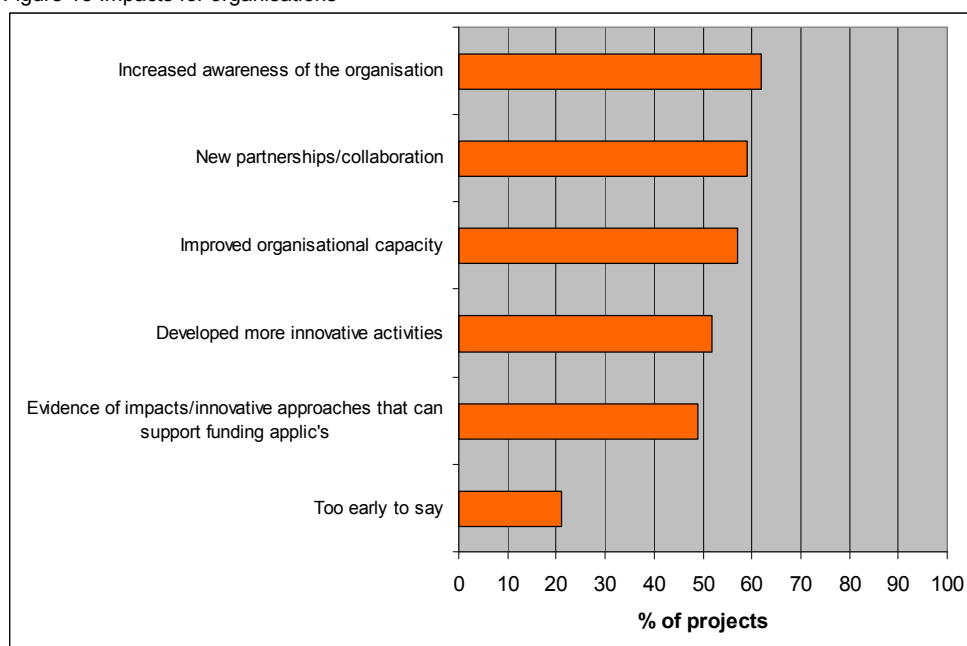
The support groups and complimentary therapies have helped to reduce feelings of distress, anxiety and depression, aid relaxation, relieve stress, increase feelings of well-being and improve coping skills. The profound impact of the programme continues to be felt by individuals affected by, or at risk of suicide, as one project worker commented, "without the Lottery grant, lives would have been lost".

Changes in local circumstances were felt in particular, to affect projects' ability to achieve impacts. External factors such as changes in local economic, political, or local service changes were reported by a fifth of projects (18%) as being a key factor influencing their ability to impact.

### **3.4 Outcomes and emerging impacts for organisations**

Reaching Communities projects in both programmes also identified that delivering the project led to a series of impacts on their own *organisation* (Figure 18). Overall, impacts on the funded organisations were more likely to be reported than impacts at the community level. Organisational impacts particularly included raised awareness of the organisation (62%) for example enabling them to attract new users or volunteers, raise awareness of an issue or gain credence with stakeholders.

Figure 18 Impacts for organisations



Base: 511 (England and Northern Ireland programmes combined; multiple responses allowed)

***'Big Lottery funding really raised our profile - we've been doing good work for years, but [it] finally gave us the 'street cred' [sic] we needed to gain the support and recognition of larger organisations. We are now taken more seriously.'***

***'There is some evidence that the project is gaining support in the wider communities in which we work, which helps us to gain support for the future.'***

**(Reaching Communities Projects)**

For one project this rise in the profile of their work led to direct impacts around influencing local strategy.

***'Due to our profile being raised by Big Lottery funding, our organisation was invited to take part in Cumbria's new suicide prevention strategy task groups. This resulted in us being asked to deliver suicide prevention training to north Cumbria health professionals over the next three years.'***

**(Reaching Communities Projects)**

Many funded organisations also perceived they had developed 'new partnerships or collaborations' as a result of the funding (59%). This could range from very informal through to formal arrangements. For example from referral agreements between services through to fully contracted relationships between a funded project and other local organisations or agencies with full partnership arrangements. One project responding to the survey said they had developed: *'some new partnerships e.g. with Business Link, Reed in Partnership and better relationships with Trusts and greater awareness of our work.'*

More than half of projects from both programmes reported that they had developed and used innovative approaches to a large extent (55%) however there was little further information available from the survey as to what these innovative approaches entailed. One example was as follows.

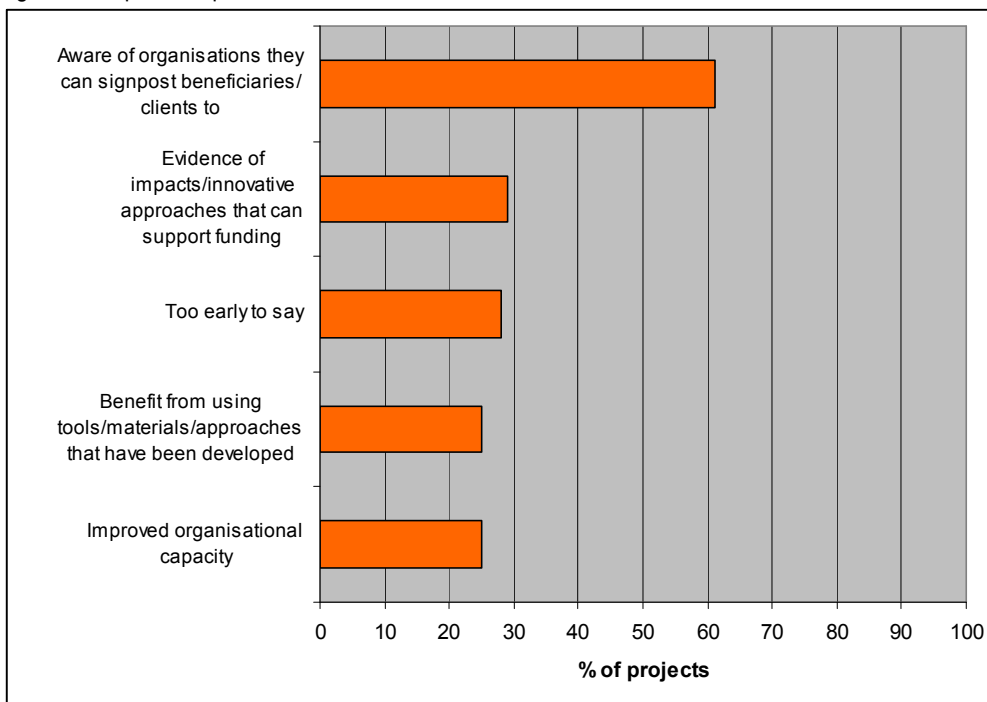
*'Our project is improving the personal and social skills of children and young people. As our project involves fun and interactive workshops i.e. using 'innovations' (inventing new products) as a platform it engages with beneficiaries more effectively. Formal learning programmes ...[can] result in them not feeling comfortable and confident during the learning process... However, by doing something fun and interactive relaxes them and the learning process becomes a lot more effective, hence developing the skills.'*

**(Reaching Communities England project)**

One project felt that having secure BIG funding enabled them to innovate in their project. *'Secure funding has allowed us to further develop our project and look into innovative initiatives which we would not have been able to do before we got Lottery Funding.'* Only a handful of projects (1% or 6 projects) said they did not use any innovative approaches at all.

Projects also reported there were benefits for the *partners or organisations* they worked with; particularly around making agencies aware of places they could signpost to or take referrals from (Figure 19). This had the benefit of ensuring more beneficiaries were appropriately referred onto BIG funded projects. In one example an organisation had: *'provided a platform for co-located services, creating better engagement opportunities with beneficiaries'*. This had been instrumental in enabling them to challenge local service providers to think differently about how they engage with their service users. They reported this approach was *'giving opportunity to go "to where the people are" versus waiting for them to come to them'* (Reaching Communities Project).

