Evaluation of Media Trust's Community Voices Programme

Prepared For Media Trust

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i   Executive Summary

- Community Voices is the Media Trust led, England-wide programme which aims to engage and empower disadvantaged or isolated communities with the inspiration, confidence, skills, access to resources and funding to help them find their voice and make it heard, using digital media. The ethos of the programme is to support communities to make a meaningful difference to their lives by utilising digital media. Media Trust operated a grant application process to select 25 community projects designed to help their community find its voice and make itself heard. The programme was delivered between March 2009 and March 2011 with a view to continuation post March 2011.

- The research has identified Community Voices to be an empowering initiative, which has provided key developmental life skills to around 2500 participants via the 25 grant funded projects. For the core participants directly involved in the programme, the skills developed have often been life-changing and relate to raised self-confidence, self-esteem and other key transferable skills. Essentially Community Voices is a qualitative initiative, which has the potential, through digital media dissemination, to impact upon wider communities.

- Concerning the role of digital media in engaging disadvantaged communities, the project participants viewed the digital media platforms (e.g. radio, film, web-content, social-networking or digital images) as **accessible** and often **familiar environments**. This alongside appropriate **training, mentoring** and **guidance** meant that digital media proved to be a successful engagement strategy. The ability of digital media content to be distributed widely, not only public facing, but often to **specific targeted audiences** through existing community based social-media networks such as e-networks; Facebook; Youtube and Twitter has enabled a **cost-effective** distribution method. The open-source element of the majority of output channels has proven to be a cost-effective and **sustainable** model for **output legacy**. However, further research/evaluation needs to assess the true 'reach' of this engagement.

- The research identified three overarching impacts across the projects as a result of being involved directly with projects. **Personal wellbeing**, **skill acquisition** and **social connectedness** were viewed as the main outputs for the direct beneficiaries. For the indirect beneficiaries, the community projects largely viewed the central outcomes as **improved awareness of varying social issues** and **improving social connections**. Beneficiary figures should be collected post March 2011 via improved mechanisms such as feedback options, 'like buttons' and questionnaires (alongside other broad-brush audience figures such as web-analytics and viewer figures)

- Direct tangible outcomes were recorded at a personal level from many of the participants interviewed. The three quotes below demonstrate some of these life-changing impacts:

*The older people involved have gained a lot more **confidence**, we have helped isolated people who maybe have lost their partners and our project has given them a new **sense of direction** and a chance to meet new people and develop*

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new skills. One whose confidence was low has even been able to interview local councillors, something she never thought she'd be able to do. [Vintage Radio]

*Having the opportunity to **be in control of what's going on**, what is included in their stories. I think it is important for them to take some of that control back.* [Adoption Support]

*For them [on the steering group] it's had a massive impact because their **lives have changed**. Four of them have got **jobs,** and one is just about to get a job. So it has made a real difference.* [Hidden Homeless]

- **25 community-led projects** have been supported through the Community Voices Programme to help them deliver their own digital-media projects to enable their voices to be heard. The communities self-defined their disadvantage and the range of disadvantage was vast. 4 Communities of Interest have benefitted from the programme, 8 Communities of Geography and 12 Communities of both Geography and of Interest. **2500 direct beneficiaries** benefited from being involved in the core 25 projects.

- Community Voices were non-prescriptive in both the definition of 'disadvantage' and the use of digital media. The varied approaches taken by the projects in using film, radio, digital journalism, billboards and others is testament to this flexible strategy. Moreover digital media does provide a key platform for communities to share their views on their perceived disadvantage and thus is an ideal conduit to reducing voicelessness. Estimates suggest that around **60,000 indirect beneficiaries** have benefited from the Community Voices outputs.

- Two rounds of **Inspiring Voices** award schemes resulted in **23 award winners**. Inspiring Voices is an awards scheme set up by Media Trust as part of the Community Voices scheme. The awards were granted to disadvantaged communities who were already successfully using digital media to get their voices heard. The awards were designed to encourage and inspire other disadvantaged communities to use digital media to get their voices heard through demonstrating a range of existing community-led digital media activity successes. The winners were **awarded £500** and were supported with a **press release** promoting their success. The award winners largely viewed the kudos of being an award winner as the central benefit of the award.

