



Sustainable Communities

Sustainable communities are able to create better local environmental, economic and social conditions for themselves and future generations. Research and evaluation undertaken by the Big Lottery Fund provides learning on:

Creating a Better Environment

- Through BIG's environmental programmes such as Transforming Your Space, we have found that environmental and community benefits frequently go hand in hand. Community involvement in improving green spaces allows people of all ages and from all parts of society to come together to improve local areas. This strengthens community relationships and promotes closer connections between local authorities and the community. Read more about the Transforming Your Space Evaluation [here](#)
- Direct environmental activity, whether the improvement of a green space, production of community-grown organic food or development of a recycling network, assists projects to achieve social and economic gains for their community. BIG initiatives have provided strong evidence of the value of the environment as a catalyst for local action. Find out more from our review of lessons learned across our [funding here](#)
- The creation of infrastructure is an important step in allowing for waste management within communities – especially the capacity for recycling. Read more [here](#)
- Raising awareness and understanding about the benefits of recycling and re-use to the community and the environment also increases recycling practice. Working with households on how to recycle one type of waste can have a knock on effect on peoples' attitudes to recycling other waste. Find out more about our Green Spaces and Sustainable Communities & Transforming Waste evaluations [here](#)

- Projects that recycle household appliances and furniture for the use of those on low incomes helps improve the quality of life and living conditions for these groups by providing access to affordable and desirable household items not available to them previously. Read more [here](#)

Sustainable Buildings

- Many organisations have found that including environmental features in community buildings reduce overhead costs in the longer term (for example improved insulation and energy saving windows). There are additional benefits including attracting positive publicity and securing "green" awards. However funding these environmental features within building plans at a time of recession can be difficult. Some organisations however have found that they can access environmental grants for specific features (Feedback from Community Buildings Programme Team, Big Lottery Fund, 2010).
- Some organisations funded by the Big Lottery Fund are putting sustainable resource use into practice by recycling and reusing materials to renovate community buildings and maximise their potential for use. The Glenfarg Village Hall supported by the Growing Community Assets programme in Scotland for example is retaining the existing village centred main hall and maximising its potential through redevelopment. Find out more about this project [here](#)

Supporting Local Economies and Generating Employment

- Ambitious community empowerment projects can create a platform to generate significant income and employment for local communities. Evaluators of the Scottish Land Fund programme linked wider economic development on the Isle of Gigha with the social factors associated with community ownership of the island. There was evidence of a growing population and with this the establishment of a range of new businesses and economic activity.
- The Scottish Land Fund evaluation also found that community ownership of assets had driven an interest in energy efficiency and the production of renewable energy as proceeds can be reinvested locally. Read more about the achievements of the Scottish Land Fund programme [here](#).
- Enterprise projects funded by BIG in developing countries have demonstrated that some of the key elements of success lie in the planning process. Key steps include undertaking a needs assessment as well as the mapping of local opportunities and resources, identifying appropriate business models, skills and training needs, assessing potential marketing strategies and arranging or providing access to credit.
- Communities overseas have also found it useful to establish self-help savings groups within the community where credit is rotated amongst groups (at a low interest rate) to enable business development. This group approach has also enabled communities to establish a credit history which can be useful when seeking larger loans and credit arrangements from banks and other financial institutions. Find out more out the impact of BIG's funding of enterprise overseas [here](#)