Figure 19 Impacts for partners



Base: 511 (England and Northern Ireland programmes combined; multiple responses allowed)

### *3.4.1 Unintended impacts*

More than 150 projects identified via the survey that their project had led to unintended or unforeseen impacts (30%). However when explored in greater detail many of these were 'outputs' rather than outcomes or impacts on target groups. For example more than a quarter identified they had made new partnerships or had developed new aspects of their service to meet changing needs (44 and 37 projects respectively) and a fifth said they had shared good practice (32 projects). There was some more limited evidence of projects being able to offer a larger scale of activity (for example being able to reach more beneficiaries than originally intended). Some projects felt that the funding had led to unintended impacts around raising the profile of the organisation which were not anticipated at the start of the project (37 projects).

## 4 Sustainability

This chapter considers the key messages from the evaluation for achieving sustainability, drawing on the survey evidence, case study information and workshops. The chapter first examines how the projects have planned for sustainability, and what factors have assisted with this. It goes on to look at the specific ways in which the project activities or ideas have been sustained<sup>25</sup>, and finally goes on to consider the effects of the economic downturn.

### 4.1 Planning for sustainability

Most projects were optimistic about being able to continue beyond the lifetime of their Reaching Communities funding. Fewer than one in twenty projects expected not to be able to continue in any form (3%), whilst eight in ten thought it would be possible to continue (83%); the remainder were uncertain when the survey took place. The workshop discussions highlighted that sustainability could sometimes be more difficult for projects employing specialist (e.g. therapeutic) staff, where there was less potential for training up volunteers or residents to carry on this work after the funding period. Projects also considered sustainability in terms of the seven criteria used within the BIG guidelines<sup>26</sup> (see Figure 20). Projects were most optimistic about sustaining a product or service developed from Reaching Communities (67%), and / or to continue their partnership (57%). At the other end of the scale, just one in five projects considered that programme infrastructure would be likely to continue after the funding period (20%).

In practical terms, projects considered the following approaches to be important when planning for sustainability:

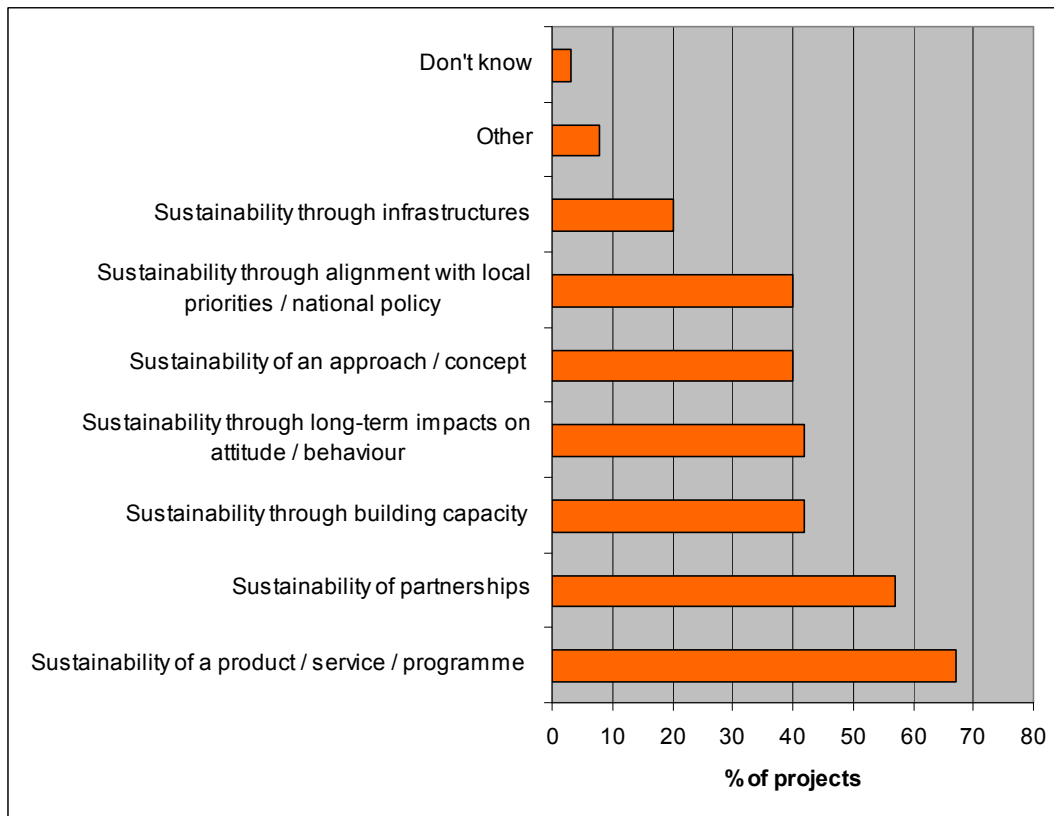
- making effective use of monitoring and evaluation, to demonstrate the projects' value
- having a clear idea of the intended legacy of the project
- appraising the possible options for sustainability
- testing these options with other stakeholders
- developing an exit strategy
- raising awareness through external communications.

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<sup>25</sup> In Northern Ireland NICVA provided support to projects on evidencing impact, through the development support contract (see Chapter One for information). This support was not evaluated as part of this evaluation, but it may have played a role in influencing results in this chapter.

<sup>26</sup> See BIG website for a more detailed explanation for each criterion.

Figure 20 What aspects of your project are you expecting to continue (beyond the life of the Reaching Communities funding?)



Base: 522 (England and Northern Ireland programmes combined; multiple responses allowed)

A number of the projects reported having uncovered a much greater level of demand within their target population than was first estimated, demonstrated through the monitoring data or project registers collected by staff. This was sometimes thought to have assisted with continuation planning, because it added weight to the case for external funding. The Links project in the Northern Ireland programme, operated by Cancer Lifeline, identified that a growing number of young women in their 20's and 30's were found to be presenting with cancer-related illnesses. This has provided the focus for plans to develop a new strand of preventative work with partner organisations.

A further project (in the England programme) lobbied Elected Members from all three of the main political parties when they were approaching project closure. Having this patronage was thought to have assisted with raising awareness with potential funding bodies.

The Youth Talk project (see Figure 21) in St Albans (from Reaching Communities England) developed an evaluation model to demonstrate the social value of its work which was effective in helping them obtain support and ultimately further funding.

Figure 21 Case study

### Youth Talk, St Albans

#### Reaching Communities England

Youth Talk received £340,087 from Reaching Communities England to deliver a five year project, supporting young people with mental health problems who would not make the transition to full independent adulthood without support. The project provides community based one-to-one counselling and psychotherapy sessions for young people aged 19-25 with mental health problems who live, work or receive education in the St Albans district. Over the first four years of the project, Youth Talk exceeded their targets of reaching 500 young people aged 19 to 25 and of 30 organisations making referrals onto the project. On average, Youth Talk beneficiaries have seen a mental health improvement of '1.2' over the course of their sessions. This result means that these clients no longer have moderate to severe mental health problems, an achievement which exceeds project targets. As one beneficiary said:

*"I feel so lucky to have been able to come to Youth Talk. I probably still would have kept everything to myself. Youth Talk has made me realise that I do have someone to share my problems with."*

The project has designed the Socio Economic Spreadsheet Instrument (SESI) to conduct a social cost benefit analysis of the counselling service. The tool calculates the benefits for the young person and their family's quality of life, as well as the broader benefits to society relating to employment, health, and the care, education and criminal justice systems. The project estimates that in 2009-2010, Youth Talk saved £880,000, according to social cost benefit research.