- Volunteers were used to help upgrade communities' skills in digital media. Media Trust led a campaign aimed at professionals in the digital media field. Local mentors were sought in order to embed the knowledge within the community and allow for continuing relationships. In total, Community Voices matched **239 digital media mentors** to the isolated community groups. This far exceeded the initial aim of 100 media matches.

- Despite the programme being affected by the election in May 2010 and associated state of Purdah, the programme was **delivered on time** and **to budget.** This was also despite external political change, influences and drivers.

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- The projects were overwhelmingly positive regarding the level and personal nature of the support they received by the Community Voices team. The hands-on support received from Media Trust was viewed as crucial to the success of the project as highlighted by one of the community project leads;

  It's a real difference from someone giving you money and saying "Off you go", getting a form and then, twelve months later, asking you how you spent the money. Media Trust were very much hands on and were a lot more involved in what we were doing and if we asked them anything they always got back to us. This very positive experience with them was something I didn't expect.

- A range of distinct communities were supported by Community Voices across both rural and urban communities. The Community Voices ethos is underpinned by the notion that the communities would identify their specific disadvantage. The types of community problems highlighted by the core 25 supported projects can be identified via three main need groups: '**urban deprivation**' was the most common problem identified by the supported communities, (38%) followed by '**stigma and lack of integration**' (29%) and '**isolation and lack of services**' (17%).

- Around 16 projects have created lasting outputs such as films, written word and billboards, creating a sustainable method of allowing their voice to be heard

- All the projects we spoke to were satisfied that they had met their central aim, that being, '*giving a voice to a previously voiceless community*'

- Respondents consulted described the 'Welcome and What Next' workshops as *informative, interesting, friendly and inspiring* events

- Many aspects of the Community Voices programme directly relate to current policy and community agendas, those being:
  Big Society – Community Voices helps people come together to improve their own lives and the lives within their communities
  Informal Adult and Community Learning – A range of direct media skills alongside many transferable skills have been developed across 2500 direct beneficiaries
  Improved Social Capital – Community Voices creates networks amongst people with shared values and therefore creates enhanced social capital for these participants
  Social Wellbeing[1] – Community Voices provides many key supportive relationships and provides a sense of belonging to the group
  Personal Wellbeing – Community Voices provides participants with self-esteem, confidence, resilience and a sense of purpose and meaning

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[1] Nef: National Accounts of Wellbeing Index

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Key Recommendations

- Community Voices should continue to support those projects with legacy outputs such as films or physical content and promote and distribute these outputs. Vitally the notion of impact on wider beneficiaries should be bedded into the dissemination strategy. Feedback on the impact of viewing or consuming the various outputs should be sought whenever possible.

- Periodic reviews of outcomes and aims should be introduced as often the focus of a project can alter over the course of its operation as unexpected outcomes emerge. Quarterly outcome setting regional workshops would benefit the projects and facilitate their direction and focus.

- The research has identified that a scaled–down, more cost-efficient national programme could be introduced post March 2011. This is due to the cost-saving associated with secondary roll-outs, those being: recruitment, programme development, partnership development and management structures. In addition to these factors, the existing training resources, embedded team knowledge of programme management and crucial lessons learnt emerging from this research can result in a more affordable model.

- Embedding a programme of peer-led cascade community training would result in a more sustainable and cost-effective model of delivery. Media Trust should seek to retain and harness the knowledge acquired by the project leaders within the core 25 Community Voices projects. These individuals could be empowered as regional training teams and utilised as community facilitators for forthcoming successful Community Voices projects.

- The twinning of new projects to experienced projects who may share either similar social disadvantage, geographical location or digital media method would also provide another important layer of '*communities helping themselves'* and associated Big Society ethics.

