



Evaluation of Young People's Fund

Year 3 Report

A report to Big Lottery Fund

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GEN

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1 INTRODUCTION

Evaluation of the Young People's Fund

1.1 GEN and Wavehill Consulting were commissioned in 2006 to undertake a five-year evaluation of the Young People's Fund (YPF) across the UK on behalf of the Big Lottery Fund (BIG). This report sets out findings of the third year of the evaluation.

Young People's Fund

1.2 The Young People's Fund was established in 2003 with a budget of £200 million available across the UK to fund projects for young people. The funding allocation was divided between the four countries of the United Kingdom, with each country designing a programme allied to the specific policy context within that country. This approach ensured that the individual country programmes reflected the policy directions that had been agreed by their respective administrations.

1.3 Each of the four programmes has further divided their funding allocation into a number of strands, with each strand offering variable levels of funding to different groups, each meeting differing funding criteria. The specifics of the programme in each country are also discussed in greater detail in the country chapters.

Aims and objectives of the evaluation

1.4 The evaluation was tasked with assessing:

- The success of each of the four country programmes in meeting their aims and outcomes.
- The impact of project activity on young participants.
- The impact of involving young people in their project, such as in design, delivery, evaluation and management of activity.

1.5 There are a number of areas in which BIG has particular interest and which the evaluation had to look at in specific detail. These are as follows:

Involvement

Objectives:

- To assess how effective the programme has been in involving young people in the design, development, delivery and evaluation of the programme and projects. In addition BIG is interested in the different levels of involvement and the characteristics of those involved.
- To make an assessment of the longer-term impacts of the programme on young people.

Areas of particular interest include:

- How successful the Local Area Panels in Scotland have been in promoting the goal of involvement and in meeting the outcomes of YPF in Scotland.

Delivery

Objectives:

- To make an assessment of the different delivery mechanisms being applied in terms of meeting the aims of the programme.

Areas of particular interest include:

- How successful the programme in Wales has been in meeting local need and filling gaps in provision.

Good Practice

Objectives:

- To highlight what works in terms of meeting the aims of the programmes and the impact that involving young people in all areas has had on them, the community and the sustainability of projects.

Areas of particular interest include:

- Examples of good practice in meeting the hardest to reach / disadvantaged groups of young people and in particular meeting the needs of 10 -18 year olds in Northern Ireland.

Overview of findings from year two of the evaluation

1.6 The year two evaluation found that, across the UK, the country programmes have been successful in supporting projects that are contributing to the aims and outcomes of YPF. A common theme across all four countries was the provision of activities that are enjoyable and provide young people with a sense of achievement. Other key findings to emerge include:

- A majority of projects in each country target disadvantaged or vulnerable groups.
- Peer recruitment is effective in engaging young people from harder to reach and harder to work with groups.
- Most, if not all of the projects in each country were involving young people in some way and at some point. However, it tends to be the more confident, more engaged young people who are most likely and able to be involved in projects.
- Involving young people adds value to the projects' activities.
- Participation in project activity and active involvement bring about a number of tangible and intangible benefits for young people. These include: improved physical well being; skills; qualifications; increased confidence; improved relationships; communication skills and engagement.

- YPF projects aim to sustain their activity beyond the end of the funding period; however there was a lot of uncertainty about how this would be achieved.

1.7 The study concluded that in each county and across the UK YPF is having a significant and positive impact on the young people. This appears to be particularly true among those young people who have been actively involved in the design, delivery, management and evaluation of project activity.

1.8 In year three of the evaluation field work was extended to include a significant degree of consultation with young people; including 'involved' young people. We anticipate that this will provide greater insight into the impact and benefits accruing to young people; why and how they are involved in the design delivery, management and evaluation of activity.

Reporting Structure

1.9 The remainder of this report is set out as follows:

- chapter 2 details the study methodology
- chapter 3 provides an overview of findings from across the UK
- chapter 4 details the findings from England
- chapter 5 details the findings from Scotland
- chapter 6 details the findings from Northern Ireland
- chapter 7 details the findings from Wales
- chapter 8 discusses the involvement of young people.

2 METHOD

2.1 The methodology for the third year was re-scoped slightly to take account of priorities for the evaluation. In each country this involved¹:

- interviews with country leads to get priorities for the third year
- interviews with grants officers
- interviews with key stakeholders in each country
- case study visits with projects, involving interviews with both project staff and young people
- a telephone survey of projects.

2.2 The team conducted 12 interviews with stakeholders, three in each country (Table 2.1).

Table 2.1 – Stakeholders interviewed

Country	Stakeholder consults
England	3
Scotland	3
Northern Ireland	3
Wales	3
TOTAL	12

Source: GEN

2.3 The team carried out 28 case study visits to projects across the four countries and telephone interviews with staff from a further 289 projects. The breakdown by country is given in Table 2.2. The quantitative element of the research was scaled down this year for two reasons. Firstly almost all projects have now been surveyed in either year one or two of the research, so it was important to avoid survey fatigue. Secondly, a more qualitative focus was taken in the third year, so additional resources were allocated to the case study visits and to interviews with young people.

Table 2.2 – Survey of projects

Country	Case study visits	Telephone survey
England	10	129
Scotland	6	60
Northern Ireland	6	27
Wales	6	73
TOTAL	28	289

Source: GEN

¹ Each country also had methodological elements that were particular to it. More detail on these is available in the individual country chapters.

Country Specific Elements

2.4 To complement the core methods for the evaluation, the study team conducted a number of country specific pieces of fieldwork.

2.5 In England, for the grants to individuals strand, the team reviewed the Big Boost evaluation report and interviewed:

- the Big Boost Co-ordinator
- five successful grant applicants
- three panel members.

2.6 In Northern Ireland, the team interviewed:

- the award partner
- the co-ordinator of small grants programme
- the co-ordinator of strategic programmes
- five successful individual grant applicants.

2.7 In Scotland, the team reviewed Volunteer Development Scotland's (VDS) evaluation of the Local Area Panels (LAPs) and interviewed:

- seven former LAP members
- the chair and one former member of the National Committee.

2.8 In Wales, the team interviewed:

- five successful grant applicants to the Make it Happen strand.

Impact of Involvement

2.9 To assess the impact of 'active involvement' on young people, the study team undertook an additional 13 focus groups with young people who are actively involved in their project. These were conducted across the four countries using a mixture of qualitative and quantitative research tools. More detail on this element of the research is provided in the chapter 8.

Table 2.3 – Focus groups with actively involved young people

Country	Focus group visits
England	4
Scotland	3
Northern Ireland	4
Wales	2
TOTAL	13

Source: GEN

3 YOUNG PEOPLE'S FUND ACROSS THE UNITED KINGDOM

Introduction

3.1 This chapter presents an overview of findings from each of the four country programmes. It considers the commonalities, and where relevant the differences between the findings in each country. It considers:

- How projects are meeting the programme aims and outcomes
- How projects are addressing disadvantage
- The active involvement of young people
- The impact of the programmes
- The YPF legacy.

Meeting the aims and outcomes

3.2 Within the structure of the overarching aims of the YPF programme across the UK, each country set its own aims and outcomes and developed its own programme designed to meet those aims and outcomes. While each country operates a unique programme, there are common characteristics in their design. An overview of these structures is given below:

- **Grants to projects** are awarded in each of the four countries, in the form of:
 - **England** – National Grants and Grants to Organisations
 - **Scotland** – Local Projects, New Ideas and Wider Inclusion
 - **Northern Ireland** – Change UR Future
 - **Wales** – Bridging the Gap and Reaching Out.
- **Grants to individuals** are awarded in three of the four countries in the form of:
 - **England** – Big Boost
 - **Northern Ireland** – The Big Deal small grants programme
 - **Wales** – Make it Happen.
- Unique elements were used in Scotland and Northern Ireland, namely:
 - **Scotland** – Local Area Panels
 - **Northern Ireland** – Change UR Future strategic programmes.

3.3 This section considers how each of these elements contributes to the aims and outcomes of the YPF programme.

Grants to projects

3.4 The majority of YPF funding has been awarded to projects in each of the four countries to work with young people to meet the programme aims and outcomes for that country. Ongoing monitoring by BIG focuses on project specific outcomes rather than programme outcomes. However the purpose of the evaluation is to assess the extent to which projects contribute to the programme outcomes, which has been measured through the telephone surveys and case study visits carried out in each country.

3.5 In previous years the evaluation has found that the aims and outcomes for each country programme are broad and as such the vast majority of projects contribute to a number of these.

3.6 This continues to be the case, however the majority of projects are able to identify one outcome that is their **main focus**. Projects taking part in the telephone survey identified the main programme outcome that their project contributes to. In each country these were:

- **England** – Enjoying and achieving (46 per cent)
- **Scotland** – More and better opportunities to gain the confidence and skills and support they need to deal with change in their lives and contribute to their local communities (53 per cent)
- **Northern Ireland** – Increasing the achievement and learning of young people (41 per cent)
- **Wales** – Enjoying life and achieving their potential (44 per cent).

3.7 These were also identified as the most common main outcomes in year two of the evaluation, showing that projects are continuing to recognise their contribution to these outcomes over time. The findings show that despite the difference in individual country programme aims and outcomes around half of the projects in each country are focussing on helping young people to achieve and develop skills.

3.8 Given the broad nature of the programme outcomes, projects can easily identify how these are being met. YPF has funded a wide variety of projects and they are all contributing to these outcomes in unique ways. The two case study examples below illustrate how projects are contributing to the most common outcomes. Further examples of how projects are contributing to the country outcomes can be found in the case study reports contained in Appendices A to D.

England – Cast – Enjoying and achieving

The project began in 2001 when the current project manager met four young people who were keen on fishing but lacked the knowledge to participate responsibly and safely. In addition they had low expectations of what they could achieve through school and poor relationships with the wider community. The fishing project was formed to teach them about fishing in return for them engaging in positive activities in the community.

Since then the project has grown and expanded immeasurably and now offers an alternative curriculum programme across Nottinghamshire and more recently within Derbyshire where young people undertake accredited courses in angling, the environment and land based industries. These courses are for young people who are not engaging successfully in school based learning.

Scotland – NICHE – More and better opportunities to gain the confidence and skills and support they need to deal with change in their lives and contribute to their local communities

NICHE (Nurturing Individual Creativity to Harness Employment) was developed as part of local project specifically to help older young people (aged 14 to 25) make the transition from school to employment, education or training. The project targets those young people who have, for example, low self esteem; behavioural issues; addiction issues; are homeless; or ex-offenders.

NICHE has two phases. Young people become involved in the first phase by taking part in relationship and skill building workshops. They will take part in arts based activities to engage them in a different way and to help them think constructively about any issues they may be dealing with. The second phase builds on this initial skills development by providing the young people with volunteering opportunities and peer support. These can be in industries such as retail, construction, community work, and travel and tourism. Young people are also required to complete a community team project, during which they will work with their peers to reach a specified goal. Once they have completed this phase, the young people may be ready to move into employment, training, further education or the local Youthbank.

Grants to individuals

3.9 In England, Northern Ireland and Wales funding was allocated to award small grants to individual or groups of young people. These were:

- **England – Big Boost**
- **Northern Ireland – The Big Deal (small grants)**

- **Wales** – Make it Happen.

3.10 Each small grants programme operated in slightly different ways however at their core was giving young people the opportunity to develop their own project idea, apply for funding, deliver their project and evaluate it.

3.11 Projects that received funding contributed to a number of the YPF outcomes in their respective countries, however primarily these strands contributed to the overarching aim of YPF, which is to involve young people in all stages of the projects.

3.12 Across the UK 3919 individual or groups of young people benefited from being the recipient of a grant to run their own project, helping to contribute to the programme's aim of involving young people.

Unique elements

Local Area Panels in Scotland

3.13 In Scotland a portion of the funding was used to establish a local area panel (LAPs) of young people in each of the 32 local authority areas to allow young people to make a recommendation on whether applications under the Local Projects strand were successful or not. A National Committee of young people and adults considered the applications and the recommendations from the LAPs before making the final decision.

3.14 The LAPs were a unique approach to involving young people in the programme, again contributing to the overarching aim of involving young people in all stages of the projects and programme. Around 500 young people were recruited and trained to become involved in a LAP or the National Committee.

3.15 The LAPs were an inherent feature of the delivery of YPF in Scotland, set up as part of the commitment to ensuring that young people's involvement was central to the programme. The evidence from the research shows that the LAPs have made a significant contribution to the Scotland programme outcome "more and better opportunities to be involved in making decisions about issues and policies that affect them in their communities".

3.16 The organisation that managed and delivered the LAP element of the Scotland programme, Volunteer Development Scotland, carried out a survey of 187 Panel Members and found that 61 per cent of panel members had become involved because they wanted to "get involved in their local community"². Furthermore:

- 70 per cent reported that their work on the LAP had made them feel part of the community
- 51 per cent said they accessed further opportunities such as volunteering or employment as a direct result of LAP involvement.³

² VDS (2008), "Big Lottery Fund Young People's Panels Evaluation", p.5

³ VDS (2008), "Big Lottery Fund Young People's Panels Evaluation", p.43-44

3.17 Our interviews with Panel Members found that getting involved in local decision making and giving something back to the community were important benefits for the young people involved.

Addressing disadvantage

3.18 Each of the countries has a focus on addressing disadvantage although each approached this in a different way. Those interviewed in the telephone survey were asked how they were meeting the aims of their country programme in terms of addressing disadvantage. The aims in each country are described below along with the proportion of projects that reported contributing to that aim.

- **England** – places priority on working with those young people who face difficulties or are at a disadvantage when it comes to getting involved in activities. Projects are expected to:
 - Help disadvantaged young people to come together with other young people to enjoy and benefit from activities (91 per cent of those surveyed) and/or
 - Create a better understanding of disadvantage among young people (71 per cent).
- **Scotland** – has identified four priority groups of young people, which are those:
 - With no opportunities to volunteer or facing barriers to volunteering (60 per cent of those surveyed)
 - Dealing with many and complicated problems (92 per cent)
 - Who do not have positive relationships with family, friends or community (73 per cent)
 - Teenage girls (75 per cent).
- **Northern Ireland** – aims to support youth inclusion by targeting resources at those at greatest risk of exclusion and/or offending (**96 per cent of those surveyed are supporting youth inclusion and 74 per cent are actively engaging with those at greatest risk of exclusion and/or offending**). In addition Northern Ireland has identified three cross cutting programme themes for projects to give consideration to, which are:
 - Additional needs of vulnerable, socially excluded and disaffected young people (93 per cent of those surveyed)
 - Transitions from infancy to young adulthood (59 per cent)
 - Impact of conflict and tackling sectarianism (59 per cent).
- **Wales** – has specified that two of its strands work with disadvantaged young people, namely:

- Bridging the Gap (BtG) supports projects that identify and engage with the most difficult to reach young people (100 per cent of BtG projects interviewed)
- Reaching Out (RO) supports projects that focus on young people who are either at risk of being or are already disaffected and disengaged, particularly in disadvantaged communities (82 per cent of RO projects interviewed).

3.19 The findings clearly show that **each of the countries has been successful in funding projects that address disadvantage by working with young people in the groups specified in the country programmes.**

3.20 Our research found that projects are achieving this in two ways. Some work exclusively with young people from a particular disadvantaged group, for example young people with a disability, or young people who are excluded from school, whilst others are open to all young people but engage many young people who are disadvantaged in some way. Those that are open to all young people reach disadvantaged groups through a variety of means. Often they will be situated within a disadvantaged area and will engage with young people from that area, and many will engage with hard to reach groups of young people through partnerships with local organisations and agencies.

3.21 The proportion of survey respondents in each country that are open to all young people or working exclusively with target groups is set out in table 3.1:

Table 3.1 – Method of addressing disadvantage

Country	Open to all young people	Work exclusively with target groups
England	32%	68%
Scotland	57%	43%
Northern Ireland	52%	48%
Wales	47%	53%

Source: Wavehill Survey of YPF Projects 2009 – 289 responses

3.22 The first case study example below (Y.A.X) illustrates a project that is open to all young people and the second (Pembrokeshire Activity Centre) shows a project that works with a particular group.

Northern Ireland – Y.A.X

Y.A.X is a 'youth led' project intended to provide a positive outlet for young people aged 12-19 from the Creggan area, particularly those who may not generally engage in community activity. The project aims to boost the confidence and aspirations of young people and promote active citizenship by empowering them to participate and take the lead in youth activities. The project currently has over 250 young people actively participating in activities.

Activities include, education and awareness raising workshops relating to pertinent social and cultural issues such as drug and alcohol misuse, equality

and diversity, art, drama, cooking, dance and sports, access to accredited courses, such as EDCL IT qualifications, and a range of social activities including alcohol free discos, pool competitions, band nights, away days and residential trips. The project has developed a very successful intergenerational 'buddying' programme where participants visit older people who live nearby, run errands and help them out where they can with the aim of reducing feelings of fear and intimidation that the elderly may have in relation to young people.

Wales – Pembrokeshire Activity Centre

Pembrokeshire Activity Centre has used its YPF funding to work with young people who are "NEET" or at risk of becoming "NEET", using a variety of activities to increase confidence, self esteem and develop social skills to enable them to progress to further education, training or employment.

The project focuses on internal learning through outdoor activities such as power boat driving, canoeing, and rock climbing. All the young people can choose activities that they would like to do so there are some indoor activities that take place such as Circus Skills and Aikido. All the activities which take place are designed to build confidence and motivation in young people.

3.23 There are benefits to both approaches. Those working with particular groups can focus on the specific issues of those groups, whilst those that are open to all young people can encourage individuals to come together with young people they might not normally meet, thereby broadening their horizons.

3.24 Across all four countries the groups that projects are most commonly working with are those **at risk of exclusion** and those **living in a deprived area**. Projects are also working with young people:

- who are offenders, ex-offenders or at risk of offending
- with mental health issues
- with a physical or sensory disability
- living in rural areas
- who are young carers
- who are homeless
- from BME groups.

3.25 The evaluation has found that the vast majority of projects are engaging with young people who are considered to be disadvantaged in some way. Case study projects reported that staff have the appropriate skills to engage with these young people and they recruit them through partnership working and word of mouth, with some projects undertaking outreach work. While these methods are considered effective, project workers acknowledge that they may not be reaching those who are 'hardest to reach'. This is a perennial problem for all agencies that work with disadvantaged young people and, although it is an issue that YPF

projects should continue to try to address, does not detract from the valuable work they do with those that they are engaging with.

Involving young people

3.26 An overarching aim of YPF is to engage and involve young people in all stages of the projects, including design, development, implementation and evaluation. This aim is in keeping with the policy contexts in each of the countries, which focus on promoting youth inclusion and active citizenship, fulfilling their obligations under the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child to uphold children's human rights and secure the right for every child to influence decisions that affect them. Ultimately this approach aims to motivate young people and give them the skills to be active citizens within their own community and beyond, bringing benefits to the young people and the wider community.

Grants to projects

3.27 The organisations that received YPF funding through the various strands that awarded grants to projects were expected to actively involve young people in their funded projects.

3.28 Through the telephone surveys and case study visits carried out in each country the evaluation has explored the types of involvement being used and levels of involvement. While the evidence in this section focuses primarily on those receiving funding through the grants to projects strands, the telephone survey in Wales included projects from the Make it Happen, grants to individuals strand.

Types of involvement

3.29 The most common ways in which young people are actively involved in projects in each country are:

- reviewing activity through informal feedback
- designing activity
- reviewing activity through structured feedback (less common in Wales than in the other countries, however still a feature in over half of projects)
- engaging other young people.

3.30 These were also the most common methods in year two of the evaluation however the survey found that in year three higher proportions of projects are reporting using some of the involvement methods⁴. The ways in which involvement has increased differs in each country:

⁴ This finding needs to be treated with caution because the samples were different and the questions were asked in slightly different ways in both years. In year two projects were asked a separate question about each involvement stage when in year three this was simplified to ask just one question about how young people are actively involved across all stages.

- **In England** more projects are involving young people in **engaging other young people; delivering activity; and in a youth forum/steering group** than in year two of the evaluation
- **In Scotland** more projects are involving young people through **structured feedback; and in delivering activity** than in year two
- **In Northern Ireland** a higher proportion of projects are involving young people through **informal feedback; in a youth forum/steering group and through structured feedback** than in year two
- **In Wales** there has been a significant increase in the proportion of projects that are involving young people in **delivering activities** and a slight increase in the proportion that involve young people in a **youth forum/steering group**.

3.31 In year two of the evaluation some case study projects reported that young people would become more involved over time once a period of capacity building had taken place to develop their confidence and skills to enable them to be actively involved. The survey findings in year three are consistent with this. Although it was not mentioned by project staff, the increase in involvement may also be due to their increased confidence and skills in facilitating involvement.

3.32 One project that uses two of the most common methods of involvement: involving young people in reviewing activity through informal; and structured feedback, is Ballymena Family and Addicts Support - New Start. Their approach is illustrated in the case study example below.

Northern Ireland – Ballymena Family and Addicts Support - New Start

The New Start project aims to raise awareness of the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse among young people, and support current or former substance abusers through structured programmes of personal development activity. New Start comprises three programmes;

Life Tools (11-17) operates one evening per week over an eight week period and works with small groups of young people aged 11-14 and 15-17 who are /or are at risk of substance abuse, to raise awareness of the dangers of drugs and alcohol, improve confidence and raise aspirations

My Life Matters (18+) is a 15 week intensive personal development course for current and former substance abusers. The course focuses on improving confidence and self-esteem, anger management, staying safe and preventing relapse. The programme comprises group and one to one sessions, with a focus on progress and personal development. The course also includes a weekly group outing or 'self care and motivation day' where participants can make use of facilities such as the Gym and Sauna and alternative therapies (including acupuncture and Indian head massage)

Both of these programmes are supported by **Recharge** which enables participants to access to the centre's fitness suite and work with a qualified gym

instructor. By promoting health and wellbeing through exercise, the programme aims to replace one behaviour (substance abuse) with another (exercise)

Life Tools participants are involved in the management, delivery and evaluation of project activity through ongoing informal consultation. Project workers indicated that they are responsive to the feedback of project participants and that courses have been continuously developed over the funding period as a result of feedback received from young people. Young People involved with My Life Matters are involved in the management, delivery and evaluation of project activity in a more formal manner through the completion of evaluation forms at the end of each week and a course evaluation after 15 weeks. By being responsive to the views of young people, project workers feel that courses are better suited to meet their needs, thereby aiding retention of young people and increasing their engagement with the activity.

3.33 As in the New Start project, projects that involve young people through feedback mechanisms, either informal or structured, commonly report that they are better able to offer activities that meet the young people's needs, which increases engagement and retention.

Level of involvement

3.34 While the findings have shown that the majority of projects actively involve young people and that a range of involvement methods are used across the projects, it is important to understand the quality of that involvement. Roger Hart (1992)⁵ developed a ladder of participation that describes eight degrees of participation from tokenism to citizenship (Table 3.2). The ladder shows increasing degrees of participation from rung one on the ladder where there is no involvement to rung eight, where young people work in partnership with adults., which are:

⁵ Hart, R. (1992), *Children's Participation from Tokenism to Citizenship*. Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre.

Table 3.2 – Hart's Ladder of Participation

Description – Hart's Ladder of Participation	
Rung 8 - Participants have the idea, setup project and invite staff to join with them in making decisions	Citizenship
Rung 7 - Participants have the initial idea and decide how the project is to be carried out. Staff are available but do not take charge.	
Rung 6 - Staff have the initial idea but participants are involved in every step of the planning and implementation: their views are considered and they are involved in taking the decisions.	
Rung 5 -The project is designed and run by staff but participants are consulted. They have a full understanding of the process and their opinions are taken seriously.	
Rung 4 - Staff decide on the project and participants volunteer for it. Staff respects their views	
Rung 3 - Participants are asked to say what they think about an issue but have little or no choice about the way they express those views or the scope of the ideas they can express.	Tokenism
Rung 2 - Participants take part in an event but they do not understand the issue	
Rung 1 - Participants do or say what staff suggest they do, but have no real understanding of the issue, or have been asked what they think. Staff use some of their ideas but do not tell them what influence they have had on the final decision	

3.35 This tool was used in the evaluation to assess the extent of involvement in YPF funded projects. Telephone survey respondents were asked to comment on where they believe their project is positioned on Hart's Ladder. The percentage of projects positioned on each rung in each country and across the UK are shown in Table 3.3 below.

Table 3.3 – Level in Hart's Ladder

Hart's Ladder of Participation	England	Scotland	Northern Ireland	Wales	UK
Rung 8	5%	8%	0%	7%	6%
Rung 7	25%	17%	18%	25%	23%
Rung 6	45%	33%	41%	42%	41%
Rung 5	24%	35%	41%	23%	28%
Rung 4	1%	3%	0%	3%	2%
Rung 3	0%	2%	0%	0%	0%
Rung 2	0%	2%	0%	0%	0%
Rung 1	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
No. respondents	129	60	27	73	289

Source: Wavehill survey of YPF projects

3.36 The findings show that there are high levels of involvement in each of the four countries, with almost all projects reporting levels of involvement between rungs four and eight, which Hart describes as 'true participation'. Hart is clear that between rungs four and eight involvement is meaningful and that operating at rung eight is not necessarily better than operating at rung four. The level of involvement has to be appropriate for the young people involved and involvement at the level of the middle rungs is often necessary to enable young people to develop skills that will enable them to be involved at a higher level.

3.37 The vast majority of YPF projects consider themselves to be at levels five or six on the ladder, which is consistent with the finding that the most common forms of involvement are in getting young people to review activity.

3.38 When projects were asked about levels of involvement at each stage the surveys found that the evaluation of project activity was the stage where young people were more likely to take the lead over adults (Table 3.4). Project management was more likely to be led by adults, with 47 per cent of projects reporting that adults are more involved than young people and a further 18 per cent reporting that the project is managed exclusively by adults.

Table 3.4 – Level of involvement in all stages (UK wide)

	Exclusively YP	More YP than adult	Even mix	More adult than YP	Exclusively adult
Initial development	8%	26%	25%	32%	8%
Project delivery	8%	25%	25%	36%	5%
Project management	2%	14%	19%	47%	18%
Project evaluation	4%	35%	39%	20%	3%

Source: Wavehill Survey of YPF Projects 2009 – 289 responses

3.39 Table 3.5 shows the percentage of project participants who are actively involved in each involvement activity. As would be expected, higher numbers of young people are actively involved in what would be regarded as lower level involvement activities, such as providing feedback, with lower numbers involved in high level involvement activities such as being a representative on a management committee or board. This is a reflection of the nature of these activities, where only a select few can be involved in representing the majority, but demonstrates the need for a variety of involvement methods to allow both high level involvement among the few and lower level involvement among the majority.

Table 3.5 – Average (mean) percentage of young people actively involved in different ways (UK wide)

Means of involvement	Mean percentage of young people involved
Review activity through informal feedback	74%
Review activity through structured feedback	66%
Engage other young people	44%
Design activity	36%
Deliver activity	28%
Manage certain projects	23%
Youth forum / steering group	19%
Recruitment of project staff	11%
YP rep on management committee / board	8%

Source: Wavehill Survey of YPF Projects 2009 – 289 responses

Change in level of involvement

3.40 In each of the countries between 80 and 90 per cent of projects involved in the telephone survey reported that the involvement of young people has increased over the course of the funding period.

3.41 When asked how YPF funding has helped projects to increase involvement the most commonly cited responses were that it has enabled them to:

- involve a greater number of young people (from 59 to 78 per cent of projects in each of the countries)
- expand the role of young people who are actively involved (from 60 to 70 per cent in each of the countries)
- give young people the skills to be actively involved (from 58 to 74 per cent in each of the countries).

Grants to individuals and Local Area Panels

3.42 As discussed previously, each of the country programmes has funded a strand that puts the active involvement of young people at its core. Namely the

small grants programmes in England, Northern Ireland, and Wales; and the Local Area Panels in Scotland.

3.43 Through interviews with the co-ordinators of these strands and a sample of young people who were involved, the evaluation has found that these strands have been successful in securing high levels of involvement and that this involvement has had a positive impact on the young people. The impacts are wide ranging, but commonly include:

- increased confidence
- the development of practical skills such as budgeting, project management, organisational skills, group work and events management
- greater awareness of local and social issues
- developing relationships with local organisations
- becoming more active within the local community and pursuing further opportunities for active involvement, including undertaking volunteering opportunities and pursuing related career paths
- setting an example to peers who in turn became involved in these strands.

3.44 Young people who received funding through these strands were truly involved in leading the projects and as such were operating on rungs seven or eight of Hart's Ladder of Participation⁶.

- **Rung 8** - young people initiate and manage projects / actions and share decision making with adults, using them as mentors and advisors. These projects empower young people while at the same time enabling them to access and learn from the life experience and expertise of adults
- **Rung 7** – young people initiate and manage projects / actions. Adults are involved only in a supportive role.

3.45 These strands were allocated a comparatively small amount of funding in relation to the funding that was allocated to projects, yet they have had a significant and arguably lasting impact on the young people who were beneficiaries. As such these strands have been a highly successful feature of YPF.

Impact

Impact of project activity

3.46 Telephone survey respondents were asked to report on what they believed would be the most significant long term benefits to young people from

⁶ Hart, R. (1992), *Children's Participation from Tokenism to Citizenship*. Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre.

their project. The most commonly cited benefits in each country varied, and the three most commonly cited benefits in each country are listed below:

- **England**
 - Increased confidence (57 per cent)
 - Increased achievement and learning (33 per cent)
 - Development of new transferable skills (33 per cent)
- **Scotland**
 - Increased confidence (70 per cent)
 - Young people feel valued (30 per cent)
 - Improved relationships with others (22 per cent)
- **Northern Ireland**
 - Increased confidence (52 per cent)
 - Increased achievement and learning (37 per cent)
 - Increased engagement (37 per cent)
- **Wales**
 - Increased confidence (77 per cent)
 - Improved relationships with others (33 per cent)
 - Increased motivation (27 per cent).

3.47 Overwhelmingly, the most commonly cited benefit across all countries was increased confidence, with between 52 and 77 per cent of projects in each country reporting this benefit. Increased confidence was identified as a benefit by both project workers and young people in the case study projects.

3.48 Increased achievement and learning of young people was a commonly cited benefit in England and Northern Ireland. This is consistent with the finding that the majority of projects in these countries consider themselves to be working towards the enjoying and achieving outcome in England; and the increased achievement and learning outcome in Northern Ireland.

3.49 Surprisingly, despite the enjoying life and achieving their potential outcome in Wales being the most common outcome that projects are working towards, increased achievement was only reported as a long term benefit by 25 per cent of projects. This may be because the survey in Wales was dominated numerically by interviews with projects in the Make it Happen strand. Many of these were short-term projects funding things like one-off events, exchange visits or work experience periods. As such these projects are less likely to deliver longer-term outcomes such as increased achievement and learning.

3.50 Project workers and young people in the case study projects reported that these benefits contribute to **empowering young people**. They also report that

their activities are having an **impact on the wider community by tackling a range of social issues and changing negative perceptions of young people**. The example below shows how YANE is delivering both of these impacts.

England - Youth Action North East (YANE)

Youth Action North East (YANE) is a regional participation project that aims to create a regional voice for young people living in the North East of England. It encourages and supports young people aged 13 to 19 to take action on the issues that affect their lives.

Young people who have been involved with the project for a while recall that prior to coming along to the project they did not think they “had a voice” and there was “no point in fighting for anything”. They now see that is not the case. They commented on how “young people feel discriminated against because they are seen as anti-social”. As a result of the project they feel “like a member of society”. Both the workers and young people feel that the impacts are inter-generational because through their campaigning activities they are changing perceptions of young people in the wider community.

Impact of active involvement

3.51 The survey asked projects to consider the benefits that young people get from active involvement in the design, delivery, management and evaluation of project activity. The findings show very little difference between what were the most commonly cited benefits of project activity and the benefits of active involvement.

- **England**
 - Increased confidence (79 per cent)
 - Increased achievement and learning (74 per cent)
 - Development of new transferable skills (71 per cent)
 - Improved relationships with others (71 per cent)
- **Scotland**
 - Increased confidence (68 per cent)
 - Young people feel valued (28 per cent)
 - New transferable skills (28 per cent)
- **Northern Ireland**
 - Increased confidence (70 per cent)
 - Improved relationships with others (33 per cent)
 - Increased engagement (33 per cent)
- **Wales**
 - Increased confidence (82 per cent)

- Improved relationships with others (47 per cent)
- Increased motivation (30 per cent).

3.52 Project workers interviewed during the case study visits reported that while the benefits that young people get from active involvement are broadly similar to those that they get from participation, **the extent of the impact is much greater for involved young people.**

3.53 The key areas where involved young people seem to benefit much more significantly than those who are solely participants is in feeling like they **have a voice, can make a difference in their community and can give something back to other young people in their project.** A number of young people reported that they will **use their experience from involvement in projects to pursue a related career.** This serves to make them feel valued, empowered and in many cases raises their aspirations. Some examples of these impacts from the case study projects are described below:

One young person on the **Future Vision project in Wales** had experienced a profound change as a result of active involvement on the project: “When I came here 3 years ago I had no confidence at all. I would only go out with my cousin, never on my own and I would not talk to anyone. Now I have visited London and Brussels, I am a member of the Youth Forum and I also sit on the board of the local management committee representing young people.”

A young person from the **Get Ready for Change/Get Ready for Geneva project in England** said “Seeing our report and then seeing the concluding observations that the UN have given back... I think we have made a tremendous difference; we’ve really been listened to. It really took me back a bit...and like the other 2,000 young people that have had a say in the project, we’ve helped give them a voice...”

One girl who is currently completing a student placement with **Féile an Phobail in Northern Ireland** said “it means a lot when someone asks you to be involved...it gets your creative side going”.

Another who is part of the Féile an Phobail management committee said that through her involvement with the project she has come to realise what young people can achieve and that “young people are on the same level as adults”.

Two girls working as peer educators for the **Ballybeen Women’s Centre – Generation Health Initiative in Northern Ireland** said that their involvement helped them in the decision to choose youth work as their future career, and that the transferable skills they have gained will be of significant benefit during their studies and in the future;

3.54 The evaluation has found that young people who are actively involved in projects find it an extremely valuable experience, with wide ranging and significant benefits to their personal development and in many cases their future careers. Giving young people a voice and enabling them to make a difference in their community are the main impacts that differentiate the benefits of active involvement from those of being a project participant who is not actively involved.

Legacy

3.55 At the end of the third year of the evaluation, with the majority of projects having received three years of funding, some have reached the end of their funding period and many are approaching the end. The evaluation has explored with projects what has been or what they expect to be the legacy of the YPF funding, in particular:

- strategic partnerships
- additionality of YPF funding
- the future of the project.

Strategic partnership

3.56 All of the projects surveyed have formed strategic partnerships with other agencies to maximise the impacts of their project. Most commonly these partnerships are with other voluntary organisations (between 78 and 90 per cent of projects) and schools (between 68 and 84 per cent of projects), but also include:

- education departments
- community learning and development departments
- social Work departments
- Police.

3.57 Effective partnership working brings a number of benefits for projects, the most significant of which include:

- enabling projects to have a greater impact by offering a more holistic provision
- learning from the work of others, ensuring ongoing staff development and the application of innovative and best practice approaches
- recruitment of young people, and in particular routes through which projects can reach the hardest to reach
- the potential for the projects or certain elements of their activity to continue beyond YPF funding.

3.58 Partnership working in Wales has been supported through the local Children's and Young People's partnerships. There is a requirement in Wales, particularly through the Reaching Out strand for YPF projects to fill gaps in local

provision, and as such all projects are linked to their local Children's and Young People's partnership. Projects had received referral or been told about referral routes through that body.

3.59 Projects reported that through delivery of their YPF funded projects they have strengthened existing partnerships and formed new partnerships. These will form a lasting legacy, with future activities benefitting from new and strengthened relationships between organisations and agencies.

Additionality

3.60 For the majority of projects their YPF funding forms most, if not all of the funding for their project. Telephone survey respondents were asked how their activities would have been affected if they had not received YPF funding. Table 3.6 shows that in Northern Ireland and Wales the largest proportion of projects said that they would not have carried out their activities at all and in England and Scotland the highest proportion would have carried out their activities, but they would have been on a smaller scale. Across the UK 40 per cent of projects would not have carried out their activities without YPF funding.

Table 3.6 – Impact on activities if YPF funding hadn't been awarded

Impact of not having YPF funding	England	Scotland	Northern Ireland	Wales	UK
Smaller scale	50%	48%	30%	38%	45%
Wouldn't have carried out	36%	37%	56%	45%	40%
Later date	13%	12%	15%	12%	13%
Carried out anyway	2%	3%	0%	4%	3%

Source: Wavehill Survey of YPF Projects 2009 – 289 responses

3.61 The slight differences in the findings in each country may be due to more restricted funding sources in Northern Ireland and Wales. The findings clearly show that in each of the four countries there has been significant additionality from YPF in terms of overall impact in terms of funding activities that would not otherwise have taken place, as well as scale and time additionality.

Future

3.62 There is a degree of uncertainty among projects concerning their ability to sustain activities following the end of YPF funding (Table 3.7). The country where there is most certainty is Wales, with almost half of projects expecting to continue beyond their YPF funding (42 per cent). This could be due to the fact that there was a requirement for projects in Wales to link into their local Children and Young People's Partnership. Being an integral part of the local infrastructure will give projects a stronger sense of their future direction within the local context.

3.63 Across the UK almost one third of projects expect to continue, with 35 per cent remaining unsure.

Table 3.7 – Likelihood of continuing post-YPF funding

Will project activities continue post-YPF funding	England	Scotland	Northern Ireland	Wales	UK
Yes	23%	32%	22%	42%	30%
Maybe	47%	40%	30%	10%	35%
Some aspects will carry on	12%	17%	4%	22%	15%
No	9%	3%	19%	19%	11%
N/A	-	-	-	6%	2%
Don't know	9%	5%	26%	-	8%

Source: Wavehill Survey of YPF Projects 2009 – 289 responses

3.64 There remain a high proportion of projects, particularly in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland that do not yet know whether their project will continue beyond their YPF funding. Identifying an exit strategy or sustainability plan will need to be a focus for projects in these countries over the coming year.

Conclusions

Meeting the aims and outcomes

3.65 Each country operates a unique programme, but there are common characteristics. The majority of funding is allocated to organisations to operate projects that meet the outcomes of the YPF programmes, whilst small grants programmes in England, Northern Ireland and Wales; and Local Area Panels in Scotland are innovative ways contributing to the 'involving young people in all stages of the projects and programme' outcome.

3.66 BIG monitors progress towards project related outcomes, which were deemed at the application stage to meet the programme outcomes. Projects therefore focus on their project related outcomes, and do not directly measure progress towards the YPF programme aims and outcomes. However the evaluation found that projects are contributing to a number of the aims and outcomes of their country programme.

3.67 Programme outcomes are broad in each country and the majority of projects contribute to a number of these. When asked to specify their main focus, around half of projects in each country are helping young people to achieve and to develop their skills.

Addressing disadvantage

3.68 Each country programme aims to address disadvantage, but each has identified different groups and outcomes in this regard. Extremely high proportions of projects are working with each of the disadvantaged groups identified in their country programme, indicating that YPF has been successful in engaging its target groups.

3.69 Some projects work exclusively with target groups while others are open to all young people but ensure that young people from disadvantaged groups are included, often by being situated in a disadvantaged area and through local partnerships.

3.70 Staff have the appropriate skills to work with and use appropriate methods to engage hard to reach young people. However projects are not convinced that they are overcoming the perennial problem of reaching the very hardest to reach. That said, projects report high levels of disadvantage among the young people with whom they work and the valuable work that they do with them makes a significant difference to their lives.

Involving young people

3.71 The Local Area Panels in Scotland and small grants programmes in each of the other countries have made a significant contribution to the overarching aim of involving young people in all areas of the projects and programmes. With a relatively small amount of funding these strands have had a significant impact on the young people involved.

3.72 The year three evaluation has found more involvement among projects than was found in the year two evaluation. This is consistent with the finding in year two that projects expected involvement to increase as young people's capacity grew. Although it was not mentioned by project workers, this increase may also be a result of their own skills development over time.

3.73 Almost all projects consider themselves to be operating a level of involvement that is described by Hart (1992) as true involvement, which contributes to citizenship. The vast majority of projects operate levels of involvement at rung five or six on Hart's Ladder of Participation, which is consistent with the finding that the most common forms of involvement are around getting young people to review activity.

Impact

3.74 Across all countries the most common impact of project activity is increased confidence. In Scotland this is in line with the programme outcomes which over half of projects reported working towards, namely helping young people to access more and better opportunities to gain the confidence and skills and support they need to deal with change in their lives and contribute to their local communities.

3.75 Increased achievement and learning is a common impact in Northern Ireland and England, which confirms their contribution to that outcome within their country programme. While the Wales programme has a similar programme outcome, only 25 per cent of its projects are reporting increased achievement and learning as a long term benefit of their activity.

3.76 The range of benefits that projects report contribute to empowering young people, impacting on the wider community by tackling a range of social issues and changing negative perceptions of young people.

3.77 The impacts of active involvement are similar to those associated with participation in project activity however the extent of the impact is much greater for involved young people.

3.78 The key areas where involved young people benefit more significantly than those who are not actively involved are in feeling like they have a voice, can make a difference in their community and can give something back to other young people in the project. Involved young people are also more likely to talk about pursuing a related career as a result of their involvement with the project.

Legacy

3.79 All projects have formed strategic partnerships with other agencies to maximise the impacts of their project. YPF has led to the strengthening of existing partnerships and the building of new partnerships, and projects expect there to be a lasting legacy that will strengthen their future activities.

3.80 The majority of project activity would either not have happened or would have happened on a smaller scale if YPF funding had not been available, showing a high level of additionality from YPF funding.

3.81 There is a high degree of uncertainty among projects in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland about whether their project activity will continue post-YPF. In Wales the picture is clearer with almost half of projects expecting to continue. The development of exit strategies and sustainability plans will need to be a priority in the other three countries over the coming year.

4 Involvement of young people

“Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child”

Article 12 UN Convention of the Rights of the Child

Introduction

4.1 The ‘active involvement’ of children and young people in the development, delivery, management and evaluation of the projects they are involved in is a central theme of the Young People's Fund across the UK. The first two years of this evaluation have highlighted some interesting findings in relation to ‘involvement’; principally that **the vast majority of projects do involve young people** (to differing degrees) and that **the level of involvement is increasing** as projects develop and the capacity of young people increases.

4.2 The research team are using a variety of methods to investigate the active involvement of young people in YPF projects. These are: the telephone survey of projects and case study visits to a sample of projects in each country. During case study visits involvement is discussed through in-depth interviews with project workers and in individual interviews with young project beneficiaries.

4.3 To better understand the pattern of young people's involvement and how this impacts on the project and on the young people themselves, the study team also carried out a series of focus groups with ‘involved’ young people during year three of the evaluation. This was done with a sample of projects in addition to the case study visit. The specific aims of the focus group research was to:

- assess the rationale for involvement and the extent to which young people identify with it
- investigate the types and level of involvement within YPF projects
- identify the benefits gained by young people through their involvement
- identify barriers to involvement; how these have, or can be overcome
- draw out the lessons that can be learnt on encouraging and enabling participation and identify practical measures that young people believe contribute to successful involvement.