Published articles have attracted interest in the SESI research tool from the likes of the Office of the Third Sector, New Philanthropy Capital and Place2B, and other agencies have already used it to help them evidence the cost savings of their services.

For some projects a challenge in developing an exit strategy was that the planning cycle of some funders (e.g. local authorities) might be too wide to fit with the project timescales. This could be an issue where staff were on temporary contracts and had to leave at the end of the project if there was not a new post starting straight away. The main lesson learned was that it was important to plan an effective exit strategy from a much earlier stage in the project cycle.

## 4.2 Ways of sustaining the project

There has been mixed success with achieving sustainability, for the projects within the programmes. The main approaches have included some combination of the following:

- alternative funding sources
- mainstreaming project ideas or services
- revenue generation / commercial activities
- substituting paid staffing with volunteer time
- community ownership
- downscaling activities

In practice, many of the projects that have been most successful in achieving sustainability combined several of the examples considered above.

### 4.2.1 Alternative funding sources

It was uncommon for projects to have sourced alternative funding at the same level as their Reaching Communities grant, to sustain them beyond the funding of the respective programmes. However, nearly a third of those responding to the survey had accessed *some* alternative funding (33%, or 168 out of 517 projects) (see Figure 22). Grant funding and charitable donations provided the main source of (secured) future income, alongside fundraising and commercial income generation activities. Only a handful of projects had been able to secure government funding at the time the survey took place; whether national or regional. The survey also indicates that, although

uncommon, there were a small number of instances (15 projects) where Reaching Communities activities had been reconfigured to meet the priorities of other BIG funding programmes.

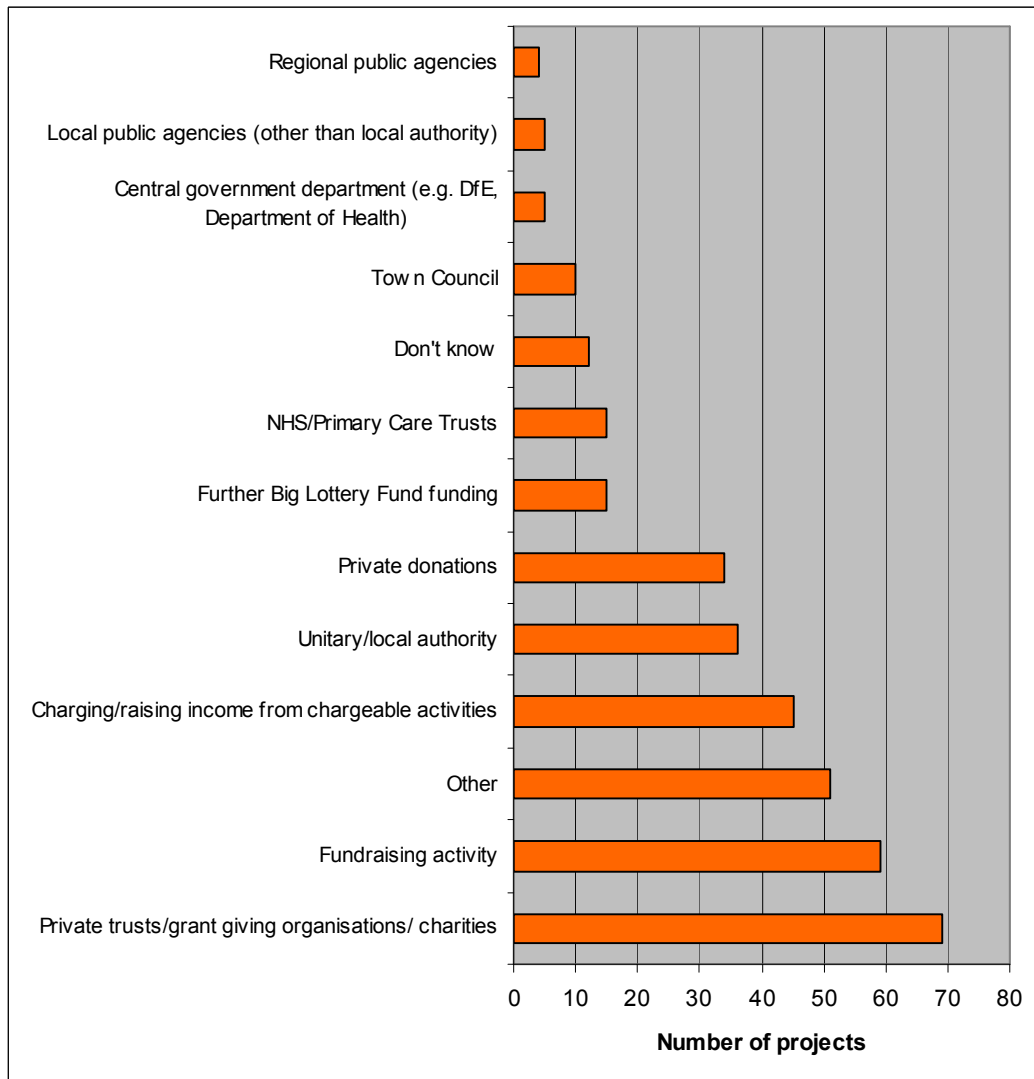
One project funded through the Northern Ireland programme run by Mediation Northern Ireland has been successful in securing further funding from the European programme Peace III which will ensure its core activity can continue until 2013. This bought some additional time to explore other options, such as gaining social enterprise status.

It was usually necessary to make a clear case for the project's value; whether financially or otherwise, to access follow-on funding, as illustrated by an example from one project.

***'[We held] a very successful competition with schools, called Zero Waste Week. We enabled schools to reduce their waste by 20%. This has been so successful that we are likely to be contracted to deliver this across greater Manchester... With our successful volunteer impact assessment, we have successfully attracted funding for our 'FareShare' programme to recruit, train and progress volunteers.'***

**(Reaching Communities England project)**

Figure 22 If you have secured future funding for your project, where did it come from?



Base: 358 (England and Northern Ireland programmes combined; multiple responses allowed)

#### 4.2.2 Mainstreaming project services or ideas

An alternative – or sometimes additional – approach taken by the projects was to persuade statutory agencies to fund some aspects of the project from their core budgets. It was often necessary to be selective, drawing on one or two elements that were the most successful. One project in England working with young carers had approached their local authority to review the organisation's work in relation to the carer's grant funding. An interest had been expressed in funding the outreach sessions that were tested through Reaching Communities as part of the carer's grants, as the local authority recognised the benefits of the model. A project in the England programme was hoping to mainstream their work through a contract with a consortium of GPs, as a commissioned service: *'we now have time to develop a wellbeing consortium to enhance opportunities for contracts in 2 towns...[via a]...small contract with GP consortium in one of our delivery areas.'*

#### 4.2.3 Revenue generation through commercial activities / training

The options for income generation varied across the programmes. A common approach was to offer training to other *organisations* at cost. This was usually a good starting point, because the development and testing of support materials had already taken place during the programmes, and could be refined into a training 'package'. A franchise or licensing arrangement provided an alternative model for rolling-out to other community organisations.

The projects were generally more reluctant to charge a commercial fee to *beneficiaries*, as this was felt to defeat the aims of the programmes. One way around this was to deduct the fee from Individual Budgets or Personal Budgets, where the beneficiary was already receiving a support subsidy (e.g. in relation to a disability or employment). This made it possible to apply a charge, without the beneficiary bearing the cost from their personal finances.

Other projects had the option of hiring or leasing premises that were secured through capital funding from Reaching Communities, or alternatively through the sale of goods. The Sports Recycler project (Reaching Communities England) aimed to become self-sustaining, through the sale of recycled and refurbished goods and by gaining new commercial contracts. Elsewhere, one project was exploring the possibility of beneficiaries making products on a commercial basis; to cover the costs of the support from staff. The organisation also hoped to establish a community building firm, to develop properties which would provide longer-term opportunities (Figure 23).