- Ultimately community voices should continue their proven approach to engage, inspire and empower disadvantaged communities via digital media adopting a modified model which encompasses key learnings and responds to current external environmental factors. The central characteristics of this future model would include:

  - Reduce the value grant awards - Recommendation based on our research findings which discovered extremely similar outcomes set and achieved by the three allocated grant awards (£1,500, £7,000 & £14,000)
  - Increase the outreach staff role – Recommendation based on the research finding which pointed to the value placed by projects on the hand-on support from Media Trust and Digital Mentors
  - Empower existing community project leads to enroll as future advisors and trainers – Recommendation based on the ability for communities to translate their experience to other similar groups and cascade their

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knowledge. Provides legacy, empowers the leaders and allows for a cost-effective supplementary training module

Secondary Recommendations

In addition to the larger holistic recommendations listed above, the research has identified a number of key specific recommendations relating to processes and mechanisms:

- Improved mechanisms to match mentors to projects sooner should be introduced
- Media Trust should provide more basic and accessible digital-media training courses
- Media Trust should embed mechanisms to more accurately evidence the indirect-beneficiary figures such as feedback and evaluation processes
- A simplified mechanism of feedback to Media Trust could be introduced such as fewer and more straightforward Ning task requests
- More explicit understanding of outcomes should be relayed to projects in order that they understand what they will be measured upon
- More time and focus should be dedicated to promoting and disseminating the output of the projects
- Any subsequent rounds of tender notices should factor in more time for tender selection processes
- The team should be in place soon after commencement of any future programme roll-outs
- Any external evaluation should be embedded in the programme delivery process from the outset

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1. Introduction, Aims and Objectives

This report provides a detailed independent analysis and review of Media Trust's Community Voices programme. The England-wide programme aims to engage and empower communities who feel disadvantaged or isolated with the inspiration, confidence, skills, access to resources and funding to help them find their voice and make it heard, using digital media. The ethos of the programme is to support communities to make a meaningful difference to their lives by utilising digital media. Media Trust operated a grant application process to select 25 community projects which would help their community find its voice and make itself heard.

Inspiring Voices is an awards scheme set up by Media Trust as part of the Community Voices scheme. The awards were granted to disadvantaged communities who were already successfully using digital media to get their voices heard. The awards were designed to encourage and inspire other disadvantaged communities to use digital media to get their voices heard through demonstrating a range of existing community-led digital media activity successes.

The Community Voices programme began in March 2009. The first wave of Inspiring Voices awards commenced in October 2009. The programme evaluation commenced on 24th February 2011 and ran for a four-week period until 29th March 2011. Despite the short research time frame, the evaluation of the project involved analysis and interpretation of a range of data sources, those being;

- **25 primary in-depth interviews**, consisting of:
  - Five members of the Media Trust Community Voices team
  - Two central funders of the Community Voices project
  - Nine community project leads
  - Nine community project participants (beneficiaries)
- Observation at one of the Community Voices community project 'output' launches
- Observation at the internal Media Trust 'lessons learnt' workshop
- Analysis of existing Media Trust monitoring and evaluation feedback material from the 3 'Welcome & What Next Days'
- Analysis of the tasks completed by projects through the Ning
- Analysis of project-wide programme material including grant application forms and project plans.

The central research questions answered within this report are:

1. What have been the central impacts upon the individuals and communities involved
2. What are the success factors
3. What barriers have prevented success and what circumstances led to this
4. What are the models of good practice

This report presents an independent review of Community Voices programme. Having considered the impacts and the project's wider influence we then present a series of recommendations for future programme development and legacy.

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2. Media Trust Community Voices Programme

2.1   Programme background, aims and objectives

Through utilising digital media Community Voices aims to empower disadvantaged communities and provide them with a voice. The grant allocation was seen as the hook to engage, train and empower the communities. Media Trust allocated the following grant values:

> ➢ 8 projects received £1,500
> ➢ 10 projects received £7,000
> ➢ 6 projects received £14,000
> ➢ 1 project received £61,000

The rationale behind the varied grant amounts was to determine if the amount of funding allocated affected impact and outcomes. The Director of Marketing and Communication Services at Media Trust, who initially wrote the bid, describes his rationale for the programme as:

> *To put the communities in the driving seat. Our role was to connect, guide and facilitate. We made a conscious decision not to parachute people into the communities… The money kept people on track and incentivised them to carry on. The reason why we decided to do this was specifically to explore how the difference in grant affected impact of the project.*

The two-year project commenced in March 2009. The project was initially billed as a pilot project with a focus upon 'rolling-out' the model to further communities post March 2011. Due to the change in government and budget cuts, it became obvious in 2010 that the Departmental funding would cease post 2011. Rather than plan to wind-down the project the team decided to deliver as planned and utilise the rhetoric, language and terminology of the new political landscape to their benefit. Indeed, the Media Trust team viewed the programme as a '*real-time exemplar'* of the Big Society.

At a time when so many other initiatives and programmes were being cut, the team was well placed to deliver a programme with relatively small pots of grant awards. This was acknowledged by the main funders, the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG), who viewed the programme as a political success;

> *From a policy perspective it is great to see how a small amount of money can help develop a model for us to take to colleagues involved in Big Society policy development. We have proved that we can do this with a small amount of funding.*

The Project Manager of Community Voices shared this view;

> *Politically we are moving towards a locally driven agenda and putting more power and a say at local level and devolving power from the central state. So for that to be successful communities need to be better organised and more coherent in identifying their needs and Community Voices is a good example of how digital*

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media can generate coherence at a local level and provide a stronger means to speak out about issues that are important.

Whilst the legacy and sustainability plans of the programme clearly altered throughout the project time-line, it is of key concern to this research how the programme can develop in the future and how each individual project can continue to benefit from their involvement.

2.2   Programme Timeline

Media Trust operated four central phases to the programme delivery, those being the tender preparation and research phase; the inspire phase; the engage phase; and the empowerment phase. Two notable influences affected the operation of the programme, those being the initial appointment of a Community Voices team, and the General Election on May 6th 2010. Since being awarded the tender in March 2009, it was not until September 2009 that the entire Community Voices team, were in post. This was viewed as a setback to some of the team;

> *We need the team be in place from the beginning. For the first six months the team was not in place. So more planning was needed although we managed to turn stuff around. [Grants and Administration Assistant]*

However, it was acknowledged by all the team members that they maintained their delivery plan despite the challenges of the late-appointment of the team and the General Election. The election, and associated state of purdah[2] leading up to it, had significant consequences on the announcement of the grant awards and therefore the commencement of the local engagement strategies, as noted by the Community Voices Project Manager;

> *We were not allowed to communicate about the project at all because it was a government funded project and for a long time there was confusion around what could be communicated. So for two months we were unsure about what we could talk about with the stakeholders and supported communities. So for the communities who wanted to get going and launch their events they were heavily restricted at a key time so there has been a knock on effect of time.*

Ultimately the programme was delivered on time and whilst a number of individual projects are still to complete their final output the vast majority have had their final screening, launch or output celebration. The table below identifies the specific task dates throughout the two-year project.

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[2] During a period of purdah, ministers and civil servants will refrain from taking decisions or making policy announcements which are significant and may be politically contentious. Purdah normally runs during the period between the announcement of an election and the date the election is held.

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Media Trust Community Voices: Delivery Time-Line

Phase	Task	Date
Tender Preparation & Research	Prepare bid, budget and submit to DCLG	Autumn 2008
	Tender awarded to Media Trust by DCLG	March 2009
	Recruit Community Voices core team	In post by October 2009
	Commission of Corporate Citizenship to highlight the digital media landscape and advise on geographical areas to focus community support based on high levels of multiple deprivation, geographical spread and a mix of rural and urban environments	June – September 2009
	Wider consultation with community based organisations through Digital Engagement event in London. Soft launch of Community Voices to the public	October 2009
Inspire Phase	Appoint Community Voices Project Board	November 2009
	Contact local CVS's and known contacts in the area to help disseminate interest into the schemes. Outreach and promotion of Community Voices in identified regions	January 2010
	Sign off selection process	January 2010
	Call for tenders. Grant application open.	January 2010 – Feb 2010
	Promotion and award of 15 'Inspiring Voices' awards to build interest, and help inspire and engage community groups that typically would not normally apply for funding support	October 2009 through to March 2010 – 1 award per week
Engage Phase	Grant application period closes	28th February
	Selection process. 830 down to 50	March – April 2010
	Final 25 selected by CV project Board	End of April 2010
	Due diligence background checks, inform successful projects of grants awarded. Highlight alternative resources and support to unsuccessful applicants	May 2010
	Attend 'Welcome and What Next' regional workshops. Manchester, York & London including training in digital media	May 2010
	Commission Community Voices film, recruit production crew and select projects to be filmed	May/June 2010
	Match funded and non-funded projects with mentor if requested.	June 2010 onwards
	Set up on Ning and introduction of monthly tasks	May 2010, first task August 2010