4.4 This chapter draws together research findings gathered through the telephone survey, the case study visits and the additional focus group research. This chapter presents analysis of findings concerning the nature, extent and impact of ‘involvement’ activity at a UK level.

4.5 The method for undertaking the focus group element of this research is described below. The method for undertaking the other elements is described in detail in Chapter 2.

Method

4.6 Focus groups involved a variety of active interview techniques, including the use of outcome stars⁷, pairs and group work as well as round table discussion. This helped to ensure that all the young people could participate in a meaningful way.

4.7 A typology based on Hart’s (1992) ‘Ladder of Participation’ was used to measure, compare and contrast the level and nature of youth involvement across the different projects⁸. The rungs of the ladder range from non-participation (where young people are manipulated or involved in a tokenistic way) to a state where young people are active citizens who share decisions with adults, initiate and lead action.

4.8 The study team aimed to carry out focus group research with involved young people in 15 case study projects. However, only 13 of the case study projects selected were able to provide a group of young people to take part in the research. We carried out focus group research in each country and spoke to a total of 69 young people. Young people involved in the research included:

- peer educators
- young people who are part of a youth committee/ steering group
- young people who sit on the organisation’s management committee
- young people involved in campaigning and awareness raising activity.

4.9 A summary of the focus group research is shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 – Focus groups by country

Country	No. of focus groups	No. of young people
England	4	18
Scotland	3	16
Wales	2	8
Northern Ireland	4	27
Total	13	69

Source: GEN/ Wavehill focus groups with YPF Projects 2009.

⁷ The Outcomes Star – Developed for the London Housing Foundation by Sara Burns, Kate Graham and Joy Keith of Triangle Consulting

⁸ Hart, R. (1992), Children’s Participation from Tokenism to Citizenship. Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre

4.10 The remainder of this chapter presents analysis of research findings concerning the active involvement of young people drawing on examples from specific projects. Full case study write ups for each project are available in appendices A to D.

Rationale for involvement

4.11 The right of children and young people to be involved in decision making is enshrined in Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). Recent years have seen a considerable push to increase participation and promote active citizenship in all spheres of public life. The active involvement of children and young people is now a central feature of policy and practice across the UK and it is increasingly expected that service providers will ensure the involvement of children and young people⁹.

4.12 The active involvement of children and young people can be defined as “the process by which children and young people influence decision making which brings about change in them, others, their services and their communities¹⁰.”

4.13 There are a number of reasons to promote the active involvement of children and young people. These include¹¹:

- upholding children's rights
- fulfilling legal responsibilities
- improving services
- improving decision making
- enhancing democratic processes
- promoting children's protection
- enhancing children's skills
- empowering and enhancing self-esteem.

4.14 Ultimately, there is considerable evidence that the active involvement of children and young people will **engender change**¹². This should lead to benefits for:

⁹ Tisdall, K., (2008) “Children, Young People and Participation” presentation available online at <http://www.iriss.ac.uk/files/iriss-cccs-1-1-kay-tisdall-2008-09-24.ppt>

¹⁰ Here by right; standards for the active involvement of children and young people, The National Youth Agency available online at http://hbr.nya.org.uk/pages/contexts_participation

¹¹ Sinclair, R. and Franklin, A., (2000) “Young People's Participation”, Quality Protects Research Briefing, available online at <http://www.rip.org.uk/publications/documents/QPB/QPB3.PDF>

¹² Every Child Matters, Change for Children available online at <http://everychildmatters.gov.uk/participation/faq>

- **young people themselves**; who are given a voice, receive better services and can gain new skills
- **for organisations**; which should benefit from better targeted services, cost savings, new ideas and satisfied young people
- **the community**; which benefits from active citizenship, fresh ideas and enthusiasm.

Is involvement important to young people?

4.15 The vast majority of young people participating in the research consider involvement to be **important and valuable**. This was true of young people involved in the focus group research and of those interviewed individually.

4.16 Young people **value the opportunities** for involvement that they have been given and **feel empowered to make their views heard and to steer activities** in the direction that they want. Comments from young people included:

“It means a lot when someone asks you to be involved...it (involvement) really gets your creative side going”
“it makes you realise that young people are on the same level as adults”
“it means a lot to know that you're trusted and that project workers have the confidence in us to give us that responsibility”
“I couldn't believe someone had given me that chance”

4.17 Young people believe that **active involvement can improve services and ensure that projects are more likely to meet their needs**. Typical comments include:

“adults don't know everything, how can they know what young people are thinking”
“(those needs) have come straight from the horse's mouth”
“if we didn't get to choose (activities) we would get bored and not turn up”
“because we are involved we are confident enough to say what we need”

4.18 A number of participants commented on the **opportunities that active involvement brings for young people to develop and grow**. Through active involvement young people can develop skills, increase their self confidence and develop a mature and professional outlook. One young person involved with Get Ready for Geneva said that “it (involvement) alters the mindset and really makes you appreciate the work that people are putting into things...you are a better person really”.

4.19 Project workers also commented on the way in which young people develop and grow as a result of opportunities to be actively involved. Many provided anecdotal evidence of the change that they have witnessed in individual

young people. This is summed up by one project worker who said “it is like planting a seed and watching it grow”.

4.20 Another common theme that young people discussed is the importance of **‘peer support’**. Young people feel that their active involvement can set a good example for others, facilitate knowledge sharing, inspire others to become involved in activities and raise the aspirations of young people who witness ‘involvement’ in action. For example, actively involved young people in the Express Yourself project felt that because they had previously been project beneficiaries, they acted as a concrete example to young people and helped them believe that they could go on and become actively involved as peer educators. They feel that they are giving something back and bringing benefits to other young people. This is backed up by young people from the St Josephs Learning Partnership who said that “it is rewarding to see the progress of others”.

4.21 Young people from a number of projects also highlighted the importance of active involvement to aid the **inclusion of young people in society**. Some feel that they are viewed as anti-social by virtue of their age and that through active and meaningful participation young people can **make a valuable contribution**. One young person involved in YANE said “I feel like a member of society and part of the community”.

How are young people involved?

4.22 Findings from the telephone surveys in each of the countries show that the vast majority of projects across the UK involve young people in some way in the design, delivery, management and evaluation of project activity. As Table 4.2 shows, **“reviewing activity through informal feedback”** is the most common method of involving young people. This is used by 94 per cent of projects. Project workers feel this is a good way to involve young people as it is **very easily achieved, is not over onerous on young people, and can help to build a good rapport** between staff and young people.

4.23 Eighty eight per cent of the projects surveyed use **“structured feedback”** as a means of actively involving young people. Structured feedback most frequently takes the form of a survey questionnaire. This is a popular method as the surveys are **simple and quick for young people to complete but provide a sound evidence base to inform the development of the project**.

4.24 A large number of projects give young people the opportunity to be involved at a higher level; for example in the **delivery of activity or on a youth forum or steering group**. Comments from project workers indicate that this kind of involvement can successfully **increase the engagement of young people in the project as they have a sense of ownership and responsibility**. This form of active participation will generally involve a limited number of young people in a more intensive way.

Table 4.2 – Means of involvement across the UK

Means of involvement	Percentage
Review through informal feedback	94%
Review through structured feedback	88%
Design activity	87%
Engage other young people	83%
Youth forum/ steering group	72%
Deliver activity	67%
Manage certain projects	56%
Recruitment of staff	43%
YP rep on management committee	40%
None of these	2%

Source: Wavehill Survey of YPF Projects 2009 – 288 responses

NOTE: percentages do not equal 100 due to multiple responses

4.25 The evaluation found evidence of how young people became involved in the marketing of YPF in an unplanned way. Some countries reported that applications to the programme were slow to come in initially, which was a particular problem in Scotland where hundreds of young people had been recruited to the 32 Local Area Panels to review applications and make recommendations on whether they should receive funding. When the young people found that there were very few applications coming in initially, many felt frustrated and began to market YPF to local projects themselves. This not only highlights the need to ensure an extensive marketing campaign, but also shows BIG how young people can be involved in that campaign.

4.26 Young people in the focus group research were actively involved in project activity in a variety of different ways. Types of involvement include:

- membership of a youth committee or steering group
- representing young people on a management committee
- delivery of peer education
- campaigning on issues of importance to young people.

4.27 Analysis of research findings shows that it is possible to group styles of involvement into two broad categories:

- group one can be referred to as ‘**operational involvement**’
- group two can be referred to as ‘**strategic involvement**’.

4.28 While there is a degree of crossover between the projects, it is useful to frame the analysis in this way. Characteristics of each type of involvement are described below.

- **Operational involvement:** Young people in these projects are most heavily involved in the **day to day delivery and management** of project activity. These projects tend to have an 'internal' focus in that, while the wider community may benefit as a result of project activity, the **primary beneficiaries are the young participants**. In these projects young people meet regularly and may take an active role in:
 - developing and drafting training resources
 - gauging the opinion of project participants
 - planning 'everyday' project activities
 - delivering 'everyday' project activities
 - taking minutes in committee meetings
 - other roles and responsibilities related to the 'day to day' operation of the project.
- **Strategic involvement:** In these projects young people tend to take a **high level view of the direction and activity** of the projects, while **project workers deal with daily aspects** of development and delivery. Although there are exceptions to the rule, these young people are likely to meet less frequently than those involved in projects characterised by 'operational involvement'. Activities that characterise this type of involvement include:
 - setting the strategic direction of the project
 - identifying issues
 - identifying activities
 - identifying who, how and why to approach people.

4.29 These observations are backed up by the views of young people. For example:

- Projects characterised by **operational involvement**:
 - The youth committee of the **Y.A.X.** project meets on a regular basis to discuss current and future project activity, they identify and cost future opportunities, plan and deliver the club newsletter and address any difficulties that are arising in relation to ongoing activities, such as lack of attendance.
 - Young people who attend the **Pembrokeshire Activity Centre** meet every two weeks to discuss and plan the activities they want to take part in.
 - Young people involved with **Inspire** recently completed a questionnaire to identify and implement 'boredom busting activities' They also have the opportunity to voice their views, concerns, likes and dislikes through their new youth club.

- Young people who attend **Express Yourself** are given the opportunity to volunteer and become peer-educators. When they are confident and capable the girls plan, deliver and evaluate their own activity. They believe that having been participants themselves, they are well-placed to know what works and what the young people may enjoy doing.
- Projects characterised by **strategic involvement**:
 - Young people involved in Get Ready for Geneva said that “**We make the long term decisions about what we want to achieve and then CRAE will try their hardest to work on a day to day basis to achieve that**”. This shows that young people are primarily involved in setting the strategic direction for the project; by defining the focus of campaign activity and articulating their messages at a high level (including the UN), as opposed to the day to day management.
 - Young people involved in the **Eye Matter – Campaign for Equality** are involved in campaign activity by identifying the issues to be addressed, who they should approach and how they should frame the issues. Project workers take care of daily aspects of running the project such as event organisation, finance and funding.
 - Young people involved in **YANE** decide at the beginning of the year what three issues they want to address. They then form campaign teams, which comprise only young people. These teams report to a young person's steering group which has a strategic overview of the campaign work being undertaken across the region. Project staff are available to provide operational support where this is needed but the campaigns belong to the young people.

4.30 It is important to remember that these **categories are not mutually exclusive**. While some projects are characterised primarily by 'operational involvement and others by 'strategic involvement', there are elements of both types present in many of the projects.

4.31 For example, within Feile an Phobail, the youth sub committee is responsible for identifying and planning youth arts events and activities. These young people are supported by the youth arts coordinator and they meet on a regular basis to plan their activities and take part in social events. They are essentially involved in a operational manner. However, the management committee of Feile an Phobail currently includes two young people under the age of 25; one of whom has been involved with the organisation for over 10 years. Joining the management committee gives them the opportunity to gain valuable experience, develop their skills and have a role in the strategic development of a high profile organisation. Young people involved in the management committee are experienced, articulate and highly motivated. These young people are involved in a more strategic way.

Motivations for involvement

4.32 Young people highlighted a number of motivations for being 'actively involved' in all stages of project activity. It is again possible to draw a distinction between the two types of involvement identified previously; 'operational involvement' and 'strategic involvement'.

4.33 Two themes emerged:

- In those projects with '**operational involvement**', a considerable proportion of 'involved' young people had **grown up as part of the project**. For many of these young people active involvement in the delivery and management of the project is a **natural progression** and results from a desire to **give something back** to the project and to help their peers to benefit in the same way that they have. These tend to include peer education and recreational youth activities, such as those provided by the Ballybeen Peer Education Project, Y.A.X, Feile an Phobail and Express Yourself and the St Joseph's Learning Partnership.
- In those projects characterised by '**strategic involvement**', young people often come together as a result of a **specific issue** that unites them. Many of the young people are **looking to engender changes outside of the project** and their interest in particular issues is a key motivating factor. For example young people involved in the Eye Matter Campaign for Equality are campaigning for changes that will make a positive difference to the lives of visually impaired young people across Northern Ireland not just those who are members of the group. In many cases these young people did not separate their motivations for participation in project activity from their motivations for active involvement, suggesting that involvement is 'intrinsic' in the way these projects operate. These types of projects also include Get Ready for Geneva, the Anti Tobacco Youth Campaign and YANE.

4.34 While it is possible to separate projects into these two broad groups, the distinctions are not always that simple. For example, the Eye Matter Campaign for Equality gives young people the opportunity to gain qualifications and enhance their skills. Some of the young people who are actively involved in the campaigning aspect of the project are also involved in the delivery of this activity; acting as 'sessional workers' and supervising residential trips. These young people expressed the same desire to 'give something back' as those from projects characterised by 'operational involvement'.

4.35 Young people in all projects, regardless of the type of activities they are involved in, said that they were motivated to become involved as they thought it would be **fun; they could meet new people; learn new things and develop new skills**. In many cases young people also hoped to gain skills that would enhance their CV and help them in their future career.

4.36 These findings were backed up by anecdotal evidence provided by project workers.

Level of involvement

4.37 A typology based on the theory set out in Hart’s ‘Ladder of Youth Participation’ was used to identify the nature and extent of young people’s involvement¹³. The measurement scale is presented in Chapter 3. The ladder shows that participation can take various forms and that young people can be involved to varying degrees depending on a range of factors. It is used to help researchers gauge the nature and extent of involvement and make suggestions as to how it may be improved¹⁴. It is important to remember that the top rung of the ladder is not necessarily the ideal situation. Projects should be viewed on a case by case basis when considering the nature of involvement, as young people with differing issues will require different types and levels of support.

4.38 The telephone survey asked project workers to rate the level of youth participation within their project against the Hart’s Ladder framework.

4.39 Table 4.3 shows the level of participation reported by projects across the UK. It shows that the greatest percentage of projects rated themselves on rung six of the ladder of participation, where project workers have the initial idea but participants are involved in every step of the planning and implementation of activity.

Table 4.3 – Level of participation in relation to Hart’s Ladder – UK findings

Hart’s Ladder of Participation	UK
Rung 8	6%
Rung 7	23%
Rung 6	41%
Rung 5	28%
Rung 4	2%
Rung 3	0%
Rung 2	0%
Rung 1	0%
No. respondents	289

Source: Wavehill survey of YPF projects – 289 responses

¹³ Hart, R. (1992), Children’s Participation from Tokenism to Citizenship. Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre

¹⁴ Hear by Right; standards for the active involvement of children and young people, The National Youth Agency available online at http://hbr.nya.org.uk/pages/contexts_participation

4.40 The research team asked young people involved in the focus group research to rate their level of involvement against Hart’s Ladder of Participation. Table 4.4 illustrates the views of young people in comparison to those of the project workers.

4.41 All of the projects involved in the focus group research consider themselves to be on rungs six to eight of the Ladder of Participation. In the majority of cases, **the views of young people map fairly closely with that of project workers**. Where there is a difference, young people tend to rank their level of involvement higher than do project workers. This suggests that young people **value the opportunities for involvement that they have been given and do not feel that their involvement is a ‘tokenistic’ gesture on the part of the projects**.

Table 4.4 – Level of participation in relation to Hart Ladder

Project	Project worker perception	Young people’s perception
England		
Project 1	Rung 8/7	Rung 8/7
Project 2	Rung 7/6	Rung 7
Project 3	Rung 6	Rung 7
Project 4	Rung 7	Unknown
Scotland		
Project 5	Rung 7	Rung 7
Project 6	Rung 7	Rung 7
Project 7	Unknown	Unknown
Northern Ireland		
Project 8	Rung 8	Rung 8
Project 9	Rung 6	Rung 7
Project 10	Rung 6	Rung 7
Project 11	Rung 7	Rung 7
Wales		
Project 12	Rung 7/6	Unknown
Project 13	Rung 6/5	Rung 6

Source: GEN/ Wavehill focus groups with YPF Projects 2009

NOTE: Project examples are highlighted where the view of young people matches that of project workers

NOTE: This data was not gathered from young people in three projects and from staff in one project

4.42 **All of the young people involved in the focus group research indicated that they are happy with the level of influence they have in their project** and they are satisfied that there are sufficient opportunities for them to be involved and to voice their opinions. Young people said:

“We choose what we want to do (who we interview, website design etc) and project workers help us to achieve if we don't know how...at the end of the day it is us actually making the decisions”

When asked if they could be more involved one group of young people said “No we are ok the way we do things – they ask us what we want to do and also if we like something we can do it again”

“We are given freedom to design and run our own activity, however if we need any help the project staff are always there to give us advice”

4.43 It is possible that the use of ‘Harts Ladder of Participation’, in the context of individual interviews and focus groups, could be open to a degree of ‘optimism bias’; with young people and project workers reporting greater levels of involvement than is the case in reality.

4.44 It is also apparent, that while young people **value the opportunities** for involvement that they have been given, this is **not something that they have actively sought**. Although the level of involvement differed significantly between projects, young people generally struggled to identify ways in which their involvement could be increased. There are three possible explanations here:

- It may be that the young people **are satisfied with the provision and with their role and do not need or want greater levels of involvement**. This is reinforced by the large number of young people who said they were satisfied with their current level of involvement. This could mean that young people feel highly involved and are satisfied or, alternatively, that there is low level involvement and that young people do not want to have greater involvement. This was highlighted by some project workers who indicated that some young people are happy to be involved primarily as beneficiaries.
- It may be that **‘you can't miss what you never had’**; young people and project workers may not be fully aware of how young people could be more actively involved in the development, delivery, management and evaluation of project activity. While young people are satisfied with their current level of involvement, it is unclear what they are benchmarking this against. As the profile of the participation and citizenship agenda continues to rise in all spheres of public life, it is possible that the expectations of young people, with regards to their involvement, will increase and they may begin to push for greater involvement in the services that affect them.
- Finally, it **may not be practical, appropriate or possible** to involve young people in all aspects of project activity. This issue was highlighted in the country chapters in relation to projects such as the Altnagelvin Teenage Pregnancy Support project in Northern Ireland and the Bridge Centre Motorcycle Project in Scotland in which young people are being supported to deal with multiple and complex issues.

4.45 The limitations of young people's involvement was also highlighted by young people from Get Ready For Geneva in the example below:

England – Get Ready for Geneva (CRAE)

“the project workers do make decisions that we aren't allowed to make (legal and financial decisions) and they also make day to day decisions. We aren't employed, we have school work and can't make every decision, but we make all the strategic decisions about what we want to achieve and how we want to achieve it. If there is any decision we aren't happy with they will definitely change it”

4.46 At this point it should be noted that the young people interviewed as part of the focus groups are those who are already actively involved and are therefore more likely to be aware of and satisfied with the opportunities available to them. However, none of the young people interviewed as part of the wider research about their participation in project activity highlighted any real concern regarding their level of active involvement.

The impact of involvement

4.47 This analysis has shown that it is possible to split projects into two broad groups depending on the nature of involvement: those characterised by operational involvement; and those characterised by strategic involvement.

4.48 In terms of the impacts and benefits accruing to young people as a result of their active involvement, the focus group research highlighted **more similarities than differences between the two groups**. There does not appear to be a particular type of involvement that brings about greater benefits than the other. In other words, it is the **process of involvement that is more significant in achieving impacts rather than the specific activities taken part in or the aims and outcomes of the project itself**.

4.49 The most significant benefits highlighted by young people include:

- increased confidence
- developing new skills including: team working, presentation, communication, IT, leadership, decision making and public speaking
- meeting new people and making new friends
- increased knowledge and awareness
- valuable addition to CV and increased focus on career options
- enjoyment
- making your voice heard.

4.50 Comments from young people include:

“I didn't think I had a voice and I didn't think there was any point in fighting for anything, but the project changed that”

“(We) can express ourselves in this group and don’t have to watch what you say like you would at school”

“The training helps you in your own life as well...it helps at school, with presentations, training days etc”

“We are learning all the skills we need to work in proper jobs”

“(The project is) great for your CV. Some people are gob smacked that you are working on this type of thing and I think that is just really amazing when you talk about all these things with people, to 40 year olds, and they just think that you have already done this and you are 15”

“To be able to say I am 15 and been to the United Nations...is an amazing thing. Not many people can say that they have done that”

4.51 The impacts and benefits found in the focus group research are similar to those highlighted by project workers through the telephone survey and case study visits. This is highlighted in Table 4.5 which presents survey findings from across the UK. The table shows that “increased confidence” is by far the most significant benefit reported by project workers. This is followed by “improved relationships”. This is reflected in the responses of young people by comments about meeting new people and making new friends.

4.52 “Increased achievement and learning” and the “development of new skills” are also frequently cited benefits of active involvement across the UK. This reinforces the comments made by young people relating to skills development and an enhanced CV.

Table 4.5 – Impact of involvement across the UK

Impact	Percentage of respondents
Increased confidence	73%
Improved relationships	47%
Increased achievement and learning	46%
New transferable skills	45%
Increased engagement	44%
Young people feel valued	41%
Improved communication skills	39%
Increased motivation	38%
Greater social awareness	35%
Improved mental well being	28%
Other	21%
Improved physical well being	16%

Source - Wavehill Survey of YPF Projects 2009 – 288 responses

4.53 The research shows that, while the impacts and benefits of active involvement are similar in nature to the benefits of participation in project activity, there is a greater emphasis on employability skills, developing a CV, career options and increased aspirations among those young people who are actively involved.

4.54 At this stage it is very difficult to make an assessment of the sustainability of these outcomes. However, it is **likely that activity that develops their skills, enhances their CVs, and helps to focus their mind on their future career options will result in considerable long term benefits** for young people.

4.55 This is illustrated in relation to Express Yourself, Feile an Phobail, the St Joseph’s Learning Partnership and Street League Scotland in the case study examples below.

4.56 The long term sustainability of outcomes will also be a focus of the research towards the end of the five year evaluation.

Scotland – Express Yourself

The impact of active involvement on employability was articulated strongly by teenage girls in the Express Yourself project. One of the activity strands actively involves young teenage girls as peer educators. The girls feel that through the project they are learning transferable skills that they can use in their working lives or in further education. They learn timekeeping skills (because their outreach work can be in different locations at various times) and they develop communication skills through engaging with numerous groups of young people and liaising with project staff about their activities and performance. The impact

of their involvement is tangible; one girl was inspired to enrol on a university degree course because of her work on the project, whilst all the girls have added it to their CVs.

Northern Ireland – Féile an Phobail

Researchers spoke with one girl who is now part of the management committee of Féile an Phobail. She originally became involved in the organisation to be a part of the radio station. She presented as part of the news team from age 13 to 16. At 16 she became an 'editor' and decided that she would also like to pursue a career in broadcasting. She is now a 'video editor'. She said that her involvement in the project has had a major impact on her confidence, her knowledge and skills and on her future career path. She feels the experience that she gained from her active involvement was invaluable and that she could not have gained the same level of exposure anywhere else.

Scotland – St Joseph's Learning Partnership

At the St Joseph's Learning Partnership young people said that as a direct result of being involved in decision making and peer support they had changed their mind with regards their original career aspirations. Some said that they are now hoping to pursue a career in social work or primary education. In addition, one of the young people has already received an offer of employment at Leisure Development Services at East Ayrshire Council.

Scotland – Street League Scotland

Street League is a structured programme of sport and education that aims to build confidence, improve health and develop skills that will help disadvantaged young people and adults towards long term sustainable education, employment and independence.

One young man from Street League Scotland spoke about the way his active involvement in the organisation has brought about a huge and lasting change in his life. When he first became involved in the organisation he was 23 and was not working. He originally became involved to take part in the football match days run in Glasgow. He suggested that instead of one off match days, the organisation should start a football league for the teams to compete in; an idea that has been successfully integrated into the structure of the organisation. This young man has since completed the Community Sports Leader Award (CSLA) and is now employed by Street League as an apprentice coach. In this role he has supervised groups of participants on residential trips abroad and he is about to lead a group of 16-19 year olds through a 16 week training programme, after which the organisation will take on another apprentice. As a result of long term active involvement in the project he feels that he has developed and enhanced his knowledge, social and interpersonal skills and been given the opportunity to "broaden his horizons". He commented that Street League empowers young people by encouraging meaningful involvement, respecting their opinions and

letting them have their say. In short involvement in Street League can “give people faith, many of whom have been put down all their lives”

NOTE. Street League was a case study project in year two of the evaluation. A full case study write up of the visit is available in the year two evaluation report.

Promoting involvement

4.57 There are a number of difficulties and barriers that could impact on the ability of projects to achieve and maintain the active involvement of children and young people. It is useful to think of these in two ways: **tangible barriers and intangible barriers**. **Tangible** barriers may include such things as:

- **lack of transport** to take young people to and from the project
- **lack of childcare** (for young parents)
- **costs** associated with accessing project activity
- **lack of capacity** among young people to take on greater levels of involvement
- **cultural barriers** (especially the engagement of Asian girls).

4.58 **Intangible** barriers may include:

- **lack of confidence** among young people to take on greater levels of involvement
- **lack of awareness** among project workers and young people around the ways in which they could be involved
- the **transient nature** of young people.

4.59 While a number of these issues were highlighted by project workers **young people themselves found it difficult to identify any major barriers** to the active involvement. The difficulties that were highlighted tended to focus on ‘intangible barriers’, such as the **maturity and mind set** of those involved and a **lack of confidence**:

- Young people recognised that there could be **difficulties involving “immature” young people**, those who want to “come along for a laugh” and who aren’t committed to developing the project.
- Young people in three of the projects mentioned **lack of confidence as a potential barrier to active involvement**. Young people involved in Fusion radio said that some people develop confidence more quickly than others. This could mean that some young people are not able to take advantage of opportunities for involvement to the same extent as others. Young people also commented that confident young people are the ones who are more likely to want to become involved initially.

4.60 There are a number of **practical measures** that can be taken to promote the active involvement of children and young people. These were highlighted by

project workers during case study visits and young people touched upon some of these issues in focus groups. Although young people did not explicitly refer to these measures as ways of promoting active involvement it is apparent that they have played a role in achieving, increasing and maintaining involvement within these projects.

- Young people involved in the Eye Matter – Campaign for Equality, mentioned the **role that training has played in increasing their confidence**. This project recognised that some of the young people lacked confidence in their ability to be actively involved. As a result they now offer OCN Level 2 'Preparation for Participation' training. This allows young people to become involved gradually, in the manner and at a speed that suits them.
- The active involvement of young people can be promoted by **increasing accessibility**, for example:
 - all the projects involved in the research are **free** to young participants
 - a number of projects provide transport (including taxis) to take young people to and from the project.
- **Incentives and rewards** can also help to sustain engagement in project activity and overcome some of the 'intangible' barriers to involvement for example, following meetings of the Feile an Phobail youth sub-committee young people tend to have a trip to the cinema or bowling.

Summary and conclusions

Is involvement important to young people?

4.61 Young people **recognise and agree with many aspects of the rationale** behind the increasing drive for the active involvement of children and young people in public life.

4.62 **Young people and project workers believe that both they and the projects they are a part of can benefit from young people's involvement.** Through active involvement, young people develop confidence and transferable skills and projects are better able to deliver services that meet their needs. This should in turn lead to increased engagement among young people.

How are young people involved?

4.63 Active **involvement can take a variety of different forms**, including peer support, youth committees and steering groups, and developing the strategic focus of project activity.

4.64 The survey of projects showed the frequency of each of these and the focus group research helped to identify two broad types of involvement:

- There are those projects where young people are mostly involved at an **operational** level; taking on the day to day tasks associated with the management of project activity.
- There are those projects where young people are more involved at a **strategic** level while project staff take on the daily delivery and management.

4.65 The characteristics of both types of involvement are outlined in Table 4.6. **There is no evidence to suggest that one form of involvement is more valuable to young people than the other.**

Table 4.6 – Characteristics of 'operational' and 'strategic involvement'

Type of involvement	Activity	Motivations	Impacts
Operational Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ developing and drafting resources ○ gauging the opinion of project participants ○ planning 'everyday' project activity ○ delivering 'everyday' project activity ○ taking minutes in committee meetings ○ other roles and responsibilities related to the 'day to day/ operation of the project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ grown up as part of the project ○ natural progression ○ give something back (to the project and to other young people) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ increased confidence ○ develop new skills ○ meet new people ○ increased knowledge and awareness ○ addition to CV and increased focus on career options ○ enjoyment ○ making your voice heard
Strategic Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ set strategic direction ○ identify issues ○ identify activities ○ identify, who, how and why to approach/ influence people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ specific issues of interest ○ engender change outside of the project in the wider community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ increased confidence ○ develop new skills ○ meet new people ○ increased knowledge and awareness ○ addition to CV and increased focus on career options ○ enjoyment ○ making your voice heard

Motivations for involvement

4.66 Motivations for 'active involvement' are varied and often differ depending on the nature of project activity, how, why and how long young people have been engaged in the project. Key findings include:

- young people want to be involved for their own benefit and also that of other young people
- young people often become more involved over time
- regardless of the type of participation, young people see their active involvement as a way to have fun, socialise and develop their skills.

Level of involvement

4.67 Whilst it is not possible to reach definitive conclusions regarding the extent of involvement across the Young People's Fund on the basis of a small sample of diverse projects, we can say that based on this evidence:

- young people are satisfied with their current level of involvement
- the perception of young people with regard to the extent of their involvement maps closely with that of project workers
- young people do not feel that their involvement is tokenistic.

The impact of involvement

4.68 **Project beneficiaries involved in both an 'operational and strategic' manner report largely similar benefits.** These are focused around increased confidence, the development of skills, a focus on future careers goals and aspirations and the opportunity to make their voices heard. It is likely that a number of these benefits will be sustained in the medium and longer term.

4.69 Overall, focus group research suggests that the **process of involvement is more important than the specifics of the activity in relation the benefits and impacts** accruing to young people.

Promoting involvement

4.70 **Young people have not experienced any major barriers in achieving and maintaining active involvement.** However, interviews with project workers and our previous experience shows that there are a number of potential barriers and difficulties; both tangible and intangible.

4.71 Practical measures to overcome such difficulties include, supporting young people to be actively involved through provision of training and activities which address issues around confidence and help to build the capacity of young people.

4.72 Projects can also introduce measures to reduce tangible barriers and increase the accessibility of involvement activity, such as provision of transport and meeting any costs incurred by young people.

5 YOUNG PEOPLE'S FUND IN ENGLAND

Introduction

5.1 The Young People's Fund (YPF) in England had a total grant allocation of £77.6 million to help increase opportunities for young people and make a lasting difference to communities. This was to be achieved by funding projects run by and for young people aged 11 to 18 and up to age 25 for those who find the transition to adult life difficult.

5.2 The programme in England was split into three strands. The **National Grants** and **Grants to Organisations** strands were administered directly by the Big Lottery Fund (BIG), and grants were awarded directly to young people through **The Big Boost**. This strand was administered by an Award Partner led by UnLtd.

5.3 The aims and outcomes of the YPF in England are:

- To engage and involve young people in all stages of the projects (including design, development, implementation and evaluation)
- To achieve the following Every Child Matters (ECM) outcomes¹⁵:
 - being healthy: enjoying good physical and mental health and living a healthy lifestyle
 - staying safe: being protected from harm, neglect and growing up able to look after themselves
 - enjoying and achieving: getting the most out of life and developing the skills for adulthood
 - making a positive contribution: to the community, and to society and not engaging in anti-social or offending behaviour
 - economic wellbeing: overcoming socio-economic disadvantages to achieve their full potential in life.

5.4 The programme placed priority on working with those young people who face difficulties or are at a disadvantage when it comes to getting involved in activities. Projects are expected to:

- help disadvantaged young people to come together with other young people to enjoy and benefit from activities and/or
- create a better understanding of disadvantage among young people.

¹⁵ Every Child Matters: Change for Children (2005), *HM Government*

5.5 In May 2005 BIG allocated additional funding through YPF2 to empower more young people. BIG made £68 million available for local and national projects to put young people at the heart of planning and running projects that will benefit them. It allocated money across the two programmes by quality and demand. The committee was able to spend up to £38 million for either National or Local Grants programmes. An additional £5 million is being used to provide support and development activities to help organisations involve young people more in their projects. The YPF2 programme is not included in this evaluation, however in future years we will consider any important learning from the programme.

Fit with English policy context

5.6 Every Child Matters (2003), underpinned by the Children's Act 2004 continues to be central to the government's approach to the wellbeing of children and young people. The ECM green paper identified YPF as one of the initiatives that will contribute towards building strong and vibrant communities, and the YPF programme has the five ECM aims at its core.

5.7 The ECM agenda was further developed through publication of the Children's Plan in December 2007. This ten-year strategy aims to make England "the best place in the world for children and young people to grow up". It focuses on the fact that young people spend four fifths of their lives outside of school and places significant importance on family support and encouragement, and taking part in positive activities outside of the school day.

5.8 The Children's Plan aims to contribute to the achievement of the five ECM outcomes by:

- improving educational outcomes for children
- improving children's health
- reducing offending rates among young people
- eradicating child poverty by 2020.

5.9 Aiming High for Young People: A ten year strategy for positive activities, published in July 2007, set out the Government's plans to help all young people, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, to take part in enjoyable and purposeful activities in their free time. The plan focuses on:

- fostering a more positive approach to young people across society and in particular within communities;
- Increasing the participation of young people in high quality positive activities, which build resilience and social and emotional skills
- empowering young people to have greater influence over services for them, with parents and communities playing their part.

5.10 Delivery of this strategy, as well as the wider programme of reforms to services and support for young people, will require the ongoing commitment of

Local Authorities and of the full range of local partners, including the third and private sectors, parents and young people themselves.

5.11 This makes it increasingly important for YPF projects to be working closely with local partners, ensuring that they are part of the local infrastructure to maximise outcomes and avoid duplication. This was a view expressed in the stakeholder interviews, where one stakeholder commented that there needs to be better links between voluntary sector projects, such as those funded by YPF and the statutory sector to ensure the provision is more joined up and the skill set of each sector is maximised.

5.12 Another stakeholder pointed out that it is important that services are joined up so that when young people leave a project or the project ends because funding has run out, the young people do not fall out of the system. Progression routes are important for maximising the sustainability of outcomes.

5.13 The overarching aim of YPF is to involve young people in all aspects of the projects, which clearly supports the focus of Aiming High to “empower young people to have greater influence over services for them”. Both stakeholders who were interviewed as part of the evaluation agreed that the active involvement of young people will continue to be a policy priority for the foreseeable future and that YPF has made a significant contribution to this agenda by raising awareness of its benefits and encouraging projects to actively involve young people.

5.14 One challenge is that the short term funding of such projects may mean that changes in practice will not be sustained beyond the funding period. It is therefore vital that YPF engenders a culture change within funded projects, rather than encouraging them to actively involve young people purely to meet funding requirements. It will therefore be important to measure the sustainability of these changes in practice in later years of the evaluation.

Method

5.15 The third year of the evaluation has involved:

- Interviews with the YPF country and policy leads and grants officers to gather their views on the operation of the programme and to get their recommendations for case study projects to visit.
- Interviews with the Big Boost Award Partner to explore the operation of the programme, its impacts and lessons learned.
- Interviews with 6 young people who were Big Boost grant recipients or panel members to explore reasons for and impact of involvement.
- Telephone survey of nine National Grants and 120 Grants to Organisations projects to gather quantitative data on the activity and impacts of projects.
- Case study visits with 10 Grants to Organisations projects, involving interviews with project staff, and where possible observation of project activity, individual interviews and focus groups with young participants

(including those who are actively involved) to gather qualitative data on activity and impacts of projects. Full case study write ups are included in Appendix A.

The Big Boost

5.16 The Big Boost was a £10 million programme of grants to individuals delivered by an Award Partner between November 2005 and November 2007. The award partner agencies were:

- **UnLtd – Lead Partner;** Foundation for Social Entrepreneurs
- **Changemakers;** educational charity to help young people play an active role in changing society for the better
- **The Scarman Trust;** National charity that helps young people bring about change in their community
- **The Prince's Trust;** helping young people to overcome barriers, get back on track, realise their potential and transform their lives.

5.17 The project activities that were funded cut across three of the five Every Child Matters outcomes, namely being healthy; being safe; and enjoying and achieving. Awards of between £250 and £1,000 were made to young people aged 11 to 16 and those aged 16 to 25 could apply for between £500 and £5,000. A total of 3356 awards were made during the lifetime of the programme.

Operation of the Big Boost programme

5.18 UnLtd and its founding members, The Scarman Trust and Change Makers, formed a partnership with The Prince's Trust to deliver the Big Boost Programme. UnLtd led the work with young people aged 17 to 25, while The Princes Trust focussed on young people aged 11 to 16, particularly those who face disadvantage.

5.19 UnLtd felt that the internal partnership worked well, however the decision to split resources evenly between the partners was one that caused them some issues. In hindsight more resource was required to recruit and support harder to reach groups, therefore a more sophisticated split of resources should be considered in future.

5.20 The award partner had a link person within BIG and felt that this individual played a key role in ensuring that they were able to deliver the programme within the requirements of the contract. The award partner reported initial teething difficulties as their relationship with BIG was being established, but these were not significant and were overcome in the early stages of the contract.

5.21 The initial planning stage was extensive and one area where the amount of time required was underestimated. Fifty individuals were employed by the partners to deliver the programme. Initially these Award Managers carried out outreach work in schools, youth groups, young offenders institutes and in other organisations that work with young people to promote the programme and

encourage young people to apply for funding. They also did capacity building work with people working with young people, such as teachers and youth workers, to enable them to promote the programme. The concept of being able to apply for funding to run their own project was alien to most young people and it took a lot to reassure them that the opportunity was genuine and within their grasp.

5.22 Following the set up stage Award Managers moved into an assessment and supportive role for the young people. Award Managers sifted initial applications and removed those who did not fit the eligibility criteria. All other applicants received a visit or in some cases a telephone call from their Award Manager to discuss their idea. This ensured that those who do not communicate well in writing were given the opportunity to explain their idea in person. Decisions on the under 16s applications were taken by the Big Boost Programme Manager, while those for the over 16s went to a nation panel of young people. Two of these panels were established, one for the north of England and one for the south.

5.23 Young people who were awarded a grant received a minimum of three visits from their Award Manager and could get ongoing support as necessary by telephone. The first was a project shaping meeting, the second was a financial review and the third was to review the project and explore future options for the young people to pursue.

Meeting the aims and outcomes

5.24 By awarding grants to individual young people to allow them to implement their project idea the Big Boost ensured that young people were truly involved in the design, development, delivery and evaluation of the project, thereby fulfilling this programme outcome.

5.25 The main beneficiaries of Big Boost were the young people who received the award, as the funding allowed them to gain experience in running their own project. Their activities will however have benefited other young people and the wider community. For example, one project aimed to tackle the issue of knife crime by raising awareness through a concert. Another involved a five a-side football game between two rival gangs. By giving young people the opportunity to do something with their idea, Big Boost is empowering young people to make a positive contribution.

Impact

5.26 The young people receiving awards through Big Boost reported significant benefits from engaging with the programme. Those interviewed felt that the benefits they got from setting up and running their own project included:

- increased confidence
- greater awareness and understanding of local, social and young people's issues

- practical skills such as budgeting, project management, events management and organisational skills
- experience of working with the third sector
- getting involved in other projects.

5.27 The young people viewed the skills and qualities they picked up from running their own projects as something they could draw upon in job interviews, with one grant recipient stating “I would not have got the job I have now if I hadn't been involved with Big Boost”. Another used their experience to get onto an MA programme. The programme co-ordinator reported that a number of young people have gone on to set up their own business, often a social enterprise, having received a Big Boost Award.

5.28 Panel members also talked about the positive impacts resulting from their experiences with the Big Boost. All of the panel members who were interviewed benefited positively from the experience, taking with them learning from the training that they were provided with and the skills developed through team based decision making. One panel member cited “my interviewer was impressed by my involvement with the panel” and another highlighted the training aspect, and its contribution to their ability to “facilitate conversation with disadvantaged young people”, again contributing to one of the key aims of YPF in England.

5.29 Big Boost recipients have led projects that have benefited other young people and helped further the Big Boost's contribution to the overall aims of YPF in England. Grant recipients have reported a high level of youth involvement and engagement, with one project in particular stating that “getting young people involved in positive activities opens up their interests and makes them aware of the opportunities that are available to them”. The project in question funded trips and activities for young people in Bournemouth, generating a lot of positive feedback from young people and their parents.

5.30 Big Boost grant recipients created a cascade effect by involving and engaging young people in their local area. Some of these young people, having seen what was possible were inspired to apply for a grant and set up their own project.

5.31 The Big Boost projects in England have created impacts that fit with the YPF outcomes in England, most notably enjoying and achieving; and making a positive contribution. All young people who were interviewed thought that they achieved the goals they originally set themselves such as raising awareness of young people's issues and creating opportunities for young people to become engaged in something positive.

Conclusions

5.32 Overwhelmingly, the programme has given young people a valuable opportunity to design, deliver, manage and evaluate their own project, whilst making a difference in their local community or for a particular group of young people.

5.33 The projects run by the beneficiaries of the programme have contributed to a range of the Every Child Matters outcomes, however the key outcome for this programme has been its contribution to the overarching outcome of YPF, which is to involve young people in all stages of the projects and programme.

5.34 In doing so the programme has generated considerable benefits for the young people involved, both soft impacts such as increased confidence, and hard impacts such as practical skills; the pursuit of further volunteering activities; securing employment; or entering tertiary education.

Grants to Organisations and National Grants

Introduction

5.35 Both the Grants to Organisations and National Grants strands were administered directly by BIG and offered up to three years funding to projects who could demonstrate that they met the programme outcomes.

5.36 **Grants to Organisations** operated between February 2005 and December 2006. With an allocation of £40 million it was the largest strand of the YPF in England, awarding grants of up to £150,000 to local projects that met the programme aims. During its operation Grants to Organisations awarded:

- a total £39,948,566
- to 396 projects
- with awards ranging from £7350 to £150,000
- and averaging £100,880.