Figure 23 Case study

### Sports Recycler, South Tyneside

#### Reaching Communities England

Sports Recycler received £74,922 from Reaching Communities England to deliver a three year project that promotes healthier lifestyles by providing access to recycled, affordable sports equipment. It works in deprived areas with communities who currently lack the confidence, equipment and experience to engage in sports such as cycling and use of fitness equipment. The project has developed a range of services in response to demand from beneficiaries, including bike maintenance courses, a bike MOT service, guided rides, workshops and work experience placements, as well as hiring out a minibus, bike trailer, camping equipment, rickshaw and electric van.

Sports Recycler staff emphasise the importance of listening to what beneficiaries want from the service and being open to criticism and change. They believe this will ensure that delivery does not simply slip into a 'comfort zone' of what is felt to be achievable, but genuinely serves the local community's needs. This approach has led the organisation to focus more on refurbishing bikes, as opposed to other sporting equipment, in line with the demand.

The ultimate plan for the organisation is to become self-sustaining, through a range of options, including securing new contracts, tendering to deliver statutory services and revenue generation through the sale of recycled and refurbished goods. For example, the Great North Forest has contracted Sports Recycler to provide a two year programme of guided bike rides. Without Reaching Communities support, Sports Recycler would have had to apply elsewhere for funding, thus significantly delaying the start of the administrative post, which was critical to set up the systems for delivery. However, the project recognises that having clear and strong plans in place for after the funding has finished is important for achieving its aims.

#### 4.2.4 Community ownership and volunteering

The projects commonly planned to transfer their expertise back to the community, to run either on a stand-alone basis, or with significantly reduced levels of external staffing input. The survey and workshops showed that success factors for this type of approach included:

- identifying key influential community members to take a lead on sustainability
- allowing a sufficient period of time to build momentum
- 'tapering' the transition from a paid staffing model to a community-led one
- formalising arrangements if necessary, using a volunteering strategy

One project in Northern Ireland had a major volunteer recruitment drive over a two year period during involvement with Reaching Communities, which reduced their reliance on paid staff.

***'Future delivery of support will be provided by a combination of paid staff and volunteers, although our consultation with the General Manager identified the likelihood that volunteers would play an ever more crucial role going forward.'***

**(Reaching Communities Northern Ireland project)**

Another project from the England programme aimed from the outset to build a large community support network to tackle social isolation. This network had reached 130 people approaching the end of the programme. By providing regular activities over a sustained period, this community was thought to be in a good position to continue the project without external support.

One health and wellbeing project was using self-organised groups of community volunteers to embed the work of the original course tutors, to ensure that messages about regular exercise and healthy lifestyles were continued. In a further example, a group of beneficiaries participating in a project had formalised their role: *'The 'Friends and Family Forum' members became confident enough to become an independent association with their own bank account and management committee and have successfully raised funds to have all the literature revamped.'*

### 4.3 Impacts of the economic downturn

The economic downturn had significant impacts on projects around their ability to achieve sustainability and in terms of delivering their project. Around nine in ten projects across both programmes considered that the economic climate would affect them in some way (with only 13% of projects in both programmes believing it would not make any difference to their project).

Just over half of projects expected the downturn to lead to an increase in the demand for their services (55%), whilst only a handful of projects expected to see a decrease (1%): *'the level of need has again been underestimated - this is in part due to the current recession starting after the project began, which has substantially affected our poorest clients'* and *'we have increasingly been asked to give support for groups, individuals and families affected by the downturn'*. The downturn has also caused needs to change and new needs to emerge, with some projects noting greater need for employment services and debt advice. The Devenish project for example, works in four of the most densely populated and deprived housing estates in County Fermanagh in Enniskillen, Northern Ireland. They have found evidence of the damaging effect that the economic recession is having on local residents, many of whom relied on the construction industry which has been one of the sectors hardest hit by the recession. Local communities have voiced concerns about ever increasing levels of unemployment, and uncertainty about potential welfare cuts, particularly among older residents. Devenish has arranged energy efficiency talks for local people and assisted numerous older residents in carrying out on-line 'access to benefits' checks, in response to these concerns through their BIG funded project<sup>27</sup>.

Some projects also anticipated knock on effects from the recession on aspects of running projects, for example the ability to attract volunteers. While some projects had experienced an upturn in the numbers of people wishing to volunteer (to gain experience and have something for their CV) other projects had experienced negative effects.

***'The economic recession has hit us hard. It not only affects income from local authorities, charitable trusts and donations from local people but also hinders volunteers from helping us. Many volunteers could not help us regularly because their businesses have suffered. Those who are unemployed have to take considerable time looking for jobs.'***

**(Reaching Communities England project)**

The economic downturn was also anticipated to have a negative effect on funding availability and sources of income. The biggest hit was expected to occur in relation to funding from other funders (50%) and from government (44%). Income generation from the public was thought to be more stable, with just one in five projects anticipating a reduction (17%) however one project noted that donations of furniture and household goods had fallen over the past 12 months.

Some projects still managed to find ways to sustain their projects despite the difficulties with funding, such as in this example, where evidence of impacts was being used to tap into statutory funding.

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<sup>27</sup> See the Showcase Case Study brochure for more examples of case studies, at [www.reachingcommunities.org](http://www.reachingcommunities.org)

*'Over the last three months a lot of our focus has been on meeting with Suffolk County Council to discuss the funding cuts but more importantly the move towards the personalisation agenda and support planning for our client group to enable them to access personal budgets. Personal budgets will provide us with future sustainable funding and the Big Lottery grant enables us to offer a valued service which we are hopeful the majority of our client group will want to continue to use.'*

**(Reaching Communities England project)**

The verdict on the economic downturn was largely as predicted, therefore, with organisations facing a much tougher financial operating climate, whilst also identifying some opportunities to address unmet demand as a result of public sector service cuts.

## 5 Conclusions and recommendations

This section draws conclusions and provides recommendations around the key themes of this evaluation: volunteering, impacts and sustainability of the projects within the Reaching Communities programmes in England and Northern Ireland.

**Volunteering** formed a key part of the work of nine in ten projects across the two Reaching Communities programmes. With the survey responses from 566 voluntary and community organisations this large sample also reflects the wider picture across the voluntary and community sectors in England and Northern Ireland. Volunteers provided administrative support but also supported, organised and lead activities. The high level of volunteering brought particular benefits: for volunteers around new skills and improvements in soft outcomes; and for projects around increased capacity allowing a greater level of service delivery. Volunteer involvement was often integral to the future sustainability of projects and some good examples existed. There continued to be challenges associated with volunteering, particularly around maintaining the commitment of suitable volunteers, which reflected patterns in the wider sector. The impacts of the recession were also becoming evident, causing levels of volunteers to rise as well as fall.

**Recommendation: BIG projects within the two Reaching Communities programmes would benefit from further opportunities to share learning and good practice. In relation to volunteering this could be around recruiting and training dedicated staff to recruit and support volunteers, training of volunteers, or working with volunteers to sustain a project. This would align with BIG's commitments in the 'Big Thinking' Strategic Framework to continuing to provide opportunities for networking and sharing learning for funded projects.**

Evidence on **impact** suggested that the Reaching Communities programmes in England and Northern Ireland had funded projects working in some of the most disadvantaged communities and with those most in need. The majority of projects reported they were achieving what they set out to do; in fact some had developed models to sustain their work into the future, and gone on to secure statutory funding from local authorities by demonstrating the value of the service provided. Inevitably some projects did not work as well. Some could not engage the numbers of beneficiaries they planned, or struggled with project promotion, administrative or recruitment problems. In these cases, better sharing of learning could have helped projects become more effective, for instance lessons learned included not listening enough to beneficiaries when designing services.