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	Provide projects with Kodak digital camera, how to prepare project plan guidance and guide on what outcomes are	May 2010 at the Welcome and What Next Days
	Media Trust facilitate projects with the creation of project plans	May 2010 onwards
	Submit and sign off into a legally binding contracts and grant payment trigger points	June 2010 onwards
	Intensively support the funded projects through outreach support, matching with digital media experts and corporate partners	May 2010 onwards
	Provide further training and development opportunities through Media Trust's 'Communications for a Big Society' conference – 5 Community Media Champions trained and inspired to build on their community reporting skills to capture thoughts and feedback from delegates	November 2010
Empower Phase	Communities start to engage wider community members through screening and launch events of their outputs. Attracting additional funding where appropriate	October 2010 onwards
	Creation of legacy outputs to attract wider community interest e.g. community newsletters, websites or blogs. Launch or screening of remaining outputs	October 2010 onwards
	Second phase of 'Inspiring Voices' – building on from first phase, the awards help to maintain interest in the intensively supported projects as they build up to their launch events	December 2010 – January 2011
	Communities start to develop their independence, building on the legacy created through their projects, sustaining the difference made through their projects. Where appropriate new funding streams are activated.	March 2011 onwards

There were three central areas relating to the project time-line which were considered to be 'risk-points', those being:

1. The appointment of a working team

It has been acknowledged by the Community Voices team that the full-team was not in post until six months after the commencement of the two-year programme. A shorter recruitment time-frame could have been implemented, or a staggered grant award scheme which could have allowed the team two full operational years.

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2. The selection of grants

Community Voices received an overwhelming number of grant applications from interested communities. Whilst the team initially envisaged a figure of around 300, they received 830 distinct grant applications. This in itself was viewed positively, as it pointed to a huge appetite for community based digital media projects. The team identified the late creation of the on-line application form as another factor in delaying the grant application process. Whilst the team approached the selection of grants in an entirely democratic and robust manner, they did not anticipate the length of time this would take. In the future more time should be provided for this phase of the project. Ultimately, the team remained true to their original governance plan, as described by the Head of Charity and Community Projects:

> *In the end and we didn't want to fast track, we wanted to do it properly. In terms of project governance we needed more than one read through so that was tough. Internally maybe we should have launched it straight away but we wanted it to be done in a different way. There were other internal Media Trust issues and a two month delay around Christmas.*

The Community Voices team maintained their thorough approach and were, on this basis, completely confident that they had selected the appropriate range of community project to fund and support.

3. Time to reflect, promote and communicate the output

Through our interviews with various community project leads, it is apparent that the focus of the projects has been upon outputs and the process of generating outputs rather than succession strategies. As such, the 'empower' phase of the programme delivery could have embraced a more prolonged period of reflection, promotion and future ongoing community communication.

For example, the project lead at the Haven project told us that the next step for them was to, '*promote the video and forward the link to anyone we can'* although she acknowledged that she has no expertise in viral marketing and that this would be handled by herself and her small team. The Haven did however host three public screenings of their film at which press and local dignitaries were invited. Below is the image of the screening invite produced by the Haven project:

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The Haven Wolverhampton in association with Light House Media Centre invite you to

THE VIP PREMIER SCREENING OF

Home Sweet Home?