5.37 Table 5.1 shows the distribution of Grants to Organisation awards across the ECM outcomes of the programme. All projects contribute to more than one of the programme outcomes (an average of 3.5 outcomes per project). **Almost all Grants to Organisations projects are helping young people to enjoy and achieve and the vast majority are helping them make a positive contribution.**

Table 5.1 – Contribution of Grants to Organisations projects to the aims and outcomes of the YPF

Aims and outcomes	Percentage of projects
Enjoying and achieving	96%
Making a positive contribution	84%
Being healthy	70%
Economic wellbeing	54%
Staying safe	47%

Source: BIG 2009

5.38 The £27 million allocated to the **National Grants** strand was awarded to national charities to fund youth-led projects that would make a significant difference to young people in England. The programme ran from August 2005 to

November 2006 and made 27 awards of between £186,000 and £2.2 million, an average of £1 million per award.

5.39 Table 5.2 shows that **the distribution of National Grants awards across the five ECM outcomes is very similar to that of the Grants to Organisations awards**. National Grants projects identified in their applications what were primary outcomes and what were secondary outcomes of the projects. **Making a positive contribution was the most common primary outcome of National Grants projects.**

Table 5.2 – Contribution of National Grants projects to the aims and outcomes of the YPF

Aims and outcomes	Percentage as primary outcome	Percentage as secondary outcome	Percentage of projects
Enjoying and achieving	52%	41%	93%
Making a positive contribution	59%	26%	85%
Being healthy	37%	26%	63%
Economic wellbeing	30%	22%	52%
Staying safe	19%	33%	52%

Source: BIG 2009

Assessment and grant management

5.40 A small group of the BIG Grants Officers (GOs) involved in YPF were interviewed by telephone. The GOs believe that YPF has been successful in creating new and innovative projects across England. The National Grants strand has created high profile projects that are making a difference at a national level and this is complemented by the wide spread local impacts that are being generated by projects funded through Grants to Organisations.

5.41 While the projects are delivering significant impacts, Grants Officers report that the impacts are difficult to monitor against the programme outcomes because the programme outcomes are poorly written and are not SMART¹⁶. Projects are also asked to report on project outcomes, rather than programme outcomes.

5.42 Overall, the GOs believe that the programme has funded many valuable projects, however feel that the nature of the outcomes and BIG's approach to monitoring these makes it difficult to measure the impacts of the programme.

5.43 In contrast, one of the stakeholders commented that the breadth of the outcomes has allowed the projects a good level of flexibility in delivering activities that meet the broad aims of the programme. This allows project staff to use their skills and expertise to meet the needs of the young people they are working with without being constrained and having to micro-plan to meet the needs of funders.

¹⁶ Acronym of Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-framed.

5.44 There are clearly pros and cons to having broad outcomes. This evaluation has measured the contribution to the outcomes that were set and discusses progress towards these in the following section.

Meeting the aims and outcomes

Contribution to the aims and outcomes

5.45 The telephone survey involved interviews with 129 project workers in National Grants and Grants to organisations projects. The findings confirmed that projects continue to see their activities as contributing to more than one programme outcome, most commonly enjoying and achieving (99 per cent of projects) and making a positive contribution (91 per cent).

5.46 When compared to the information provided at the application stage, a higher proportion of projects noted a contribution to economic wellbeing (70 per cent) and staying safe (77 per cent). This may be because, although these were not intended outcomes projects are realising that they are a by product of working towards other outcomes.

5.47 This is illustrated by one of the case studies who identified enjoying and achieving; and making a positive contribution as the main outcomes that their project contributes to. However the young people who were interviewed during the visit also reported benefits related to staying safe and economic wellbeing, namely keeping them off the streets and out of trouble, and helping them secure places at college or university (case study example 1).

Case study example 1 – Fusion Radio

Fusion invited young people aged 13-23 to come together to develop a radio station within their township¹⁷. There were three township radio stations, with young people in two of the four townships working together on their station. In the final year young people from across the four townships came together to develop a cross borough broadcast.

A few of the young people mentioned how their involvement would look good to future employers. One young person was pursuing a career in media and had used the qualifications from his involvement in the project to help secure his place at university, while another used his experience to get into college. One young person reported that the project had kept him off the streets and out of trouble.

5.48 The survey asked respondents to identify the one outcome that most closely matches that of their project. Almost half (46 per cent) report this to be **enjoying and achieving**, while for almost a third (29 per cent) it is **making a positive contribution**. Projects focussed on enjoying and achieving, tend to be arts development projects, or youth centres or clubs. Those that focus on making

¹⁷ Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council served four localities known as townships, namely Rochdale, Pennines, Middleton and Heywood.

a positive contribution are most commonly community cohesion or volunteering projects.

Addressing disadvantage

5.49 The programme in England expected projects to address disadvantage among young people. Respondents to the telephone survey reported actively:

- engaging with disadvantaged young people (93 per cent)
- helping disadvantaged young people come together with other young people to enjoy and benefit from activities (91 per cent)
- creating a better understanding of disadvantage among young people (71 per cent).

5.50 When asked about the main groups that their project targets almost two thirds (61 per cent) reported targeting **young people living in deprived areas** and over half (56 per cent) are targeting **young people at risk of exclusion**. Other groups that are targeted by a significant proportion of projects include:

- offenders/ex-offenders/at risk of offending (38 per cent)
- BME groups (28 per cent)
- physical/sensory disability (26 per cent)
- mental health issues (24 per cent)
- living in rural areas (22 per cent)
- young carers (16 per cent)
- homeless (12 per cent).

5.51 A third of those surveyed are projects that are open to all young people, yet 93 per cent of all projects are actively engaging with disadvantaged groups. This shows that **many projects are fulfilling the programme priority of ensuring that those who are disadvantaged are coming together with other young people to benefit from activities**.

5.52 In addition, both the survey findings and case study visits found evidence that **many projects are working with more than one type of disadvantage**, which means that young people are coming together in diverse groups and are able to learn from the experiences of others. For example, case study example 2 illustrates a project working with young people living in a deprived area, some of whom are from minority ethnic groups or have a disability and who are learning about a variety of faiths.

Case study example 2 – Paddington Arts

Paddington Arts aims to a) to organise a series of youth forums / teenage chat shows (entitled Teentalk), run by and for young people on issues and topics relevant to themselves and b) to run a mentoring / training programme that enables young people to learn new skills around video / programme making and

event planning. The Teentalk series of activities has covered a range of social issues such as homelessness, pregnancy, sex and relationships, faith issues, drug and alcohol misuse, guns and gang culture.

Participants have been drawn mainly from a deprived local area and the cohort is both disadvantaged and diverse (in terms of ethnicity and with a number of participants with disabilities). Observation of the final filming event showed a large group of highly engaged and confident young people with an impressive ability to address a range of complex and sensitive issues (around different faiths) in an open and discursive way.

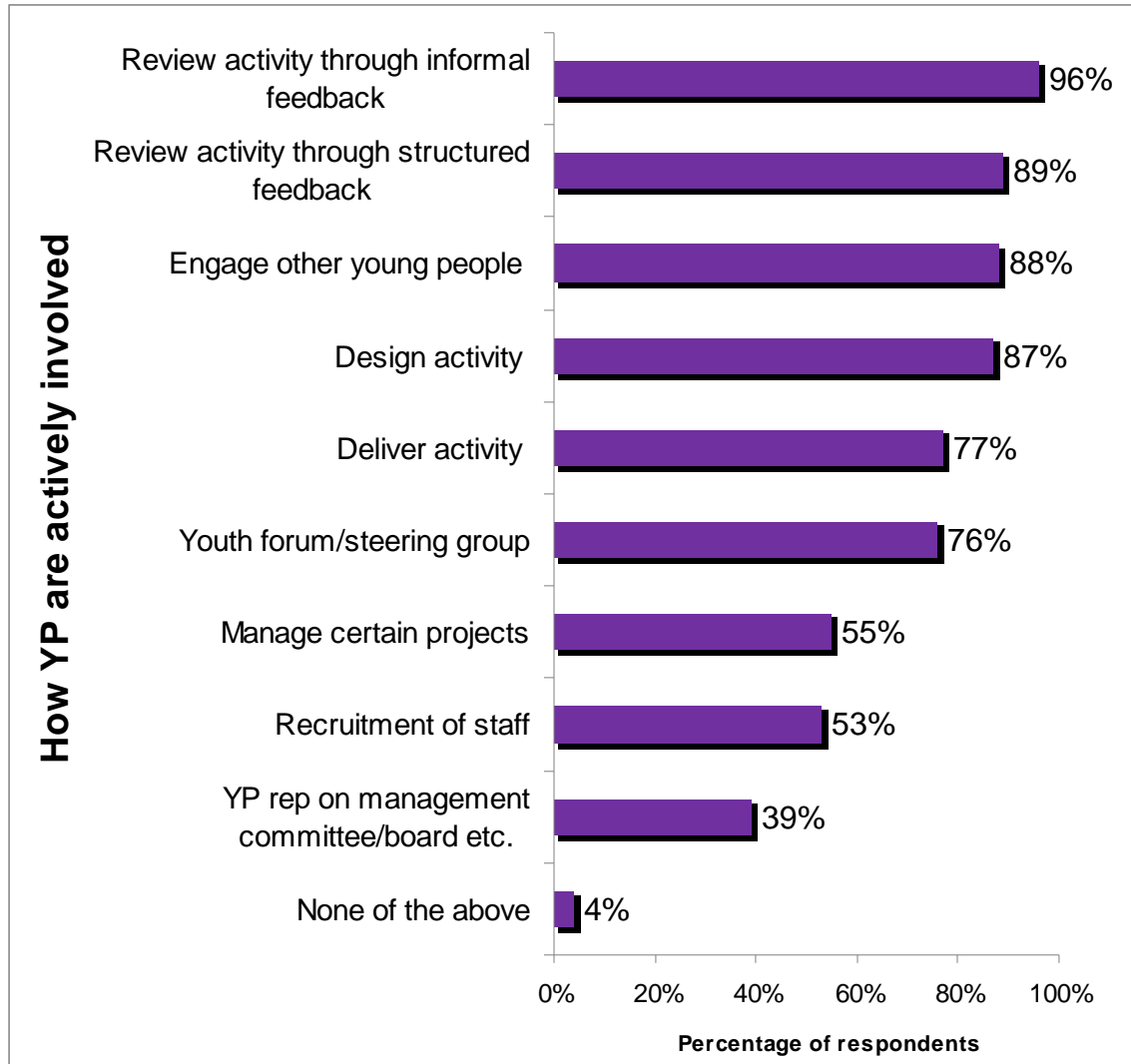
5.53 The evidence shows that the programme has clearly been successful in funding projects that are actively engaging with disadvantaged young people and in many cases bringing different groups of young people together. This in itself contributes to the programme priority around addressing disadvantage - **creating a better understanding of disadvantage among young people**. Some projects, such as Fusion Radio (case study example 1) and Paddington Arts (case study example 2) are also addressing this priority more explicitly by engaging young people in activities where they explore a range of social issues.

Involvement of young people

Are projects involving young people?

5.54 The YPF programme in England aims to engage and involve young people in all stages of the projects, including design, development, implementation and evaluation. Figure 5.1 illustrates the ways in which projects are involving young people. It shows that **almost all projects involve young people in some way, most commonly in reviewing activity through informal feedback (96 per cent of projects)**.

Figure 5.1 – How young people are actively involved with the project



Source: Wavehill Survey of YPF Projects 2009 – 129 responses

NOTE: percentages do not equal 100 due to multiple responses

5.55 Compared to year two of the evaluation more projects appear to be engaging young people in certain involvement activities, namely engaging other young people, delivering activity, and involving young people in a youth forum or steering group. This finding needs to be treated with caution. Firstly the samples are different in both years, although 60 per cent of the year three sample were also interviewed in year two; and secondly the questions were asked in different ways in both years¹⁸. Table 5.3 compares the figures for both years for each of these involvement activities.

¹⁸ In year two projects were asked a separate question about each involvement stage, so for example they were asked how young people are involved in project delivery as a separate question from how they are involved in the management of the project. In year three this was simplified and projects were asked how young people are actively involved with the project.

Table 5.3 – Contribution of National Grants and Grants to Organisations projects to the aims and outcomes of the YPF

Method of involvement	Percentage of projects (year two)	Percentage of projects (year three)
Engaging other young people	77%	88%
Delivering activity	67%	77%
Youth forum/steering group	66%	76%

Source: Wavehill Survey of YPF Projects 2009 – 129 responses

5.56 In year two case study projects anticipated that active involvement of young people would increase as project beneficiaries developed the confidence and skills to move into an involvement role. These figures support this assertion.

Are projects young person led?

5.57 While projects are clearly involving young people, it is important to understand the extent to which young people are involved. Table 5.4 summarises survey findings in relation to the level of involvement of young people in the various stages of the project. It shows that project workers are most likely to take the lead on the management of projects and relinquish more control to young people in each of the other aspects of running the project, particularly in relation to **evaluation and ongoing development**. This supports the earlier finding that young people are most commonly involved in providing formal and informal feedback on how the projects operate.

Table 5.4 – Involvement of young people in different stages

	Percentage of projects				
	Exclusively young people	Young people take lead	Even mix	Project workers take lead	Exclusively project workers
Initial development	7%	24%	29%	35%	5%
Delivery	4%	23%	32%	35%	6%
Management	0%	12%	20%	52%	16%
Evaluation /ongoing development	3%	36%	39%	20%	2%

Source: Wavehill survey of YPF projects 2009 – 129 responses

5.58 **The level at which young people are involved in the delivery of projects is higher this year than it was in year two of the evaluation.** In year two only 16 per cent of projects were delivered exclusively or predominantly by young people, compared to 27 per cent in year three. A number of the case study projects were able to demonstrate a high level of involvement of young people in the delivery of project activity. One interesting example is a National Grants project called Leading our Lives, where young people were actually employed by the project to deliver its activity (case study example 3).

Case study example 3 – Leading our Lives

The Fostering Network runs a 3-year project called Leading our Lives that aims to work with care experienced young people (young people who have been in care or are the sons or daughters of foster carers) to help them shape the delivery of fostering services in England. The project recruited sessional workers aged 18 to 25 to organise and deliver specific activities, and assistant sessional workers between the ages of 16 and 25 – both of these posts were applicable for sons and daughters of foster carers and care leavers.

Activities include panel training to provide young people with the skills they need to become an independent fostering panel member for a local authority or a fostering provider, campaigning to improve the lives of children in care, the launch of a newsletter (Revo) and a film about stigma surrounding children in care.

Care experienced young people that go through the panel training are given the necessary skills and opportunity to participate in decision-making within the fostering service. The 27 sessional workers and the 90 forum participants gain new transferable skills such as research and consultation, project management, media work, campaigning, and providing training to others. By actively participating in regional forums young people are empowered to make a positive contribution to the community and influencing policy-making, which enables the fostering service to better meet the needs of young people.

5.59 While the survey shows that the management of projects is more likely to be adult led than any other stage, there are many projects that do involve young people in management activities, most commonly through youth fora or steering groups. An example of one such project is Youth Action North East (case study example 4).

Case study example 4 – Youth Action North East (YANE)

Through links with local youth workers, project workers invite young people aged 13-19 from across the region to lead activities that address the issues that matter to them. Annually young people identify the topics that matter to them and then form campaign teams to drive forward action across the region. The campaign topics for 2009 are sexual health, bullying, and transport.

Throughout the year the campaign teams organise themselves and their activities as they see fit. The young people can draw on the support of the Regional Participation Team and can obtain advice from an Advisory Group made up of professionals from across the region. Campaign activity is overseen by a young person's steering group.

Are all young people involved?

5.60 Although figure 5.1 above shows that the majority of projects are actively involving young people, it is also important to understand how many of the

participants in these projects are actively involved. This was explored in the survey.

5.61 Table 5.5 shows the percentage of projects that use each method of involvement (the figures shown in figure 5.1 above) alongside the percentage of beneficiaries who are involved in this way. It shows that, as already discussed, most projects involve young people by asking them to provide informal or formal feedback and that on average 77 per cent and 70 per cent respectively of young people in the projects are involved in these ways.

Table 5.5 – Percentage of project beneficiaries ‘actively involved’

Means of involvement	Percentage of projects employing method	Mean percentage of young people within project that are involved (%)
Review through informal feedback	96%	77%
Review through structured feedback	89%	70%
Engage other young people	88%	48%
Design activity	87%	40%
Deliver activity	77%	28%
Youth forum/ steering group	76%	16%
Manage certain projects	55%	24%
Recruitment of staff	53%	11%
YP rep. on management committee	39%	6%

Source: Wavehill survey of YPF projects – 129 responses

Note: Mean percentage of involved young people within project is based on responses of those who could provide figures

5.62 Where involvement is more intensive (such as youth a forum or steering group, delivery of activities, or representing peers on a management committee), the number of young people who are actively involved reduces. This is to be expected for a number of reasons, including:

- These are more intensive mechanisms for involvement and not all young people will want to be involved in an intensive way.
- Some types of involvement, such as a youth forum/steering group or young people representatives on a management committee are by their very nature a mechanism that only a select group can be involved in.
- Some mechanisms for involvement, such as delivering activity, may be something that young people progress into, having been with the project for a while.

Measuring involvement

5.63 Survey respondents and case study projects rated the level of youth participation in their project against Hart’s Ladder of Participation¹⁹ (Table 5.6).

¹⁹ Hart, R. (1992), *Children’s Participation from Tokenism to Citizenship*. Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre.

Three quarters of projects would describe themselves as being on one of the top three rungs, showing high levels of involvement. **The most common rung for projects to be on is rung six (45 per cent of projects), where staff involve young people in every step of the planning and implementation, their views are considered and they are involved in taking decisions.**

Table 5.6 – Level of participation in relation to Hart's Ladder

Description – Harts Ladder of Participation	Percentage of respondents
Rung 8 - Participants have the idea, setup project and invite staff to join with them in making decisions	5%
Rung 7 - Participants have the initial idea and decide how the project is to be carried out. Staff are available but do not take charge.	25%
Rung 6 - Staff have the initial idea but participants are involved in every step of the planning and implementation: their views are considered and they are involved in taking the decisions.	45%
Rung 5 -The project is designed and run by staff but participants are consulted. They have a full understanding of the process and their opinions are taken seriously.	24%
Rung 4 - Staff decide on the project and participants volunteer for it. Staff respects their views	1%
Rung 3 - Participants are asked to say what they think about an issue but have little or no choice about the way they express those views or the scope of the ideas they can express.	0%
Rung 2 - Participants take part in an event but they do not understand the issue	0%
Rung 1 - Participants do or say what staff suggest they do, but have no real understanding of the issue, or have been asked what they think. Staff use some of their ideas but do not tell them what influence they have had on the final decision	0%

Source: Wavehill survey of YPF projects – 129 responses

5.64 Case study example 5 gives an example of a project that ranks itself at rung six or seven on the ladder, which are the rungs where most projects consider themselves to be.

Case study example 5 – Anti Tobacco Youth Campaign (Rung 6/7)

The Anti Tobacco Youth Campaign (ATYC) is run by young people for young people and aims to give young people a voice and the knowledge and skills to campaign about smoking and other tobacco issues. Activities centre on the development of an interactive website (that encourages inter-group working and cross fertilisation of ideas) and participation in a range of events to promote the campaign messages and raise awareness of smoking and tobacco issues.

Working through the different groups, young people are central to developing the campaign's messages, lobbying activities and a range of educational materials. Through their own insights and experiences they have created campaign

materials designed to impact on other young people. The direction of the project has been substantially influenced by the young people involved, largely in an informal way: “young people have steered the project remotely rather than as part of a formal steering group.”

5.65 Very few projects would consider themselves to be on the top rung of the ladder where activities are purely young person led. One of the case study projects considers itself to be operating between rungs seven and eight and is described in case study example 6.

Case study example 6 – Get Ready for Geneva/Get Ready for Change

The Children's Rights Alliance England (CRAE) has developed a project to engage young people in an international process of safeguarding their human rights, largely through research and campaigning activities. Young people are involved at the heart of the project; on the steering group, leading separate campaign teams, developing the project's interactive website and as Children's Rights Investigators and Children's Rights Champions (bringing local emphasis to the national campaigns). Two members of the steering group also participate in the CRAE Trustee Board.

Throughout 2008 young people have been involved in articulating their research findings and campaign messages at the highest level, including at the UN Committee meeting in Geneva (September), young people from the project have also travelled to speak at the UN General Assembly in New York.

Barriers to involvement

5.66 BIG Grants Officers noted that the level of involvement in YPF is lower than its successor, YPF2. BIG values youth involvement and would have liked to have seen higher levels of involvement and more youth led projects as a result of YPF. However it was not a programme requirement for young people to be involved at all stages, nor was it a requirement that projects be youth led, but rather an emphasis was placed on young people being involved throughout all stages of the projects.

5.67 The research findings show that although very few projects are youth led, they are meeting the requirements of the fund. Almost all projects (96 per cent) involve young people in some way and over three quarters of young people are actively involved through informal feedback.

5.68 In the case study visits both young people and project staff were satisfied with the extent to which young people are involved. Although potential barriers to involvement were identified, these were not considered by either group to be significant and where these were mentioned solutions had been found. Barriers tended to fall into two categories:

- Lack of confidence, skills and capacity among the young people to take up the opportunities on offer

- Access issues, including lack of transport, and concerns about safety when travelling to the project

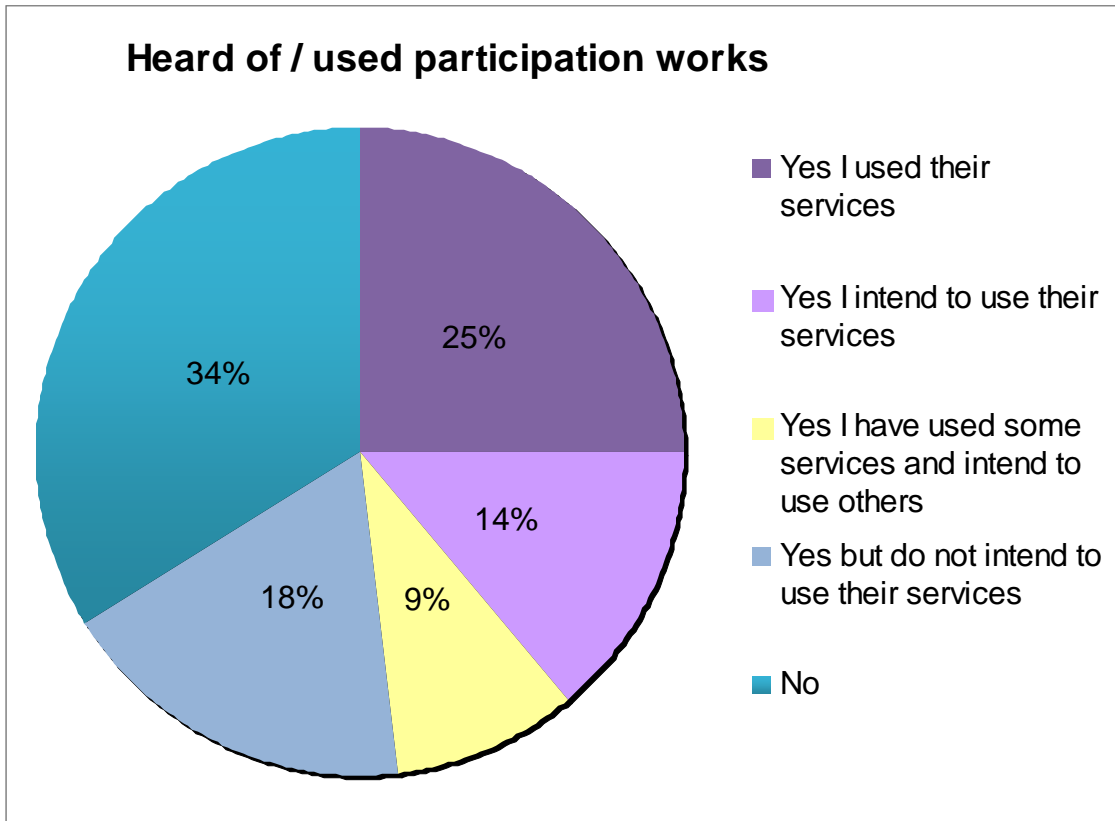
5.69 Projects allow young people time to build their confidence and support them to develop the necessary skills to move into a more involved role when they are ready. Where access is an issue some projects provide taxis to ensure that young people are not travelling alone in the dark or over long distances, or they ensure that the young people have access to a lift either from parents or staff.

5.70 The fact that barriers to involvement are not considered a significant issue does not mean that higher levels of involvement are not possible, nor that more significant benefits could not be achieved with greater levels of involvement. With more stringent requirements around involvement at the assessment stage and more guidance and support, YPF could have perhaps challenged projects further, generating greater levels of involvement and greater impacts

5.71 Having recognised this, BIG have sought to ensure higher levels of youth involvement in YPF2 by focussing more on this at the assessment stage than they did for YPF. In addition funding was made available to Participation Works to support YPF2 projects in England to maximise levels of youth involvement. This support is now also available to YPF projects in England, although this was not available at the beginning of their funding period.

5.72 A third of the surveyed projects (34 per cent) have used the services of Participation Works (including nine per cent that intend to use the services again) and a further 14 per cent intend to use their services. Eighteen per cent of respondents have heard of Participation Works but do not intend to use their services, while a third (34 per cent) have not heard of them (see Figure 5.2).

Figure 5.2 – Have projects heard of and used services of Participation Works



Source: Wavehill Survey of YPF Projects 2009 – 129 responses

5.73 Table 5.7 shows which of the Participations Works services have been used or are likely to be used by the 62 projects that have used or intend to use their services.

Table 5.7 – Participation Works services that projects have used or intend to use

Service	Used	Intend to use	Total respondents
Hear by Right Workshops	28 (78%)	8 (22%)	36
Guide to participation	19 (79%)	5 (21%)	24
Best practice mini guides	10 (59%)	7 (41%)	17
Enquiries service	10 (63%)	6 (37%)	16
Regional networks	9 (60%)	6 (40%)	15
Youth at the table	3 (25%)	9 (75%)	12
Ready steady change – training course	6 (60%)	4 (40%)	10
Building a Culture of Participation – training course	6 (67%)	3 (33%)	9
On line gateway	6 (67%)	3 (33%)	9
Local learning groups	4 (44%)	5 (56%)	9
Saying power – training course	1 (25%)	3 (75%)	4

Source: Wavehill Survey of YPF Projects 2009 – 62 responses

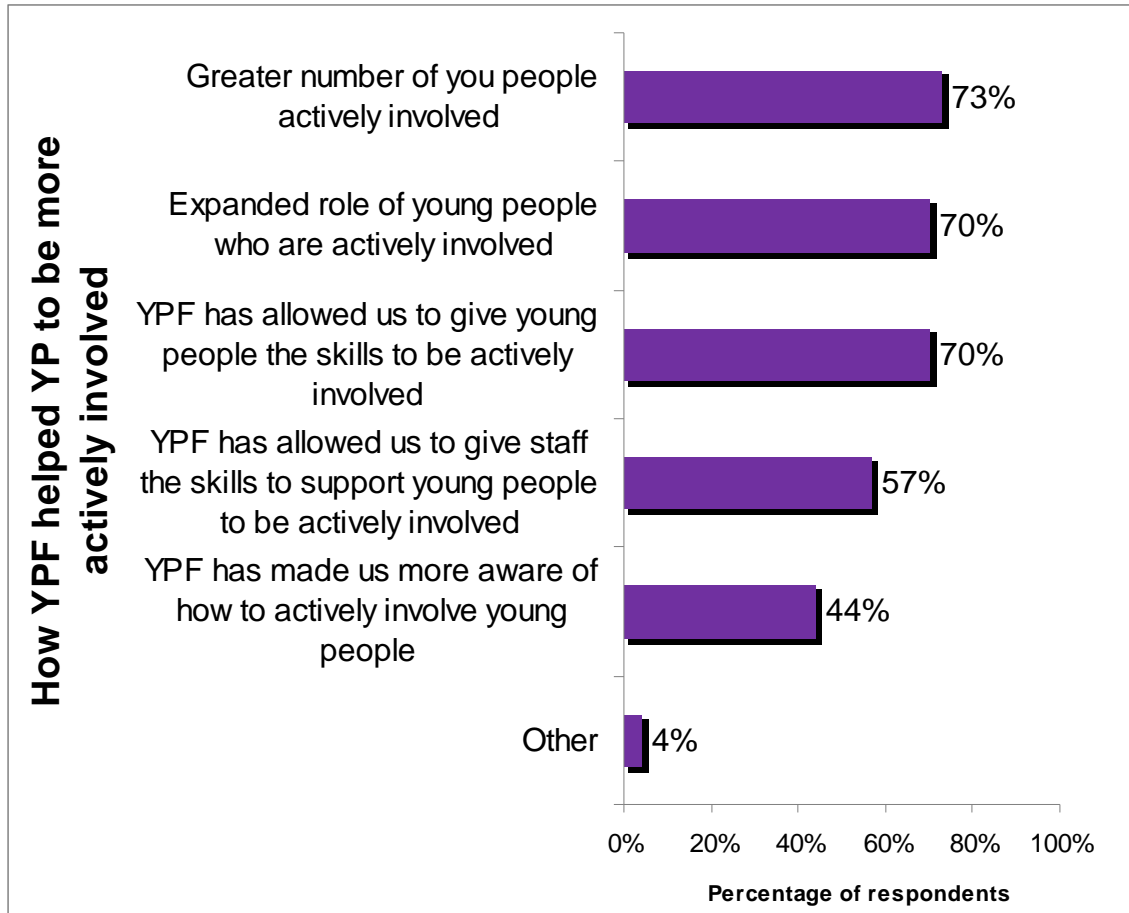
5.74 The most commonly used or likely to be used services are Hear by Right Workshops, the guide to participation and best practice mini guides.

Change in levels of involvement

5.75 Over the course of the funding period to date, the majority of projects (85 per cent) feel that the involvement of young people has increased.

5.76 The telephone survey asked projects how YPF had helped young people to be more actively involved. Figure 5.3 shows that the most significant benefit of YPF funding is that it has enabled 73 per cent of projects to involve a greater number of young people. The funding has also helped projects to expand the role of young people who are actively involved (70 per cent of projects) and to give young people the skills to be actively involved (70 per cent).

Figure 5.3 – How YPF has helped young people become more actively involved



Source: Wavehill Survey of YPF Projects 2009 – 110 responses

NOTE: percentages do not equal 100 due to multiple responses

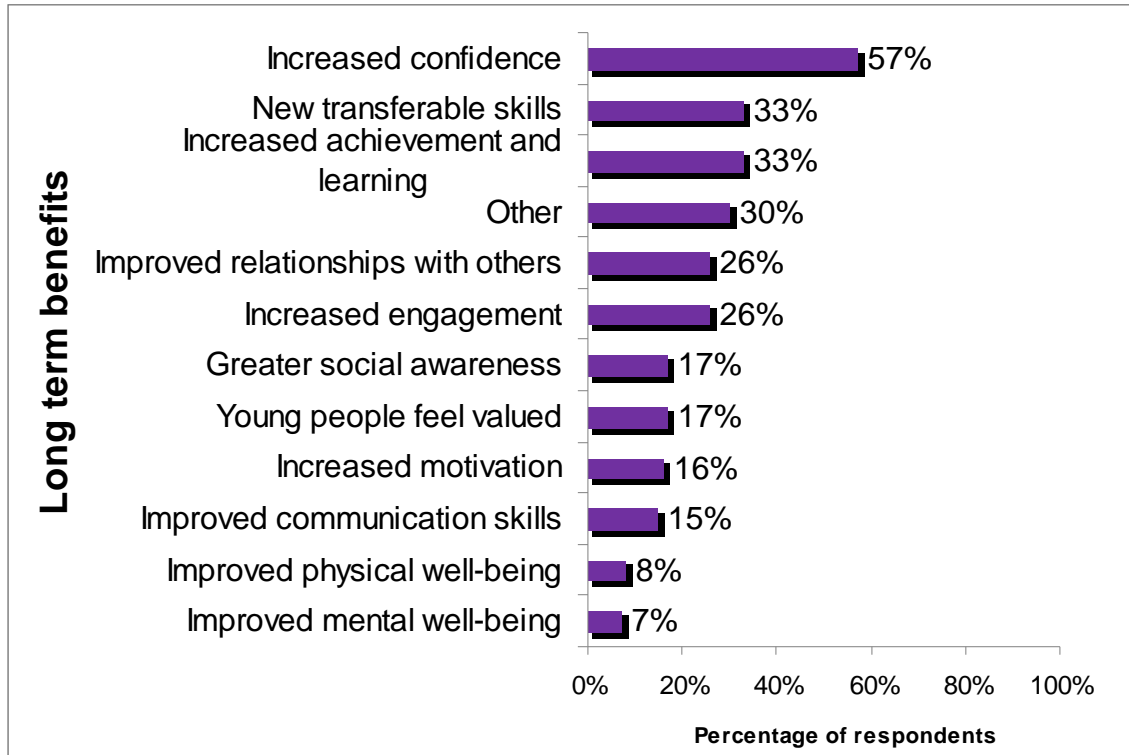
Impact of Grants to Organisations and National Grants

Impact of participation in project activity

5.77 Despite the variety of project activities funded by YPF, project workers have observed a number of common benefits to participants. Most notably 55 per cent of projects identified increased confidence as a benefit that young people have got from participation in their project. Thirty seven per cent have observed young people develop new transferable skills and 33 per cent reported that participants have increased motivation as a result of their participation.

5.78 Figure 5.4 shows that project workers expect these benefits to be long term. In particular 57 per cent of projects expect increased confidence to be a long term benefit and 33 per cent expect transferable skills to be a lasting benefit. Although only 22 per cent of projects identified increased achievement and learning as a benefit that participants had got to date, 33 per cent expect this to be a long term benefit of participation.

Figure 5.4 – Three most significant long term benefits of participation



Source: Wavehill Survey of YPF Projects 2009 – 129 responses

NOTE: percentages do not equal 100 due to multiple responses

5.79 Almost half of projects recorded in the ‘other’ category referred to personal development achievements, namely life skills, coping skills, self awareness, self esteem and raised aspirations. The remainder discussed benefits that were specifically project related, such as “young people have re-assessed their own use of violence”, or “young disabled people will be aware of the laws that they can use to defend their rights”.

5.80 Project workers in the case study projects reported similar benefits to those identified in the survey. In addition they spoke of how having felt these benefits the end product was a **more empowered group of young people**. Projects are also having an **impact on the wider community by tackling a range of social issues and working to change negative perceptions of young people**. Case study example 7 shows how YANE is delivering both of these impacts.

Case study example 7 – Youth Action North East (YANE)

Youth Action North East (YANE) is a regional participation project that aims to create a regional voice for young people living in the North East of England. It encourages and supports young people aged 13 to 19 to take action on the issues that affect their lives.

Young people who have been involved with the project for a while recall that prior to coming along to the project they did not think they “had a voice” and there was “no point in fighting for anything”. They now see that is not the case. They commented on how “young people feel discriminated against because they are seen as anti-social”. As a result of the project they feel “like a member of society”. Both the workers and young people feel that the impacts are inter-generational because through their campaigning activities they are changing perceptions of young people in the wider community.

Impact of active involvement

5.81 The survey asked projects about the benefits that young people got from active involvement in the design, delivery, management and evaluation of project activity. As Figure 5.5 shows, **increased confidence** is once again identified by the vast majority of projects (79 per cent). This is followed by **increased achievement and learning** (74 per cent), **improved relationships with others** (71 per cent), and **new transferable skills** (71 per cent).

Figure 5.5 – Most significant benefits of ‘involvement’



Source: Wavehill Survey of YPF Projects 2009 – 129 responses
 NOTE: percentages do not equal 100 due to multiple responses

5.82 Young people who are actively involved in a project experience broadly similar benefits to those who are solely participants, however **the scale of impact is usually more significant for those young people actively involved.**

5.83 Actively involved young people regularly discussed **the social aspects of their involvement, enjoyment, skills development and increased confidence**. For example, young people involved in the Fusion Radio project Steering Group said: “It’s good to be involved because it gives you more confidence. Some people need to be hands on to understand. They get to make decisions, map something over 6 weeks and see the end result. Then they talk about it afterwards. They self evaluate. You also get to meet other people”.

5.84 The key areas where involved young people seem to benefit much more significantly than those who are solely participants is in feeling like they **have a voice, can make a difference in their community and can give something back to other young people in their project**. This serves to make them feel valued, empowered and in many cases raises their aspirations. For example the young people who are actively involved in the Get Ready for Geneva/Get Ready for Change project described earlier said:

- “It’s actually changed my life since I got involved...In terms of career...I want to go into human rights or something law-related [in the long term]...but other things... so many things that I’ve done over the past 2 years, we’ve spoken at conferences and we’ve met Ministers... when you talk to other people they find it hard to believe that you’ve done all of this and some people are kind of ‘gobsmacked’...”
- “Seeing our report and then seeing the concluding observations that the UN have given back... I think we have made a tremendous difference; we’ve really been listened to. It really took me back a bit...and like the other 2,000 young people that have had a say in the project, we’ve helped give them a voice...”
- “We’ve gained new knowledge and skills we can pass on to other young people in our local area.”
- “It alters your mindset, you’re a better person really.”

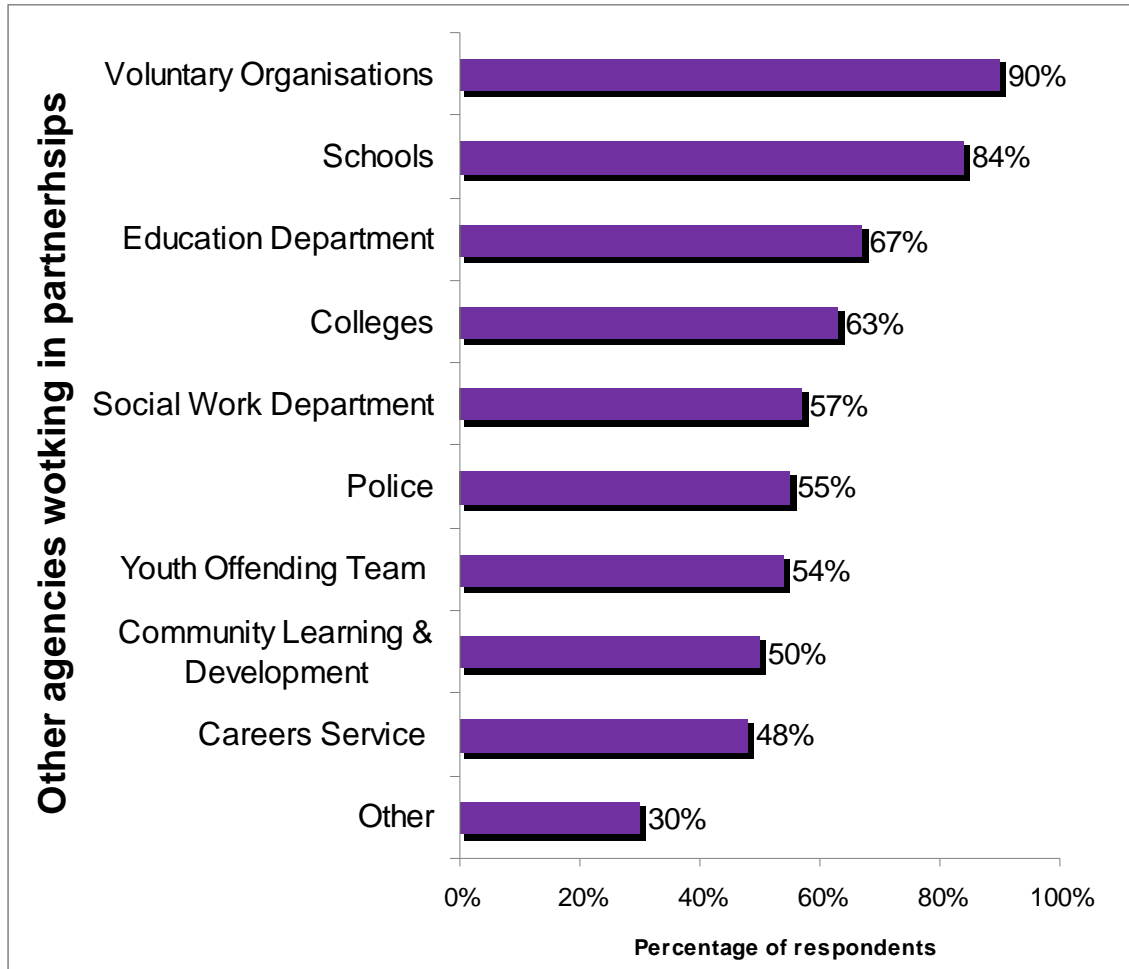
5.85 The findings clearly show that young people who are actively involved in projects acquire a range of benefits, which they value. These include soft impacts such as enjoyment and increased confidence, as well as hard impacts such as the development of specific skills. Giving young people a voice and enabling them to make a difference in their community are the main impacts that differentiate the benefits of active involvement from those of being a project participant who is not actively involved.

Legacy of YPF

Strategic partnership

5.86 All of the projects surveyed have formed strategic partnerships with other agencies to maximise the impacts of their project. The largest percentage of projects (90 per cent) work in partnership with voluntary sector organisations and 84 per cent work with schools.

Figure 5.6 – Agencies YPF projects work in partnership with



Source: Wavehill Survey of YPF Projects 2009 – 126 responses
 NOTE: percentages do not equal 100 due to multiple responses

5.87 The partnerships that have been formed are both formal²⁰ and informal in nature. Where partnerships are in place these are more likely to be formal with schools (54 per cent), education departments (48 per cent) and Careers Services (47 per cent). Informal partnerships are most likely with the police (67 per cent) and colleges (61 per cent).

5.88 Effective partnership working brings a number of benefits for projects, the most significant of which include:

- Enabling projects to have a greater impact by offering a more holistic provision

²⁰ By **formal** partnerships we are referring to situations where partners have defined roles, remits and responsibilities, regular meetings, specific objectives etc.

- Learning from the work of others, ensuring ongoing staff development and the application of innovative and best practice approaches
- Recruitment of young people, and in particular routes through which projects can reach the hardest to reach
- The potential for the projects or certain elements of their activity to continue beyond YPF funding.