**Recommendation: BIG might explore future opportunities to continue to share learning and good practice arising from the programmes, for example around how effectively engaging beneficiaries leads to successful project delivery.**

Clearest impacts were at the individual / beneficiary level. Projects in both programmes were confident they had improved the lives of individuals; and this was commonly evidenced via soft outcomes measures.

Tracking beneficiaries beyond the life of the project to help measure longer term change was less common, and the concept and approach appeared to be less well understood. Impacts for individuals included equipping beneficiaries for life, reducing feelings of social isolation and improving general wellbeing<sup>28</sup>.

**Recommendation: BIG should continue to promote the value of self-evaluation and provide and share more detailed information about methods for measuring longer term impact that might be used.**

**Recommendation: To collect more systematic evidence of impact, BIG may consider making self-evaluation compulsory for funded projects. This requirement should be proportionate to grant size and guidance would be required around what level and type of evaluation would be considered appropriate.**

**Recommendation: BIG should ensure the learning is shared from the evaluations planned by Northern Ireland projects.**

The two programmes also impacted on funded organisations, giving them a robust financial footing from which to work, enabling them to develop new partnerships and raise the profile of their organisation. The funding supported 'less well known' issues or causes, such as projects linked to suicide, sex workers, violence and torture as well as 'hidden communities' such as hidden carers or people with hidden disabilities. The two programmes also gave organisations the opportunity to innovate; having longer term funding meant new approaches could be tested.

**Recommendation: BIG might wish to consider commissioning further research to draw out learning and good practices from projects working with 'minority' or under-researched communities, such as hidden carers.**

Projects were already experiencing the effects of the economic climate despite having some level of 'security' within their BIG grant, and a rise in demand for services was expected; projects offering employment support or debt advice were already experiencing this. Despite the economic circumstances, projects from both programmes were optimistic about being able to **sustain** some aspect of their project beyond the life of the funding period (usually a product, service or partnership). Very few expected not to continue in any form. Models such as social enterprise, asset transfer or volunteer activity were helping sustain some projects. While few projects had secured follow-on funding at the level of their Reaching Communities grant, nearly a third had accessed *some* alternative funding, for example via other grant funding or charitable donations. The popularity of sessions on sustainability at the learning events delivered during 2010 showed an appetite among projects for further information and case study examples of these issues.

**Recommendation: Examples of approaches and models of sustainability, what works and why could be developed and shared, particularly for new and existing projects within England programme<sup>29</sup>. Further advice from BIG could be help new grantees around planning for sustainability and developing an exit strategy.**

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<sup>28</sup> Given the diversity of the programme it was not possible to collate the soft outcome evidence, because projects used a diverse set of soft outcome tools to capture this change.

<sup>29</sup> The NICVA Development and Support contract mentioned in Chapter One is supplying this in Northern Ireland.

The evaluation has also impacted on BIG's **processes**. For instance helping BIG revise application forms and applicant guidance for Reaching Communities 4. However limitations with BIG's programme data also reduced the possibility of drawing conclusions about the programmes as a whole<sup>30</sup>. Lessons from this evaluation could help inform any future evaluation of open, demand led programmes. For example should BIG require future evaluations to measure impact, their design should take account of the diverse nature of the outcomes/impacts and associated difficulties in capturing an appropriate baseline from which to measure change. It would need to recognise the difficulties of attributing impact to the two programmes with so many other influences, and that communities supported by the two Reaching Communities programmes were very diverse making it difficult to set up a control group exercise. Future impact evaluation may therefore prove complex and costly.

**Recommendation: BIG should continue to develop data capture procedures, for example descriptive data about projects, monitoring and project closure information, and making this more readily available electronically for evaluation purposes.**

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<sup>30</sup> For example no overall measure of 'number of beneficiaries helped' or 'postcode of beneficiaries' was available for the two programmes from BIG. See Chapter One and also see Ecorys (2009) 'Evaluation of Reaching Communities – Final Report' available at [www.reachingcommunities.org](http://www.reachingcommunities.org)

## **Annex One: Year Four Survey Responses**

## Year Four Survey Responses - Technical Note

The following results are based on surveys carried out online in 2010 with Reaching Communities grantees in the England and Northern Ireland programmes. Overall 566 projects responded to the survey this year, of whom 534 were from the England programme and 32 were from the Northern Ireland programme.

This survey took place from 22<sup>nd</sup> October to 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2010. 1,971 projects were invited to participate, this included 1,926 from England<sup>31</sup> and 45 from Northern Ireland. The overall response rate was 29%. The response rate for the Northern Ireland programme was 71%.

All individual results are rounded to the nearest whole percent. Where question 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 half a percent, but not zero. 'Tick all that apply' or multiple responses mean that respondents can give more than one answer to a question and overall results therefore total more than 100%.

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<sup>31</sup> All projects funded up to those awarded grants in October 2010.

## 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) (Total base = 566)

	2010	
	Number	%
Reaching Communities England	534	94
Reaching Communities Northern Ireland	32	6
Total	566	100

3. How many years has your Reaching Communities project been running for? (Total base = 566)

	Total		England		Northern Ireland	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
1 year	21	4	20	4	1	3
2 years	31	6	31	6	0	0
3 years	263	46	257	48	6	19
4 years	56	10	49	9	7	22
5 years	195	35	177	33	18	56
Total	566	100	534	100	32	100

**4. Which year of your Reaching Communities project are you currently in? (Total base = 566)**

	Total		England		Northern Ireland	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
1 year	268	47	261	49	7	22
2 years	103	18	88	17	15	47
3 years	124	22	119	22	5	16
4 years	65	12	60	11	5	16
5 years	6	1	6	1	0	0
Total	566	100	534	100	32	100

**YOUR ORGANISATION**

**5. Which, if any, of the following characteristics describes your organisation? (Please tick all that apply) (Total base = 556. Multiple responses allowed)**

	Total		England		Northern Ireland	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Umbrella organisation or network	25	4	20	4	5	16
Local organisation - part of wider national/regional voluntary sector body	74	13	68	13	6	19
Independent voluntary sector organisation	431	78	413	79	18	58
Virtual network	1	*	1	*	0	0
Statutory organisation (England only)	10	2	10	2	0	0
Town Council (England only)	1	*	1	*	0	0
Parish Council (England only)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	56	10	54	10	2	6
None of the above	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	556	-	525	-	31	-

**6. Please indicate the following details about your organisation.**

**Number of years your organisation has existed for** (Total base = 555)

	Total		England		Northern Ireland	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
0-5 years	51	9	50	10	1	3
6-10 years	108	19	100	19	8	26
11-15 years	102	18	98	19	4	13
16-20 years	47	8	45	9	2	6
21 years or more	241	43	225	43	16	52
Don't know	6	1	6	1	0	0
Total	555	100	524	100	31	100

**Number of full time staff your organisation employs** (Total base = 556)

	Total		England		Northern Ireland	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
0-9	382	69	365	69	17	55
10-19	57	10	51	10	6	19
20-49	47	8	41	8	6	19
50-99	12	2	12	2	0	0
100-249	13	2	13	2	0	0
250 or more	21	4	20	4	1	3
Don't know	24	4	23	4	1	3
Total	556	100	525	100	31	100

**Number of part time staff your organisation employs (Total base = 556)**

	Total		England		Northern Ireland	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
0-9	399	72	377	72	22	71
10-19	52	9	48	9	4	13
20-49	41	7	39	7	2	6
50-99	7	1	6	1	1	3
100-249	14	3	13	2	1	3
250 or more	7	1	7	1	0	0
Don't know	36	6	35	7	1	3
Total	556	100	525	100	31	100