A moving and heart-felt look into the lives of women affected by Domestic Violence.

DATE: 11th MARCH 2011	TIME: 6.45PM FOR 7PM START	ADMIT: one Please bring this ticket with you for admittance to the film screening and drinks reception
ADDRESS: Light House Media Centre, Chubb Buildings, Fryer Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1HT		

The filmmakers will attend the premier and invite you to join them for a drinks reception following the screening

Due to limited seating in the cinema the organisers would be most grateful if you could confirm your attendance on: **publicity@havenrefuge.org.uk or 01902 572173**

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Despite these three main time-line issues the funders (CLG) praised Media Trust in their ability to deliver the programme on time,

> *It was delivered on time and to budget and did it when they were supposed to do it. Successful project management.*

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3.   Community Voices Programme Management Processes

This section of the report combines analysis of:

- The 25 community grant application forms and project plans from the awarded communities
- Internal evaluation forms from the 'Welcome and What Next Days'
- Quotes from key Media Trust team members and funders; and
- Analysis of the content placed upon the Ning evaluation feedback site.

This helps us to demonstrate the processes of programme management in place and how this contributed to the overall successes of the programme. We conclude this section considering the programme-wide impact and make reference to beneficiaries and scope of impact.

3.1   Grant Award Selection Criteria

Before considering the 25 projects selected for grant award by the Community Voices project board it is important to identify the selection framework in place. The Community Voices project categorised project communities as either a 'Community of Geography' or a 'Community of Interest', with the former being a group connected by locality and the latter a group connected by shared circumstances or identity. The key characteristics considered through the selection processes are described in the 'Community Voices: Project Definition Document' as:

- ➢ A project that is community led or is driven by the community and that directly benefits the community itself, be a Community of Geography or Community of Interest
- ➢ A well defined target community group and an appreciation of the number of people who are likely to benefit directly from the project; in line with National Indicator 4[3]
- ➢ A clear focus on 'voiceless' citizens from deprived, isolated or disadvantaged communities; communities must define how and why they experience social disadvantage and /or isolation from the wider community
- ➢ A demonstration that the digital media chosen is the most effective way of helping the community to find its 'voice' and make itself heard, with particular consideration given to any specific communication barriers that may exist
- ➢ A clear understanding of how giving people digital media skills can help a community find its voice, and how those new skills will be developed. Demonstrator projects should take advantage of peer learning, mentoring and informal learning approaches to particularly benefit those who are put-off from assessed forms of training[4]
- ➢ Well defined project outcomes that meet the objectives of the Community Voices project overall, and specifically define how the difference that each project aims to make will be measured

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[3] This indicator assesses the percentage of people who feel they can influence decisions affecting their local area
[4] Opportunities should provide pathways to accredited training that can lead towards nationally recognised qualifications.

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- ➢ Have the potential to be sustained and leave a lasting legacy that can benefit the community in the long term. This includes new skills as well as continuous access to technologies and support, for example the creation of new digital mentors
- ➢ Be inspirational to other people within the community and to other communities, to encourage greater participation and so help sustain the difference the project makes. Applicants will need to consider existing projects that currently benefit their community and show how their proposal can engage or compliment existing activities to maximise the benefits that the projects delivers
- ➢ Demonstrate a cost-effective approach that benefits the community as much as possible, using the awarded grant to its full extent to support the community. Consideration should be given as to whether utilising existing services, for example UK Online Centres, can best meet the project and community requirements. Where possible demonstrator projects should seek to extend access to equipment and software by using existing under-utilised resources and equipment to facilitate enhanced public and private access e.g., school computer labs out of school hours, using equipment provided by Home Access to also benefit other household members.

With these considerations in mind we will now reflect upon the 25 communities who were successful in their grant application process and went on to be the demonstrator projects.

3.2   Representing the Selected Communities

Desk based analysis of the grant applications of the 25 projects selected by the Community Voices project board, in line with the selection process criteria detailed above, provides us with an overview of the range of community problems and ways in which the digital media project aimed to benefit these communities.