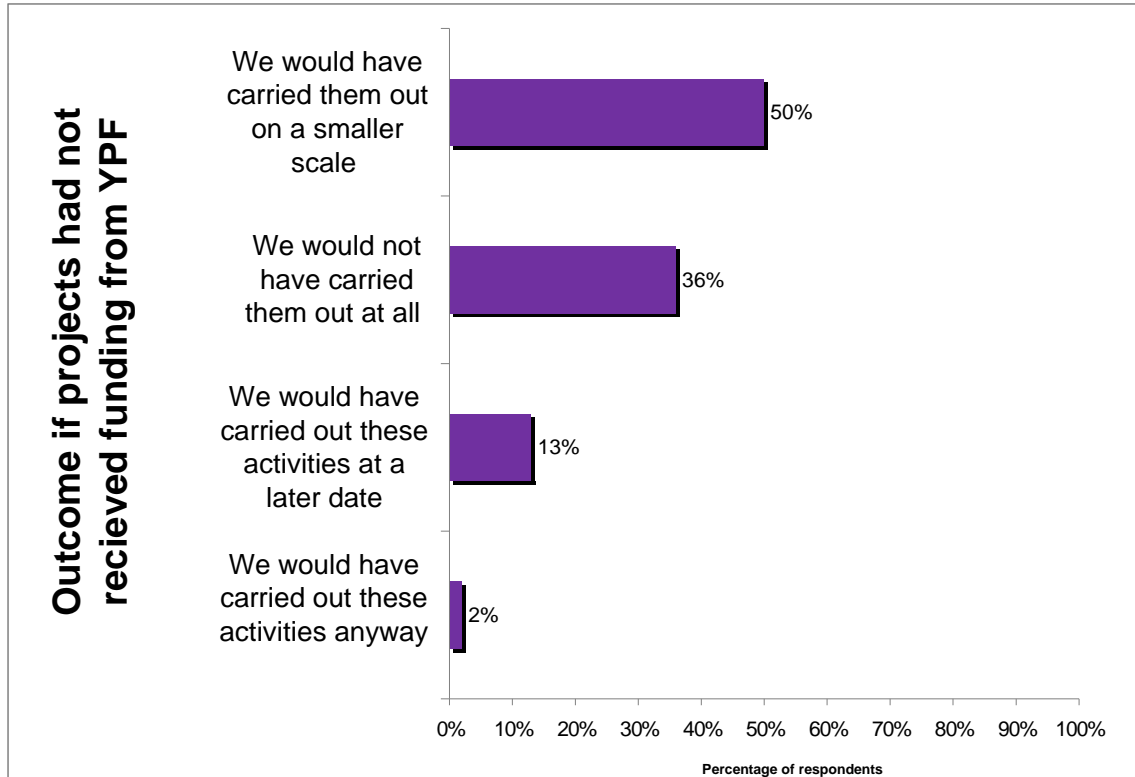
5.89 Case study projects spoke of the lasting legacy that YPF will leave in relation to Partnership working. The agencies that operate the YPF funded projects have strengthened existing partnerships and formed new partnerships. These partnerships will endure beyond the lifetime of YPF, ensuring that future activities benefit from new and strengthened relationships between organisations and agencies.

Additionality

5.90 For 40 per cent of the projects who participated in the survey their YPF grant is their only source of funding. For a further 32 per cent YPF funding constitutes over 75 per cent of the project's income. **In the absence of this support over one third of projects feel that their activities would not have been possible**, while half of projects think that activity would have occurred on a smaller scale or at a later date (Figure 5.7).

5.91 The findings show that YPF has generated a significant additionality effect. It has generated significant overall net impact, as well as scale and time additionality.

Figure 5.7 – Additionality associated with YPF



Source: Wavehill Survey of YPF Projects 2009 – 129 responses

5.92 These findings are reinforced by those of case study projects, all of which believe that **the scale, quality and impact of their activities have been greatly enhanced by the support of the YPF**. This has brought about benefits for young people and the wider community. For example:

- Youth Action North East (YANE) used the YPF funding to create an infrastructure that will allow YANE to move towards being a self supporting group. This will allow a continuation of the impacts realised to date, which include the building of positive relationships with the government office, the public transport executive and at a local level; and giving young people in the North East the opportunity to lead campaigns on the issues that matter to them, creating lasting difference for themselves and other young people.
- Leading Edge used the funding to set up 272 homework clubs across the country through partnerships with schools and colleges, providing resources for studying to help young refugees/asylum seekers and young carers to settle into the school's environment and culture.
- Get Ready for Geneva/Get Ready for Change used the funding to recruit and train volunteers including Children's Rights Investigators and Children's Rights Champions; allow young people to carry out wide scale research and produce the 'Get Ready for Geneva' research report; create national campaign teams to drive forward the core messages and initiate policy

change; develop an interactive website attracting over 800 unique visitors per month; carry out a variety of high profile campaigning activities. The project's activities have resulted in all of the recommendations from the 'Get ready for Geneva' report being included in the UN committee's concluding recommendations.

Future

5.93 There is a degree of uncertainty among projects concerning their ability to sustain activities following the end of YPF funding. Almost half (47 per cent) of those surveyed say that their project may continue beyond YPF funding; a further nine per cent say that they do not know whether it will continue or not; while nine per cent of projects will not continue. Almost a quarter (23 per cent) of projects are certain that their activity will continue, while for 12 per cent some aspects of their activity will continue post YPF funding.

5.94 In order to sustain activity, projects are most likely to look for alternative sources of funding (54 per cent), while 28 per cent are looking to partnerships as a means of continuing their activity. Some project staff are hopeful that their projects will become self sustaining through service level agreements and funded project activity. Kids Out is one such project.

Case study example 8 – Kids Out

Kids Out received funding through the National Grants Strand to purchase and operate 5 mobile multi media vans (in East Riding, Cumbria, Cambridgeshire, Buckinghamshire and Surrey) and one static multi media site (in Wolverhampton). Each unit contains the necessary equipment to allow young people to record music and film. The units work flexibly in the areas in which they are based, meeting local need as appropriate. For example:

- Arriva commissioned the project to engage young people in making a film to show how young people behave on buses
- The project work with Local Authority Social Inclusion Teams to run projects that work with young people who are not engaging in mainstream education.

The project is building partnerships at the local level and is aiming to become self sustaining by generating income from delivering projects for partners.

Conclusions

Meeting the aims and outcomes

5.95 By awarding small grants to individual young people and supporting them to manage their grant and run their own project, the Big Boost has made a significant contribution to the overall aim of YPF, which is to involve young people in all aspects of the projects. In doing so the programme has supported young people to make a difference in their communities and contribute to a

number of the Every Child Matters outcomes. There have been a number of significant positive impacts for the young people involved, including personal development and progress into volunteering activities, employment and tertiary education

5.96 All YPF projects contribute to a number of the Every Child Matters outcomes, with the vast majority contributing to enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and being healthy. Grants Officers report that although projects are delivering significant impacts, it is difficult to monitor these against the programme outcomes because these were poorly written; and projects only report on project specific outcomes, rather than programme outcomes.

Addressing disadvantage

5.97 Almost all projects in England are actively engaging with disadvantaged young people and are helping young people to come together with other young people to enjoy and benefit from activities. The vast majority are creating a better understanding of disadvantage among young people. The programme has been successful in funding projects that meet these aims of the England country programme and the evidence shows that projects are engaging with young people from a wide range of disadvantaged backgrounds, most commonly those living in deprived areas and those at risk of exclusion.

Involvement of young people

5.98 The vast majority of projects are actively involving young people in their projects, primarily through reviewing activities, however involvement has increased since the year two evaluation and in particular more projects are now involving young people in engaging other young people, delivering activities and in a youth forum/steering group.

5.99 Although involvement is evident across projects, very few are young person led. Young people are most likely to take the lead on the evaluation and ongoing development of projects and least likely to take the lead on management.

5.100 Reviewing activity is not only the most common form of involvement, but it is also the involvement method that engages the majority of project participants. As involvement becomes more intensive, such as in designing or delivering activity or sitting on a steering group, the numbers of young people who are involved decreases.

5.101 All projects are involving young people in a way that is considered true involvement in Hart's Ladder of Participation, showing that projects are nurturing citizenship in the young people they are working with. YPF has been successful in funding projects that are involving young people, although the majority of projects are on rungs five and six of the ladder, with few being truly young person led.

5.102 Project workers and young people are satisfied with levels of involvement and young people involved in the case studies did not perceive any barriers to

their involvement. Grants Officers note however that involvement appears higher in YPF's successor programme, YPF2 as a result of a more stringent assessment process and support from Participation Works. This indicates that YPF projects could have been challenged further, generating greater levels of involvement and greater impacts.

Impact

5.103 Increased confidence, new transferable skills and increased motivation are the most commonly cited benefits to young people of participation in YPF projects. When asked to consider long term benefits of the project, increased achievement and learning becomes more commonly cited. These benefits lead to a more empowered group of young people.

5.104 Project activities often tackle a range of social issues, having a positive impact on the wider community and challenging negative perceptions of young people.

5.105 Active involvement generates broadly similar impacts to project activities, although the benefits are more marked for young people who are actively involved. Actively involved young people are more likely to report feeling like they have a voice, can make a difference in their community and can give something back to other young people in their project.

Legacy

5.106 Projects have formed and strengthened local partnerships as a result of YPF and these partnerships are in many cases expected to endure beyond the lifetime of the funding, ensuring a lasting legacy in local delivery approaches.

5.107 Without YPF funding over a third of projects would not have carried out their activities and a further 50 per cent would have carried them out on a smaller scale, showing a high level of additionality from YPF.

5.108 Almost half of projects still do not know whether their activity will continue once their YPF funding ends, making the development of exit strategies and sustainability plans a priority for projects in England over the coming year.

6 YOUNG PEOPLE'S FUND IN SCOTLAND

Introduction

6.1 The Young People's Fund (YPF) in Scotland has a grant allocation of £23.8 million from the Big Lottery Fund (BIG) which is used to support projects that target young people between 11 and 25 years old. The main aim of the programme in Scotland is to enable young people to learn new things and take part in healthy and positive activities that make them feel good about themselves.

6.2 The YPF in Scotland has three specific outcomes, namely that young people will have:

- more and better opportunities to gain the confidence and skills and support they need to deal with change in their lives and contribute to their local communities.
- more and better opportunities to be involved in making decisions about issues and policies that affect them in their communities.
- more and better opportunities to take part in activities that make them feel good about themselves.

6.3 The programme in Scotland targets four priority groups of young people, which are those:

- with no opportunities to volunteer or facing barriers to volunteering
- dealing with many and complicated problems
- who do not have positive relationships with family, friends or community
- teenage girls.

6.4 The YPF in Scotland also supports seven priority projects, those which:

- encourage teenage girls to access activities
- remove the barriers to volunteering or increase volunteering opportunities
- help young people adopt active, healthy and positive lifestyles
- encourage young people to make positive changes in their behaviour
- bring young people together from different backgrounds and experiences
- support young people through periods of transition
- help young people gain confidence and skills to become active citizens.

Funding streams

6.5 Initial funding allocated by YPF in Scotland was split into three separate strands to support different types of projects:

- **Local Projects** – £11.4 million was available to support projects that covered one local authority area. Recommendations on projects to fund were made by Local Area Panels²¹ (LAPs).
- **Wider Inclusion Projects** – £2.85 million was available to projects that covered more than one local authority area and that targeted non-geographic communities.
- **New Ideas** – £4.75 million was available to fund projects that tried out new approaches for engaging young people, that carried out groundbreaking work, and that adapted approaches that have been used successfully elsewhere.

6.6 In Scotland, the YPF set up 32 LAPs – groups of young people that made recommendations on funding applications that they received from projects under the Local Projects funding stream. The National Committee, a body of young people and adults that made final decisions on funding applications passed to them by the LAPs, was set up at the same time. This system was unique to Scotland and was intended to increase young people's involvement in making decisions about their local communities (YPF Outcome Two). It was an integral part of the delivery mechanism from the beginning of YPF in Scotland. LAPs will be covered in more detail in subsequent sections of this Chapter.

Fit with Scottish policy context

6.7 Since the YPF was established in 2005, the political landscape in Scotland has changed significantly. In 2005 a Labour-Liberal Democrat coalition was in power, however a SNP administration formed a government in 2007. The transition between these led to a degree of uncertainty in the policy environment and changes in the relationship between local authorities and the Scottish Government. For example, Single Outcome Agreements (SOAs) were agreed as part of the Concordat between Scotland's 32 local authorities and the Scottish Government. Much of the funding that had previously been ring-fenced to help local authorities deliver programmes was removed as part of the SOAs. However, as part of the Concordat local authorities now have more control over their spending decisions. The result of these changes has been a degree of uncertainty amongst voluntary and third sector organisations in terms of how to access funding and what funding is available.

6.8 Despite these changes, young people continue to have a prominent place in the Scottish political landscape. The Scottish Government has assigned young people a specific outcome in its National Performance Framework, aiming

²¹ The LAPs were also known as Young People's Panels

to ensure that **“our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.”²²**

6.9 Youth work is seen by the Scottish Government as a major way in which this outcome can be met. The National Youth Work Strategy states that **“youth work opportunities can also support young people to live their lives as confident individuals, effective contributors, successful learners and responsible citizens.”²³**

6.10 Clearly the YPF in Scotland can, through supporting youth work organisations and young people in LAPs, make a **major contribution to the achievement of the specific National Outcome cited above.**

6.11 Further, the More Choices, More Chances (MCMC) strategy published by the Scottish Government in 2006 articulates the issue of young people who are not in education, employment or training and proposes ways of tackling this issue. Stakeholders interviewed as part of the evaluation believe that YPF in Scotland has played a significant role in funding third sector projects whose activity contributes to the aims of MCMC and that YPF is a good fit with their priorities for young people, particularly around the goal of involvement.

6.12 As 16+ Learning Choices are introduced (in which all young people over 16 will have a Learning Agreement) there will be an opportunity for third sector projects to play a formal role in the mainstream learning choices that young people make. In the future, funds such as YPF could help to bring third sector projects and local authorities together by making engagement with local authorities a condition of project funding. In this way, the contribution that projects make to a young person's education, and therefore their economic potential, could be a criterion that projects work to meet.

²² Scottish Government (2007), “National Outcomes”,

²³ Scottish Government (2007), “Moving Forward – A Strategy for Improving Young People's Chances Through Youth Work”, p.4

Method

6.13 The third year of the evaluation in Scotland used a mixed method. Table 6.1 shows the groups interviewed, the rationale for doing so, and the relevant method employed by the study team.

Table 6.1 - Year three study method

Group	Rationale for Method	Method Employed by Study Team
BIG Country and Policy Leads	Explore priorities for Year Three of evaluation	Face to face interviews
BIG Grants Officers	Gather information on grant assessment process and recommendations for project case study visits	Focus group
Stakeholders	Explore policy context	Three telephone interviews
Chair and Member of National Committee	Explore operation of Committee	Two telephone interviews
Local Area Panels	Review operation of LAPs	Telephone interviews with 4 LAP members and 1 focus group with 3 LAP members
YPF funded projects	Assess impact of YPF on project staff and young people	Telephone interviews with 60 projects and 6 case study visits

Local Area Panels

Introduction

6.14 Local Area Panels (LAPs) were unique to the Young People's Fund in Scotland and were set up in each of Scotland's 32 local authorities. Comprising a group of young people and a Panel Worker, each LAP assessed project funding applications that they received under the Local Projects strand (that is, projects that operated within their local authority area) and made a recommendation to the National Committee whether to award funding to the project. The National Committee then made the final decision based on this recommendation, the assessment of BIG Grants Officers, and other information held on the applying organisation such as its management structures and financial performance.

6.15 This approach was developed to ensure that young people had an opportunity to be involved in influencing projects and their activities in their local

area and to contribute to the outcome “more and better opportunities to be involved in making decisions about issues and policies that affect them in their communities”.

6.16 This chapter explores the operation of the LAPs and the National Committee. It uses the findings from the interviews carried out by GEN and draws on the evaluation of the LAPs completed by Volunteer Development Scotland (VDS) in July 2008.²⁴ It also draws on the fieldwork GEN conducted with the LAPs and the National Committee in Year One of the evaluation. The section covers:

- Arrangements put in place to lead, manage and deliver LAP activity.
- The operation of the LAPs.
- Young people's involvement and the impact this has had on them.
- The contribution of the LAPs to the outcomes of YPF in Scotland.

Management and delivery of LAP activity

6.17 The YPF in Scotland allocated £1 million to fund the operation and activity of the LAPs and VDS was awarded the contract to manage and deliver their activity. The Volunteer Centre Network was sub-contracted by VDS to facilitate the LAPs in each local authority area and to provide the Panel Workers, whilst Youthlink Scotland was sub-contracted by VDS to provide training for Panel Workers and Panel Members. Young Scot was subcontracted by VDS to promote YPF throughout Scotland and assist in the recruitment of young people.²⁵ In total, around 500 young people were recruited and trained for the LAPs.

How were young people recruited to the Panels?

6.18 Recruitment of young people was carried out by Panel Workers, who were required to recruit a minimum of five members for each LAP. As part of their evaluation of the LAPs, VDS carried out a survey of its 32 Panel Workers to explore the methods that they found most effective in recruiting young people. Over two thirds (67 per cent) of Panel Workers felt that they had most success when they used contacts in their own networks, for example Youth Teams and Community Learning and Development. They also used Youth Scotland, Dialogue Youth and Princes Trust.²⁶ Other recruitment methods included advertising in local libraries; using Volunteer Centre contacts; and word of mouth.

Why did young people join LAPs?

6.19 As part of its evaluation, VDS surveyed 187 Panel Members to find out their motivations for participating in the LAPs. Almost three quarters (71 per

²⁴ VDS (2008), “Big Lottery Fund Young People's Panels Evaluation”

²⁵ VDS (2008), “Big Lottery Fund Young People's Panels Evaluation”, p.3

²⁶ VDS (2008), “Big Lottery Fund Young People's Panels Evaluation”, p.5

cent) said they joined to gain new skills. Other common reasons for joining included having new experiences (67 per cent) and to get involved in their local community (61 per cent). Relatively few (17 per cent) joined because their friends were involved.

6.20 From the interviews with Panel Members in this evaluation, it appears that getting involved in local decision making and giving something back to the community were important factors. In Shetland, young people liked the idea that they could make a difference to their local area and contribute in a meaningful way. They also wanted to work with a variety of age groups rather than the standard 16-18 and 18-25 age groups that were usually in place. In Renfrewshire, young people wanted to make a difference to their local area but also wanted to “have fun”.

What did young people do as part of LAP activity?

6.21 The main purpose of the LAPs was to assess funding applications and make recommendations to the National Committee on their suitability. Firstly, Youthlink tasked the Panel Members with researching their local area (by asking other young people what they felt the local priorities were) so that they could make more informed decisions about the applications.

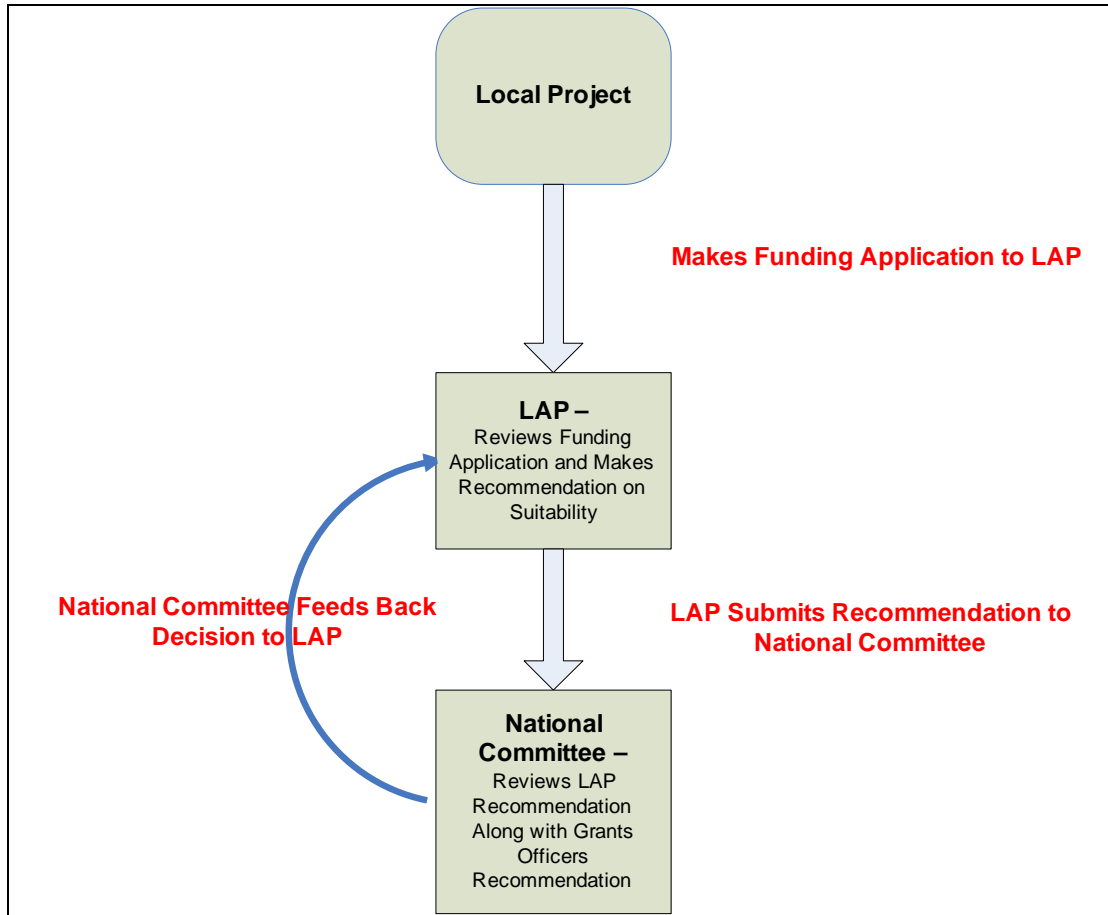
6.22 Panel Members received training from Youthlink on how to assess the applications and how to judge an application that was suitable for their local area against one that was not. They were also informed of the aims, outcomes and priority groups of Young People's Fund in Scotland and how projects should provide evidence that they meet these aims and outcomes and provide support for priority groups. Crucially, Panel Members were trained to look for evidence that young people were actually involved in the project and were not simply beneficiaries of it.

6.23 Youthlink also held a number of regional training days, where LAPs from different areas came together to take part in group training. A total of 500 Panel Members received training for the LAPs over two years.

Funding application process – Local Projects

6.24 Figure 6.1 illustrates the process that applications from projects followed under the Local Projects funding stream.

Figure 6.1 – Funding application process for Local Project strand



6.25 As found in Year 1 of the evaluation, Panel Members said that they did not get as many applications as they had expected²⁷ and often assessed practice applications to get experience of working through the process. This seemed particularly acute in Shetland, where two Panel Members said they did not receive any funding applications during the year and a half that they were on the LAP. The LAP in Renfrewshire also found that few applications came in when the LAP was first set up, although momentum seemed to build as time went on and they began receiving more applications. There was a feeling amongst the Renfrewshire Panel Members that the YPF and the LAP could have been publicised more than it was amongst local Youthwork organisations. This sentiment was shared by some Panel Workers and Members consulted by VDS as part of its evaluation.²⁸

²⁷ This is in keeping with the findings from Year 1 of the evaluation

²⁸ VDS (2008), “Big Lottery Fund Young People’s Panels Evaluation”, p.37

6.26 Partly because of the lack of bids received, LAPs organised other activities for their members. In Shetland, they did a variety of team building exercises such as orienteering and abseiling, and on occasion invited speakers to give talks on local issues. In Renfrewshire, Panel Members received media training and also training on legislation and privacy issues.

Qualification in Participative Democracy

6.27 As part of their experience on the LAP, Panel Members could work towards Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) Level 5 in Participative Democracy. The qualification was created exclusively by Youthlink Scotland and Adam Smith College to recognise Panel Members' training for and attendance at the LAPs. It allowed Panel Members to improve their communication and decision making skills, and to hone their negotiating abilities. In total, 234 Panel Members achieved the qualification.²⁹

6.28 Panel Members were very positive about the qualification and the fact that it gave them something to work towards when funding applications were not coming in as expected. They valued the fact that the qualification gave them recognition for their work on the LAPs, but they also said that it was an enjoyable experience.

6.29 In Renfrewshire, the feedback was very positive but there was some initial confusion about the qualification, in that it was not clear at the outset that the qualification existed or what it involved. This partly substantiates the findings of the VDS evaluation, in which some Panel Workers expressed concern that they did not have enough information about the qualification at the beginning of the contract and therefore "could not adequately explain to the young people what it was".³⁰ It is not clear from the VDS evaluation nor from interviews with Panel Members and stakeholders why this situation arose, however evidence from the interviews suggests that it did not last long and that Panel Members were informed of the qualification in due course.

Relationship with the National Committee

6.30 The National Committee consisted of 7 young people and 2 or 3 adult members. It met every 2 months and assessed around 15 to 30 funding applications each time. It was tasked with making the final decisions on funding applications passed to it by the LAPs. The Committee used the recommendation from the LAP and a copy of priorities for the LAP's local area, but also used information that the LAP did not have access to, such as financial information on the organisation and the assessment of the YPF Grants Officers. In most instances the National Committee agreed with the recommendation from the LAPs, however in 14 cases they disagreed. In 10 of these, the LAP had endorsed the funding application but the National Committee had decided not to

²⁹ VDS (2008), "Big Lottery Fund Young People's Panels Evaluation", p.19

³⁰ VDS (2008), "Big Lottery Fund Young People's Panels Evaluation", p.20

endorse it, whilst on four occasions the LAP had not endorsed the application whereas the National Committee had chosen to award funding.

6.31 On balance, the arrangement between the LAPs and the National Committee seems to have worked well. However, through interviews with Panel Members and review of VDS' evaluation of the LAPs it seems that quality of feedback from the National Committee to the LAPs was sometimes an issue. The Panel Members did not feel that the quality of feedback from the National Committee on its decisions was particularly good and they were often unsure if their recommendation had been endorsed or not. When the National Committee decided against their recommendation, the LAPs did not feel they got enough information as to why this was.³¹ This view was supported by Youthlink, however they acknowledged that the situation improved over time. Part of the reason for this was that BIG responded to the issue and provided enhanced feedback to the LAPs on the decisions taken by the National Committee.

6.32 The National Committee member interviewed by the study team also felt that there was more scope to involve LAP members in their activities. They suggested that it might have been beneficial to all if they had more opportunities to spend time together, perhaps with each LAP (or small groups of LAPs) coming together with the National Committee for a day to establish relationships and gain a better mutual understanding of their activities.

Impact of participation on Panel Members

6.33 An observation in Year 1 of the evaluation was that the skills young people gained from participating in the LAPs would be beneficial to them in later life. This sentiment appears to have been borne out. For example:

- One Panel Member in Shetland said that her work on the Panel has made her more confident and more competent in her job.
- One Panel Member in Shetland said that she will add the qualification in Participative Democracy to her CV and that it will help in applications for university and jobs.
- Panel Members in Renfrewshire said that they are more motivated and confident in putting their opinions across, especially in their jobs.
- A Panel Member in Glasgow said that participating in the Panel improved his decision making skills and increased his confidence. He also said that the positive experiences on the Panel encouraged them to be involved in more volunteering activities in the future.

6.34 The VDS evaluation also gathered the views of 187 Panel Members, with key points being that:

³¹ VDS (2008), "Big Lottery Fund Young People's Panels Evaluation", p.36

- 92 per cent felt they had significantly improved their ability to work as a group.
- 84 per cent felt they had significantly improved their communication skills.
- 70 per cent said their work on the LAP had made them feel part of the community.
- 51 per cent said they had accessed further opportunities such as further volunteering or employment as a direct result of LAP involvement.³²

Conclusion – have LAPs contributed to YPF's outcomes in Scotland?

6.35 As set out previously, the outcomes of YPF in Scotland are that young people will gain:

- More and better opportunities to gain the confidence and skills and support they need to deal with change in their lives and contribute to their local communities.
- More and better opportunities to be involved in making decisions about issues and policies that affect them in their communities.
- More and better opportunities to take part in activities that make them feel good about themselves.

6.36 Looking at the evidence gathered by the study team, and drawing on the evidence from the VDS evaluation, it would appear that the **LAPs have been largely successful in contributing to these outcomes**. Feedback from the Panel Members suggests that they have gained confidence and learned new skills, particularly as a result of working to achieve the SCQF Level 5 in Participative Democracy. They also felt that they contributed to their local community and had a chance to make decisions about their local area. However in some areas the lack of funding applications has had a negative impact on this, as has the perception that feedback from the National Committee was not of the quality it should have been, particularly at the start of the process.

Projects funded by YPF in Scotland

6.37 This section looks at the projects funded through YPF in Scotland and the impact that their activity has had on young people. It examines the impact on not just young people that are beneficiaries of activity, but also those that are actively involved in some way.³³

Assessment and grant management

6.38 Initial funding allocated by YPF in Scotland was split into three separate strands to support different types of projects:

³² VDS (2008), "Big Lottery Fund Young People's Panels Evaluation", p.43-44

³³ By "involved" we mean young people have influence over planning, delivering, managing, evaluating and project activity.

- **Local Projects** – £11.4 million was available to support projects that covered one local authority area.
- **Wider Inclusion Projects** – £2.85 million was available to projects that covered more than one local authority area and that targeted non-geographic communities.
- **New Ideas** – £4.75 million was available to fund projects that tried out new approaches for engaging young people, that carried out groundbreaking work, and that adapted approaches used successfully elsewhere.

6.39 As Table 6.2 shows, just under £24 million was allocated to projects by YPF in Scotland. This is because YPF received an additional £5 million to allocate to projects, but this was not allocated to a particular strand. The greatest proportion of the total was allocated to recipients in the Local Projects strand. The Wider Inclusion strand did not allocate all of its funding.

Table 6.2 – Number of projects allocated YPF funding

Strand	No. projects	Available funding (£millions)	Allocated funding	% of total available funding
Local Projects	158	£11.4	£15,335,630	135%
New Ideas	5	£2.85	£1,792,821	63%
Wider Inclusion	38	£4.75	£6,691,643	141%
Total	201	£19.0	£23,820,094	

NB: An additional £1million was used to establish and support the LAPs that is not included in the table.

Source: BIG 2008

6.40 Applicants were asked at the assessment stage which of the YPF's outcomes in Scotland their project contributed to. Table 6.3 demonstrates that the majority contributed to outcomes “more and better opportunities to take part in activities that make them feel good about themselves” (97 per cent) and “more and better opportunities to gain confidence and skills and support they need to deal with the change in their lives and contribute to their local communities” (91 per cent).

Table 6.3 – Contribution of projects to the outcomes of YPF in Scotland

Outcomes	% of projects
More and better opportunities to take part in activities that make them feel good about themselves	97%
More and better opportunities to gain the confidence and skills and support they need to deal with the change in their lives and contribute to their local communities	91%
More and better opportunities to be involved in making decisions about issues and policies that affect them in their communities	38%

Source – BIG 2008

6.41 Grants Officers in Scotland report that the broadness of the outcomes means that every project contributes to “more and better opportunities to take part in activities that make them feel good about themselves.” Grants Officers said that the broad outcomes makes it more difficult for projects to assess their impact and therefore more challenging to evaluate YPF overall. Although this has meant that a diverse range of activity has been funded through YPF in Scotland, with hindsight, perhaps the outcomes should have been more specific.

6.42 Nevertheless, Grants Officers said that the outcome “more and better opportunities to be involved in making decisions about issues and policies that affect them in their communities” is the most defined. It has the potential to generate real, sustained and measurable impact and in tandem with the LAPs, has been a significant innovation for this type of programme.

Meeting the outcomes of YPF in Scotland

6.43 Taking the survey responses of project staff, **the majority say they contribute to all three of YPF's outcomes in Scotland**, with 100 per cent of projects contributing to the outcome “more and better opportunities to gain the confidence and skills and support they need to deal with the change in their lives and contribute to their local communities” (Table 6.4). In terms of outcome three “more and better opportunities to be involved in making decisions about issues and policies that affect them in their communities”, the proportions citing it at the application stage (38 per cent) is lower than that which cited it in the survey of projects (55 per cent). Possible reasons for this could be that the survey targeted 60 projects, whilst 201 projects received funding from YPF in Scotland³⁴, or it could be that project workers feel their project has increased its contribution to this outcome as the project has developed over time.

6.44 When asked to indicate which outcome most closely matches the main activity of their project, 53 per cent report that “**more and better opportunities to gain the confidence and skills and support they need to deal with the change in their lives and contribute to their local communities**” is the closest match. Only five per cent of projects report that “more and better opportunities to be involved in making decisions about issues and policies that affect them in their communities” is the closest match to their main project activity.

³⁴ The survey sample was not designed to be representative by project outcomes

Table 6.4 – Contribution of projects to YPF outcomes

Outcome	Projects Contributing to Outcome	Projects Whose Main Activity Closely Matches Outcome
More and better opportunities to gain the confidence and skills and support they need to deal with the change in their lives and contribute to their local communities	100%	53%
More and better opportunities to take part in activities that make them feel good about themselves	92%	42%
More and better opportunities to be involved in making decisions about issues and policies that affect them in their communities	55%	5%

Source: Wavehill Survey of YPF Projects 2009 – 60 responses

NOTE: Percentages in first column do not equal 100 due to multiple responses

How useful are the outcomes in Scotland?

6.45 **Case study projects are positive about the outcomes** and find that their broad nature gives them flexibility to adapt activities according to the needs of young people. One of the case study project managers praised the Young People's Fund saying that it was the only fund at the time that was flexible enough to support her project as it concentrated on meeting the needs of young people rather than on the area's funding needs. This contrasts with the views of the Grants Officers (paragraph 6.41).

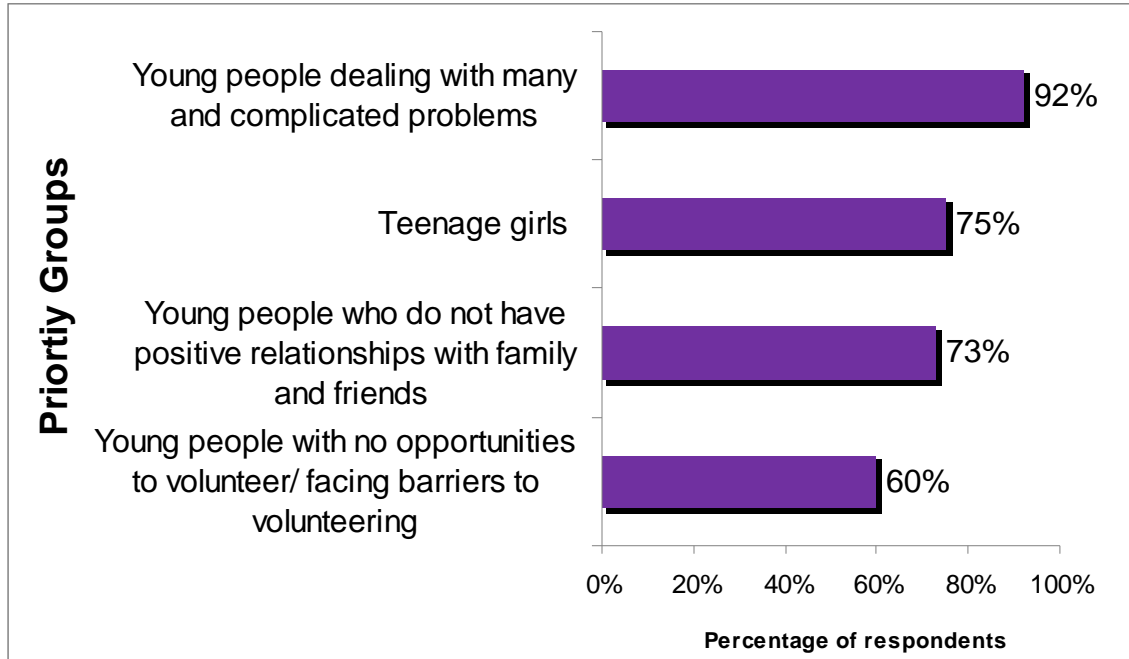
Contribution of projects to the priority groups

6.46 In addition to the three main outcomes, projects are also required to make a contribution to the **priority groups** that the YPF in Scotland targets. **The majority of projects contribute to more than one priority group** (Figure 6.2), with:

- 92 per cent engaging young people who are dealing with many and complicated problems.
- 75 per cent engaging teenage girls.
- 73 per cent engaging young people who do not have positive relationships with family and friends.
- 60 per cent engaging young people with no opportunities to volunteer/facing barriers to volunteering.

6.47 Again taking the views of Grants Officers, they report that the priority groups were useful in informing the assessment stage, but were not really considered after this stage.

Figure 6.2 - Projects that are actively engaging young people who are...



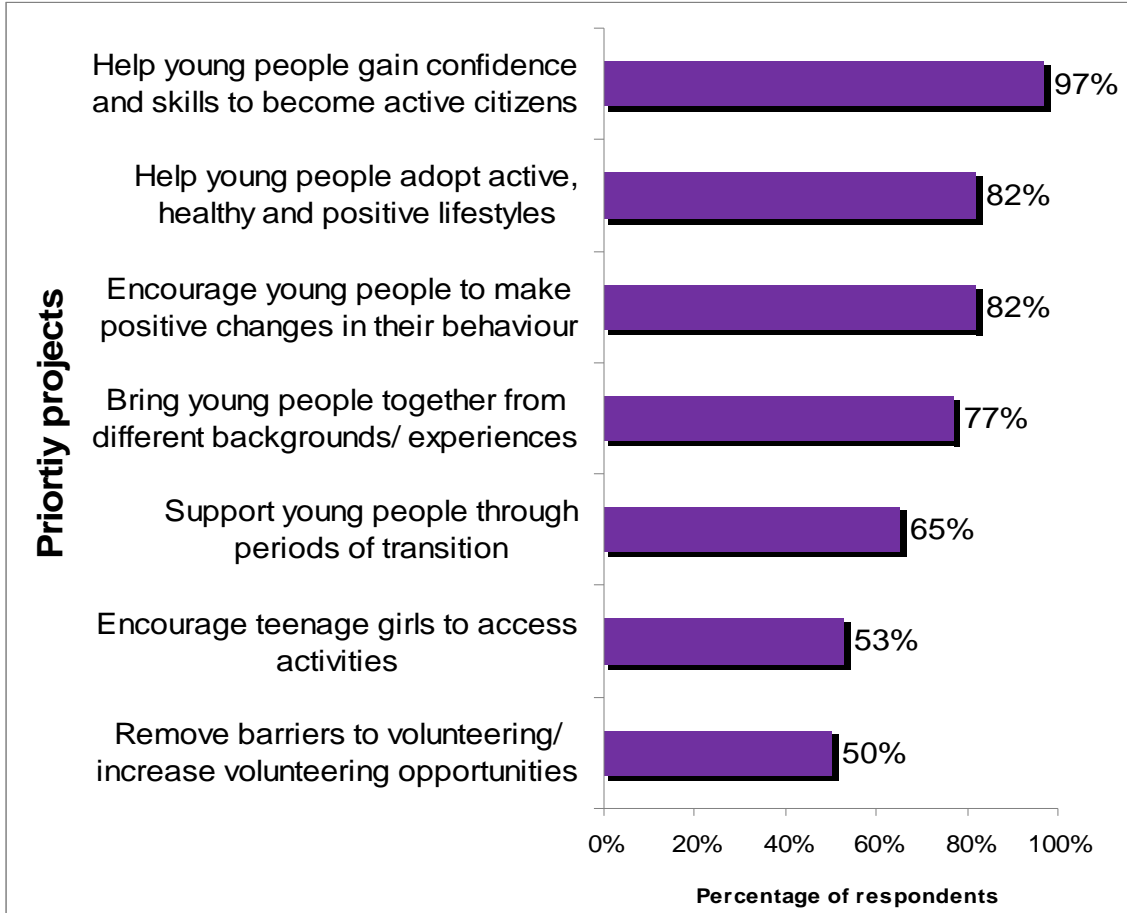
Source: Wavehill Survey of YPF Projects 2009 – 60 responses

NOTE: percentages do not equal 100 due to multiple responses

Contribution of projects to the YPF priority projects

6.48 The YPF in Scotland also has seven priority projects that funded projects could make a contribution to. As Figure 6.3 shows, **97 per cent of respondents feel that the priority project that most closely matches the aims of their own project is “help young people gain confidence and skills to become active citizens”.**

Figure 6.3 - Priority projects that most closely match the aims of the project



Source: Wavehill Survey of YPF Projects 2009 – 60 responses

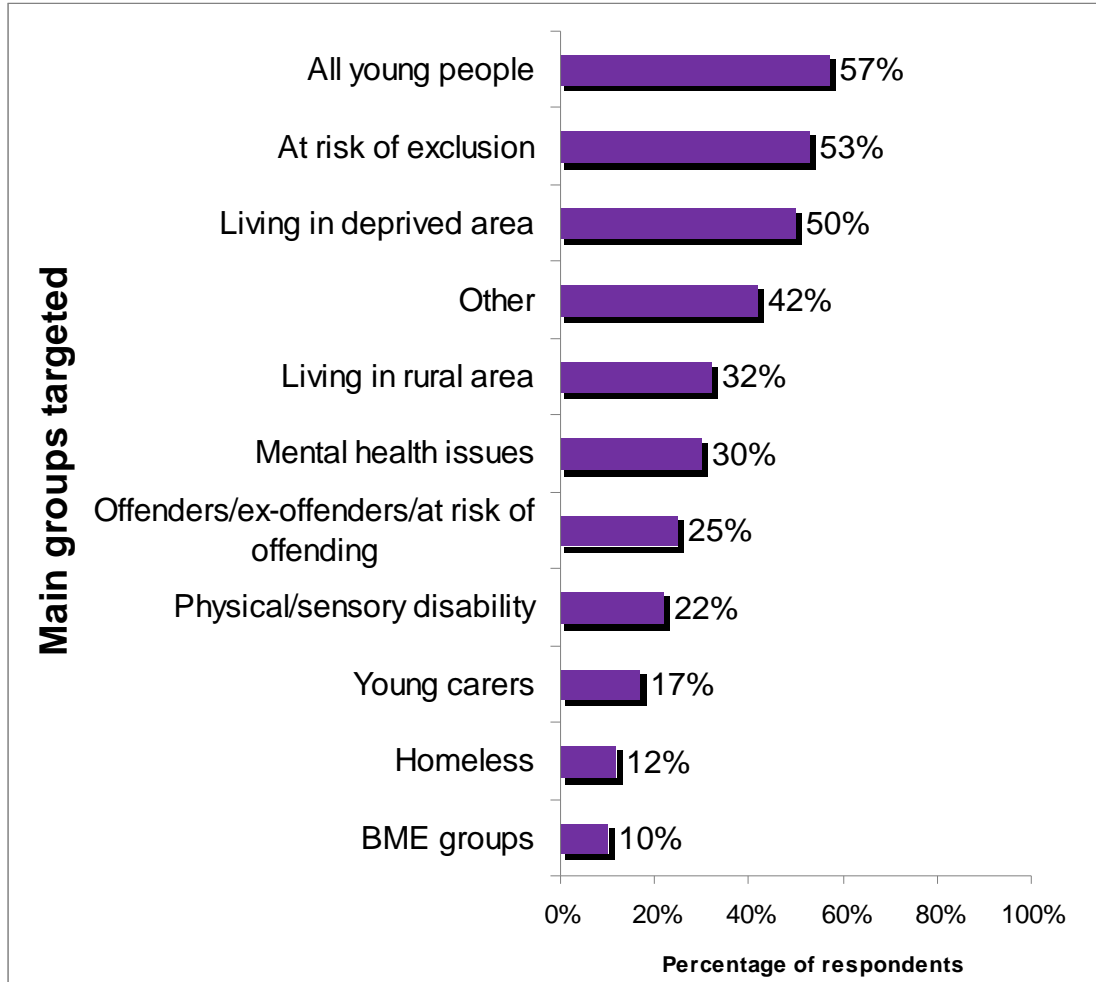
NOTE: percentages do not equal 100 due to multiple responses

What groups of young people are projects targeting?