**7. Which if any of the following describes the areas you work with? (Tick all that apply) (Total base = 556)**

	Total		England		Northern Ireland	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Located in urban areas	224	40	206	39	18	58
Located in rural areas	197	35	182	35	15	48
Located in urban fringe areas	423	76	398	76	25	81
Don't know/not applicable	21	4	20	4	1	3
Total	556	-	525	-	31	-

**8a. [Northern Ireland projects only] Are you part of a partnership delivering a Reaching Communities project? (Please tick one) (Base all Northern Ireland projects, total = 32)**

	Number	%
Yes	7	22
No	24	75
Not answered	1	3
Total	32	100

**8b. [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, total =)

	Number	%
Lead partner	6	19
Not lead partner	26	81
Total	32	100

**8c. [Northern Ireland projects only if yes at Q8a] Please indicate how many partners there are in your project partnership in each of the following categories? Multiple answers allowed (Please insert the number of each type of partner)** (Base all Northern Ireland projects in a partnership, total = 6)

	Number
1 partner in voluntary or community sector	3
2 partners in voluntary or community sector	1
3 partners in voluntary or community sector	1
11 partners in voluntary or community sector	1
0 statutory sector partner	1
1 statutory sector partner	2
4 statutory sector partners	1
5 statutory sector partners	1
0 other partner	1
1 other partner	2
4 other partners	2

## **VOLUNTEERING**

**9. Are there any volunteers involved in your project? (Total base = 557)**

	Total		England		Northern Ireland	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Yes	500	90	477	91	23	74
No	57	10	49	9	8	26
Total	557	100	526	100	31	100

**10. If yes, which if any of the following does your recruitment and training processes for volunteers include? (Base Number - 500)**

	Total		England		Northern Ireland	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Informal chat with prospective volunteer	438	88	419	88	19	83
Advertise the role	287	58	274	57	13	57
Application and/ or interview process	366	74	347	73	19	83
Informal briefing	305	61	294	62	11	48
Hold formal training sessions	376	76	356	75	20	87
Provide mentoring support	383	77	367	77	16	70
None of the above	3	1	3	1	0	0
Other	45	9	44	9	1	4
Total	500	-	477	-	23	-

**11. What roles have your volunteers played in your project? (Base Number - 500)**

	Total		England		Northern Ireland	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Supporting activities	482	97	459	96	23	100
Organising and leading activities	291	58	277	58	14	61
Recruiting new beneficiaries	160	32	156	33	4	17
Administrative support	323	64	311	65	12	52
Other	62	13	58	12	4	17
Total	500	-	477	-	23	-

**Specified as other at Q11 (Total base all specifying at Q11 = 62)**

	Number
Mentoring & community outreach	15
Management committee / Trustee	9
Fundraising	7
Advocacy / counselling	6
Driving	6
Gardening / maintenance	5
Catering	2
Marketing	2
Language support / translation	2
Run entirely by volunteers	1
Other	7
Total	62

**12. What, if any, are the benefits of involving volunteers for your project? (Base Number - 500)**

	Total		England		Northern Ireland	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Enables us to deliver more activities/increase our service	431	88	419	89	22	97
Enables us to sustain some activities without direct funding	310	62	297	62	13	57
Provides more local / expert knowledge	326	65	309	65	17	74
Helps us to engage with our target group(s)	397	80	377	79	20	87
Provides peer support for our target group(s)	334	67	315	66	19	83
Other	38	7	36	8	2	9
Don't know	2	*	2	*	0	0
Total	500	-	477	-	23	-

**13. What, if any, are the benefits of involving volunteers for the volunteers? (Base Number - 500)**

	Total		England		Northern Ireland	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Gain new skills	478	96	455	95	23	100
Increase confidence / self-esteem	478	96	455	95	23	100
Enhance CV / increase chance of finding paid employment	449	90	430	90	19	83
Improve social skills	419	84	398	83	21	91
No benefits	4	1	4	1	0	0
Don't know	2	*	2	*	0	0
Other	49	10	46	10	3	13
Total	500	-	477	-	23	-

**14. What challenges, if any, are there around involving volunteers in your project? (Base Number - 500)**

	Total		England		Northern Ireland	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Ensuring the right volunteers are recruited	410	82	389	82	21	91
Ensuring high quality of project delivery / service	329	66	312	65	17	74
Time needed to train and support them	484	77	365	77	19	83
High turnover of volunteers	126	25	120	25	6	26
No challenges	15	3	15	3	0	0
Other	36	7	34	7	2	9
Don't know	1	*	1	*	0	0
Total	500	-	477	-	23	-

## **SOFT OUTCOMES**

**15. 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. What soft outcomes, if any, are you measuring as part of your project? (Please tick all that apply) (Base number = 499)**

	Total		England		Northern Ireland	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Increased confidence / self-esteem	476	90	452	91	24	80
Improved wellbeing	440	83	416	83	24	80
Improved health	338	65	327	66	19	63
Developing new skills	399	77	386	77	23	77
Community engagement	379	73	369	74	20	67
Reduced isolation	421	79	401	80	20	67
Developing relationships	376	71	353	73	23	77
Other	40	7	38	8	2	7
None	4	1	4	1	0	0
Total	529	-	499	-	30	-

**15a. Please describe what you have found from tracking these soft outcomes? (Are beneficiaries' soft outcomes improving? At the rate you expected?) NB. Only one category selected for each response**

	Total		England		Northern Ireland	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Outcomes improving	260	56	248	57	12	50
Outcomes improving as expected	27	6	27	6	0	0
Outcomes improving faster than expected	31	7	28	6	3	13
Outcomes improving more slowly than expected	5	1	5	1	0	0
Outcomes improving at variable rates	24	5	24	5	0	0
Data not (yet) available	81	18	74	17	7	29
Other	36	8	34	8	2	8
Total	461	-	437	-	24	-

**16. What methods, if any, are you using to track the progress of beneficiaries once they leave your project? (Tick all that apply) (Base number = 429)**

	Total		England		Northern Ireland	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Follow up survey	259	60	248	62	12	40
Informal contact	331	77	314	79	17	57
Invited to project events	278	65	261	65	19	63
Catch up via telephone	215	50	204	41	11	37
Using a tracking database	103	24	96	19	7	23
Via our partners	133	31	127	32	6	20
Don't know	7	1	6	1	1	3
Other	60	15	58	15	2	7
None	32	6	30	6	2	7
Total	429	-	399	-	30	-

**Specified as other at Q16** (Total base all specifying at Q16 = 60)

	Number
Via on-going long term support of beneficiaries	21
Social networking websites / emails / texts	9
Formal contact – feedback questionnaires/review forms/post project assessment/outreach	8
Too early / systems being developed	4
Beneficiary focus groups / interviews	3
Feedback requests	2
Not applicable	2
Outreach	2
Other	7
Total	60

**16a. Please describe what you have found from tracking the progress of your beneficiaries?** (What are beneficiaries doing now?) NB. Up to three categories selected for each response

	Total		England		Northern Ireland	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Positive progression (eg. further training)	136	33	127	33	9	36
Soft outcomes improved (eg. confidence)	118	29	114	29	4	16
Data not yet available	81	20	76	20	5	20
Mixed success	21	5	19	5	3	12
Informs future project development	12	3	11	3	1	4
Data unavailable/ difficult to collect	47	11	42	11	5	20
Other	75	18	72	19	3	12
Total	409	-	389	-	30	-

## **PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY**

**17a. Has the economic downturn affected your project in any way? (Tick all that apply)?** (Base number = 522)

	Total		England		Northern Ireland	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
No impact	69	13	67	13	2	7
Increased demand for your services	293	56	280	57	13	43
Reduced demand for your services	8	2	8	2	0	0
Reduction in income from the public	91	17	88	18	3	10
Reduction in funding available from government	229	44	222	45	7	23
Reduction in funding available from other funders	264	50	254	52	10	33
Other (please specify)	70	13	64	13	6	20
Don't know	11	2	7	1	4	13
Total	522	-	492	-	30	-

