



## Devon Youth Bank Case Studies

### Case Study 1

Area: Exeter – Youth Open Space International Club.

Background:

The club is a youth club for young people aged 13 -19 who are refugees to this country. It was started because of the need to bring communities together outside of school hours. Bullying due to racism was being experienced by these young people and there was no appropriate provision for them outside of school. They had become concerned for their physical safety when playing football in Belmont Park. They wanted a way to integrate with other young people and learn to all get on together. Twenty-six young people registered with Devon Racial Equality Council and formed the YOSIC.

The Approach:

The Club's ethos is to provide a safe place for these young people to learn, play sports, explore cultural issues and meet new friends. The boys meet on a Friday and the girls on a Saturday (they come with their mothers). They work closely with the National Parks and many of the young people are working towards its leadership certificate as they are keen to build their self esteem, confidence and self reliance. Three young people have taken on the role of leaders within the club. They have established successful 5-a-side and 11 a-side football teams. The YOF grant has enabled them to hire Riverside Leisure Centre and the University pitches twice a week so that they are safe when training. The 5 a-side team has won the 'Kick Racism out of Football' competition 3 times. They are keen to play with other young people so plans are in place to join up with DYS's active football initiatives. Football also features in the club's links with Moretonhampstead Youth Club. The club is working on a 'Kick Racism Out of Schools' football tournament. Some girls are involved in the football.

A teacher is employed on a Saturday to help with GCSE revision for both girls and boys.

A film maker has helped with the production of a DVD about the young people's experience of racism in schools. This has been shown in schools with the young people giving a presentation. There are plans to make another

DVD about some of the young people's journeys from Afghanistan or Iran to Britain and their perception of what it means to be a refugee in Britain.

Outcome:

The young people have little family or other support; some are orphans, so this meeting point gives them opportunity to discuss and address relevant issues and gain an understanding of their newly adopted country. The club gives them a starting point from which they can learn to become independent. They have developed many skills. They organise their football and have the confidence to go into schools with their DVD and tell their peers about their experiences. They are now keen to register with DYS and join its activities and get to know many more English friends. Those English friends will gain much knowledge and understanding of a very different life story as a result.

## **Case Study 2**

Area: Exeter – Voices 2 Be heard, 'Funky Fortnight'.

Background:

Voices 2 Be Heard is a group of young people who are either in the care of Devon County Council or are leaving care. These young people wanted to let people know about their existence and that 'being in care wasn't their fault'. They wanted to broaden their own experiences and life chances by having a go at things they would not normally be able to do. They decided to organise a series of events over the summer when there was not that much going on.

Approach:

A planning meeting was held in June where the group decided that Street Dancing, Street Art, DJ and MCing, and drama would give good opportunities for publicity, offer a variety of experiences and attract young people who were able to attend at varying times. DAISI was involved to suggest suitable professionals to facilitate the events. Responsibility for arranging each activity with the professional was allocated to individual young people; flip charts and mind mapping was much in evidence.

Outcome:

The half day workshops were described by the young people as 'fun and interesting and we got to know one another's views'.

Street Dance was 'great fun and so funny. We were taught those weird moves in just half a day'.

Street Art was good because 'I made something cool to take home' (namely boards with graffiti art).

In the drama workshop the young people said they shared a lot with each other and it felt OK.

The music was particularly popular with a complete song produced in just half a day about what it is like to be in care. The group are very proud of this achievement. It features one young man rapping, a young girl singing and backing vocals. All the young people involved commented how much they enjoyed singing and that they do not often get the chance to do it.

As a result of these activities the group now plan to produce an album of 5 or 6 songs about their experiences of life in care so that others can have a greater understanding. They plan to ask the drama teacher back to facilitate some exercises in order to determine what the group really want to achieve from this exercise.

There are plans to extend next year's funky fortnight to include even more activities.

### **Case Study 3**

Area: Exeter Innov8

Background:

A group of young people randomly surveyed 50 other young people on the streets of Exeter. 95% said they would welcome a new radio station produced by and for young people. 90% felt that they were not 'taken seriously by adults in authority'. In order to fill this gap Innov8 created a project to run out of the Exeter Phoenix Sound Gallery which would produce a monthly 2 hour radio show for 13 – 19 year olds. A film documentary tracking its progress would also be produced. The show has been broadcast on a Sunday on the local community radio station Phonic FM since April 2009.