6.49 The majority of projects (57 per cent) report that they target all young people (Figure 6.4). A significant proportion (53 per cent) target young people at risk of exclusion, whilst half target young people living in deprived areas.

6.50 Forty two per cent of projects also target other groups of young people, the most common of which are those with a history of alcohol or substance misuse. Some projects also target those young people with additional support needs.

Figure 6.4 - Main groups targeted by the project



Source: Wavehill Survey of YPF Projects 2009 – 60 responses

NOTE: percentages do not equal 100 due to multiple responses

6.51 NICHE (Nurturing Individuals’ Creativity Harnesses Employment) is a good example of a project that targets young people dealing with a range of issues (case study example 1).

Case study example 1 – NICHE

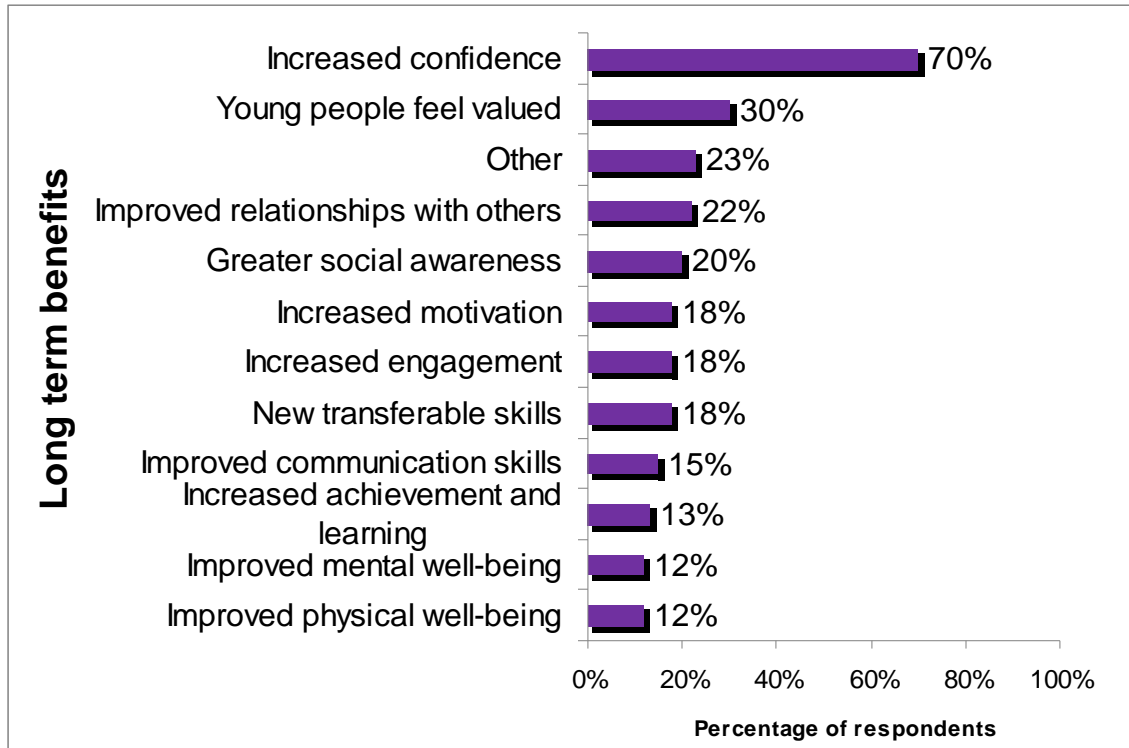
NICHE is part of PEEK (Possibilities for East End Kids), a project for young people that operates in the Calton district of Glasgow’s East End. The overarching aim of NICHE is to give young people the skills that they will need in employment, further education and training, and in volunteering. NICHE engages young people who are offending or have offended in the past; experiencing behavioural issues; truanting/excluded from school; experiencing addiction issues; and being affected by homelessness. NICHE also caters more

broadly for those young people who have left school with a lack of skills and qualifications; who have low self-esteem; and who may need to develop life skills and receive advice on training/employment opportunities.

Long term impact of participation in project activity

6.52 Overall, project workers are confident that young people will experience a wide variety of benefits in the long term as a result of participating in project activity (Figure 6.5). They are of the opinion that the main benefit will be **increased confidence (70 per cent of projects)**, but that they will experience a number of other benefits such as **feeling valued (30 per cent)**, **improved relationships with others (22 per cent)** and **greater social awareness (20 per cent)**.

Figure 6.5 - Most significant long term benefits of participation



Source: Wavehill Survey of YPF Projects 2009 – 60 responses
 NOTE: percentages do not equal 100 due to multiple responses

6.53 Findings from the interviews with staff in the case study projects supported the survey findings that increased confidence is one of the main benefits that young people get from participating in project activity. This is illustrated by the Fairways project, which helps young people with learning difficulties make the transition to adulthood. The young people receive peer mentoring support and form Friendship Circles to which they can invite their friends and do whatever activity they like doing. They learn to take charge of their own lives and make

decisions. Young people report that they feel much more confident because of Fairways and better able to direct their own lives.

6.54 The Bridge Centre Motorcycle Project provides a further useful illustration of how an innovative approach can help build the confidence and self-esteem of young people (case study example 2)

Case study example 2 – Bridge Centre Motorcycle Project

One strand of activity at the Motorcycle Project helps young people in primary school gain the confidence and self assurance to make the transition to secondary school. Young people are referred to the project and work with staff in small groups to talk about any issues they may be facing in their personal lives, and to help them construct a more positive view of both themselves and how they see the future.

By encouraging young people to ride the motorcycles, project staff help them to conquer their fear of the unknown and to try new things. It is not only the staff themselves that notice a difference in the young people, the young people say that they feel much more confident because of their attendance at the workshops and through riding the motorcycles. They feel more positive about making the transition to secondary school and look forward to trying new things.

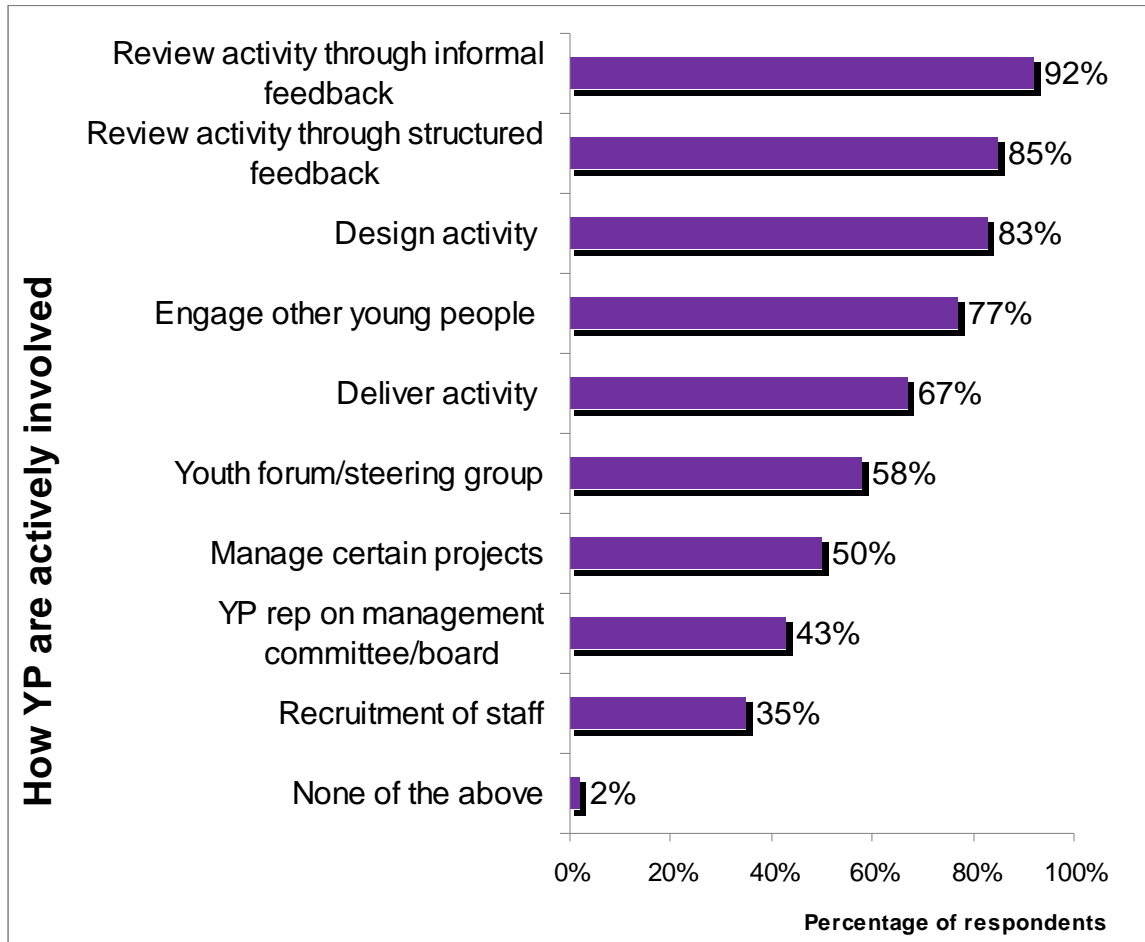
Are projects involving young people?

6.55 A major aim of the YPF is to increase participation of children and young people through their active involvement in the development, delivery, management and evaluation of project activity.

6.56 Figure 6.6 shows the ways in which young people are 'actively involved' in these key elements of projects and illustrates the fact that **in Scotland, the vast majority of projects promote the active involvement of young people.**

6.57 To do this, projects typically employ some form of **feedback mechanism** to allow young people to influence reviews of project activity. Specifically, 92 per cent of projects use informal feedback mechanisms, whilst 85 per cent use a structured feedback approach. A large proportion of projects (83 per cent) also involve young people in the **design** of project activity.

Figure 6.6 - How young people are actively involved with the project



Source: Wavehill Survey of YPF Projects 2009 – 60 responses
 NOTE: percentages do not equal 100 due to multiple responses

Are projects young person led?

6.58 Table 6.5 summarises the level of involvement that young people have in various aspects of project activity. It shows that the **involvement of young people is most significant when evaluating and influencing the ongoing development of project activity**. In 42 per cent of projects young people take the lead on this aspect of activity, whilst in 3 per cent young people are exclusively responsible for it. There is also significant involvement of young people in the **delivery** of project activity. In 30 per cent of projects young people take the lead, whilst in 15 per cent they are exclusively responsible for delivery of activity.

Table 6.5 - Involvement of young people in different stages of project activity

	Percentage of projects				
	Exclusively young people	Young people take lead	Even mix	Project workers take lead	Exclusively project workers
Initial development	3%	27%	22%	32%	17%
Delivery	15%	30%	15%	37%	3%
Management	2%	22%	10%	42%	25%
Evaluation/ongoing development	3%	42%	33%	18%	3%

Source - Wavehill Survey of YPF Projects 2009 – 60 responses

6.59 A good example of a project in which young people plan, deliver and evaluate activity is Express Yourself (case study example 3).

Case study example 3 – Express Yourself

The Express Yourself project is one that uses dance and drama to engage young people that live in deprived areas, with a particular focus on teenage girls. When teenage girls first come to the project they take part in the workshops, but after a while (and if they are ready for the role) they can volunteer to become peer educators. They go through training which includes basic youth work training and shadowing of tutors to gain experience of running the workshops. They get to a point where they are responsible for the planning, delivery and evaluation of their own activity. The fact that the peer educators also took part in workshops at an earlier stage gives them more of an understanding of what works and how best to deliver activities that young people will enjoy.

6.60 It appears from the survey of projects that young people are not involved as heavily in the management of projects (Table 6.5). Despite this, Figure 6.6 has shown that young people will often be **represented on project steering groups** (58 per cent of projects), that they will **manage certain projects within the main project** (50 per cent) or that a **young person will be on a project's management committee/board**.

Are all young people involved?

6.61 Whilst the proportion of projects reporting the active involvement of young people is relatively high, it is important to assess the extent to which this correlates with the number of young people that are actively involved.

6.62 Table 6.6 shows the average proportion of young people across the sample of projects that are involved for each category of involvement stated above. The data suggests that on average, lower level involvement (for example giving feedback) is lower than might be expected. Just over two-thirds (67 per cent) of young people feed back informally, whilst 60 per cent feed back in a formalised manner. Compared to the proportion of projects citing these methods

of involvement (92 and 85 per cent respectively) these figures suggest that not every young person in a project that involves young people is actually actively involved. This may be the young person's choice however, and it is not possible to provide a robust explanation for these figures from the survey responses.

6.63 Figures for higher level involvement (for example managing certain projects; participating on a management committee; or recruiting staff) are lower again. For example, on average:

- 21 per cent of young people in each of the projects manage certain strands of activity/projects
- 6 per cent of young people are involved on a project's management committee
- 5 per cent of young people are involved in the recruitment of staff.

6.64 This is understandable given that the number of young people involved in managing a project will always be lower than those feeding back on it or participating in its activity.

Table 6.6 – Percentage of project beneficiaries 'actively involved'

Means of involvement	Percentage of projects employing method	Mean percentage of young people within project that are involved (%)
Review through informal feedback	92%	67%
Review through structured feedback	85%	60%
Design activity	83%	23%
Engage other young people	77%	33%
Deliver activity	67%	24%
Youth forum/ steering group	58%	16%
Manage certain projects	50%	21%
YP rep. on management committee	43%	6%
Recruitment of staff	35%	5%

Source: Wavehill survey of YPF projects – 60 responses

Note: Mean per centage of involved young people within project is based on responses of those who could provide figures

Measuring involvement

6.65 The survey asked respondents to rate the level of youth participation in their project against Hart's Ladder of Participation.³⁵ The Ladder provides a means of measuring youth involvement in a given project according to the extent

³⁵ Hart R, (1992), "Children's Participation: From Tokenism to Citizenship", UNICEF

to which young people influence and make decisions on the aims of the project and its activity. The Ladder does not confer value judgements on projects that operate between Rungs 4 and 8 of the Ladder, and a project on Rung 4 of the Ladder does not necessarily have inferior levels of involvement to a project on Rung 8.³⁶

6.66 The findings suggest that projects in Scotland have a **relatively high level of youth participation** (Table 6.7). For example, in a quarter of projects it was young people that had the initial idea for the project and continue to take the lead (Rungs 8 and 7 on Hart's Ladder), whilst a further 68 per cent of respondents said it was designed by staff but that participants are consulted as part of the decision making process (Rungs 6 and 5 on Hart's Ladder).

6.67 In a small minority of projects (seven per cent) young people do not have any real influence (Rungs 3 to 1 of Hart's Ladder).

Table 6.7 – Level of participation in relation Hart's Ladder³⁷

Description – Hart's Ladder of Participation	Per centage
Rung 8 - Participants have the idea, set up project and invite staff to join with them in making decisions	8%
Rung 7 - Participants have the initial idea and decide how the project is to be carried out. Staff are available but do not take charge.	17%
Rung 6 - Staff have the initial idea but participants are involved in every step of the planning and implementation: their views are considered and they are involved in taking the decisions.	33%
Rung 5 - The project is designed and run by staff but participants are consulted. They have a full understanding of the process and their opinions are taken seriously.	35%
Rung 4 - Staff decide on the project and participants volunteer for it. Staff respect their views	3%
Rung 3 - Participants are asked to say what they think about an issue but have little or no choice about the way they express those views or the scope of the ideas they can express.	2%
Rung 2 - Participants take part in an event but they do not understand the issue.	2%
Rung 1 - Participants do or say what staff suggest they do, but have no real understanding of the issue, or have been asked what they think. Staff use some of their ideas but do not tell them what influence they have had on the final decision	0%

³⁶ Hart believes that Rungs 4 to 8 of the Ladder indicate young people's true involvement in activity

³⁷ Hart, R. (1992), *Children's Participation from Tokenism to Citizenship*. Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre.

6.68 The Fairways project represents a good example of how young people that are involved in a steering group influence the activity of a project (case study example 4).

Case study example 4 – Fairways

The Fairways project is one that helps young people with learning difficulties or disabilities make the transition to adulthood. It offers a wide range of activity to the young people that includes peer mentoring, one-to-one support with professional staff and Friendship Circles. The project involves the young people in the planning of activity through its Advisory Group. The Group is made up of project staff, young people and peer mentors who are the same age as the young people. The Group provides a steer on the types of activity that are delivered through the project and has in the past been involved in the recruitment of staff to the project.

The Advisory Group engenders a much greater sense of buy-in from the young people and is an effective means of generating support amongst them. Relationships between young people and project staff are two-way instead of one-way and lead to greater mutual respect between staff and young people. The young people develop negotiating and communication skills, learning how to put forward opinions in a constructive way.

Barriers to involvement

6.69 The evidence from the survey of projects suggests that they experience a variety of barriers and challenges to actively involving young people. One of the more commonly cited challenges is **generating commitment from young people**, especially at the start of the process. This can be because of low levels of self-esteem and confidence amongst the young people that make them reluctant to put themselves forward for more involved roles.

6.70 In some cases, the **nature of the project and its target group of young people may mean that it is neither appropriate nor practical to have them more heavily involved** in planning, delivering, managing and/or evaluating project activity. This is often the case in projects to which young people are referred (by, for example, schools and social work departments) and in which they take part in set activity to help them reach a specific goal.

6.71 The Bridge Centre Motorcycle Project provides a good illustration of this. One of the core services that the project provides is for young people making the transition from primary to secondary school. Staff run workshops and other group activities to help build the young people's confidence and self assurance. The **young people take part in the project for a very specific purpose**, and the schools that refer them expect to see results. Therefore although the project takes into account informal feedback from the young people, they have no formal influence over the activity they take part in.

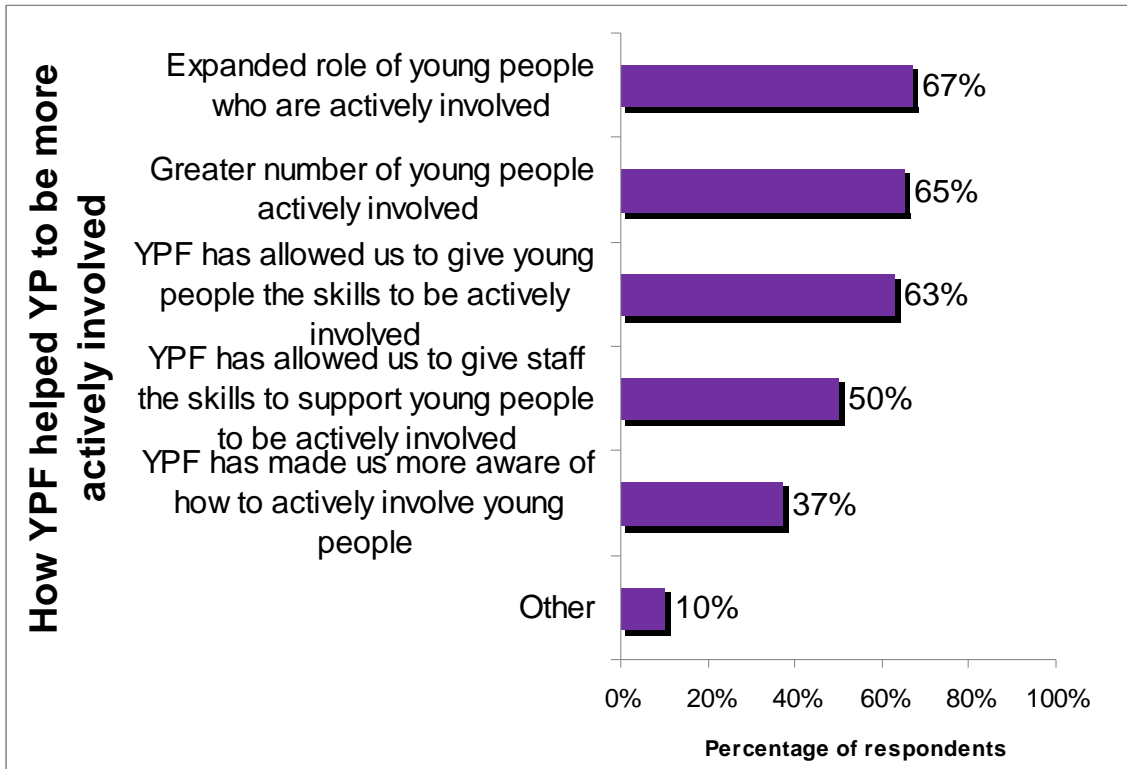
Change in level of involvement

6.72 Overall, the majority of projects (83 per cent) feel that young people have become more actively involved over the course of the funding period. Five per cent said they had not, whilst the remainder said it was not applicable or that they did not know.

6.73 It appears that YPF in Scotland plays a major role in getting young people involved in project activity (Figure 6.7). The survey of projects workers shows that:

- 67 per cent of projects state that YPF has allowed them to **expand the role** of young people that are actively involved.
- 65 per cent state that YPF has allowed them to **increase the number** of young people that are actively involved.
- 63 per cent state that YPF has allowed them to give **young people the skills** to be actively involved.

Figure 6.7 – How YPF has helped young people become more actively involved



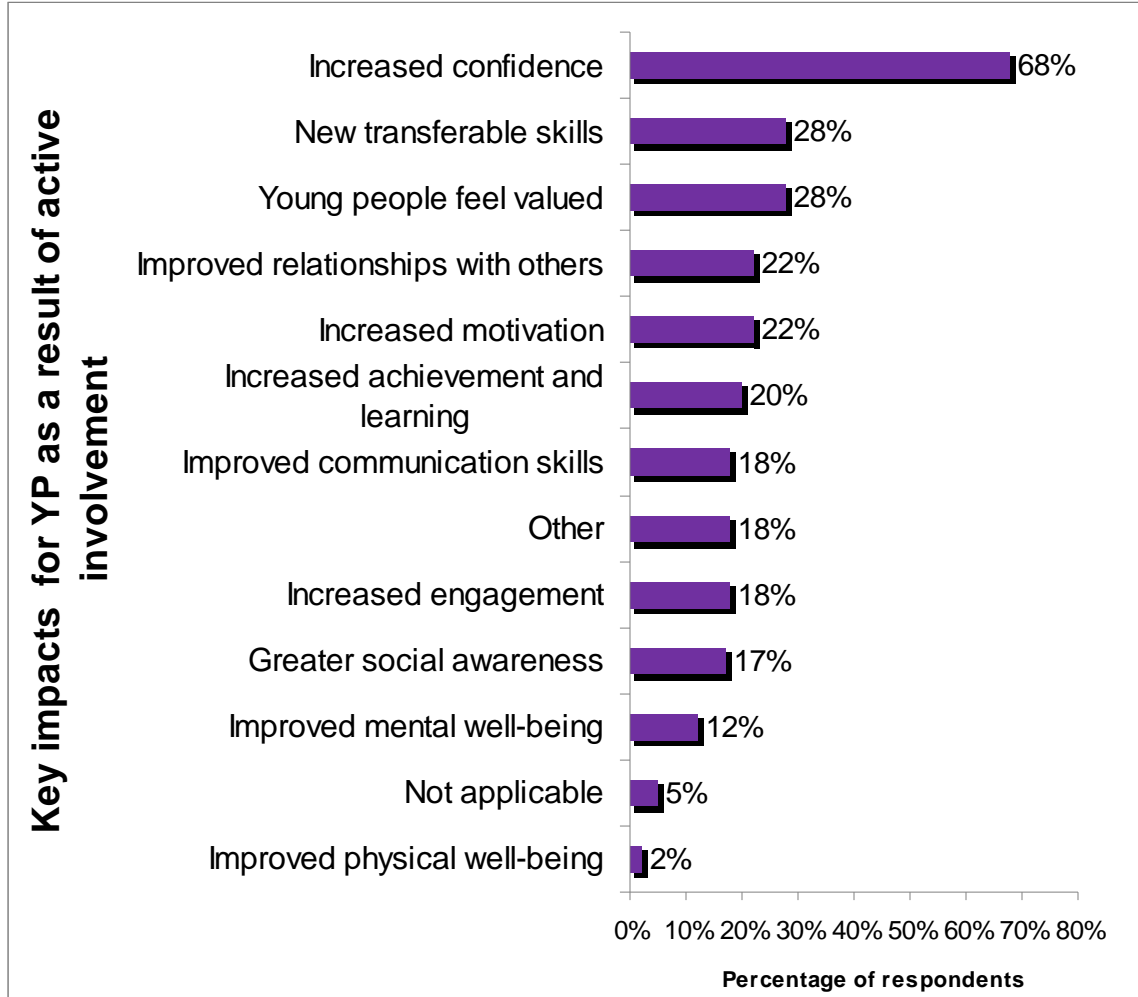
Source: Wavehill Survey of YPF Projects 2009 – 60 responses
 NOTE: percentages do not equal 100 due to multiple responses

Impact of active involvement

6.74 As with participating in project activity, **increased confidence** seems to be the main benefit that projects report actively involved young people gain (68

per cent of projects). However, over a quarter of projects (28 per cent) report that young people gain **new transferable skills**, whilst the same proportion suggest that young people **feel valued** (Figure 6.8).

Figure 6.8 – Three most significant benefits of active involvement



Source: Wavehill Survey of YPF Projects 2009 – 60 responses
 NOTE: percentages do not equal 100 due to multiple responses

6.75 These findings are substantiated by the views of young people themselves. For example, those who are actively involved in the Express Yourself drama project (as peer educators) say that being involved in this way has a multitude of benefits, particularly around their current and future employability. They have improved their communication skills and their timekeeping, and feel more independent. As a result, their confidence has increased. One young person entered a university course in sports science after feeling empowered to do so through their work as a peer educator.

6.76 In addition to the impact on young people, the case study visits found evidence that the involvement of young people can have positive impacts on the project itself, as in St Joseph's Learning Partnership (case study example 5).

Case study example 5 – St Josephs Learning Partnership

At St Josephs Learning Partnership young people have gradually become more involved in both planning and delivery, including high-level decision making on the best use of resources. This has improved the project as the young people have been given the freedom to develop new ideas for volunteering, and have also started new clubs. One of these is a games club to help the transition of the most vulnerable children from primary to secondary school. The young people have also started a cheerleading club for young girls. Both of these clubs have added to what the Partnership can offer, and gives it further means to engage additional young people.

Legacy of YPF

Strategic partnership

6.77 All of the surveyed projects work in partnership with other organisations, the largest proportion of which (87 per cent) work with **voluntary sector organisations and schools**. Almost three quarters (72 per cent) work with community learning and development organisations. Over half of projects work with the police (57 per cent) and social work departments (52 per cent).

6.78 In most cases partnership working tends to be on an informal basis. Of the 9 organisations/departments that respondents were asked to comment on, the majority said they formed an informal partnership with 8 of them. The one organisation with which the majority worked in a formal partnership was Education Departments, though this answer was given by a slender majority of 51 per cent.

6.79 Project workers believe that working as part of a strategic partnership brings several benefits, such as:

- **Sharing resources, expertise and contacts.** This leads to expanded delivery to the target groups, but also means that projects become more aware of groups that they could be targeting. The knowledge that partner agencies bring helps to enhance the service that young people receive.
- Related to this is the **avoidance of duplication**. By working in partnership, it is clear who is responsible for which area of delivery and resources can be tailored to each agency's specific role.

6.80 The main challenge of strategic partnership working is finding the **time to commit to it properly**. This is not just the time on the part of the project workers, there is also an issue on the time that partner agencies are willing to commit. Another challenge is the fact that although the partners are working

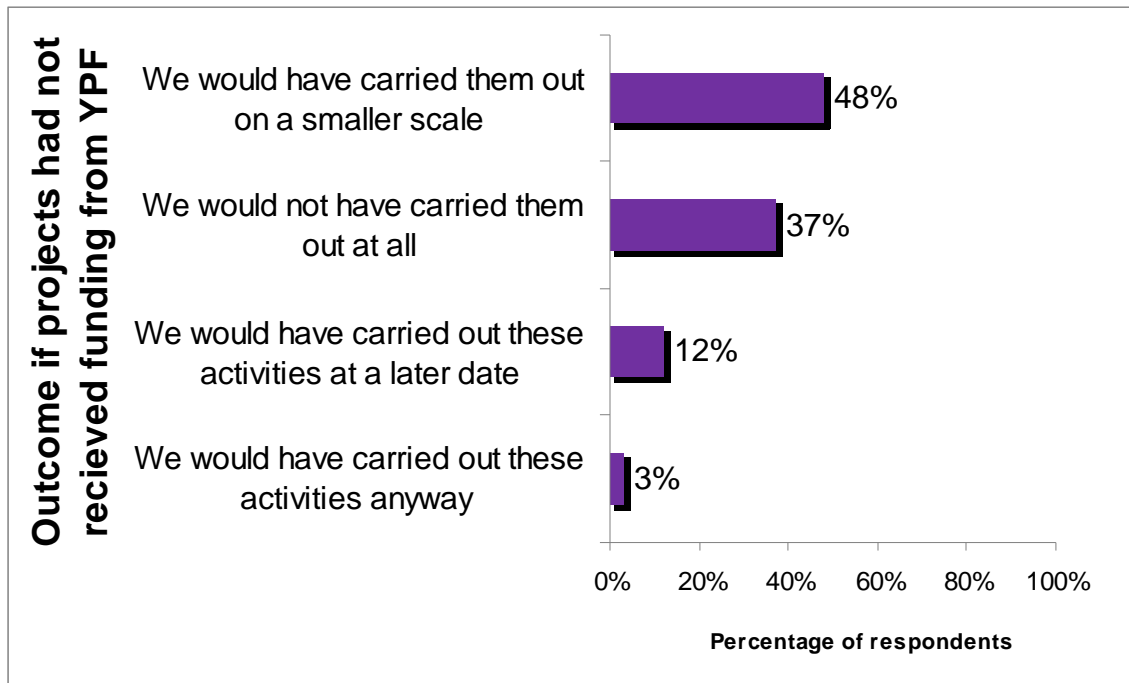
together, they may have differing agendas and so reaching agreement can be difficult.

Impact of YPF on project activity

6.81 The YPF in Scotland has had a **significant effect on project activity**. As Figure 6.9 shows, over a third of projects (37 per cent) **would not have been able to carry out any project activity without YPF funding**. YPF has allowed projects to deliver activity on an increased scale than they would have otherwise (48 per cent of projects) and has allowed a minority of projects to deliver activity more quickly (12 per cent). Just three per cent of projects said they would have carried out their activities anyway if YPF funding wasn't available.

6.82 It is clear that YPF has had a significant additionality effect, in terms of both overall net impact and the scale and timing of project activity.

Figure 6.9 – Additionality associated with YPF



Source: Wavehill Survey of YPF Projects 2009 – 60 responses

6.83 Findings from the case studies substantiate these sentiments. Funding from YPF has allowed them to deliver activity at a greater scale than they would otherwise, and in many cases has allowed them to deliver distinct strands of activity that have had a significant impact on young people. For example:

- Without YPF funding, the Bridge Centre Motorcycle Project would not have been able to deliver the referral based activity for young people with behavioural issues. The success of the activity that they did deliver has allowed them to demonstrate the project to more local schools and has increased the demand for their service.

- YPF funding allowed the Express Yourself project to employ a full-time development worker, funded training for young people to become peer educators, and allowed them to pay the peer educators for the work that they do. Without funding from YPF the project would not have been able to deliver this activity at all, and would not have been able to actively involve young people in the way that it has.
- The YPF has wholly funded the development of a radio station at St Joseph's Learning Partnership. Young people have had significant input into the design of this project, and when it is fully operational they will have full control of the station. Without funding from YPF, the radio station would not have happened at all.

Future

6.84 There is some optimism amongst a minority of project workers that their project will be sustained following the end of the YPF funding period, however a significant proportion appear to be uncertain, perhaps because for many projects YPF funding is due to end soon. Just under a third (32 per cent) said that it will be sustained, whilst 40 per cent said that it might be. A further 17 per cent said that some aspects of the project will continue. For example, staff and young people at St Josephs Learning Partnership hope that the project will continue through the extensive partnership network the project has developed within East Ayrshire.

6.85 This suggests that YPF has had a catalytic effect, and has contributed to the sustainability of projects.

Summary

6.86 The findings from the survey of projects and findings from the case studies have demonstrated that YPF in Scotland has helped projects to have significant impact on young people. Specifically:

- The majority of projects feel that they contribute to all three of YPF's outcomes. However projects feel that outcomes 1 and 2 are the closest match to their project's activity.
- The broadness of the outcomes has been seen as something of a weakness by Grants Officers, however projects take a different view and believe it gives them the flexibility to adapt activity to the changing needs of young people if necessary.
- Projects say the biggest impact they have is on young people's confidence. This is true of both young people that are participants and of those that are actively involved.
- Projects feel that young people that are actively involved develop transferrable skills to a greater extent than those that are not actively involved.

- Additionality of YPF is high. In the absence of YPF funding, surveyed projects and case studies believe they would not have carried out activity to the same scale or in the same time period, and in a third of cases not at all.
- A significant proportion of project workers are unsure if their project will be sustained following the end of YPF funding

Conclusions

Meeting the outcomes of YPF in Scotland

6.87 Evidence gathered during Year 3 of the evaluation suggests that the funded project activity, coupled with the implementation of the LAPs, have made a significant contribution to meeting the outcomes of YPF in Scotland.

6.88 The broad nature of outcomes themselves are seen by the projects as a useful way to frame project activity, as they allow them to adapt activity as the needs of young people change. From an evaluation perspective, it is perhaps more difficult to properly assess the “fit” of projects with these outcomes because of their broadness, a view articulated by the Grants Officers.

6.89 In Scotland, the 4 priority groups and 7 priority projects provide additional guiding principles that projects were assessed against at the application stage. However it does not appear that they provide any current guide to the projects as to whom they target activity at, nor do the Grants Officers believe they are particularly relevant once a project receives funding.

6.90 Nonetheless, projects feel that they target many of the priority groups and projects anyway and that they often overlap. Case study projects suggest that, for example, young people dealing with many and complicated problems will very often not have positive relationships with family and friends. The majority of projects feel they contribute to more than one priority group and to more than one priority project.

6.91 In addition, the YPF in Scotland demonstrates close alignment with the current devolved administration's priorities, particularly regarding the contribution YPF can make to achieving the National Outcome “our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.”³⁸

Involvement

6.92 Increasing the involvement of young people in the design, delivery, management and evaluation of project activity is the overarching aim of YPF in the UK. Through the implementation of the LAPs, YPF in Scotland has developed an innovative approach for this type of programme that has undoubtedly helped to increase the influence that young people can have in local funding decisions.

³⁸ Scottish Government (2007), “National Outcomes”,

6.93 Judging by the evidence from both the interviews with young people and the evaluation of the LAPs by VDS, there is a demonstrable impact on young people from having participated in the LAPs, particularly on their confidence, communication skills, and awareness of priorities in their local area. Perhaps where the LAPs have not been as successful is with communication with the National Committee. In particular, the LAPs expressed some frustration at the small number of applications and that feedback on decisions was not of the quality they expected.

6.94 There is also clear evidence from both the case studies and the survey that young people are actively involved in project activity, most frequently by giving feedback on a formal or informal basis. Although project staff may take the lead on delivery and management of projects overall, projects believe that the level of involvement in their project has increased during the YPF funding period. Nonetheless, the average proportion of young people that are involved in each project is lower than might be expected given the high proportion of projects citing involvement. This is particularly true of lower level involvement such as providing feedback, where high numbers of young people can reasonably be involved.

Impact

6.95 The impact of YPF is positive and wide-ranging across the funded projects and the young people themselves. For the projects, without funding from YPF the majority would not have been able to deliver activity to the scale or in the time that they did, whilst a third of projects would not have delivered certain strands of activity at all. Therefore YPF has helped projects to engage increased numbers of young people, and to facilitate their involvement in activity.

6.96 For the young people, the impact of their participation is positive and was articulated unanimously by young people in the case study projects. The biggest impact is on their confidence, and in many cases they have tried new things that have made them more open to opportunities. Project staff believe that young people feel more valued, develop improved relationships with others, and have greater social awareness and motivation.

Legacy

6.97 The legacy of YPF in Scotland is perhaps too early to judge at this stage, particularly whilst many of the projects are within their YPF funding period. However what is clear is that the YPF has allowed projects to deliver activity that they otherwise would not. Project workers believe that their project is likely to continue, and in this sense YPF has provided projects with a stable platform on which to build.

6.98 The goal of involvement is widely supported amongst young people, project staff and stakeholders and is something that is increasing amongst funded projects.

7 YOUNG PEOPLE'S FUND IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Introduction

7.1 The Young People's Fund (YPF) in Northern Ireland has a total grant allocation of £14.8 million. This is available to help young people aged 0 to 25 and is intended to promote youth inclusion by targeting resources at those young people at greatest risk of exclusion or offending.

7.2 The programme in Northern Ireland is split into two strands: **Change Ur Future**, administered directly by the Big Lottery Fund (BIG), and **The Big Deal**, administered by an Award Partner led by YouthNet.

7.3 The aims and outcomes of the YPF in Northern Ireland are:

- increased participation of children and young people
- increased health and wellbeing for young people
- increase achievement and learning for young people
- wider family and community support for young people.

7.4 Projects should also give consideration to the cross cutting programme themes:

- additional needs of vulnerable, socially excluded and disaffected young people
- transitions from infancy to young adulthood
- impact of conflict and tackling sectarianism.

Fit with Northern Ireland policy context

7.5 The aims and objectives of YPF in Northern Ireland are based upon those originally set out by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister in "Making it R Wrld 2". These were then developed by "Our Children and Young People – Our Pledge" the ten year strategy for children and young people.

7.6 The aims and objectives of YPF in Northern Ireland are therefore a good 'fit' with national policy priorities and with the work of the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY); whose priorities (which were identified by young people) focus on play and leisure, giving young people a voice, mental health and well being, protection (including protection in the community) and equality.

7.7 The political environment in Northern Ireland has undergone significant change since the restoration of devolved Government in May 2007. A key driver of public policy is the wholesale Review of Public Administration (RPA) which was officially launched in 2002. As a result of RPA, structures within health, education and local government are undergoing significant change. Key changes which may impact upon third sector organisations include:

- the number of councils will reduce from 26 to 11 by May 2011
- a range of government functions, including community development will be transferred to local government
- four new national health organisations were established in April 2009
- an Education and Skills Authority will replace the five existing Education and Library Boards by January 2010.

7.8 The **active participation** of children and young people, a central aim of the YPF in Northern Ireland and across the UK, is currently high on the political agenda. The centrally funded 'Participation Network', in conjunction with NICCY and other statutory and voluntary sector partners are working to ensure the active participation of young people in all tiers of government, from school councils to the National Assembly and to achieve their goal of:

"Developing a culture where the views of our children and young people are routinely sought in matters which impact on their lives."
(Our Children and Young People—Our Pledge; OFMDFM, 2006)

7.9 The YPF therefore has the potential to make a significant contribution to national policy priorities as the structures of the new administration are embedded. This is particularly true in achieving the active and meaningful participation of children and young people.

Method

7.10 The third year of the evaluation has involved:

- interviews with the YPF country and Policy Leads and Grants Officers
- interviews with the Big Deal Award Partners (Youthnet, Playboard and Northern Ireland Youth Forum)
- telephone survey of 27 'Change UR Future' projects
- case study visits with six 'Change UR Future' projects, involving interviews with project staff, observation of project activity, individual interviews and focus groups with young participants (including those who are 'actively involved'). Full case study write ups are included in Annex A.

The BIG Deal

7.11 The **Big Deal** focuses on increasing the **participation of children and young people**, the first YPF programme outcome, through delivery of strategic programmes and awards which contribute to the other aims, outcomes and cross cutting themes. The Big Deal is a £4 million grants programme delivered through BIG's Award Partner. The Big Deal brings together a number of different agencies with experience of working with children and young people. These are:

- **Youthnet**, the Youth Network for Northern Ireland (lead partner with responsibility for the small grants programme)
- **Playboard** (0-10 delivery partner Play Quest programme)

- **The Northern Ireland Youth Forum** (delivery partner) supported by the Education and Library Boards (11-16 and 17-25 Strategic Programmes)
- **The Youth Council for Northern Ireland** (strategy and coordination partner).

7.12 The Big Deal has been split as follows:

- £3 million is to be used for a series of **strategic programmes** targeted at three age groups:
 - **Play Quest** (0-10yrs) is delivered by a team of play rangers, coordinated by PlayBoard. The programme is delivered across a range of statutory, voluntary and community sector organisations and is intended to achieve the effective participation of children through play.
 - **Programmes for young people** (11-16yrs and 17-25yrs) are delivered by a team of participation workers from the Northern Ireland Youth Forum, based within each of the five Education and Library Boards. The programme aims to work with young people not currently engaging with youth services; with youth councils, forums and committees; youth centres; and other projects working with young people. The programmes are:
 - **Transitions** – to explore effective decision making for young people at key transitions points in their lives
 - **Making it happen** – to help young people become aware and develop their talents, and skills to make a difference in their local community
 - **Democracy works** – to help young people understand who they can influence and how they can contribute to positive change
 - **Making your youth council work for you** – helping to strengthen and develop participative youth structures
 - **Organisational change** – to help organisations to engage young people in their decision making processes.
- £1 million has been allocated to a **small grants programme** distributing awards directly to young people (aged 0-25). An individual child or young person can apply for a grant of £500 and a group can apply for an award of between £500 and £2500.

Operation of the programme

7.13 **YouthNet and its partners believe that their internal partnership has worked well.** YouthNet is experienced in managing small award programmes and was therefore well placed to take the lead on the Big Deal small grants programme. Final decisions on grant applications are made by young people through The Big Deal Children's and Young People's Forum. The young people involved in this forum were recruited through the Big Deal strategic programmes and were provided with training to allow them to be effective decision makers in

assessing grant applications. The programme opened for applications in September 2006 and will close in September 2009. To date the programme has awarded £798,448 to 362 projects.

7.14 YouthNet operates a two stage process to assist young people in making their applications. Initially, applicants submit an outline proposal which allows the Big Deal to assess the fit of the project with the aims and outcomes of the programme. Young people are then supported to complete a full application which is put to the Children and Young People's Forum for approval. Around 90 per cent of these applications have been approved. **Grant recipients interviewed for this study are satisfied with the application procedures and support available from Youthnet.** They also commented on the helpful and approachable nature of Big Deal staff.

7.15 **The small grant programme has proved very successful in generating applications from groups of young people.** Awards to individual young people have not however been on the scale initially anticipated; with less than 10 individual grants made to date. The Award Partner is unclear why 'take up' of individual grants has been so low. The structure of the programme, whereby individuals can only be awarded £500, may however provide some explanation. For example, a young person who wishes to undertake some form of training or voluntary work would not receive an award if they did not require the full £500 to fund the activity.

7.16 Through the strategic interventions, **the Award Partners have brought together professionals in the fields of youth work and play work to provide a holistic approach to the active participation of children and young people.** The organisation of the strategic programmes for young people aged 11-25, with a participation worker based within each of the Education and Library Boards, is a strength of the programme as this has enabled the strategic interventions to achieve **Northern Ireland wide coverage and involve organisations in both urban and rural areas.**

7.17 However, **in working through existing intermediaries and structures it is possible that the Big Deal will lack the ability to influence change for those 'hardest to reach' young people;** those who are unlikely to engage with existing provision.