**Specified as other at Q17** (Total base all specifying at Q17a = 70)

	Number
Too early to assess (frequently dependant on anticipated public service cuts)	33
Negative effect on beneficiaries situation	8
Reduction in employment/work placement opportunities for beneficiaries (particularly those disadvantaged)	7
Restricted involvement of partners due to their budget cuts	6
Challenging conditions for raising funds	5
Other	11
Total	70

**17b. Are you expecting your project to continue beyond the life of the Reaching Communities funding?** (Please tick one only) (Base number = 522)

	Total		England		Northern Ireland	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Yes	436	83	410	83	26	87
No	12	3	12	2	0	0
Don't know	74	14	70	14	4	13
Total	522	100	492	100	30	100

**17c. If yes, what aspects of your project are you expecting to continue?** (Please tick all that apply)  
(Base those expecting to continue at Q17 = 436)

	Total		England		Northern Ireland	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
<b>Sustainability of an approach/concept</b> trialed through a programme as opposed to sustainability of the programme itself	173	40	162	40	11	42
<b>Sustainability of partnerships</b> , either for continued delivery of a service or as an end in itself. Here, the emphasis is on the development and/or improvement of multi-agency working in addressing social issues	247	57	236	58	11	42
<b>Sustainability through building capacity</b> within organizations/ community networks, particularly as an important precursor to delivering a programme's objectives	185	42	171	42	14	54
<b>Sustainability of a product/service/ programme</b> through further funding and/or integration into the statutory sector	291	67	275	67	16	62
<b>Sustainability through infrastructures</b> , for example as a result of social enterprise or the creation of employment opportunities	86	20	82	20	4	15
<b>Sustainability through alignment with local priorities/national policy</b> which usually focuses on getting the service or idea funded by a statutory body	175	40	168	41	7	27
<b>Sustainability through long-term impacts on attitude/behaviour</b> , usually targeted on improving social or health related behaviours	183	42	171	42	12	46
Other	33	8	30	7	3	12
Don't know	12	3	10	2	2	8
Total	436	-	410	-	26	-

**18. If you have secured future funding for your project, where did it come from? (Tick all that apply) (Base number = 517)**

	Total		England		Northern Ireland	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Unitary / Local Authority	36	7	36	7	0	0
Private Trusts / grant giving organisations / charities	69	13	68	13	1	4
Further Big Lottery Funding	15	3	14	3	1	4
Central Government department (e.g. DCSF, Department of Health)	5	1	4	1	1	4
Regional public agencies (e.g. regional development agency)	4	1	3	1	1	4
Local public agencies (other than local authority)	5	1	5	1	0	0
NHS / Primary Care Trusts	15	3	14	3	1	4
Town Council	10	2	10	2	0	0
Private donations	34	7	33	7	1	4
Fundraising activity	59	11	57	12	2	7
Charging / raising income from chargeable activities	46	9	46	9	0	0
Don't know	12	2	11	2	1	4
Other	25	5	22	4	3	11
Not applicable / No future funding has been found	372	72	349	71	23	82
Total	517	-	489	-	28	-

**Specified as other at Q18** (Total base all specifying at Q18 = 25)

	Number
No need to identify further funding at present	14
Seeking funding from a variety of sources	4
Currently negotiating / awaiting results of funding bids	3
Church	1
Awaiting results of the spending review	1
Future Jobs Fund	1
UK online	1
Total	25

### **MEETING THE NEED**

**19. To what extent do you feel that your project has achieved the following?** *(Please select the statement which most applies)*

**We have met the needs that we originally identified** (Base number = 522)

	Total		England		Northern Ireland	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
To a large extent	365	70	342	70	23	77
To a small extent	21	4	20	4	1	3
Not at all	0	0	0	0	0	0
Not relevant / too early to say	135	26	129	26	6	20
Don't know	1	*	1	*	0	0
Total	522	100	492	100	30	100

**Our activities have met the needs of all our target communities (Base number = 522)**

	Total		England		Northern Ireland	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
To a large extent	321	62	299	61	22	73
To a small extent	56	11	55	11	1	3
Not at all	0	0	0	0	0	0
Not relevant / too early to say	143	27	136	28	7	23
Don't know	2	*	2	*	0	0
Total	522	99	492	100	30	100

**We have reached hard to reach groups (Base number = 522)**

	Total		England		Northern Ireland	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
To a large extent	310	59	291	59	19	63
To a small extent	89	17	84	17	5	17
Not at all	0	0	0	0	0	0
Not relevant / too early to say	120	23	114	23	6	20
Don't know	3	1	3	1	0	0
Total	522	100	492	100	30	100

**We have met the needs of the 'most in need' (Base number = 522)**

	Total		England		Northern Ireland	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
To a large extent	302	58	282	57	20	67
To a small extent	78	15	75	15	3	10
Not at all	0	0	0	0	0	0
Not relevant / too early to say	136	26	129	26	7	23
Don't know	6	1	6	1	0	0
Total	522	100	492	100	30	100

**Our project has reduced disadvantage and social exclusion (Base number = 522)**

	Total		England		Northern Ireland	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
To a large extent	287	55	270	55	17	57
To a small extent	96	18	90	18	6	20
Not at all	1	*	1	*	0	0
Not relevant / too early to say	134	26	128	26	6	20
Don't know	4	1	3	1	1	3
Total	522	100	492	100	30	100

**Our project has used innovative approaches / activities (Base number = 522)**

	Total		England		Northern Ireland	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
To a large extent	288	55	267	54	21	70
To a small extent	121	23	117	24	4	13
Not at all	6	1	6	1	0	0
Not relevant / too early to say	101	19	96	20	5	17
Don't know	6	1	6	1	0	0
Total	522	100	492	100	30	100

**Our project has met the programme outcomes we originally specified (Base number =522)**

	Total		England		Northern Ireland	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
To a large extent	324	62	302	61	22	73
To a small extent	44	8	38	8	6	20
Not at all	0	0	0	0	0	0
Not relevant / too early to say	153	29	151	31	2	7
Don't know	1	*	1	*	0	0
Total	522	100	492	100	30	100

**20. What sources of evidence have you used to assess the extent to which needs have been met? (Please tick all that apply) (Base number = 522)**

	Total		England		Northern Ireland	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Informal feedback from beneficiaries	417	80	393	80	24	80
Level of attendance	404	77	383	78	21	70
Level of demand for activities	396	76	374	76	22	73
Self-evaluation	387	74	363	74	24	80
Performance against programme outcomes	389	75	371	75	18	60
Formal feedback from beneficiaries (e.g. responses from beneficiary questionnaire)	412	79	390	79	22	73
Performance against programme milestones	224	43	213	43	11	37
External evaluation	336	64	313	64	23	77
Tracking beneficiaries	118	23	110	22	8	27
Other	50	10	47	10	3	10
Don't know	15	3	15	3	0	0
Total	522	-	492	-	30	-

**Specified as other at Q20** (Total base all specifying at Q20 = 50)

	Number
Too early to say	29
No response	15
None	2
Social Return on Investment	1
Repeated demand from beneficiaries	1
Seeking funding for external evaluation	1
Increased referrals to GP services	1
Total	50

**21a. Which of your activities were most effective in meeting the needs you identified? (Base number = 522)**

	Total		England		Northern Ireland	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
One to one support	292	56	273	55	19	63
Information, advice, guidance and / or signposting	248	48	232	47	16	53
Training programmes / workshops	239	46	222	45	17	57
Social activities	217	42	203	41	14	47
Physical activities	115	22	103	21	12	40
Promotion / marketing	74	14	68	14	6	20
Support services	176	34	164	33	12	40
Too early to say	124	24	119	24	5	17
Other ( <i>please specify</i> )	31	6	31	6	0	0
Don't know	6	1	6	1	0	0
Total	522	-	492	-	30	-