Approach:

50% of this group of young people considered themselves as disadvantaged, (1 young person was in care, 1 had learning difficulties, another was at risk of exclusion). Extensive preparation and research is needed to produce a magazine style radio show so the group meet every Monday. The show includes 'The Good Godly Gig Guide', a serial drama, recordings of and interviews with bands, vox pops taken on the streets (eg, 'should you have to change to fit in', exam pressures) and interviews with well known people (eg, Ben Bradshaw). The team made all the show's jingles themselves. Major issues such as sweatshop labour, festivals, what to do if you do not get your exam grades, war on want are all tackled. The show communicates with all the young people who listen or e-mail or keep in touch via the internet. Audience feedback is monitored by e-mail and the internet [www.sound-gallery.net](http://www.sound-gallery.net). Extensive research is carried out on the streets of Exeter so young people are also reached in this way.

The highly complex process of producing a radio show means that the team have to work together and each team member has to do their share of the organisation and preparation which is a significant commitment. Ten team members have achieved the V100 volunteering certificate. The documentary charting the development of the show has been completed and is awaiting its public screening which will be held at the Phoenix Centre. One of the team members who has autism has played a key role in its production. He is now keen to pursue film making as a career. The YOF grant paid for support from an engineer.

Outcome:

These young people have used the medium of radio to reach out to many other young people who share the same concerns. They have explored many important issues central to the society in which they live and not just to themselves as individuals. They have been able to use their own format, language and overall approach. The team members themselves have gained a huge variety of technical, organisational, creative and communication skills. Their confidence and self esteem has developed to the extent that they comfortably write and perform in their serial drama, stepping up to the microphones like the professionals that some of them now wish to become.

#### **Case Study 4**

Area: Exeter - A series of activity sessions for care leavers who are also young parents.

Background:

A group of care leavers who had become / were about to become parents found that mainstream ante-natal and post-natal activities were uncomfortable for them as they felt 'as if they were the only care leavers who had ever become parents'. They were much younger than most of the other attendees and felt as if they had nothing in common with them or their babies. They also wanted to effect changes to the care system as a result of their experiences of growing up in care.

Approach:

They organised a series of gatherings for care leavers who had children or were about to have children so that they would feel less isolated and could share relevant experiences. They were keen to pass on good parenting advice in a way that they found relevant to them and their situation. The group meet at Buddle Lane where the atmosphere is relaxed and the toddlers could run around while the Mums and staff chatted. New babies are much admired and passed around, giving Mum a break. Pregnant care leavers have somewhere to go to ask advice and 'admit to being scared'. The conversation covers many useful topics and much important information is shared; from contraception immediately following birth to breast feeding and weaning through to language and child development. A nurse came to one session and the young people had many important questions for her. The

cooking sessions of pasta with a variety of sauces or pizzas was much enjoyed and conversation continued as recipes were written down to be shared. Everyone managed to sit down together to share their lunch and the toddlers eat very well indeed in this atmosphere; a very positive experience. There were children's books to be shared and new nursery rhymes to be learned and even created! The young women state how important this chance to socialise is as they had found all other ante-natal / mother and baby groups difficult 'as they were full of middle aged women'. This group was their chance to mix with young people who shared their same experiences of being a care leaver and also a young parent and also to have some fun.

Outcome:

The older group members stated that running these sessions has helped their confidence recover following having a baby so young. A Buddle Lane youth worker is starting a young parents group (not just for care leavers who have become parents). These young women are keen to support others in their situation and join this group (thereby stepping outside the care system). They have much good advice to share and many good ideas, such as bring and buy sales of baby stuff, pampering sessions and writing about a day in the life of a young parent. There is opportunity for useful discussion re housing, finances and education and training. Some of the older group members are looking to use their positive experiences of running this group to take sexual health and child care out into the community.



# Youth Work **in Devon**

Devon Youth Service