7.18 Within BIG there is a perception that the small grant programme has worked relatively well, while the **strategic interventions have taken time to build momentum and begin to show tangible results.** This view is shared by the Award Partner. The partners (BIG and the Award Partner) feel this can be explained by:

- **Lack of clarity on both sides around what they were hoping to achieve and how they could go about it.** The aim of the programme was to influence organisational change and achieve a legacy for the YPF in Northern Ireland. BIG did not have the necessary expertise to achieve this

in-house and invited applications for an Award Partner, only one of which was forthcoming.

- **The unique and innovative nature of the strategic interventions, which fell outside of 'toolkit'³⁹ for BIG.** This led to problems in agreeing processes and procedures. This should not however be an issue for similar programmes in the future.

7.19 BIG intended to take a 'hands off' approach to the management of the Award Partner but reported that their involvement in the management of the programme was required in early phases. This resulted in a degree of tension and a feeling on the part of the Award Partner that they were being 'micro managed'. Although the Award Partner now has a good working relationship with BIG, there is a sense that this could have "gone the other way" and **future partnerships would need to be more clearly defined**. This view is shared by BIG who indicated that future work of this nature would incorporate a longer development phase for the Award Partner allowing any difficulties and lack of understanding to be resolved prior to the programme becoming operational.

Meeting the aims and outcomes

7.20 The structure and organisation of the Big Deal, which is unique to Northern Ireland, has the **potential to contribute significantly to the aims and outcomes of the YPF through the increased participation of children and young people**. This was reinforced by a key policy stakeholder who described the Big Deal as "innovative and very participative".

7.21 The small grant programme aims to increase the participation of children and young people as decision makers as well as contributing to the other aims and outcomes of the YPF, such as improved health and well being and increased achievement and learning.

7.22 The nature of projects approved varies by age group. An example of a project for the 0-3 age group includes funding being used by young mothers to provide opportunities for peer support and childcare. Funding for 4-10 year olds has supported nurseries and schools to buy equipment for their playgrounds, plants for their gardens, run summer play schemes and take children on day trips. For young people aged 11+ applications for funding are varied and have included, support for sporting activities, music, drama, residential trips, education and awareness raising activity. One grant recipient, who was also a member of the assessment panel, successfully applied for a grant to undertake research with young people in a rural area to map existing provision and establish demand for different youth activities.

7.23 The strategic programmes are set within the context of the wholesale Review of Public Administration (RPA) in Northern Ireland. The country is currently undergoing significant structural change in the public sector and the strategic programmes aim to work with emerging bodies in their development

³⁹ Standard operating procedures for the Big Lottery Fund

phases to influence change and achieve the active participation of children and young people. This is a good strategic fit with the wider policy context, which has a focus on driving forward the youth participation agenda.

Impact

7.24 Grant recipients highlighted a number of impacts and benefits that have accrued as a result of support provided by the Big Deal. **Young grant recipients commented on increased confidence, team building and facilitation skills** brought about by their opportunity to manage a small grant as well as the **personal satisfaction** they gain from assisting other young people. A number of young people also commented on a **positive 'cascade' effect** that has resulted from their grant success, with other young people being inspired to take on their own projects and activities after seeing first hand what is possible.

7.25 The programme of strategic interventions was intended to influence organisational change and achieve a legacy for the YPF in Northern Ireland. It is still early days in this respect but both BIG and the Award Partner are confident that the programmes will achieve this aim in the long term. As previously stated, youth participation is high on the political agenda in Northern Ireland and the **strategic interventions have provided a "tangible testing ground" for participation mechanisms** which can now be taken forward by the organisations that have been a part of the programme.

7.26 In relation to the wider activity and direction of BIG, the strategic interventions have had a significant impact, and have led to the increased participation of children and young people within the organisation. Indeed, PlayBoard recently consulted with 250 children under the age of 10 to gather their views on the types of activities and projects that BIG should be funding.

Conclusions

7.27 The Big Deal is an innovative programme and is unique to the YPF in Northern Ireland. The Award Partner recognises the risk that BIG took in setting up the programme and believes that BIG should be commended for this. The partnership has resulted in a great deal of learning for BIG, YouthNet and the other partners that they will be able to use going forward. Key findings include:

- The structure and organisation of the Big Deal has significant potential to contribute to the aims and outcomes of the YPF in Northern Ireland, through the **increased participation of children and young people**
- The experience of Youthnet in administering small grants programmes is a valuable addition to the programme. As a result the small grant programme has proved **very successful in generating applications from small groups of young people**.
- However, to date, the strand has **not been so successful in achieving the volume of applications intended from individual young people**. The structure of the programme may account for this in that young people can only apply for grants of £500 and cannot be awarded smaller sums.

- The strategic interventions have taken time to build momentum and begin to show tangible results. The innovative nature of the programme and a lack of clarity among partners have played a role in this. **All partners are now confident that the strategic interventions are working well and will deliver on their goals to influence organisational change and achieve a lasting legacy for the YPF.**
- While it is too early to assess the impact of strategic interventions it is apparent that the Big Deal has provided a **“tangible testing” ground for participation mechanisms and a solid foundation upon which to build and drive forward the youth participation agenda** in the emerging structures in Northern Ireland.

Change UR Future

7.28 **Change UR Future** is the largest strand of the YPF in Northern Ireland with an allocation of £10.8 million. This strand is administered directly by BIG. It opened for applications in July 2005 and closed in September 2006. The programme offered grants of between £40,000 and £500,000, for a period of up to five years, to projects which could demonstrate a contribution to the aims and outcomes of the YPF. The offer of funding over a five year period is unique to the Northern Ireland programme.

7.29 Over the course of its operation, Change UR Future awarded £10,689,986 to 52 projects across the country. Awards ranged from £62,400 to £498,613, with the average (mean) value being £205,577. Table 7.1 shows the distribution of awards across the aims and outcomes of the programme. It shows that **all of the awards made are intended to increase the participation of young people. The vast majority of projects indicated on their applications that they could also contribute to the other primary aims of the programme in Northern Ireland.** With regards to the cross cutting themes, three quarters are concerned with the transition from infancy to adulthood and almost half of funded projects look to address the impact of conflict and tackling sectarianism.

Table 7.1 – Contribution of projects to the aims and outcomes of the YPF

Aims and outcomes	Percentage of projects
Increased participation of young people	100%
Increased achievement and learning for young people	98%
Additional needs of vulnerable, socially excluded and disaffected young people	94%
Increased health and well being for young people	90%
Transitions from infancy to adulthood	75%
The impact of conflict and tackling sectarianism	44%
Helping bring about wider family and community support ⁴⁰	4%

Source: BIG 2009

⁴⁰ This outcome was optional for projects and was not fully recorded on BIG’s data management system, therefore the figure is not a true reflection of the proportion of projects contributing to this outcome.

Assessment and grant management

7.30 Through Change UR Future BIG aimed to fund **innovative projects** in the youth sector. Applications were assessed and scored based on their 'fit' with the aims and outcomes of the fund and the level of involvement of young people. Following this, ongoing performance is monitored based on project specific outcomes and targets as opposed to the programme outcomes.

7.31 The YPF received a large volume of applications and around 17 per cent were successful in being awarded funding. With hindsight, Grants Officers believe that the aims and outcomes agreed at the outset may have been too broad. This attracted a large number of applications and made comparison difficult in the assessment phase. Grants Officers report that **some potentially effective project ideas, especially from low capacity groups, may have missed out on funding as they would not have been able to articulate their aims and outcomes as successfully as high capacity groups.**

7.32 This view is reinforced by key policy stakeholders, one of whom commented that many young people, especially older young people, simply want a place to meet and to have "ownership" of that place. Small scale, low budget, simple project ideas can therefore be very effective in meeting the needs and aspirations of young people.

7.33 In future Grants Officers believe that the **aims and outcomes of programmes should be more focused.** In saying this, Grants Officers are confident that the majority of projects are carrying out very valuable work that will have a lasting impact on the young people involved.

Meeting the aims and outcomes

Contribution to the aims and outcomes

7.34 The survey of Change UR Future projects shows that a **majority can demonstrate a contribution to more than one of the outcomes** of the YPF:

- 96 per cent contribute to the increased participation of young people
- 93 per cent contribute to increased achievement and learning for young people
- 85 per cent contribute to the increased health and well being of young people
- 85 per cent are helping to bring about wider family and community support for young people.

7.35 The outcomes are broad and projects consider them to be interrelated, with benefits in one area bringing about additional benefits in another.

7.36 This is illustrated by case study example 1, which is a project run by the RNIB in Northern Ireland. While the overarching aim of the project is to increase the participation of young people with a visual impairment, the capacity building

element of the project means it can also demonstrate a contribution to other programme outcomes.

Case study example 1 – RNIB 'Eye Matter Campaign for Equality

'Eye Matter – Campaign for Equality' is a group of young people (aged 15-30) who campaign to raise awareness of the issues affecting young people living with serious sight loss. The project is intended to increase the confidence and self esteem of young people and equip them with the necessary skills to lobby for change in areas that are important to them.

The primary contribution of the project is in increasing the participation of young people, as it supports those who face barriers to inclusion to help them make their voices heard. The project also offers young people the opportunity to gain formal qualifications, contributing to increased achievement and learning for young people, while capacity building and personal development opportunities impact on the health and well being of young people.

7.37 The survey asked respondents to comment on the aim that **most closely matches** that of their project. The greatest number of respondents (41 per cent) report that their project's main focus is on **increasing the achievement and learning** of young people. The activity of these projects includes peer education, provision of an alternative curriculum for young people out with the school environment, and developing the employability skills of young people.

7.38 Thirty seven per cent report that their main focus is on **increasing the participation of young people**. The activity of these projects is varied and ranges from community cohesion to outdoor activities. Fifteen per cent of projects are working to improve the **health and well being** of young people, primarily through the provision of peer led and health education. The remaining seven per cent feel their activity has a focus on helping to bring about **wider family and community support**.

Contribution to the cross cutting themes

7.39 In addition to the primary aims and outcomes, Change UR Future projects are required to consider the cross cutting themes of the programme in Northern Ireland. A **majority of projects can demonstrate a contribution to more than one of the cross cutting themes** with:

- 93 per cent addressing the additional needs of vulnerable, socially excluded or disaffected young people
- 59 per cent supporting young people in the transitions from infancy to adulthood
- 59 per cent addressing the impact of conflict and tackling sectarianism.

7.40 Case study example 2 shows the way in which one project, Féile an Phobail helps to address all three of the cross cutting themes of the YPF.

Case study example 2 – Féile an Phobail

Féile an Phobail was established in 1988 as a response to the conflict in Northern Ireland. Through the medium of community arts, Féile an Phobail aims to challenge negative images of the west Belfast area, provide a positive outlet for young people, develop and showcase the talents of local people and bring about better conditions for families and the wider community. The organisation now provides a year round programme of free and accessible activities and events, which celebrate diversity and talent in the local area and address pertinent social issues. Through partnerships with youth outreach workers, the project provides a positive outlet and encourages the participation of young people who may not usually engage in youth and community activities. Arts activities also have a strong community focus, bringing a sense of identity, belonging and pride to young people during their transition from infancy to adulthood. The activity of the organisation is constantly developed and adapted to address changing social and economic conditions within the local community and facilitate cross community activities within the context of conflict resolution.

Supporting youth inclusion by targeting resources at those at greatest risk of exclusion and/ or offending

7.41 An additional aim of the YPF in Northern Ireland is to promote youth inclusion by targeting resources at those at greatest risk of exclusion and/ or offending. Ninety six per cent of projects surveyed consider that they are helping to promote youth inclusion and 74 per cent are actively engaging with those at greatest risk of exclusion and/or offending. Projects are working towards this aim **by targeting resources towards disadvantaged young people and those living in areas of deprivation**; 56 per cent of projects surveyed are located in deprived areas and 26 per cent actively engage with young people with a history of offending behaviour and/or young people at risk of offending behaviour.

7.42 Engaging those at greatest risk of exclusion and/ or offending is a challenge. Engagement mechanisms vary depending on the type of service offered by the project. For those working in a professional capacity to provide assistance to young people facing specific issues, engagement tends to be by referral through formal channels. For example, in one project working with young people with a history of substance misuse, referral is primarily through healthcare professionals or the criminal justice system. Whereas, for those projects providing recreational or diversionary activities, including educational activities, 'word of mouth' recommendation is seen as the most effective way of engaging young people.

7.43 The extent to which projects are engaging with those young people at greatest risk of exclusion and or offending is unclear. One project working with young people aged 12-19 raised this as an important issue for them to address in the future (case study example 3).

Case study example 3 – Sean Dolans Y.A.X Project

Y.A.X is a 'youth led' project intended to provide a positive outlet for young people from the Creggan area, particularly those who may not usually engage in community activity. The project aims to boost the confidence and aspirations of young people and promote active citizenship by empowering them to participate and take the lead in youth activities.

In future Y.A.X is hoping to expand and be able to work with younger children in the area. In line with the aims of the YPF in Northern Ireland, the project looks to work with those young people at greatest risk of exclusion. Young people who are currently involved in Y.A.X have highlighted to project workers that the process of marginalisation begins in childhood and that the project should also target younger age groups.

7.44 The view expressed in case study example 3 also emerged in interviews with key policy stakeholders who stressed the need for early intervention, engaging with young people on the 'edge' of disengagement, and the importance of inclusivity through the provision of free and accessible activities for all young people. The YPF in Northern Ireland is in a good position to contribute in this area as it is the only country programme which works with young people under the age of 11.

Usefulness of aims of the YPF

7.45 **The broad nature of the aims, outcomes and cross cutting themes has led to a diverse range of projects being funded.** Case study projects were unanimous in highlighting the broad and non prescriptive nature of the aims and outcomes as a strength of the YPF, as it has allowed them to develop and tailor their activities in line with the needs of the young people involved at any given time. This is in contrast to the views of the Grants Officers who stated that the outcomes are perhaps too broad.

Involvement of young people

Are projects involving young people?

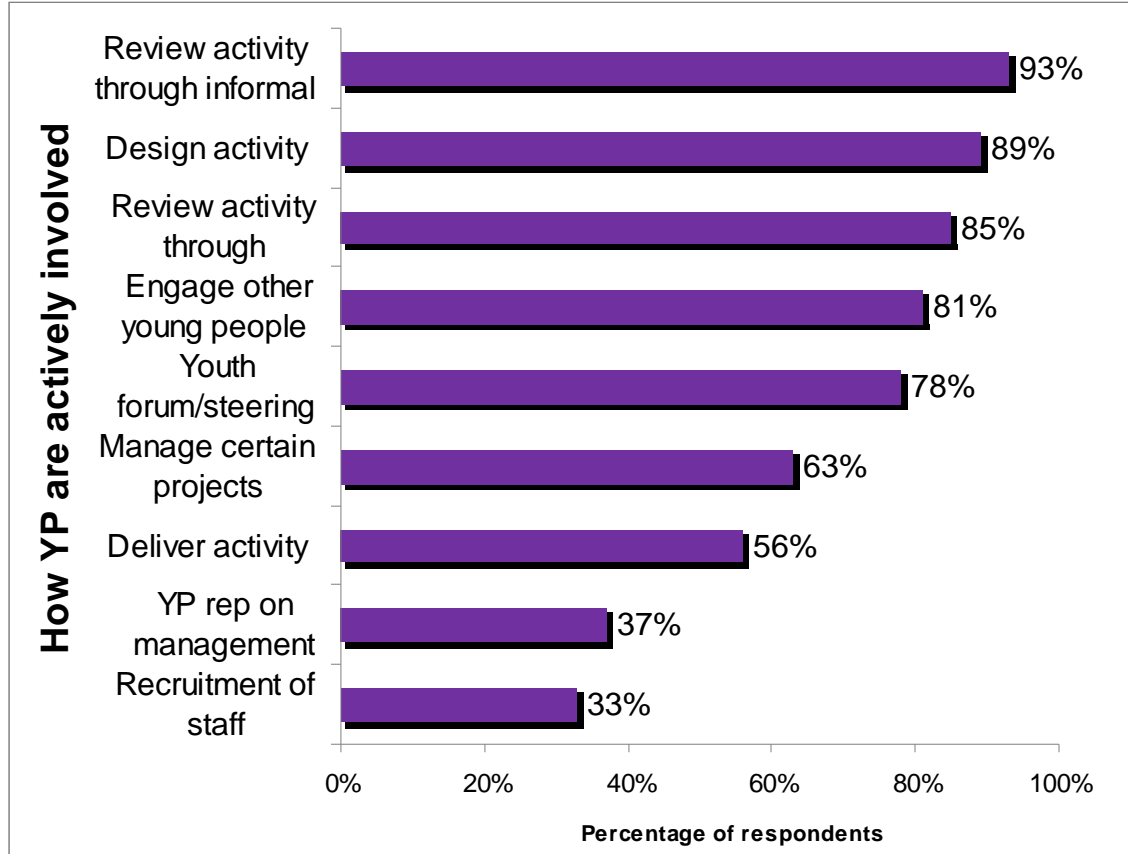
7.46 The overarching aim of YPF is to increase participation of children and young people through their 'active involvement' in the development, delivery, management and evaluation of project activity. Figure 6.1 illustrates the ways in which young people are involved in project activity. It shows that **the vast majority of projects promote the 'active involvement' of young people.**

7.47 The review of activity through 'informal feedback' is the most frequently cited mechanism for involving young people used by 93 per cent of projects. Eighty five per cent of projects use 'structured' feedback to review their activities primarily through survey questionnaires.

7.48 Informal feedback was also the most common method of involving young people in year two of the evaluation. However, **the evidence indicates that involvement has increased among Change UR Future projects.** The year two

survey found that 83 per cent involved young people through informal feedback; 50 per cent through a youth forum or steering group and 48 per cent through structured feedback; considerably lower than in year three⁴¹.

Figure 7.1 – Ways in which projects involve young people



Source: Wavehill Survey of YPF Projects 2009 – 27 responses
 NOTE: percentages do not equal 100 due to multiple responses

Are projects young person led?

7.49 Table 7.2 summarises survey findings in relation to the level of involvement of young people in the various stages of the project. It shows that the **involvement of young people is most significant in relation to evaluation and the ongoing development** of project activity (in 41 per cent of cases this is carried out predominantly by young people). This supports the previous finding that young people are primarily involved by providing feedback on project activity.

⁴¹ In year two projects were asked a separate question about each involvement stage, so for example they were asked how young people are involved in project delivery as a separate question from how they are involved in the management of the project. In year three this was simplified and projects were asked how young people are actively involved with the project.

Table 7.2 – Involvement of young people in different stages

	Percentage of projects				
	Exclusively young people	Young people take lead	Even mix	Project workers take lead	Exclusively project workers
Initial development	4%	19%	22%	48%	7%
Delivery	7%	19%	11%	59%	4%
Management	0%	19%	26%	37%	19%
Evaluation/development	0%	41%	44%	15%	0%

Source: Wavehill survey of YPF projects 2009 – 27 responses

7.50 The involvement of young people is least significant in relation to the delivery of project activity. In almost two thirds of cases, delivery is exclusively or predominantly carried out by project workers. The involvement of young people in this area has however increased in comparison to year two; where 76 per cent of projects reported that delivery was carried out exclusively or predominantly by project workers.

7.51 In year three of the evaluation those projects delivered exclusively or predominately by young people tend to be focused around education and awareness raising activity. This is illustrated in case study example 4.

Case study example 4 – Ballybeen Women’s Centre PEP Generation Health

YPF funding was secured by the Ballybeen Women’s Centre Peer Education Project to deliver ‘Generation Health’- a new health initiative for young people. Through peer education young people are the driving force of the project. The project currently has eight active peer educators delivering evening sessions in the centre and outreach activity in local schools.

Peer educators ‘self select’ to be involved in the project, and include young people who have themselves attended peer education as participants and those who wish to work with young people in their future career. With the support of the young people’s worker, peer educators design and deliver courses that meet needs identified by young participants.

7.52 In keeping with the findings of the year two research, Table 7.2 shows that project workers continue to take the lead in project management activities. The extent to which young people are involved has however increased significantly; 56 per cent surveyed in year three said that projects are managed exclusively or predominantly by project workers; this is compared to 98 per cent in year two.

7.53 While project workers take the lead in management activities, many projects do involve young people in this, as Figure 7.1 illustrates. In 78 per cent of cases involvement is through a young people’s forum or steering group and in 37 per cent of cases young people are represented on the management committee of the organisation.

7.54 An example of a project in which young people take the lead in project management is illustrated in case study example 5, which details the roles and

responsibilities of the young people involved in the youth committee of the Sean Dolans Y.A.X project.

Case Study Example 5 – Sean Dolans Y.A.X Project

The Y.A.X project is run by the 'Youth Committee'. Young people from older age groups are nominated and elected to the committee by their peers at the annual youth conference. The youth committee essentially mirrors that of the organisations' Executive Committee. Roles include a chairperson, secretary, treasurer and development officer as well as young people to head up each of the project elements (drama, sports, social events etc). Young people are provided with training to assist them in their role at the start of their period on the committee. The Youth Committee has a budget to provide its activities and is involved in all stages of the planning, development and management of the programme. Although, the Youth Committee reports to the Executive Committee, as long as the proposed activities are 'safe' and 'within reason' the young people are allowed to run the project entirely as they see fit.

Are all young people involved?

7.55 The survey asked projects to provide details of the numbers of participants who are 'actively involved'. Table 7.3 shows the percentage of project participants involved through each of the methods considered above. It shows that, as previously stated, **almost all projects involve young people through informal and/or structured feedback. Within these projects the majority of participants are involved in each of these ways (upwards of 70 per cent).**

7.56 In terms of **higher level involvement**, Table 7.3 shows that, on average, **less than a quarter of participants tend to be involved.** For example:

- While over three quarters of projects have a youth forum or steering group, only a fifth of the project's beneficiaries are involved in them.
- Similarly, while 37 per cent of projects have a young person's representative on the management committee of their organisation, only six per cent of young people are involved as a representative.

Table 7.3 – Percentage of project beneficiaries ‘actively involved’

Means of involvement	Percentage of projects employing method	Mean percentage of young people within project that are involved (%)
Review through informal feedback	93%	85%
Review through structured feedback	85%	73%
Design activity	89%	37%
Engage other young people	81%	39%
Youth forum/ steering group	78%	20%
Manage certain projects	63%	14%
Delivery activity	56%	21%
YP rep. on management committee	37%	6%
Recruitment of staff	33%	4%

Source: Wavehill survey of YPF projects – 27 responses

Note: Mean percentage of involved young people within project is based on responses of those who could provide figures

Measuring involvement

7.57 Survey respondents and case study projects rated the level of youth participation in their project against ‘Harts Ladder of Participation’. The results, shown in Table 7.4, indicate **relatively high levels of participation with all projects ranking themselves in the top half of the table**. Forty one per cent of projects rated themselves on the 5th and 6th rungs of the participation ladder. Examples of participation at this level are illustrated in case study examples 6 and 7.

7.58 While Hart’s framework appears to be hierarchical, with rung eight representing the ideal form of involvement, the ladder should not be interpreted in this way. Indeed Hart states that rungs 4 to 8 all represent true involvement and the precise level and nature of involvement should be set at the level that is suitable for project participants.

Table 7.4 – Level of participation in relation to Harts Ladder ⁴²

Description – Harts Ladder of Participation	Percentage of respondents
Rung 8 - Participants have the idea, setup project and invite staff to join with them in making decisions	0%
Rung 7 - Participants have the initial idea and decide how the project is to be carried out. Staff are available but do not take charge.	18%
Rung 6 - Staff have the initial idea but participants are involved in every step of the planning and implementation: their views are considered and they are involved in taking the decisions.	41%
Rung 5 -The project is designed and run by staff but participants are consulted. They have a full understanding of the process and their opinions are taken seriously.	41%
Rung 4 - Staff decide on the project and participants volunteer for it. Staff respects their views	0%
Rung 3 - Participants are asked to say what they think about an issue but have little or no choice about the way they express those views or the scope of the ideas they can express.	0%
Rung 2 - Participants take part in an event but they do not understand the issue	0%
Rung 1 - Participants do or say what staff suggest they do, but have no real understanding of the issue, or have been asked what they think. Staff use some of their ideas but do not tell them what influence they have had on the final decision	0%

Source: Wavehill survey of YPF projects – 27 responses

Case study example 6– Eye Matter – Campaign for Quality (Rung 6)

The Eye Matter - Campaign for Equality is based around the issues identified by young people as being important to them. With the support of the Campaigns Officer, the group take the lead in all aspects of project activity. Flexibility is a key strength of the project in that young people can be involved to differing degrees in whichever activities they feel comfortable with. While some young people are very proactive in terms of campaigning, others lack the confidence to become heavily involved straight away. Young people have the opportunity to complete OCN Youth Work qualifications at different levels and some have gone on to supervise the delivery of elements of project activity. Over the course of the funding period, project workers feel that the involvement of young people has increased. This has happened in line with increased skills and capacity as they see that they have the power to make real and lasting change. Young people feel that there are plenty of opportunities for them to be involved in the planning, delivery and management of project activity.

⁴² Hart, R. (1992), *Children’s Participation from Tokenism to Citizenship*. Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre.

Case study example 7 - Teenage Pregnancy Support (Rung 5)

The Altnagelvin Teenage Pregnancy Support Project provides specialist ante natal and post natal care for teenagers and vulnerable young people, to help ensure positive outcomes and futures for mothers and their babies. Within the project, the specialist midwives endeavour to give young people 'ownership' of their care by setting appointments at a time and place suggested by the young person and by reconfirming the appointment with young person immediately prior to the visit to ensure that they are still happy for it to go ahead. Young people are able to contact the midwives to ask for help or advice at any time and the midwives provide their mobile numbers so they can always be contacted. Expectant mothers are given the opportunity to provide feedback on the services received in formal and informal ways. This feedback is used to guide the development of the project. Feedback has been sought through questionnaires distributed to all those receiving one to one support, and through focus groups with antenatal classes. Those receiving additional support through their pregnancy indicated that they are happy with the level of involvement they have and that they value the 'peace of mind' provided by the service.

Barriers to involvement

7.59 Barriers to involvement are wide ranging and may relate to the **nature of project activity** and to **young people themselves**. For some projects, it may simply **not be practical** to have project participant's heavily involved in the development, delivery and management. For example, young people receiving specialist support delivered by Teenage Pregnancy Midwives from Altnagelvin Hospital are going through a major change in their lives and are looking for the support of the midwife in a professional capacity. While some degree of involvement in project delivery has been possible (one girl who received additional support assisted the midwives in the delivery of antenatal sessions regarding her experience of breastfeeding) it is vital that young expectant mothers receive accurate and timely advice and have a trusting relationship with their midwife.

7.60 **Lack of confidence** may also be a barrier to the increased involvement of young people. This was highlighted by the RNIB 'Eye Matter – Campaign for Equality'. This project works with young people with a visual impairment, to empower them and equip them with the necessary skills to lobby for change on issues of importance to them. The project has found that some of the young people involved in the group lack confidence in their ability to contribute to the campaign. Through its partnership with 'Public Achievement' (a youth focused civic education organisation) the project has given young people the opportunity to complete OCN Level 2 'Preparation for Participation' training to give them the confidence to become more actively involved.

7.61 In some cases the **transient nature of young people** may be a barrier to increased levels of participation. This was highlighted by Feile an Phobail, a community arts organisation working to develop and showcase the talents of local people in west Belfast. Youth arts activities are led by a sub-committee of

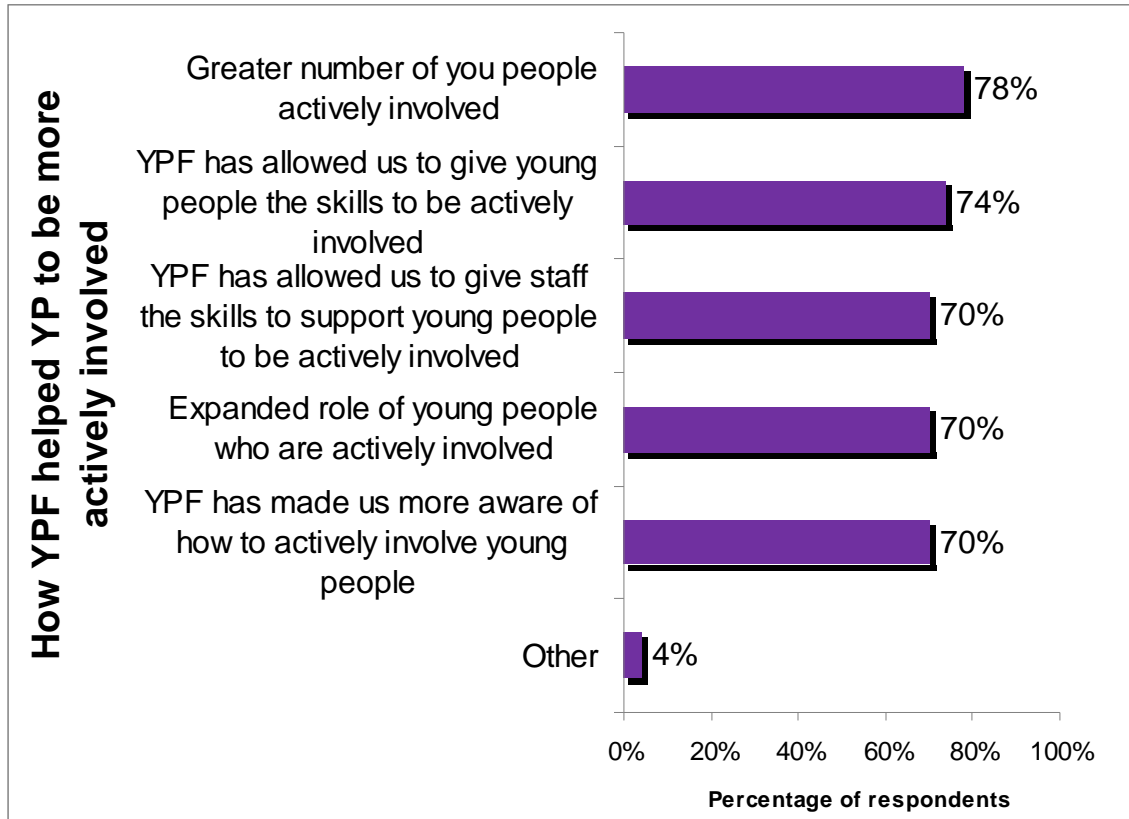
young people who are recruited on a regular basis. While some young people stay with the organisation and may be offered the opportunity to be involved in the management committee, others, understandably, move on as they continue their education, move into employment, leave the area, or take up new interests. Project workers highlighted this as a potential barrier to the greater involvement of young people. However, the flow of young people through the project ensures ideas remain fresh, vibrant and attractive to new groups of young people, thereby ensuring the ongoing success of the project.

Change in levels of involvement

7.62 The majority of projects (89 per cent) report that the involvement of young people has increased over the course of the funding period to date.

7.63 Figure 7.2 illustrates the role of the YPF in increasing the level of involvement of young people. It shows that the most significant benefit of **YPF funding is that it has enabled projects to involve a greater number of young people** (78 per cent). This also emerged as a finding for case study projects, many of which highlighted the increased involvement of young people in line with their increased capacity and aspirations. In 74 per cent of cases YPF funding has allowed projects to equip young people with the skills to be actively involved. In 70 per cent of cases YPF funding has helped project workers to become more aware of how to involve young people.

Figure 7.2 – How YPF has helped young people become more actively involved



Source: Wavehill Survey of YPF Projects 2009 – 24 responses
 NOTE: percentages do not equal 100 due to multiple responses

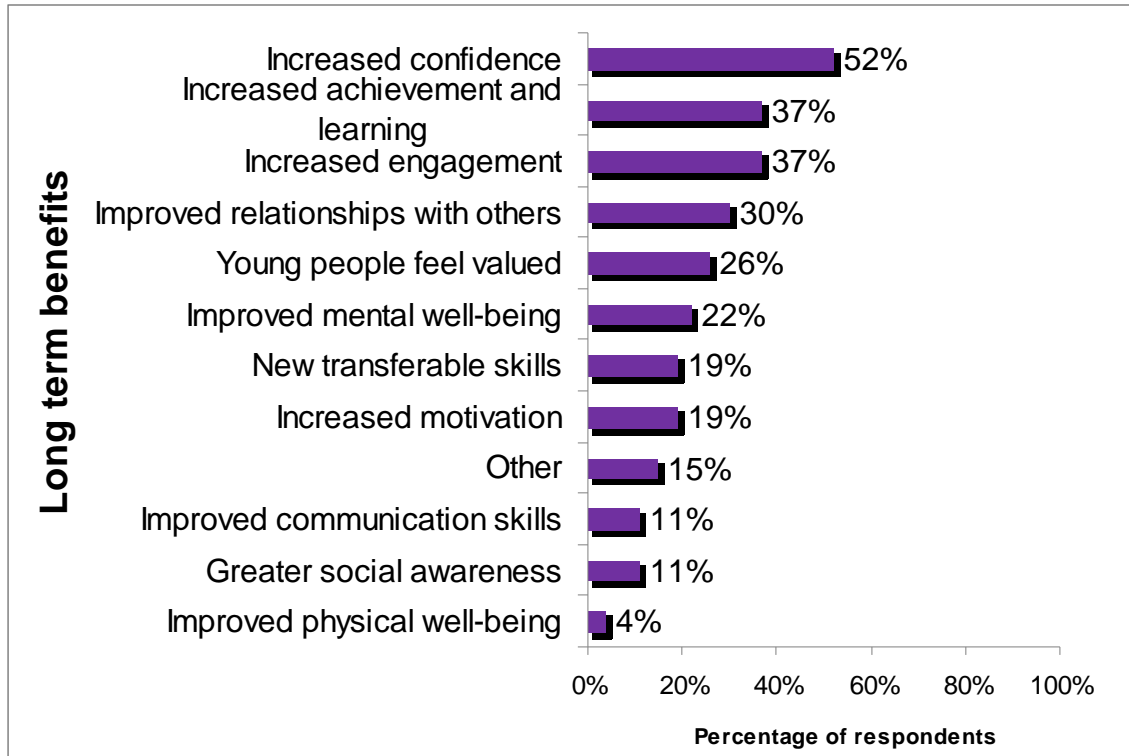
Impact of Change UR Future

Impact of participation in project activity

7.64 Project workers are confident that participation in Change UR Future projects will bring about a number of significant and long lasting benefits for young people. The benefits associated with project activity are wide ranging and vary depending on the focus of the project.

7.65 Figure 7.3 illustrates the views of project workers in relation to the three most significant long term benefits accruing to young people as a result of participation in project activity. The most frequently cited benefits are increased **confidence** (52 per cent), increased **achievement and learning** (37 per cent) and increased **engagement** (37 per cent).

Figure 7.3 – Three most significant long term benefits of participation



Source: Wavehill Survey of YPF Projects 2009 – 27 responses
 NOTE: percentages do not equal 100 due to multiple responses

7.66 These findings are backed up by those from case study projects which reported similar benefits. Young people also highlighted the **enjoyment** they get from participating in project activities and reported that opportunities to meet new people and make new friends are key benefits.

7.67 There is a perception across projects that the **skills and personal development that result from participation will empower young people and help them to manage their daily lives outside of the project**. Projects may help young people do this in a number of ways, for example:

- Young women receiving additional support from specialist teenage pregnancy midwives consider that the service has helped increase their knowledge and confidence, making them better able to care for their new baby.
- Young people involved in the Eye Matter – Campaign for Equality have a sense of ownership of the project and therefore feel empowered to make a difference. They report that debating and campaigning has had a positive impact on their presentation and public speaking skills; given them the confidence to “speak out” in front of their peers and before those in positions of responsibility; and has instilled in them the ability to ‘listen’ and take account of the views of others.

- Young people with a history of substance misuse who participate in the New Start 'My Life Matters' programme highlighted the role that the programme plays in bringing structure to their daily lives and developing skills that will help them to beat their addiction (case study example 8).

Case study example 8 – New Start – My Life Matters

My Life Matters (18 +) is a 15 week intensive personal development course for current and former substance misusers. The course focuses on improving confidence and self-esteem, anger management, staying safe and preventing relapse. Programme participants reported that the benefits they have got from taking part include: meeting new people, team working, learning new skills, increased confidence and motivation. In the long term participants believe that their involvement in the project will impact significantly on their ability to take control of their own lives. This is illustrated in a powerful way by the 'divorce' letters written by My Life Matters participants after making the decision to leave their addiction behind. For example; "Dear Heroin...my life is so good now...I've learned new real effective and permanent coping skills (not the temporary relief that you gave). I have learned effective tools for living and its working"

Impact of 'active involvement'

7.68 The survey of Change UR Future projects also considered the benefits accruing to young people who are actively involved in the design, delivery, management and evaluation of project activity. As Figure 7.4 shows, **confidence** is once again highlighted as the single most significant benefit (70 per cent). This is followed by **improved relationships** (33 per cent) and **increased engagement** (33 per cent).

Figure 7.4 –Three most significant benefits of ‘involvement’



Source: Wavehill Survey of YPF Projects 2009 – 27 responses

NOTE: percentages do not equal 100 due to multiple responses

7.69 Active involvement delivers largely similar impacts and benefits as participation in project activities. **However the scale of impact is usually more significant for those young people who are actively involved.**

7.70 Actively involved young people point to enjoyment, **skills development and increased confidence** when asked about the benefits of their involvement. Other benefits highlighted by young people who are actively involved (through for example youth committees, management committees and in the delivery of activities) included, **presentation and communication skills, leadership, team working and assertiveness.**

7.71 Young people feel empowered by their role within their project; value the trust that has been put in them and the opportunity to be heard. One girl who is currently completing a student placement with Féile an Phobail said “it means a lot when someone asks you to be involved...it gets your creative side going”. While another who is part of the Féile an Phobail management committee said that through her involvement with the project she has come to realise what young people can achieve and that “young people are on the same level as adults”.

7.72 Project workers also noted how young people who are actively involved develop over time. They have observed that **empowerment plays a significant role in raising the aspirations of young people as they begin to see what it**

is possible to achieve. One project worker said “it is like planting a seed and watching it grow”.

7.73 A number of young people indicated that their involvement has helped to focus their minds and make decisions regarding their future career paths. For example:

- Two girls working as peer educators for the Ballybeen Women's Centre – Generation Health Initiative said that their involvement helped them in the decision to choose youth work as their future career, and that the transferable skills they have gained will be of significant benefit during their studies and in the future;
- One girl who is a member of the management committee of Féile an Phobail, decided to pursue a career in broadcasting following her involvement with the organisation's radio station.

Legacy of YPF

Strategic partnership

7.74 All of the projects surveyed are working in partnership with other organisations to achieve effective delivery of activity. The largest percentage of projects (89 per cent) work in partnership with voluntary sector organisations. Other key partners include education (74 per cent) and social work departments (70 per cent) and schools (70 per cent). Forty four per cent of projects indicated that they work with the police and a third with youth offending teams.

7.75 Change UR Future projects work with partners in both formal⁴³ and informal ways. The survey shows that, in general, projects tend to have formal partnerships with voluntary sector organisations, the police, careers service and youth offending teams, whereas partnerships with schools, colleges, education and social work departments tend to be informal in nature.

7.76 Effective partnership working brings a number of benefits, the most significant of which are:

- **Allowing projects to access to resources, experience and expertise of partner agencies** thereby providing an enhanced service for young people. This is illustrated by the ‘Eye Matter - Campaign for Equality’ and their partnership with Public Achievement. Public Achievement delivers training to the campaign group and handles the technical aspects of campaign activity, such as filming. The RNIB reports that without the skills and experience of Public Achievement it would not have been possible for the project to make campaigning a reality.
- **The provision of a ‘holistic’ service for young people.** By working in partnership with other agencies, projects are better able to support young

⁴³ By **formal** partnerships we are referring to situations where partners have defined roles, remits and responsibilities, regular meetings, specific objectives etc.

people. Projects may refer young people to partner agencies or act to ensure that young people are fully aware of support available and how to access it. This is illustrated by the Teenage Pregnancy Support project (case study example 12).

7.77 Challenges associated with partnership working tend to focus around communication; bureaucracy; time and resource constraints; and setting parameters and agreeing processes and procedures.

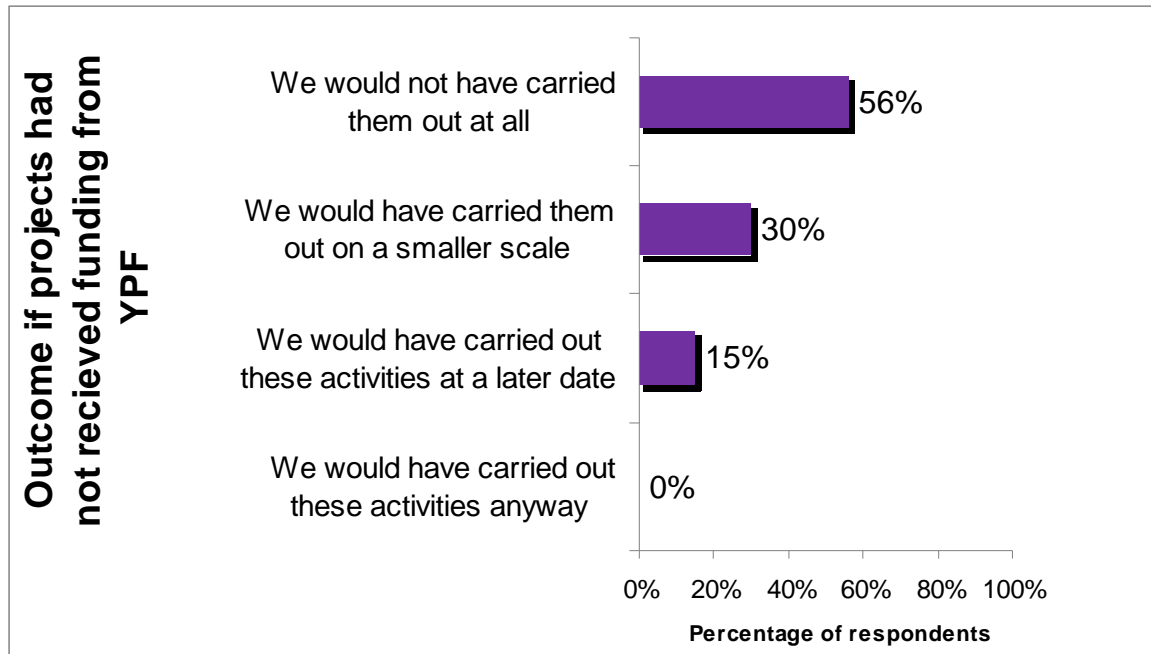
Case study example 12 – Teenage Pregnancy Support

Midwives delivering additional support to pregnant teenagers and vulnerable young people feel that the impact of the services they provide is greatly enhanced by relationships they have established with other agencies. Key partners include; community midwives, Social Services; GPs; the education board; schools; and Sure Start. The specialist midwives share information with these partners to ensure the best care and support can be provided to young people. The teenage pregnancy midwives liaise with other statutory and voluntary sector partners including, benefits advisers; and Women's Aid. Through partnership working the project is able to help young people access a wider network of support that will be of assistance to them during their pregnancy and after the birth of their baby.