**21b. Which of your activities were least effective in meeting the needs you identified? (Base number = 522)**

	Total		England		Northern Ireland	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Activities that did not match the needs of beneficiaries	76	15	73	15	3	10
Lack of engagement	38	7	33	7	5	17
Developing partnerships	25	5	24	5	1	3
Promotion / marketing	48	9	45	9	3	10
Activities for children and young people	21	4	19	4	2	7
Business management / administration	27	5	25	5	2	7
Engaging with vulnerable / hard to reach / marginalised groups	24	5	23	5	1	3
Too early to say	252	48	237	48	15	3
Other ( <i>please specify</i> )	28	5	25	5	3	1
Don't know	72	14	70	14	2	7
Total	522	-	492	-	30	-

**Specified as other at Q21b** (Total base all specifying at Q21b = 28)

	Number
None	10
Not applicable	4
Lack of engagement from partners or statutory/secondary service providers	3
Lack of volunteers	2
Activities targeted to faith groups	1
Engaging beneficiaries who had high level English language skills	1
Lack of funding	1
Changes to venue affected engagement	1
Resettlement	1
Accreditation	1
Outreach	1
Impact of recession on sales	1
No response	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>

**22. What good practice, if any, do you have relating to how you have met or addressed need that you have identified through your project?** (Please tick all that apply) (Base number = 522)

	Total		England		Northern Ireland	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Effective partnership working / team working	324	62	304	62	20	67
Excellent communication	244	47	224	46	20	67
Enabling empowerment of beneficiaries / staff	307	59	291	59	16	53
Innovative delivery	230	44	217	44	13	43
Excellent management / monitoring	232	44	216	44	16	53
Organising effective staff / volunteer training	250	48	235	48	15	50
Effective dissemination of project approach / activities / findings	144	28	136	28	8	27
Too early to say	122	23	115	23	7	23
Other (please specify)	14	3	14	3	0	0
Don't know	7	1	7	1	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>522</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>492</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>-</b>

## **IMPACTS OF THE PROJECT**

### **23. What have been the impacts of your project on your organisation? (Please tick all that apply)**

(Base number = 511)

	Total		England		Northern Ireland	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Improved organisational capacity	291	57	273	56	18	67
New partnerships and collaboration	303	59	284	59	19	70
Developed more innovative activities	267	52	248	51	19	70
Evidence of impacts/ innovative approaches that can support funding applications	252	49	237	49	15	56
Increased awareness of the organisation	317	62	297	61	20	74
Too early to say	107	21	103	21	4	15
Other ( <i>please specify</i> )	14	3	13	3	1	4
Don't know	3	1	3	1	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>511</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>484</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>-</b>

### **24. What have been the impacts of your project on your beneficiaries? (Please tick all that apply)**

(Base number = 511)

	Total		England		Northern Ireland	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Beneficiaries better equipped for work	215	42	204	42	11	41
Beneficiaries better able to manage life	341	67	321	66	20	74
Improved physical health among beneficiaries	223	44	207	43	16	59
Improved mental health among beneficiaries	308	60	292	60	16	59
Beneficiaries are now less isolated	354	69	334	69	20	74
Too early to say	117	23	112	23	5	19
Other ( <i>please specify</i> )	22	4	21	4	1	4
Don't know	1	*	1	*	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>511</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>484</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>-</b>

**25. What have been the impacts of your project on the local community / area? (Please tick all that apply) (Base number = 511)**

	Total		England		Northern Ireland	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Improved community capacity	212	41	200	41	12	44
Greater community cohesion	236	46	225	46	11	41
Environmental improvements	57	11	55	11	2	7
Better-used community spaces	128	25	119	25	9	33
New or improved community facilities	83	16	77	16	6	22
Too early to say	170	33	162	33	8	30
Other ( <i>please specify</i> )	27	5	26	5	1	4
Don't know	23	5	22	5	1	4
Total	511	-	484	-	27	-

**26. What have been the impacts of your project on your partners? (Please tick all that apply) (Base number = 511)**

	Total		England		Northern Ireland	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Benefit from using tools/materials/approaches that have been developed	128	25	116	24	12	44
Evidence of impacts/ innovative approaches that can support funding applications	149	29	142	29	7	26
Aware of organisation's they can signpost their beneficiaries/ clients' to	312	61	295	61	17	63
Improved organisational capacity	129	25	118	24	11	41
Too early to say	145	28	138	29	7	26
Other ( <i>please specify</i> )	18	4	18	4	0	0
Don't know	16	3	16	3	0	0
Total	511	-	484	-	27	-

**27. Have there been any unintended impacts that have resulted from your project? (Please tick one only) (Base number =511)**

	Total		England		Northern Ireland	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Yes	153	30	142	29	11	41
No	134	26	129	27	5	19
Don't know	140	27	130	27	10	37
Not applicable	84	16	83	17	1	4
Total	511	100	484	100	27	100

**27a. If yes, please describe what these unintended outcomes / impacts have been? (E.g. have you had a positive impact on beneficiaries/ projects/ community outside your remit?)**

*NB. Up to five categories selected for each response*

	Total		England		Northern Ireland	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Further partnerships/ joint working	42	26	40	26	2	-
Further developments of the project (eg. in response to identifying need)	44	27	39	25	5	-
Reaching more beneficiaries/ identifying greater need	37	23	34	22	3	-
Raising the organisation's profile	37	23	32	21	5	-
Sharing good practice (eg. training/ networking/ dissemination)	32	20	30	19	2	-
Greater involvement of volunteers	14	9	12	8	2	-
Too early to say	11	7	11	7	0	-
Other	43	26	41	27	2	-
Total	164	-	153	-	11	-

## 28. What factors, if any, have affected the achievement of your intended impacts?

*NB. Multiple categories selected for single responses where appropriate.*

	Total		England		Northern Ireland	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Staff/ volunteer qualities	58	24	56	25	2	-
External circumstances (eg. economic, political, local service changes)	42	18	41	18	1	-
Good communication/ relationships (partners/ beneficiaries/ volunteers/ staff)	38	16	37	16	1	-
Responding to needs	22	9	21	9	1	-
Engagement of beneficiaries	23	10	21	9	2	-
Issues engaging beneficiaries (eg. more complex/ slower/ fewer than anticipated)	19	8	19	8	0	-
Staffing issues	18	14	18	8	0	-
Too early to say	33	14	31	14	2	-
None/ other (eg secure funding, good project management, user involvement)	74	31	70	30	4	-
Total	240	-	228	-	12	-

## 29. What lessons have you learned from delivering your project?

*NB. Multiple categories selected for single responses where appropriate.*

	Total		England		Northern Ireland	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
To develop innovative/ most appropriate ways of engaging	55	19	53	20	2	-
Value of good project management, monitoring, supervision, training	53	19	49	18	4	-
Extent of demand	46	16	43	16	3	-
To be flexible/ responsive	38	13	36	13	2	-
How successful the project has been	34	12	32	12	2	-
Importance of effective partnership working	30	11	30	11	0	-
Value of working with community/ users	22	8	20	7	2	-
Importance of publicity	16	6	16	6	0	-
Importance of volunteering	10	4	10	4	0	-
To plan ahead	11	4	11	4	0	-
Too early to say	45	16	44	16	1	-
Other	62	22	57	21	5	-
Total	285	-	270	-	15	-

## 30. Would your project have taken place without support from Big Lottery? (Please tick one only)

(Base number = 511)

	Total		England		Northern Ireland	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Yes	7	1	7	1	0	0
Yes but in a reduced form	161	32	154	32	7	26
No	311	61	293	61	18	67
Don't know	32	6	30	6	2	7
Total	511	100	484	100	27	100





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