Impact of YPF

7.78 The YPF grant is the major source of funding for the majority of the projects included in the survey. Forty four per cent of projects are wholly funded by YPF and a further 41 per cent receive the majority of their funding from YPF. **In the absence of this support the majority report that their activities would not have been possible**, while 45 per cent believe that activity would have occurred on a smaller scale or at a later date (Figure 7.5).

Figure 7.5 – Additionality associated with YPF



Source: Wavehill Survey of YPF Projects 2009 – 27 responses

7.79 These findings are reinforced by the case study projects, all of which believe that **the scale, quality and impact of their activities have been greatly enhanced by the support of the YPF**. This has brought about benefits for young people and the wider community. For example:

- YPF funding for the Hope Centre (Ballymena Family and Addicts Support) allowed the ongoing development of structured services for young people aged 18-25 as well as the establishment of activity targeted specifically towards younger age groups. In the absence of this support, project workers feel that it would not have been possible to develop and run the ‘Life Tools’ and ‘My Life Matters’ programmes.
- In the absence of YPF support, the RNIB state that they would have struggled to gain the scale of funding necessary to establish the Eye Matter – Campaign for Equality and develop important links with organisations such as Public Achievement, who have been instrumental in the delivery of training to young people.
- YPF funding enabled Ballybeen Women’s Centre to extend the successful Peer Education Project by employing a ‘Young People’s Support Worker’. Funding also allowed the establishment of a ‘satellite sexual health’ clinic within the centre providing free and confidential services, including health and counselling services, for young people. The clinic, the first of its kind in Northern Ireland, is delivered by Brook – the national voluntary sector provider of free and confidential sexual health advice services specifically for young people under the age of 25.

- Funding from the YPF allowed Féile an Phobail to employ a youth worker to facilitate and 'showcase' a year round programme of 'youth led' activities and events. The YPF provides around 75 per cent of the funding for the programme and has enabled the organisation to more than double the number of youth activities and events it can organise in a year. The skills, experience and contacts of the youth worker has also enhanced the programme of activities with increased benefits for the community as a whole. In the absence of this support it would not have been possible for the organisation to employ a youth worker and youth activities would have continued to be isolated events, on a smaller scale.
- Support from the YPF enabled the Sean Dolans GAA to set up and develop the Y.A.X project. Funding allowed the establishment of two full time posts: a project coordinator; and youth worker; to support young people in planning and running their programme of activities. Without these project workers it would not be possible for the project to operate, as the GAA Executive Committee are all volunteers.

7.80 What is less clear is the extent to which funded projects may be duplicating existing provision and vice versa. This did not feature in discussions with project workers but was highlighted as a potential issue in interviews with key policy stakeholders. However, the perception is that any problem lies largely with the statutory sector which may take a 'knee jerk' reaction to perceived issues without properly considering existing voluntary sector provision.

Future

7.81 There is a **degree of uncertainty among projects concerning their ability to sustain activities** following the end of YPF funding. Thirty per cent suggested that their project may continue, while a further 26 per cent are unsure what will happen. In order to sustain activity, projects are most likely to look for alternative sources of funding (22 per cent). This is also true for the majority of case study projects.

Summary

7.82 Overall, the third year of the evaluation has highlighted continuing development within projects funded by Change UR Future. Key findings include:

- **The vast majority of projects can demonstrate a contribution to more than one of the aims, outcomes and cross cutting themes** and all of the awards made are intended to increase the participation of young people.
- **Projects value the non prescriptive nature of the aims and outcomes.** This is however in contrast to the views of Grants Officers.
- **The vast majority of projects promote the 'active involvement' of young people**, with almost all projects involving young people through informal and/ or structured feedback.

- While, project workers continue to take the lead in the delivery and management of activities, on the whole **the level of 'active involvement' has increased** as compared to findings in previous years.
- The most common benefits of both participation and 'active involvement' include **increased confidence, achievement and learning and increased engagement**. These findings are reinforced by those of project beneficiaries. While the reported benefits are similar, **the scale of impact is usually more significant for those young people who are 'actively involved'**.
- There is a **high degree of additionality** associated with YPF support, and in the absence funding the majority do not feel that their activities would have been possible.

Conclusions

Meeting the aims and outcomes

7.83 The programme as a whole is a good 'fit' with national strategic priorities for young people, which are likely to continue to focus on active participation, mental health and well being and poverty; in terms of financial poverty and poverty of opportunity. There is also considerable evidence that the activity of both the Big Deal and Change UR Future **is meeting the aims and outcomes of the YPF in Northern Ireland**.

7.84 The broad and interrelated nature of programme aims and outcomes have led to a very diverse range of projects receiving funding from Change UR Future, with the vast majority being able to demonstrate a contribution to two or more of the programme outcomes and cross cutting themes. **Grant recipients value the broad and non-prescriptive nature of the outcomes** as this has allowed their activities to develop in line with the changing needs and priorities of young people.

7.85 In line with the aims and outcomes, there is also a focus across the programme (the Big Deal and Change UR Future) on addressing the needs of those young people at greatest risk of exclusion and or offending, with considerable resources targeted towards disadvantaged young people and young people living in areas of deprivation. **The extent to which projects are successfully engaging with young people at 'greatest risk' and those least likely to engage in existing youth provision is however unclear and extremely difficult to assess**. The view of project workers and stakeholders is that early intervention and inclusivity are key in addressing these issues.

Involvement

7.86 The overarching aim of the YPF programme is to increase participation of children and young people through their active involvement in the development, delivery, management and evaluation of project activity. Increased participation of young people is also an explicit aim of the YPF in Northern Ireland.

7.87 Through the small grants programme, the **Big Deal has afforded young people the opportunity to set up and run their own project**. Small grant recipients interviewed as part of the study found the application processes simple and Big Deal staff approachable and helpful. Young people who have received a small grant also commented on a **positive 'cascade' effect as a result of their grant, with young people they have worked with being inspired to undertake their own activities** and projects after seeing what it is possible to achieve.

7.88 The evaluation of Change UR Future shows that **the vast majority of projects promote the active involvement of young people, most frequently through consultation and seeking feedback**. The involvement of young people is most significant in terms of the evaluation and ongoing on development of project activity, while project workers continue to take the lead in project management and the delivery of activity. In saying this, the vast majority of projects feel that the 'active involvement' of young people has increased over the course of the funding period and **the proportion of projects engaging young people in 'higher level' involvement activities such as delivery, or as part of a youth forum or committee has increased** in comparison to previous years.

7.89 In order to maximise the impacts and benefits accruing to young people it seems important that 'active involvement' continues to be a key feature of the fund, and that involvement is realistic, meaningful and transparent.

Impact

7.90 The impact of the programme is wide ranging and has resulted in benefits for all partners involved; including BIG, the Award Partners, funded projects, wider communities and young people. While it is still too early to assess the lasting impact of the YPF, it is anticipated that the programme will leave a lasting legacy of increased participation of young people. There is already evidence of this shift in culture from within BIG itself.

7.91 Among young people, the benefits of participation and 'active involvement' focus on opportunities for **enjoyment, personal development and skills development**. 'Active involvement' (within the small grant programme and Change UR Future) delivers largely similar impacts and benefits as 'participation'; however the **scale of impact is more significant for those young people who are empowered to become 'actively involved'**.

Legacy

7.92 The third year of the evaluation highlights a **high degree of additionality associated with YPF funding**, with many indicating that the **scale, quality and impact of their activities has been greatly enhanced by the support of the YPF**.

7.93 Change UR Future projects have displayed **considerable success in establishing productive formal and informal partnerships** which have enabled them to access resources, experience and expertise of partner agencies and provide a 'holistic' service to young people.

7.94 While it is too early to assess the impact of strategic interventions it is apparent that the Big Deal has provided a **“tangible testing” ground for participation mechanisms and a solid foundation upon which to build and drive forward the youth participation agenda** in the emerging structures in Northern Ireland.

8 YOUNG PEOPLE'S FUND IN WALES

Introduction

8.1 The Young People's Fund (YPF) has been operating in Wales since April 2005 and in that period has allocated over £13.2 million to 246 projects across Wales. Projects are assessed and funded on the basis that they help to achieve one or more of the YPF's three key aims in Wales, namely:

- Helping young people to enjoy life and achieve their potential.
- Helping young people to develop skills and contribute to their communities.
- Helping young people to choose positive activities which discourage anti-social behaviour.

8.2 Projects are funded under three strands:

- **Make it Happen (MiH)** is a strand of funding consisting of small grants (between £500 and £5,000) for projects developed and undertaken by young people. It supports young people with ideas for activities or projects that will help other young people or their local community.
- **Bridging the Gap (BtG)** supports a small number of large-scale projects that identify and engage with the most difficult to reach and challenging young people, for example young people facing multiple issues such as exclusion from school, homelessness, or alcohol misuse. Projects assess young people's needs, actively support them in accessing existing services and assist them in re-engaging with constructive activities that will help turn their lives around. They will also achieve at least two of the key aims of the Fund. Grants can be up to a maximum of £1,000,000.
- **Reaching Out (RO)** funds projects which focus on engaging targeted young people in activities by undertaking prevention and/or outreach and intervention work to fill a gap in local provision. Projects must achieve at least two of the main aims. Young people engaged by projects under this strand are disaffected and disengaged, or at risk of being so, and the strand also has a particular emphasis on projects serving disadvantaged communities.

8.3 The method employed in the third year of the evaluation was based on the collation of primary data through fieldwork and a telephone survey. This consisted of:

- Face-to-face semi-structured interviews with the YPF country and policy leads and Grants Officers to explore programme management, allocation and operational successes and challenges.

- Semi-structured interviews with three independent strategic stakeholders to gain an external view on the YPF, its alignment with existing policy initiatives and suggestions for future strategy. These were a Senior Lecturer in Youth Work at Trinity University College and former Chair of the All-Wales Principal Youth Officers Group; a Policy Director at Children in Wales, the national umbrella organisation for those working with children and young people in Wales; and a representative from the Welsh Assembly Government Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills.
- A quantitative telephone survey of 73 YPF projects in Wales across the three strands (60 from 'Making it Happen', 11 from 'Reaching Out' and 2 from 'Bridging the Gap').
- Case study visits with six projects, four funded through Reaching Out and two through Bridging the Gap. In the case studies the consultancy team reviewed applications and monitoring reports prior to the visit and then carried out face-to-face semi-structured interviews with project staff during the visit, on-site observation of project activity and individual interviews with young participants.
- The team carried out two focus groups with young people which focused on their involvement (as distinct from participation) in the programme, and its impact. Full case study write ups are included in Appendix A.
- Our team conducted four qualitative telephone interviews with young people who had been involved in developing their project ideas and applications under the Make it Happen Strand.

Policy and strategic context in Wales

8.4 There are several key policy developments in Wales which form the context within which YPF-funded projects are operating. In this section we explore these policies along with the findings of our interviews with the three stakeholders about the implications for YPF of these policies and strategies.

Skills that work for Wales ('The NEET strategy')

8.5 As discussed in last year's evaluation report, Skills that Work for Wales, or the NEET strategy as it has become informally referred to, was developed by the Welsh Assembly Government in 2008. The document was at consultation stage at the time of last year's evaluation report, but the implications for delivery of services to young people are now becoming clearer. The strategy outlines three key areas where services for young people need to develop:

- **The Right Systems:** Developing efficient processes for identifying and re-engaging young people who become NEET.
- **The Right Provision:** Providing a full range of learning options to meet demand.

- **The Right Support:** Learning support and careers advice and guidance so that young people are given the skills to access education, training or employment and targeted and intensive personal support to enable young people to overcome significant and sometimes multiple barriers to participation.

8.6 Much of the activity funded under YPF, especially, the Reaching Out and Bridging the Gap strands are responding to the principles of this strategy by providing alternative curriculum and informal learning activities for young people, ensuring participation of groups who are at risk of being NEET, and ensuring that key partners are engaged in referrals and identification of need. The interviews with strategic stakeholders suggest that the aims of the YPF are appropriate to the policy context as it is rapidly developing in Wales. The Reaching Out strand is crucial in filling gaps in mainstream provision, as well as supplementing and strengthening ongoing policy initiatives to provide support, learning and informal learning opportunities.

The Convergence and Regional Competitiveness programmes

8.7 As with the 'NEET strategy', the Convergence and Regional Competitiveness programmes in Wales were at an early stage during last year's evaluation and the extent and nature of some of the EU-funded interventions is now clearer. A key point is that the ESF Priority 1: Supplying Young People with Skills for Learning and Future Employment is closely aligned with the 'NEET strategy'. It will create a substantial number of Youth Work posts, especially in West Wales and the valleys over the coming years. This will undoubtedly lead to significant development and further diversification of the range of provision on offer to young people. As of May 2009, 109 project ideas had been logged on the Welsh European Funding Office's website to be funded under this priority.

8.8 This has implications for YPF on two fronts. Firstly, it may provide a continuation option for some of the more developed and larger projects funded under Reaching Out or Bridging the Gap. However, given that bids under the newest ESF and ERDF programmes will need to operate on a sub-regional basis and be based on strategic partnerships, it will be essential for projects to consult with their local Children's and Young People's Partnership to determine whether local and regional partners can be engaged. Many projects funded under Reaching Out and Bridging the Gap are already working with their local partnerships, and some of those interviewed during this evaluation were exploring ESF options.

8.9 The second implication for the YPF is that the EU programmes have 'hard-edged' indicators, such as training accreditations and job outcomes, as their key performance indicators and outputs. Many YPF projects are well-g geared for this, but others will need to adapt both their delivery and their monitoring if they are to be successful in accessing ESF funding.

Review of local provision under the Youth Service Strategy for Wales

8.10 Although the strategy was launched in 2007, the year 2008-09 has seen a significant amount of activity at local level on the configuration of Youth Services in each local authority. One of the specific objectives was to develop a unique blend of maintained and voluntary sector provision according to patterns of local need. This included a scoping study conducted by the Welsh Local Government Association to inform future funding and planning. The study involved regional and local analyses of needs and provision, the development of regional and national Workforce Development Plans and a review of the way that the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) deals with key deliverers of the strategy. As a result, a programme budget of £3.37 million in capital and revenue for 2008-09 and £6.5 million in a combination of capital and revenue funding for 2009-10 was approved by the Minister. As part of the strategy, WAG has reviewed the National Voluntary Youth Organisations grant scheme, and the strategy notes that in future, all organisations receiving grant funding will need 'to demonstrate in detail and in action how they support Extending Entitlement, WAG's framework for the delivery of services to children and young people, this strategy and the national, regional and local collaboration arrangements' (*Youth Service Strategy for Wales*). NVYOs will also need to show how they measure the outcomes of their work with young people and how they intend to contribute to the national implementation of Demonstrating Success to show the impact of their work on young people.'

8.11 The Demonstrating Success model is currently being piloted. It is a common assessment framework for gauging 'distance travelled' and emotional intelligence amongst young people, and is set to go live in 2009-10.

Talk to Me: the action plan for reducing self-harm and suicide in Wales

8.12 **Talk to Me** is the Action Plan for reducing self-harm and suicide in Wales. Following the high-profile cases of young people committing suicide in the Bridgend area in late 2008, the Welsh Assembly Government responded by producing an action plan, which has recently been out for consultation and is expected to be signed off imminently. The consultation draft of the action plan looks at seven key commitments:

1. Helping people to feel good about themselves.
2. Providing help early to those in need.
3. Responding to crises in people's lives.
4. Dealing with the effects of suicide and self harm.
5. Increasing research and improving information on suicide.
6. Working with the media to make sure reporting on mental health and suicide is sensitive.
7. Making sure that, where possible, people at risk do not have access to things which could be used for suicide.

8.13 The national action plan outlines the challenges and priorities and how organisations, working together, will deal with them. It also looks at the causes of

emotional distress and aims to tackle many of the issues which people, particularly young people, may face.

8.14 One of the key learning points to note from the evidence gathered during this evaluation is the extent to which many of the projects delivering under the Young People's Fund are 'linked in' to this wider policy context. In the case of the Reaching Out and Bridging the Gap strands, this can be attributed to the fact that all projects are required, as a funding stipulation, to work with their local Children and Young People's Partnership. This has had several positive effects from a project point of view:

- It has ensured that projects have access to relevant strategic knowledge and expertise within their partnerships.
- It has enabled projects to work in partnership with their local networks of providers, thus avoiding duplication, enabling them to gauge the extent of local need and gain referrals from their partners.

Overview of programme activity funded under the Young People's Fund in Wales

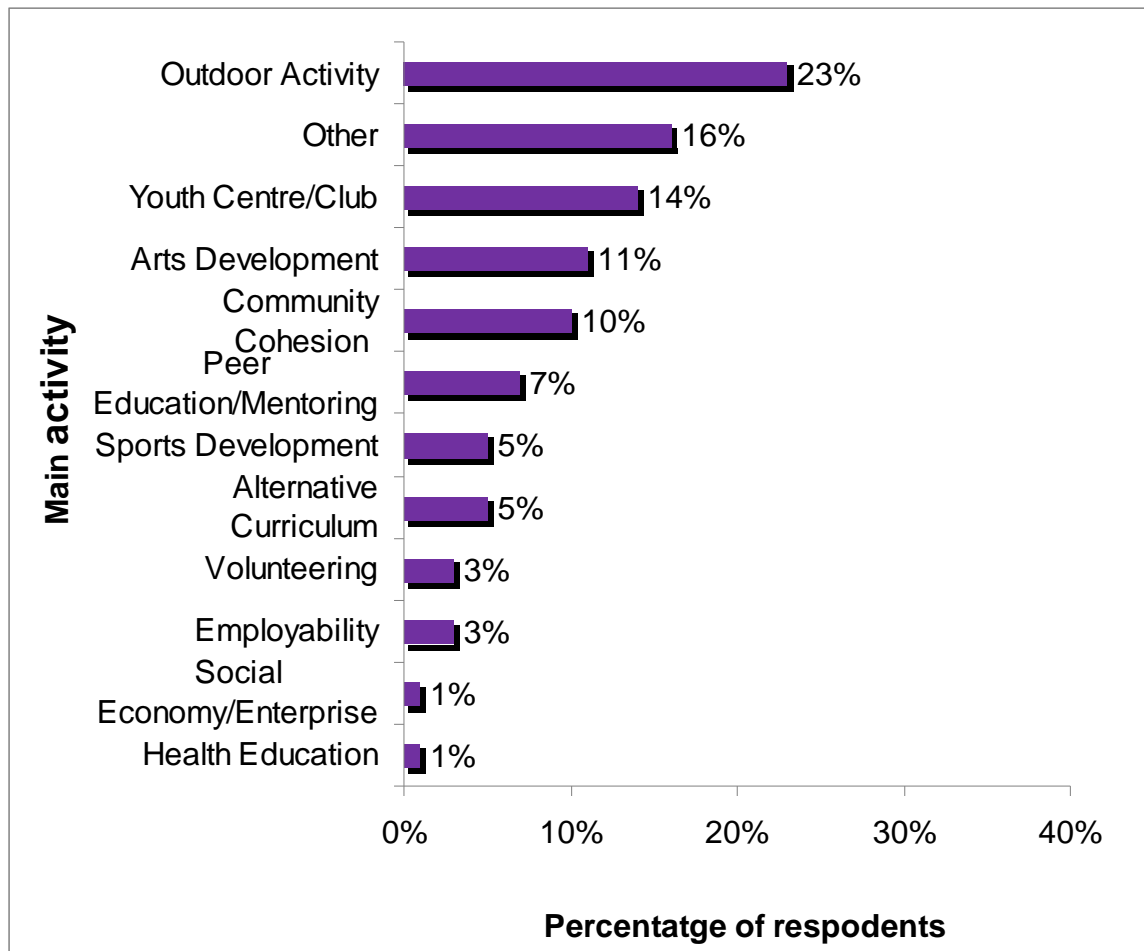
Introduction

8.15 This section gives an overview of project activity across the three strands. Based on the survey of projects in Wales, it provides a quantitative analysis of project delivery, such as what sort of projects and interventions are being delivered, how projects are involving young people and the outcomes projects report that they are delivering for young people. The findings reported here are based on the evidence gathered through the survey of 73 projects. The section gives an overview, and is not disaggregated by strand because the sample of projects is not sufficient to be statistically valid for Reaching Out and Bridging the Gap once disaggregated. Subsequent sections of this report consider each strand separately.

Main project activity

8.16 Projects use a wide range of interventions to engage young people. Our team asked the projects to outline their **main** activity, funded under YPF. The results show that outdoor activities is a key activity (23 per cent), as are Youth Centre or clubs-based activities (14 per cent) and Arts Development (11 per cent).

Figure 8.1 – Main activity supported by YPF funding

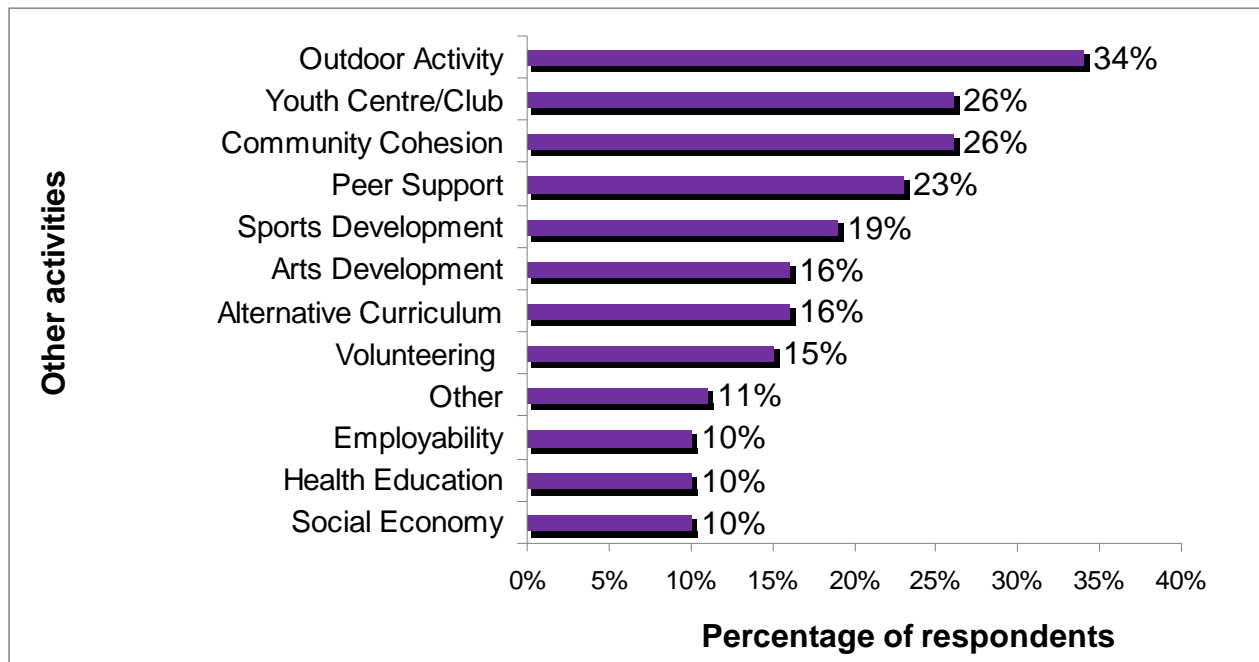


Source: Wavehill Survey of YPF Projects 2009 – 73 responses

Other project activities

8.17 We asked each project to indicate other, secondary activities they offer to young people that are funded under YPF. Again, there is a wide variety and again, outdoor activities along with Youth Centre or Club activities were the most commonly cited along with Community Cohesion and Peer Education/Mentoring.

Figure 8.2 – Other activities supported by YPF funding



Source: Wavehill Survey of YPF Projects 2009 – 73 responses.
 NOTE: percentages do not equal 100 due to multiple responses.

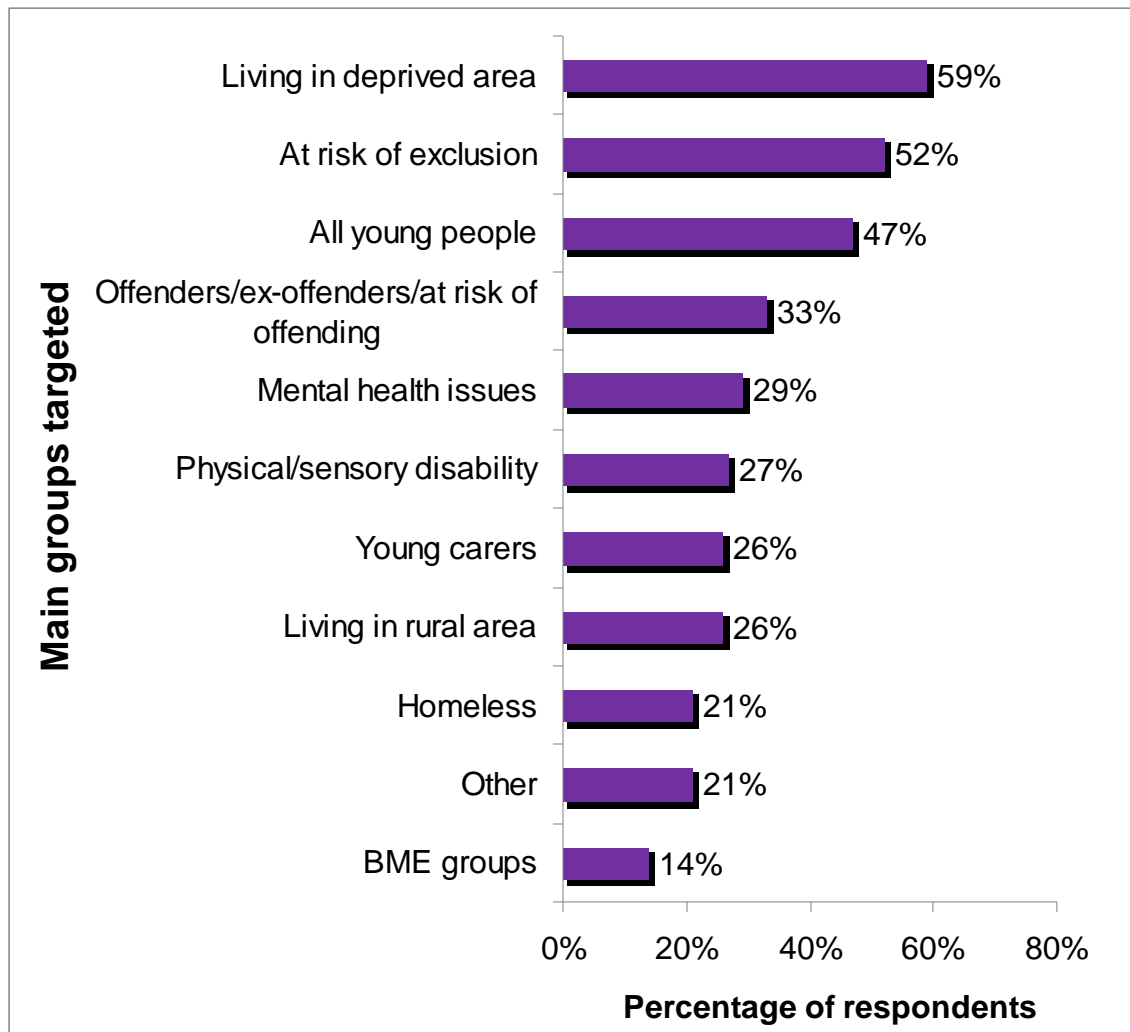
8.18 It is worth pointing out that the findings on the main and secondary activities reflect the fact that the sample (as per the distribution of projects within the fund in Wales) includes a higher number of projects funded through Making it Happen, a large number of which are focussed on outdoor activities. Reaching Out and Bridging the Gap account for fewer projects in Wales, and are more likely to focus on youth-work, alternative curriculum and mentoring.

Participant profile and engagement

8.19 Most projects target specific groups of young people, with 73 per cent of all projects surveyed reporting that their client group were ‘those at risk of being, or who are already, disaffected and disengaged, particularly in disadvantaged communities.’ Some 62 per cent indicated that their participants are ‘the most difficult to reach young people’. The results show the majority of projects target young people that fit both descriptions.

8.20 Our team asked projects to give us further details about the young people participating in the project and their barriers. The findings show that those ‘living in a deprived area’ were targeted by 59 per cent of projects, those ‘at risk of exclusion’ were targeted by 53 per cent of projects and 47 per cent of projects reported that they are open to ‘all young people’.

Figure 8.3 – Target groups



Source: Wavehill Survey of YPF Projects 2009 – 73 responses
 NOTE: percentages do not equal 100 due to multiple responses

Ways in which projects are engaging young people

8.21 Projects report a variety of referral routes to engage young people. Word of mouth was the most frequently-cited (73 per cent), young people already being involved with the organisation (60 per cent), and partnership with other organisations (56 per cent with some 36 per cent of projects receiving direct referrals). A key finding is that 26 per cent of projects had been initiated by young people approaching the organisation itself. An example of this was encountered during a Case study visit to the Child Care/Creche for School Girl Mothers (See Appendix D for the full project write-up), where the young mothers themselves had written to the local authority pointing out that there was a gap in provision that was preventing young mothers from continuing with their education. This in turn prompted the authority to review the situation and led to the initiation of the project.

8.22 In the study, 83 per cent of projects reported that they had recruited over 100 per cent of their target participants over the course of their funding. The 17 per cent that had not reached their target said that they had not come to the end of their recruitment activity or that their target client group is by nature, hard-to-reach. Over-recruitment for some of the activity-based projects can be an issue where there is limited capacity 14 per cent of the projects had over recruited.

Outcomes and impact of project activity

8.23 We asked projects about the benefits that they had observed in young people as a result of the project's work. The most commonly-cited outcome is increased confidence (71 per cent), improved relationships (45 per cent) and increased motivation (33 per cent). These were followed by improved communication skills (27 per cent), young people feeling valued (25 per cent) and new transferable skills (22 per cent). Project representatives were then asked to comment on the most significant long term benefits that participation will bring to young people. The top-line results retained the same order with only slight adjustments to percentages, which means that projects consider that the impact on beneficiaries is sustainable in the long-term.

Programme outcomes

8.24 We asked project representatives for their views on which of the three Wales programme outcomes they believe that their project is meeting. 'Enjoying Life and Achieving their Potential' was most frequently-cited (44 per cent), followed by 'Developing Skills to Contribute to their Communities' (33 per cent) and 'Choosing Positive Activities which Discourage Anti-social Behaviour' (23 per cent). We asked projects which outcomes they felt their project contributed to, as a secondary or indirect outcome, the order of outcomes was the same, but the percentage was higher (97 per cent; 86 per cent and 73 per cent respectively).

8.25 These results show that projects appear to be providing a high level of additionality with regard to programme outcomes. Most projects are directly contributing to more than one of the programme outcomes, and, in many cases, those outcomes are closely related to one another and complementary in their scope: for example developing skills can lead directly to achieving potential, and choosing positive and diversionary activities is a route to progressing in relation to either of the other outcomes.

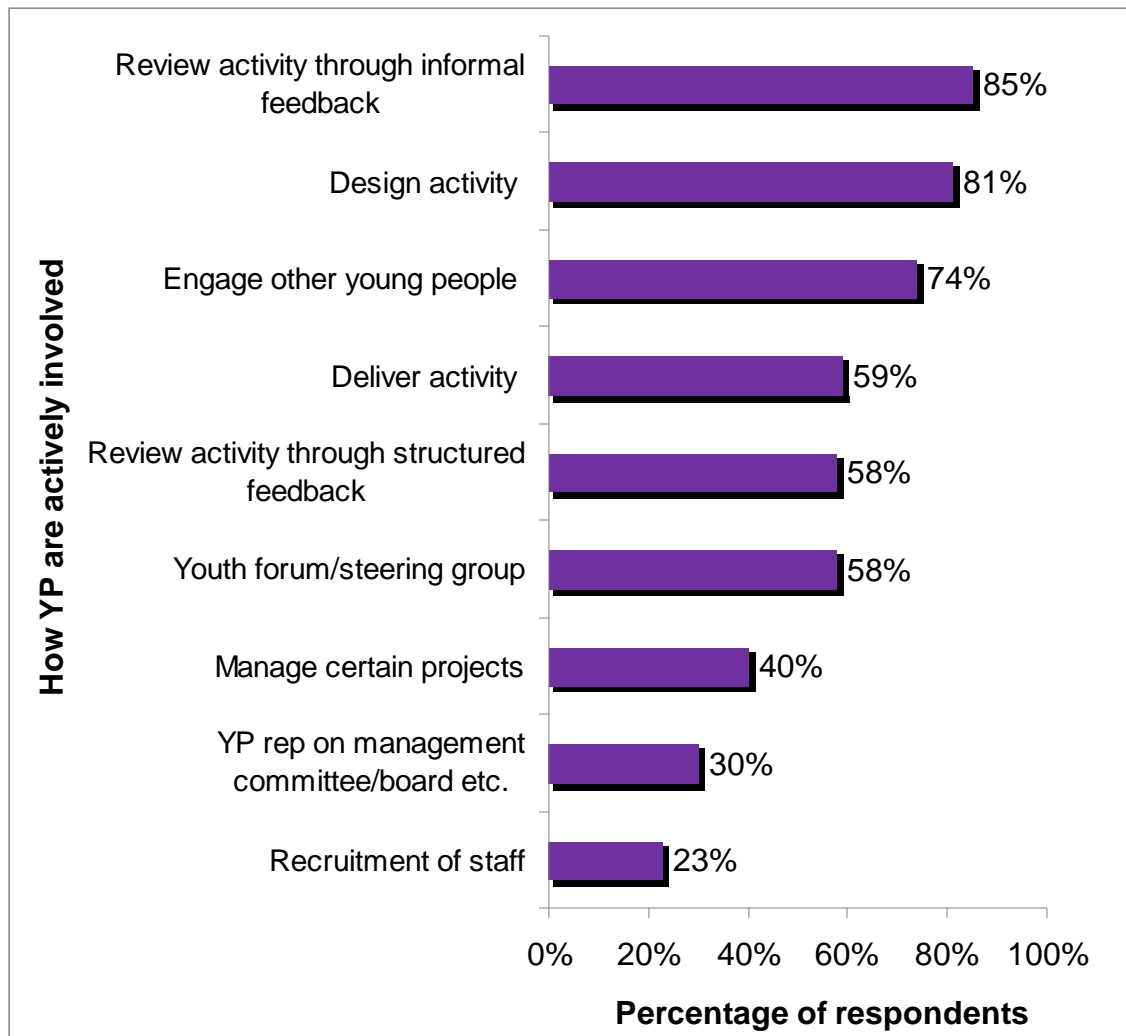
Involvement of young people

8.26 The Young People's Fund and this evaluation have focussed on the extent to which young people are involved in their projects, on the nature of that involvement, and the impact of involvement on young people and the projects.

Ways in which young people are involved in projects

8.27 Figure 8.4 shows that the most common means of involving young people is through informal feedback and review (85 per cent) followed by involving them in the design (81 per cent) and in engaging other young people (74 per cent).

Figure 8.4 – Ways in which projects involve young people

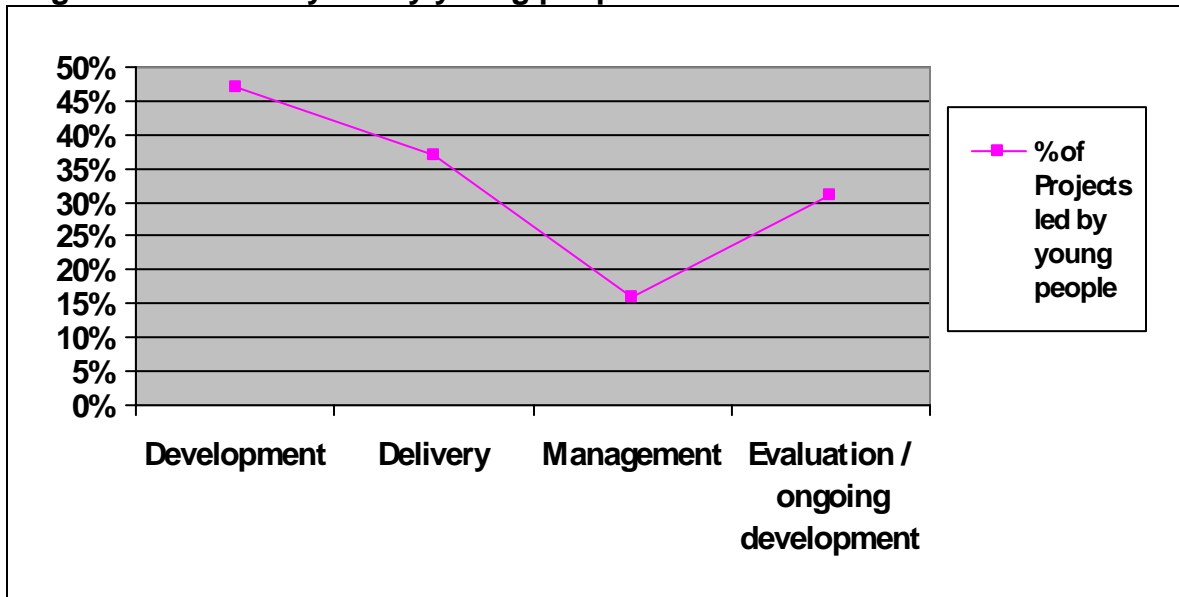


Source: Wavehill Survey of YPF Projects 2009 – 73 responses
 NOTE: percentages do not equal 100 due to multiple responses

Aspects of projects in which young people are involved

8.28 Just under half of all projects (47 per cent) were exclusively or primarily developed by young people, again reflecting the fact that the Make it Happen strand accounts for most projects and therefore most of our survey sample. Subsequent sections of this report show that Bridging the Gap and Reaching Out projects, which are almost usually based on substantial consultation with young people, are complex funding bids, often between several partners, which call for some strategic expertise.

Figure 8.5 – Activity led by young people



Source: Wavehill Survey of YPF Projects 2009 – 73 responses

8.29 The line graph in Figure 8.5 shows that involvement of young people falls off between initial development and management, but ‘picks up’ where evaluation is concerned.

8.30 One potential reason for this is that the delivery and management of many projects will involve specialist intervention and strategic expertise. To support young people with multiple and complex needs some interventions require confidentiality and are therefore sometimes unsuited to peer involvement. For some projects there are other barriers to involvement which we address below.

8.31 In the interviews with project representatives we explored the barriers that face involving young people in the project. Some projects pointed towards the nature of their target group which can make it difficult to broker or sustain the involvement of young people. Others reported that literacy issues can make formal and hands-on involvement in steering groups and project applications difficult. However, there are some good examples of projects that have successfully overcome these barriers:

‘The initial attitudes of negativity and barriers that the young people had [was a problem]. Once the youngsters realised that the whole project was their own, as the project gained momentum they excelled in their skills and exceeded their own expectations.’

‘The young people were so eager and so engaged in what they were involved in that we had to in effect hold back the reins, so that they completed one section before moving onto the next. From then on the young people would take a step

back look at what they have achieved, evaluate, then concluded before moving on.'

'There has been one or two young people who've had to leave early after school which has involved a bit of conflict as they had an agreement when they started that they would all put the time in, we've sat down as a group and worked it through.'

Levels of Project Involvement

8.32 We asked projects to tell us the proportion of their beneficiaries that are involved in various aspects of project activity. The results show the following mean proportions of participants involved, across all projects interviewed. On average:

Table 8.1 – Mean percentage of young people involved

Means of involvement	Percentage of young people involved
Review through informal feedback	67%
Review through structured feedback	59%
Engage other young people	51%
Design activity	43%
Deliver activity	40%
Youth forum/ steering group	37%
Manage certain projects	27%
Recruitment of staff	25%
YP rep. on management committee	24%

8.33 Percentages of young people who are involved varies between projects. Some projects said that under 1 per cent of young people were involved in a particular aspect of the project, whilst in other projects 100 per cent of beneficiaries were involved in this aspect. So, whilst the mean scores for involvement (shown above) are encouraging, the full results suggest that there is still significant variation across projects in relation to levels of involvement.

8.34 Encouragingly, 81 per cent of projects felt that young people had become more involved in the project as it progressed and were able to engage more fully with its running and management over its course.

8.35 Sixty per cent of projects said that YPF funding had helped them expand the role of young people, 59 per cent said that a greater number of their participants had become involved and 58 per cent said that the YPF had allowed them to give the young people the skills they needed to be involved. The qualitative evidence gathered from participants in the case studies supports this. Those participants who were involved spoke of receiving support to fulfil their roles and of becoming more engaged with the working of their projects as they progressed. One young person, who was aged 14, and sat on a multi-agency

group of high-level professionals said: 'They [the professionals on the group] do give you a lot of help, if you don't understand something.'

Hart's Ladder of Participation

8.36 Project representatives were asked to 'place' their project in relation to Hart's Ladder of Participation. The results are shown in the table below, and show that the highest percentage of projects operate at rung six (42 per cent). In these projects staff have the initial idea but participants are involved in every step of the planning and implementation: their views are considered and they are involved in taking the decisions, whilst some 25 per cent of projects feel they are at level seven where participants have the initial idea and decide how the project is to be carried out. Staff are available but do not take charge.

Table 8.1 – Level of participation in relation to Harts Ladder ⁴⁴

Description	%
Rung 8 - Participants have the idea, setup project and invite staff to join with them in making decisions	7%
Rung 7 - Participants have the initial idea and decide how the project is to be carried out. Staff are available but do not take charge	25%
Rung 6 - Staff have the initial idea but participants are involved in every step of the planning and implementation: their views are considered and they are involved in taking the decisions	42%
Rung 5 - The project is designed and run by staff but participants are consulted. They have a full understanding of the process and their opinions are taken seriously	23%
Rung 4 - Staff decides on the project and participants volunteer for it. Staff respect their views	3%
Rung 3 - Participants are asked to say what they think about an issue but have little or no choice about the way they express those views or the scope of the ideas they can express	0%
Rung 2 - Participants take part in an event but they do not understand the issue	0%
Rung 1 - Participants do or say what staff suggest they do, but have no real understanding of the issue, or have been asked what they think. Staff use some of their ideas but do not tell them what influence they have had on the final decision	0%

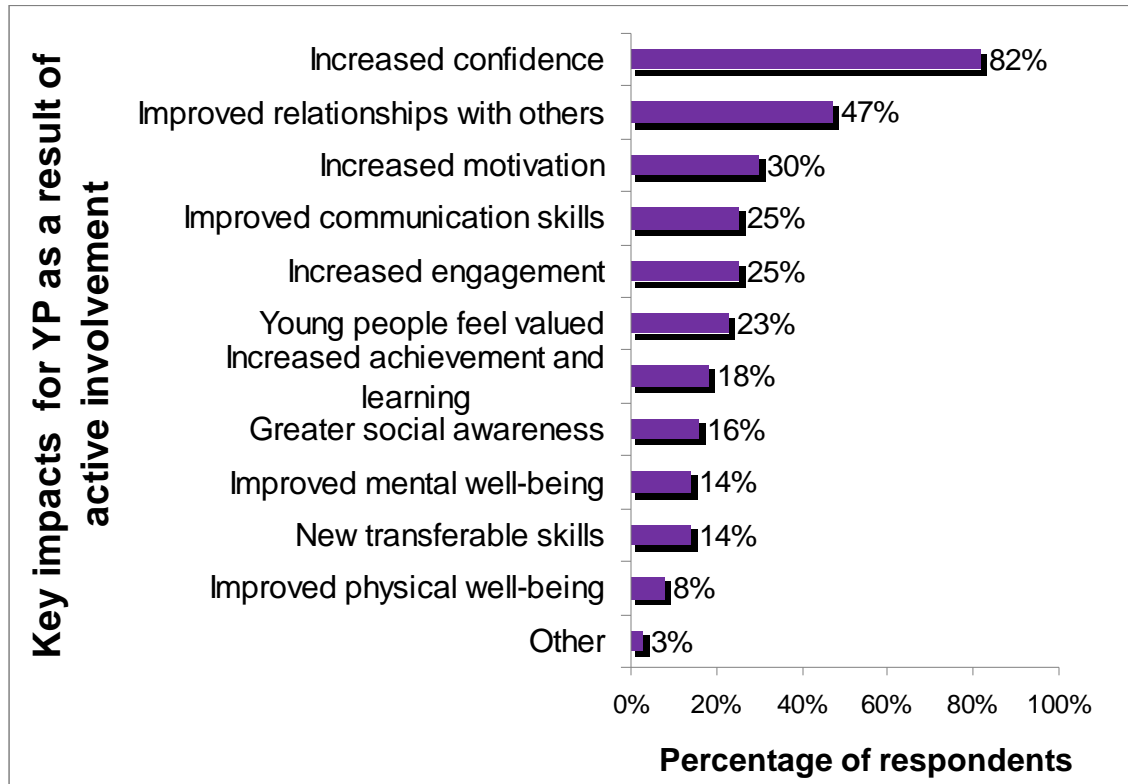
Impact of involvement

8.37 We asked project representatives to tell us about the impacts that they had observed in young people as a direct result of their involvement in the project. Figure 8.6 illustrates that, as with the general impact of participation, increased confidence is the most commonly-cited outcome (82 per cent),

⁴⁴ Hart, R. (1992), *Children's Participation from Tokenism to Citizenship*. Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre.

followed by improved relationships (47 per cent) and increased motivation (30 per cent).

Figure 8.6 – Three most significant long term benefits of participation



Source: Wavehill Survey of YPF Projects 2009 – 73 responses
 NOTE: percentages do not equal 100 due to multiple responses

Make it Happen (description and impact on young people)

8.38 Make it Happen is a strand of funding consisting of small grants (between £500 and £5,000) for projects developed and undertaken by young people. It supports young people who have ideas for activities or projects that will help other young people or their local community. To-date 102 projects have been funded under the strand, representing 82 per cent of the YPF funded projects in Wales. However, given that it is a small grants programme, it is the smallest of the funds in terms of total amount allocated. Allocation to-date totals £811,623 from a strand budget of £1 million. By the end of year three 81 per cent of the total Make it Happen funding has therefore been allocated. The funding allocated to-date under this strand represents around 6 per cent of the total fund allocated thus far across the whole programme in Wales (£13.2 million).

8.39 The focus of Make it Happen is on empowering and enabling young people to develop, deliver and benefit from their own projects. Whilst there is an emphasis on active involvement throughout the YPF programme, this is an

integral part of Make it Happen with the strand seeking to deliver outcomes for young people, both in the process of project development, delivery and management, as well as through participating in project activities. Young grant recipients are normally supported by a professional or volunteer, such as youth-worker, teacher or support worker.

8.40 The strand is open to applications from all groups of young people, but it gives priority to applications from the following groups:

- Groups run by disabled young people or young people from BME backgrounds.
- Small groups who've not received funding before.
- Groups of young people facing particular issues of disadvantage.
- Projects promoting integration between young people with different experiences or background.

8.41 In addition to the 60 Make it Happen projects interviewed during the survey, we interviewed four young people who have received grants through Making it Happen. We explored with them the process of applying and managing the grant, what was delivered and the impact on them of being actively involved in all aspects.

Application process

8.42 The four young people interviewed were largely positive about the process of applying for BIG funding, with all those interviewed rating it as 'fairly easy'. All had received support from the relevant professional or volunteer and they all reported that this had been useful:

'It seemed pretty easy - the youth workers didn't seem stressed and they gave us a lot of support. The youth workers helped us as it seemed they'd done this before.'

'We had plenty of help off [individual name] and the teachers.'

'The Treasurer helped us. We were ok, we had help from teachers at school too.'

Project purpose and accrued outcomes

8.43 The case study projects involved outdoor pursuits, work experience, and exploring Chinese culture. The young people interviewed felt that they had gained a great deal out of the project as participants. One of the young people commented that they had learned a lot about Chinese culture and were looking to strengthen links between their youth centre and a community in China, while participation in one of the outdoor pursuits projects had led to Duke of Edinburgh Award accreditation for several members of the group.

'An understanding of another culture, meeting new people and a possible visit to our link school in Nantong in 2010.'

'We gained the Silver Duke of Edinburgh Award and Leadership Award'

8.44 Project staff reported that the increase in confidence in participants is the most frequent outcome that YPF projects deliver. Young people themselves cited confidence as the major benefit they had achieved. Interestingly, the young people themselves, unprompted, spoke about confidence growing, as well as specific skills, from the process of being actively involved with the project and the responsibilities that came with being so, such as leading a group of peers, public speaking and attending meetings.

'Gave us the confidence to lead a group, I wasn't sure at first and felt a bit nervous but as I got into it my confidence got loads better and we all worked well together as it's two different schools, it was good. We gained map reading skills and navigation too.'

'Confidence for a lot of people - I didn't really like speaking to people before and was pretty quiet as we're from a small, quiet place and giving us the opportunity to go to London and experience all that [. . .] I can pretty much guarantee our personal goals were achieved like confidence.'

'As we had regular meetings I learnt committee skills - communication as well as team building.'

8.45 The young people talked about positive peer interaction, communication with each other and learning to work together as a group during the projects.

'It made us all get on a lot better together, we really gelled as a group spending that amount of time together'

'We gained a lot of confidence and it improved our communication skills and improved our awareness of other places.'

8.46 The young people reported that the very nature of the project activities had helped to engender respect for others, appreciation of other cultures and an awareness of the world.

'Respecting and appreciating the staff for the hard work they'd put in to give us a good time and personally with building confidence and working better together - in the unfamiliar surroundings we all pulled together.'

'We learnt about citizenship and working together.'

'[the place where I live] is a small town and none of us has really gone anywhere and it's a chance for us to see something else - new experiences.'

8.47 All of the young people interviewed felt that the project had helped them in their educational and career progression. One interviewee had taken up volunteering as a result and another spoke of the profound impact that the project had had on his self-confidence and aspirations for the future.

I know for a fact that helping to set up the funding and all that and going on that trip has made me a changed person now. Before I wouldn't talk to anyone, I was pretty shy. It's made me talk to people - given me the confidence and I've overcome a lot of fears. I'm joining the army when I've passed my fitness tests.

Reaching Out and Bridging the Gap

8.48 The Reaching Out and Bridging the Gap strands of the Wales programme between them account for around 18 per cent of the total number of projects funded to-date. However, given that both strands fund larger-scale, longer-term projects, in comparison with Make it Happen, they account for 94 per cent of the total funding allocated. The findings reported in this section are drawn from six case study visits to current, live projects, two from the Bridging the Gap strand and four from Reaching Out.

8.49 **Bridging the Gap** supports a small number (currently six) of large-scale projects that identify and engage with the most difficult to reach and challenging young people. Young people who may face multiple problems such as exclusion from school, homelessness, or alcohol misuse. Projects assess young people's needs, actively support them in accessing existing services and assist them in re-engaging with constructive activities. The projects achieve at least two of the main programme aims and grants can reach up to £1 million. The total spend to-date against this strand is £4.6 million.

8.50 **Reaching Out (RO)** funds projects focussed on engaging targeted young people in activities by undertaking prevention and/or outreach and intervention work that are intended to fill a gap in local provision. Projects need to achieve at least **two** of the main aims. Young people engaged by projects under this strand will either be at risk of being, or will already be, disaffected and disengaged, particularly in disadvantaged communities. Thirty-nine projects have been funded to-date and a total of £7.9 million allocated.

8.51 The findings about these two strands are analysed in the same section of this report, as the interventions are often similar in terms of the outcomes they are looking to achieve for young people. The projects differ in scale and in some instances differ in terms of the specific challenges facing the young people they work with. Any divergent findings in relation to each strand are highlighted in this section as they arise in relation to specific issues.

How projects are making a difference to the community

8.52 The evaluation evidence suggests that those projects with a community focus are succeeding in making a difference, by involving young people in

community life who are at risk of exclusion. A good example of this is the Future Vision project run by the Rhondda Housing Association, which is funded under Reaching Out and works to two YPF outcomes: Develop skills and contribute to their communities; Enjoy life and achieve their potential.

Case study example 1 – Future Vision

The project engages disadvantaged young people living in social housing across five estates in the Rhondda Cynon Taff area. There is a core group of 15 young people, aged 14-19 years, some of whom have completed an Open College Network accreditation in “Introduction to Youth Work”, and who have formed the Youth Forum. They meet once a month to discuss new activity ideas and evaluate activities they have done. There is also an “Editorial Group”, a group of about six young people who meet to discuss projects done over the last three months and write a newsletter which is distributed to all the tenants, councillors and Community First areas. One participant commented: *“This has helped us get off the streets and all mix better together, it has given us skills like map reading, cooking and how to put together a good CV and we wanted to prove to some of the older people that we are not all trouble makers. Some of us have even improved our grades at school”*. One young person continued *“I was easily led before and just did what everyone else did and was always in trouble, now I have the confidence to do my own thing and I like helping with the others, looking out for some of the younger ones, its nice”*.

8.53 There are other interesting examples where YPF funding has enabled young people to play a more active role in their communities. The Conwy Child Care/Creche for School Girl Mothers has enabled young mums, a often excluded, isolated and stigmatised group to continue in education (see section 4.2 below). It has enabled them to become active citizens with career aspirations and support networks. One participant commented: *‘Being at home on your own, it’s isolating, you have nothing to do, no goals. I have a life now.’*

8.54 In terms of the extent to which projects are making a difference in communities through prevention of anti-social behaviour (ASB), young people were open and candid about the fact that they had been prone to ASB. One participant of the CYCA ‘Moving On’ project, funded under Reaching Out, reported that his behaviour has changed since learning how to cope with his feelings: *‘Children our age tend to have a lot of aggression, it cools them down, gets us to think about things and teaches us ways to cope without being aggressive.’*

Addressing Disadvantage

8.55 The evidence gathered through the case study interviews and observations shows that disadvantaged young people are being assisted by projects under both Reaching Out and Bridging the Gap. All of the projects

visited had recruited participants facing social and economic disadvantage, such as young people from deprived areas, young social housing tenants, young people from families with a record of poor educational attainment and unemployment, young lone parents and those facing or who had faced family breakdown.

8.56 During the case study visit to the School Girl Mothers project at Conwy, our researcher conducted a focus group with participants. One of the striking aspects of that group session was that for the first twenty minutes, the young mothers spoke of their courses, forthcoming examinations and assessments, their career aspirations and the next step in their progression. The 'young mothers' did not define themselves as mums, but as young learners. It was only after prompting that they began discussing the challenges of being parents, mostly lone parents. This was explained by one of the group: *'It's only when you're happy that your child is being well-looked after that you can concentrate on studying.'* The childcare provision had enabled them to focus on other aspects of their lives that would not otherwise be possible.

8.57 In Pembrokeshire, the evaluation team visited the 'Positive Futures' project run by the Princes' Trust to provide alternative learning opportunities to young people who are at risk of being, or actually are, NEET. The project is careful and selective in the way in which it puts together groups of young people in order to ensure that there is a supportive environment and a mix of those who have been on the project for some time and are progressing well, with newer recruits who may be starting from a low base of skills and confidence.

Case study example 2 – Positive Futures

Whilst visiting the project the young people were involved in an indoor rock climbing activity and one of the young people being instructed simply said *"I can not do any of this..."* Through gentle instruction and support from his peers and the instructor within 15 minutes he had climbed the wall and made his way back down, and the smile on his face clearly showed he felt he had achieved something. When the researcher asked one of the young people why he came here and what it did for him he replied *"Before I was bored and frustrated and every day my mum used to have to drag me out of bed, now I get up by myself".*

The Impact of YPF Activity on Young People

8.58 The majority of the young people we interviewed and observed during the case study visits had seen some level of positive change during their participation in the project. A number of outcomes were reported by disadvantaged young people and those who were, or were at risk of being, NEET.

8.59 For some young people, remaining in education is in itself an outcome. For the young mothers in statutory education at the School Girl Mothers project, the childcare had helped them to remain in mainstream educational settings, rather than receiving five hours of home tuition which is the normal entitlement.

For those that had progressed to further education, it is even more difficult to remain in education without support. One commented, to broad agreement, that the project was quite simply, the difference between being in or out of education: *'I wouldn't be in education – I just wouldn't be able to do it.'*

8.60 The participants at the 'Positive Futures' project in Pembrokeshire had all been referred by their schools and were at risk of exclusion. One of the young people observed that the project had taught him about himself and his own barriers: *'I don't like school but I do enjoy what we do here. I'm different with the people [project workers] here. I don't kick off anymore, and I know how to stop it.'*

8.61 For other young people, the outcomes related to emotional well-being, self-confidence and the resilience to cope in life. The CYCA 'Moving On' project in Carmarthenshire provides counselling, holistic therapies and yoga to young people suffering emotional difficulties. It is funded under Reaching Out and works towards the following programme outcomes: choose positive activities which discourage anti-social behaviour; develop skills and contribute to their communities.

Case study example 3 – Moving On

A pupil whose parents had recently separated noted: *'Roedd bywyd fi wedi torri yn hanner. O'n I ddim y gweld unrhyw obaith, dim golau, ac o'n i ddim eisiau trafod e da' neb, o'n I ddim yn gwybdo sut. Ond, mae e wedi helpu fi siwd gymaint. [My life split in half. I couldn't see any hope, any light, and I didn't want to talk to anybody about it – I didn't know how. But it has helped me so much.]* In terms of re-engaging pupils with their education and discouraging anti-social and challenging behaviour, some of the aromatherapy, massages and meditations had helped young pupils with emotional difficulties to cope with the stress of school and home life. One year nine pupil noted: *'Children our age tend to have a lot of aggression, it cools them down, gets us to think about things and teaches us ways to cope without being aggressive.'* And, another said: *'Ar ôl dod mas, dw I'n barod am arholiad, am ysgol, am unrhywbeth. Mae'r hyder 'da fi I wynebu pethau a delio gyda stress. [After coming out [of the sessions], I'm ready for an exam, for school, for anything. I have the confidence to face things, to deal with stress.]'*

Addressing gaps in provision

8.62 One of the key roles of YPF is to provide activities and interventions that are not currently available within existing provision in each local area. The evidence gathered strongly suggests that the projects are doing this. All the projects visited during the case study research were linked into their local Children and Young People's partnership, the multi-agency body in each local authority that co-ordinates provision.

8.63 Several of the case study projects were unique: the Young Mother's project is filling an identified need that was brought to the attention of the local

authority through young mothers in the county writing to them highlighting the gap that existed. There is a very high drop-out rate amongst young mothers in education. There is no obligation for local authorities to provide support to enable them to remain in education beyond the statutory five hours of home tuition during late pregnancy for those of school age. The project has shown that, with support and facilities, young mothers can remain in education and achieve their potential.

8.64 Two of the six case study projects provide alternative curriculum opportunities to young people unsuited to mainstream educational environments. The projects attempt to intervene before young people become NEET if they are of school age, or to work with them if they have become NEET after leaving school. Both of these projects are linked to the local Children and Young People's partnership. One was funded under Bridging the Gap - 'Changing Tracks' in Bridgend - and one 'Positive Futures' in Pembrokeshire was funded under Reaching Out. In both cases, they were the only projects of this nature in their respective county boroughs, and were providing a service that schools were unable to provide.

8.65 One of the independent strategic stakeholders we interviewed commented on the YPF in this regard, noting that: *'The Fund has a role to play here, as does ESF. Alternative education [provision] and vocational training is very under-developed at the moment, but the policy tells us that we need to be moving in that direction under Learning Pathways and NEET [strategy].'*

8.66 The Rhondda Housing Association project, Future Vision, is another example of filling identified need. Support to young people in social housing is still under-developed, despite the efforts of the 'foyer' movement to address this. Funding can be sourced for registered social landlords to provide or commission training, or to provide support for tenants with disabilities or special needs from the Supporting People budget. However, youth work and activity-based work that does not always lead directly to formal qualifications, or is not traditional 'support' is difficult to find funding for.

8.67 The two projects with an emotional health focus, the CYCA 'Moving On' project and the 'Inspire' project in Wrexham, are filling an identified need, not just in relation to beneficiary need, but also existing service provision. They are funded under 'Reaching Out' and Bridging the Gap' respectively. The need for accessible emotional health support for young people has become starkly apparent over the past year with the Bridgend suicide 'cluster' and the Welsh Assembly Government's development of a suicide prevention strategy. One of the seldom-reported facts about the Bridgend 'cluster' is that few of the young people who took their own lives had previously presented with any mental or emotional health difficulties. Most of these young people were, therefore, not previously known to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) teams.

8.68 The projects are, then, both meeting a latent or hidden need amongst young people who are below the CAHMS intervention rate (normally Tier 2 or 3). The project manager at 'Moving On' spoke of the need for early intervention:

Case study example 4 – Moving On

The existence of the project at the schools also filled a gap in capacity in local CAMHS: it is often very difficult to identify 'Tier 1' cases and intervene at an early stage in young people's difficulties before they become more pronounced and progress to Tiers 2 and 3. Some 30 per cent of participants who are receiving counselling at the project have self-harmed. The project manager commented that YPF had helped to provide the 'reach' into the schools, and the project's resultant ability to engage young people unlikely to present with difficulties elsewhere, or whose emotional difficulties were not yet sufficiently severe to be referred to CAMHS or an educational Psychologist. She commented: 'Without the Young People's fund, it just wouldn't have happened.'

Involvement

8.69 All of the case study projects from the Reaching Out and Bridging the Gap strands have mechanisms to involve young people in the projects. Young people were generally happy with their level of involvement in projects and the means by which they could make their opinions heard on any aspect of the programme. One participant of the Future Vision project, who is not involved in a formal capacity, despite being encouraged to be, commented: *"I know that if I have something to say I can say it, I don't have to be on the forum for my voice to be heard"*. This is a view echoed by participants in other projects and suggests that young people are empowered and enabled to make their views known and to influence the projects in the act of participation, even if they choose not to engage with the more formal involvement mechanisms.

8.70 For young people who do want to be actively involved, there is evidence of opportunity across all projects to be involved. It was also clear that projects will provide appropriate support to enable the involvement of young people if the demands are seen to be a challenge. An Executive Board member on the School Girl Mothers project who is a Year 9 pupil, commented: *"They [the professionals on the group] do give you a lot of help, if you don't understand something."*

How young people are involved at each stage

8.71 The level of involvement varies between projects, according to what is deemed appropriate from the point of view of confidentiality, and, where there are practical issues relating to literacy or commitment. One of the case study projects had participant's representation on Executive Boards and Steering Groups, two had youth forums which were felt to be more age-appropriate for their particular cohorts. The two projects working with young people at risk of being NEET, and the 'Moving On' Emotional Health project were based on the principle of empowering young people to choose and plan their activities, and in the case of 'Positive Futures' to develop their own code of behaviour. The evidence indicates that the case study projects have the appropriate balance for their respective

groups of young people. At the heart of all of the projects is the right of young people to be involved in decisions affecting them, and to have a say over the nature of activities and interventions they participate in. One of the young people at the 'Positive Futures' project in Pembrokeshire said *"Because we get to plan ahead it means we can do what we want to do, it is different to school because here we are less controlled and more free range!"*

Barriers to involvement

8.72 Some barriers to involving young people were cited, but most of the barriers raised referred to formal involvement in Steering Groups and Executive Boards. For some groups literacy often precluded them from sitting on a Steering Group, although it could be argued that projects can take measures to ensure that literacy is not a barrier to this kind of involvement. Project workers reported that young people who are NEET or at risk of being NEET, can be difficult to engage in formal project involvement and it was felt that less formal but equally consultative structures were the most appropriate means of ensuring involvement. Nevertheless, the projects had all found ways of collecting young people's views, either formally or informally, and taking account of them in the project implementation and planning. For lone parents, transport and childcare are barriers that projects have worked to overcome.

8.73 The conclusion to be drawn is that even if 'formal' involvement of some groups of young people is not possible, even when the structural barriers are removed, informal involvement of participants is the best means of ensuring that their views are heard. Most projects have succeeded in finding a balanced model that suits their participants wants and the nature of the project activity.

The impact of involvement on young people

8.74 Young people who have been actively involved in projects were very positive about the effect this has had on them. One of the young mothers in the Conwy project said: *"This is the only thing I've ever been any good at."* The 'Moving On' project has a low drop-out rate as a result of its involvement policy.

Case study example 5 – Moving On

Young people are involved in all aspects where it is appropriate, given the nature of the interventions and the confidentiality issues. All beneficiaries interviewed agreed that they were able to choose the nature and extent of their engagement with the holistic therapy, yoga and counselling – participation in all is voluntary, and young people are asked what they want to do, and what they feel will work best for them. As a result the project has a low drop out rate and many of the young people we spoke to told us that they looked forward to the sessions and felt better prepared to deal with school work, examinations, peers and their home lives after participating.

8.75 One young person on the Future Vision project in the Rhondda had experienced a profound change as a result of active involvement on the project:

Case study example 6 – Future Vision

'When I came here 3 years ago I had no confidence at all. I would only go out with my cousin, never on my own and I would not talk to anyone. Now I have visited London and Brussels, I am a member of the Youth Forum and I also sit on the board of the local management committee representing young people.'

The impacts of young people's involvement on projects

8.76 These projects experience a low rate of drop-out and disengagement, given their client-groups, which staff and young people attribute to involvement and choice. Many of the young people engaged in these projects have come to the projects from environments where they feel they have a lack of control over their own lives. Being consulted and involved in decisions that affect them pays dividends in terms of commitment.

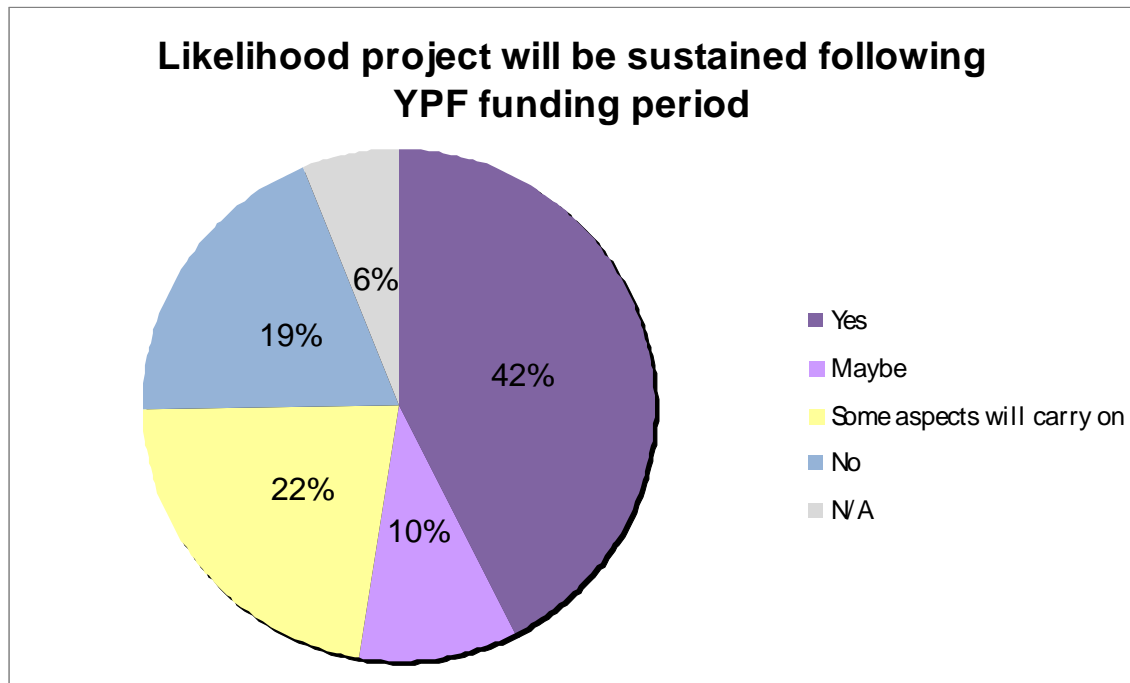
Legacy of YPF

8.77 This section explores the issues of ongoing sustainability of projects and for Reaching Out and Bridging the Gap strands, the projects' position within the overall range of service provision in the local context.

Potential for projects to continue beyond YPF funding

8.78 The first point to note is that 42 per cent of projects reported that they are likely to continue after the end of YPF funding, with a further 10 per cent saying 'maybe'. A further 22 per cent reported that some aspects of the projects will continue, and 19 per cent said that the project will not continue beyond the funding period.

Figure 8.7 – Likelihood of sustaining project activity



Source: Wavehill Survey of YPF Projects 2009 – 73 responses

8.79 The majority of the projects surveyed are funded through Make it Happen and so are smaller, shorter-term projects than those funded under Reaching Out or Make it Happen. Of the case study projects that we visited, which were funded under Reaching Out and Bridging the Gap, all wished to continue in some form and were currently exploring continuation options. These included:

- ESF funding under Priority 1 - Supplying Young People with Skills for Learning and Future Employment. For the projects relating directly to NEET client groups and employability, there are clear opportunities under this priority, and all were seeking to engage partners via their local Children's and Young People's partnerships and expand their projects across local authority boundaries.
- People and Places – one of the projects is looking to expand its range of clients beyond young people to include family-based interventions.
- The Future Vision project has committed to mainstream the post of one of the youth workers working on the project, but is exploring future opportunities at present.

8.80 It is worth noting that both Bridging the Gap projects had two years to run before completion, so there was less immediate urgency to secure continuation funding, but staff on both projects are highly conscious of the need to begin exploring options, and have started to compile evidence to demonstrate the effectiveness of their interventions.

8.81 We have outlined above some of the specific ways in which the projects are addressing gaps in provision and providing services that would not otherwise be available. In terms of legacy, beneficiaries on several projects suggested that participation in the project had diverted them away from being disaffected in their communities. In this respect the projects have made a significant contribution to the development and blend of provision in each authority.

'I was getting into debt, couldn't afford childcare so I could study, my partner was made redundant. I wouldn't be in education without the support and my life wouldn't be heading in the direction it is now.' – School Girl Mothers project

"without them (Changing Tracks) I would not be in college, they have improved my confidence and I am much happier now". – Changing Tracks project.

"I understand the work here (OCN) and the workers understand me, they listen to me and don't shout and I trust them. Since coming here I am much calmer and I understand my moods more and now I love going to school alongside this project". - Changing Tracks project

8.82 New partnerships have formed during the course of the funding. Whilst most of the projects we visited were built on existing partnerships between organisations, many had further developed, through a combination of:

- Engaging key partners in referral, delivery of aspects of the projects, or them having a role in its management through Board membership.
- All projects were linked into their local Children's and Young People's partnership and had received referral or been told about referral routes through that body.

8.83 The Children and Young People's Partnerships will need to provide a forum for strategic partnership to continue by overseeing and ensuring the 'fit'; of projects in the overall mix of local provision and engaging partners to work together. It will also have a role in sharing best practice. On an operational level, the sustainability of existing relationships based around delivery, referral and management will depend on the format in which these projects are likely to continue. If they can find succession funding that allows them to continue (as opposed to scale down out of necessity), then it is likely that existing relationships and partnerships will be maintained.

Conclusions

8.84 Project activity has been diverse with a wide range of provision made available for young people. Most projects see a direct link between their project interventions or activities, their participant's progression and the three country outcomes which provide the over-arching framework for the projects. These links

are clearer in projects funded under Reaching Out and Bridging the Gap owing to the longer-term nature of the projects and the type of activities.

8.85 Most projects are focusing on a particular client-group, such as young people in deprived areas or those at risk of exclusion, although many projects are open to all young people. However, these 'open' projects tend to be funded under the Making it Happen strand, whereas Reaching Out and Bridging the Gap tend towards focussed interventions with circumscribed groups of young people. The evidence gathered suggests that projects under these two strands are successfully targeting participants from the correct groups. This is mainly due to well-developed partnerships and referral mechanisms, often but not always forged through the local Children and Young People's Partnership.

8.86 On the basis of evidence gathered, the impact on young people of participating in the projects has been positive and in many cases profound. Confidence, motivation and improved relationships have all been cited, and for some of the young people we interviewed, their participation in their particular project has effectively constituted the difference between being engaged in learning and society, or being disaffected or NEET.

8.87 The projects visited during case study visits were well-paced to deliver on their programme outcomes. Many of the participants spoke of being steered away from anti-social and aggressive behaviours, others of being active citizens who were hopeful about their futures, and some saying that they were equipped to deal with difficulties.

8.88 The Making it Happen strand has involvement at its heart and this emphasis has also helped young grant recipients to progress. Those interviewed stated that the process of applying, managing and delivering the grant had challenged them to develop new skills and broadened their horizons.

8.89 Involvement has also been a key consideration for the projects funded under Reaching Out and Bridging the Gap, and each project has worked well to find a level and appropriate means of involvement for its participants. Young people's involvement has enhanced the projects by keeping participants more engaged, providing a means by which they can make their views known and giving them a sense that they are being listened to and that somebody is responding to their concerns.

8.90 As with last year's evaluation, levels of involvement were highest during project development, and got lower with delivery and lower still with project management, but were again higher when it came to evaluation and planning.

8.91 The impact on participants who have been involved in projects has been largely positive and, again, in some cases led to long-term change. Again, confidence, motivation and a sense of being listened to were the key outcomes raised by participants who were actively involved in their projects.

8.92 The case study projects we visited that were funded under Bridging the Gap and Reaching Out were all responding directly to fill gaps in local provision. In all cases participants had been involved and consulted in project development.

Linking with Children and Young People's Partnerships had led to the avoidance of duplication and the forging of strategic and operational partnership. It also ensured that projects could be aligned with local and national policy, and that referral could be taken to projects from other agencies working with young people who were linked into the local partnership. This is clear strength of the YPF delivery model in Wales and one that could be extended to other national programmes under YPF.

8.93 Sustainability remains an issue for projects that are coming to an end. None of the projects we visited that are funded under Reaching Out and Bridging the Gap have gained any agreement locally to mainstream the whole of their project, and none had to-date, secured longer-term or succession funding. However, all of the projects are keenly aware of the need to secure funding and all were exploring options and opportunities.

9 Learning points

9.1 This chapter draws out the key learning points from the evaluation and makes practical recommendations based on our findings. The learning points and recommendations focus on:

- Programme aims and outcomes
- Encouraging active involvement of young people
- Maximising the benefits of active involvement of young people
- Linking to the local infrastructure
- Sustainability of outcomes.

Programme aims and outcomes

Key Learning Point 1

Broad aims and outcomes allow projects to focus on and prioritise the needs of beneficiaries over the needs of funders.

The broad aims and outcomes identified in each of the country programmes allow grant recipients to use their experience and knowledge to design and deliver projects that meet the needs of young people first rather than the needs of funders. Whilst projects are working towards a common end goal, the way they get there is user-led, shaped by the needs and aspirations of the beneficiaries, local circumstance, the types of activity and the skills and expertise of the staff.

Key Learning Point 2

Measuring the success of a programme with broad aims and outcomes is challenging when grant recipients do not use a common set of indicators.

A drawback of having broad outcomes is that it can be difficult to measure progress towards and achievement of anticipated outcomes. Projects funded through YPF are monitored against project specific outcomes rather than programme outcomes. These should clearly relate to programme outcomes but because of the differences in each project, progress and outcomes cannot easily be aggregated across the programme.

Key Learning Point 3

Projects are more likely to focus on working towards the programme aims and outcomes when they are clearly aligned with national policy outcomes

Project workers in England can more readily identify the programme aims and outcomes and how they are working towards them. The reason seems to be that the programme in England is directly linked to the national policy, Every Child Matters. Project workers easily identify with the outcomes, they are likely to be used to working towards these outcomes, and they can engage with partners using a common language and working towards a common set of outcomes.

Key Learning Point 4

While YPF aims to involve young people at all stages of the project, the complexity of the application process makes it difficult to involve them in a meaningful way at this stage.

Whilst many project staff consider the process of applying for YPF funding to be more straightforward than many funding streams, and decisions on applications were made relatively quickly, there are some issues that have hindered projects and worked against the aims of YPF:

- The application process remains too complex to be accessible to many young people. This made it difficult to involve young people in developing and completing the application.
- Young people were usually consulted at the application stage, but then typically 6 to 9 months would pass between submission, funding approval and new staff taking up posts. By this stage the project idea had often lost momentum and many of the young people who had been involved had moved on. This could discourage young people from being involved in this or similar processes in the future.

Key Learning Point 5

By providing a range of strands and structures, YPF has offered a variety of different routes and types of involvement. This has met the needs of and provided opportunities for young people at different stages of readiness for engagement and with different types of need.

Each strand and structure of YPF has brought different benefits. For example the strands which provide grants to individuals have been particularly successful in allowing young people to genuinely initiate, deliver and manage their own short term project; while grants awarded to organisations have provided longer term opportunities that provide stability for young people, which is especially important for those with chaotic lives, and ongoing development and social opportunities for all young people.

Recommendations: Programme Aims and Outcomes

Recommendations for Funders:

- When developing future programmes funders should consider having broad aims and outcomes to enable user led responses. They should aim to link programme outcomes to appropriate national policies and clearly articulate how the programme will contribute to achieving policy outcomes.
- With broad aims and outcomes, funders must carefully consider the information they need from grant recipients to measure progress towards programme outcomes. This will include developing a common set of outcome indicators. By developing a broad and extensive list of outcome indicators for each programme, projects will be able to identify a subset that is relevant to them.
- If a programme aims to involve beneficiaries at all stages, funders must make sure that the application process and tools are designed to be user friendly and accessible, taking in to account the range of audiences and groups who will be involved. This will include regular communication and updates throughout the application and decision making period.
- Where a programme is targeted at a wide audience and aims to achieve a range of outcomes, funders should consider developing a set of complementary types of activity and strands rather than trying to achieve all aims and reach all beneficiaries through one approach.

Encouraging active involvement of young people

Key Learning Point 6

Peer recruitment is effective in encouraging young people to participate

Throughout the evaluation projects have highlighted the success of peer recruitment in encouraging a wider group of young people to become engaged. Projects can maximise their reach by involving young people in recruiting and encouraging other young people to participate.

Key Learning Point 7

The vast majority of projects are initiated by adults however peer recruitment could encourage more young people to initiate projects

The evaluation found that while young people are consulted at the application stage, projects are often initiated by adults, with young people rarely being involved beyond consultation. The evaluation found that peer recruitment is a

good means of encouraging young people to initiate projects. This happened in Scotland, more by accident than design, when young people from some of the Local Area Panels, feeling frustrated at the initial lack of applications being submitted, began marketing the programme to other young people and projects in their area. Additionally, young people who were beneficiaries of the Big Boost in England and the Big Deal in Northern Ireland reported that when other young people saw that they had been successful in obtaining a grant and running their own project, they were encouraged to submit their own application.

Key Learning Point 8

It is challenging to provide hard evidence of the impacts on projects resulting from young peoples' involvement.

Involvement is often implicit in daily activities and both young people and project staff report that they are generally satisfied with levels of involvement. This may be because they have no benchmark to compare it to rather than because young people are being involved as fully and meaningfully as they could be. There is a lack of hard evidence of how involving young people has influenced decisions and brought about change and so there is scope for staff and young people to raise their expectations of what constitutes genuine involvement and to more realistically assess involvement and its impacts.

Key Learning Point 9

Young people, especially those who are harder to engage, tend to become more involved over time following a capacity building phase

9.2 Meaningful involvement is not achievable or desired by all young people and it is important that funders recognise this. Beneficiaries often need to develop their confidence and skills to be actively involved. This takes time and appropriate support from skilled project staff.

Recommendations: Encouraging active involvement of young people

Recommendations for Funders

- Where a programme aims to fund projects that are initiated by young people, funders should consider involving young people in promoting the programme.
- Where a programme aims to encourage high levels of active involvement funders should challenge project staff to maximise involvement by making it a requirement that they record and monitor changes resulting from involving young people using tools such as Participation Works' What's Changed tool.

- Funders of programmes that aim to engender active involvement should make it a requirement that grant recipients demonstrate how they will support beneficiaries to become more actively involved over time. Monitoring processes should measure progress against this plan.

Recommendations for Funders and Projects

- Where a programme aims to engage young people either as participants or to be actively involved in projects, funders should encourage and projects should use peer recruitment as a means of engaging a wider group.

Recommendations for Projects

- Projects that aim to actively engage young people should record and monitor the changes that have taken place as a result of involvement, and actively reflect on current methods of involvement and opportunities for developing these methods.

Maximising the benefits of active involvement

Key Learning Point 10

Young people who are actively involved benefit more than those who engage only as a participant

Young people who are actively involved in projects find it an extremely valuable experience, with wide ranging and significant benefits to their personal development and their future careers. Involvement gives them a voice and enables them to make a difference in their community. All types of involvement are beneficial and very often impacts stem from the process of being actively involved as opposed to participating in specific activities.

Key Learning Point 11

Project staff need to have the necessary skills and expertise to identify and facilitate a range of involvement activities to suit the diverse needs and capacity of young people.

It is vital that projects recognise that 'one size does not fit all' and that involvement activity must be pitched at a level that is appropriate for and tailored to the needs of the young people. Project workers need to be skilled in:

- identifying a range of involvement activities to suit the variety of young people engaging with the project (including those who may lack confidence and those who may only engage with the project for a limited period of time)
- identifying a pace of activity that suits the young people in the project to ensure maximum participation

- effectively communicating the short and long term benefits that young people can gain through active involvement
- challenging young people, including those considered hardest to reach, to become involved.

Key Learning Point 12

It is extremely effective to provide young people with specific training to build their skills and confidence to help them be involved.

Young people often require significant time and support to build the skills and confidence to be actively involved in projects. While projects allow young people time and offer them support, there is limited evidence from case study projects of young people being provided with formal preparation for active involvement. Where this happened young people reported that they valued the experience and it helped them to feel more confident about being involved.

Key Learning Point 13

Young people, especially those who have not achieved at school, are highly motivated by formal, accredited qualifications.

To ensure the active involvement of young people over a sustained period it is important that they recognise the skills they have developed and feel they have gained something concrete as a result of their efforts. Young people are motivated by the achievement of formal, accredited qualifications for example through the LAPs and peer education projects.

Recommendations: Maximising the benefits of active involvement

Recommendations for Policy Makers and Funders

- Promoting the active involvement of young people should continue to be a priority.

Recommendations for Funders

- Funders should consider asking grant recipients to provide evidence of staff training and ongoing CPD activity as part of monitoring arrangements to ensure that staff have the necessary skills and expertise to identify appropriate opportunities for active involvement to meet the range of needs and abilities of the young people they are working with

Recommendations for Projects and Funders

- Projects should explore opportunities for formal development opportunities to support young people to develop the skills and confidence to become actively involved, such as the 'preparation for participation' training that the RNIB project offered its participants in partnership with Public

Achievement (a youth focussed civic education organisation). Funders should encourage this approach by awarding funding to support these activities.

- Projects should explore opportunities for formally accrediting activities that young people engage in as a record of their achievements. Funders should encourage this by awarding funding to support this type of activity

Recommendations for Projects

- Projects should take steps to ensure that staff have and continue to develop the skills and expertise to support and facilitate involvement opportunities. This should start with a training needs analysis followed by individual development plans for each staff member. Skills could be developed through internal and external training and development activities and could potentially involve young people.
- Projects should hold regular internal reviews and assessments of how well the project is doing in involving young people and to identify what staff and the project needs to do to continue to improve and build on this.

Linking to local infrastructure

Key Learning Point 14

There would be significant benefit in there being stronger links between funded projects and local infrastructures.

The integration of YPF projects with local infrastructures helps **to maximise impacts and minimise the risk of duplication**. It is a strength of the programme in Wales where projects were required to work with their local Children and Young People's Partnership. This approach ensures that projects have access to relevant strategic knowledge and expertise; enables them to work with local networks of providers, thus avoiding duplication, maximising opportunities for cross referral, and enabling them to understand wider provision; ensures that within the local area there is a more coherent and holistic approach to working with young people to provide them with opportunities to engage in positive activities and to support them to address the issues that they face.

Key Learning Point 15

Taking a panel approach can be an effective way of engaging young people in local decision making

The use of LAPs in YPF in Scotland has demonstrated that there are a significant number of young people who are keen to be involved in making decisions that affect their local area. When young people on the LAPs were not reviewing applications, some took the initiative to get involved in other activities locally.

There may be an opportunity to learn from this approach and enable young people to become part of their local infrastructure through the development of local decision making panels of young people that support local Children and Young People's Partnerships and equivalents.

Recommendations: Linking to Local Infrastructure

Recommendation for Funders

- Funders of future programmes should consider whether there are opportunities for grant recipients to directly link to existing local infrastructures. Where it is beneficial, it should be a funding requirement.

Recommendation for Policy Makers

- Consideration should be given to establishing local decision making panels of young people to support decision making locally and give young people the opportunity to develop their skills and experience.

Recommendation for BIG and the YPF Evaluation Team

- Once the Strategic Programmes strand of YPF in Northern Ireland is more established, further learning around the involvement of young people in decision making structures will be available and should be incorporated into the evaluation

Sustainability of Outcomes

Key Learning Point 16

Overall, within projects, there is a lack of planning for the ongoing sustainability of YPF funded activities.

Many projects are unsure about whether their project will continue beyond their YPF funding and are relying on other funding opportunities being available. Projects in Wales are more certain about their future, suggesting that being closely linked to local infrastructures provides more certainty about whether or not activities are sustainable in the longer term.

Recommendations: Sustainability of Outcomes

Recommendations for BIG

- BIG should consider taking action to encourage projects that are still receiving funding through YPF to prepare sustainability plans or exit strategies for their project's activity going forward to ensure maximum sustainability of outcomes

- In future projects should be asked to include plans for preparing an exit strategy as part of the application process. This would not ask for the detail of the strategy, but how and when they will start the process of planning

Recommendation for BIG and the YPF Evaluation Team

- The final two years of the evaluation should focus on gathering evidence on what the long term impacts of YPF have been for the young people; projects, including staff and the organisation as a whole; and local communities.