In addition to the application forms, the project plans were also considered, which highlighted the ways in which each project was planning to implement its project and meet their central aims. The following data represents the range of criteria and specific indicators outlined by the selected 25 projects:

Value of Intended Grant Awards;

- ➢ 8 projects received awards of £1,500
- ➢ 10 projects received awards of £7,000
- ➢ 6 projects received awards of £14,000
- ➢ 1 project received award of £61,000

As the programme developed, three of the community projects were not awarded their full, agreed funding amounts. In the case of Project 61, who were initially allocated £61,000, they operated cost savings resulting in a reduction of grant by £14,500. The Farming Channel also had their allocated budget reduced by £8,962.87 due to lower than expected levels of community engagement. Despite this the project has secured its own funding sources in order to facilitate its continuation post March 2011. Similarly, the Hattersley & Mottram Community Media project, originally awarded £14,000, had their award reduced by £2,000. Due to other funding cuts the project developed an exit strategy to close by April 2011 and therefore did not require the final award.

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In total, 9 of the 25 projects were successful in attracting additional funding for the operation and support of their Community Voices project:

➢ Adoption Support. £7,000 award from Community Voices secured additional £2,000 from the Midlands Family Placement Group
➢ Hidden Homeless. £14,000 project. Secure in-kind support from various housing associations
➢ Club Soda. £7,000 award from Community Voices secured additional funding from IDeA
➢ Deafinitions. £14,000 award from Community Voices secured additional in kind support from various local partners
➢ Hattersley & Mottram Community Media. £14,000 award from Community Voices applied for Tameside Community Trust
➢ The Tower Hamlets Interfaith Youth Committee. £7,000 secured multiple additional funding streams
➢ The Farming Channel. £14,000 award from Community Voices. Secured In kind volunteer support (£6K), Transition Vision (£9K)
➢ The Haven. £14,000 Community Voices award secured match funding from Vinvolved
➢ Vintage Radio. Awarded a £1,500 grant from Community Voices secured assistance and funding from Riverside Housing, Wirral Council, Age Concern, Help the Aged, YMCA

The ratio of awards given to communities of interest, geography or both, is demonstrated in the pie chart below, with the majority of the projects falling into the 'both' category:
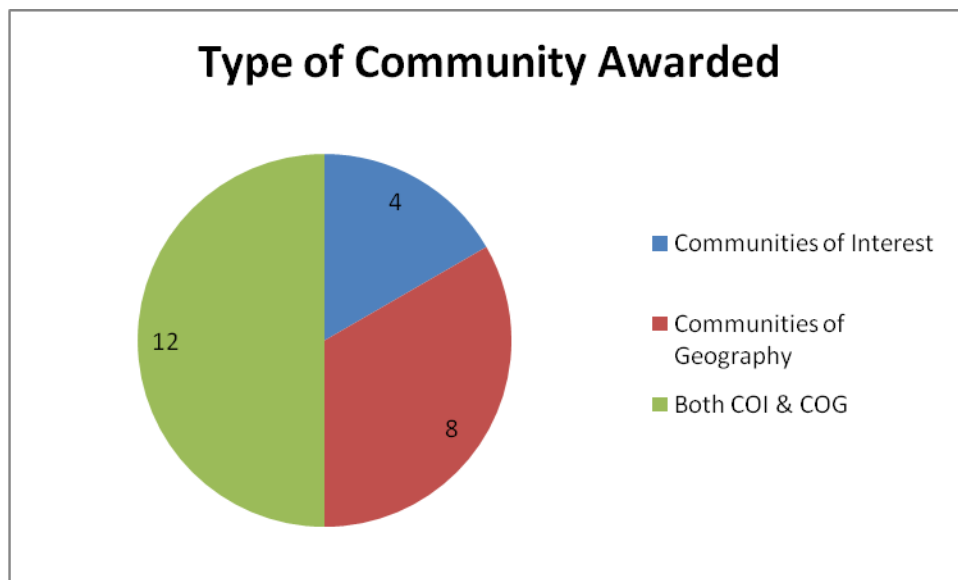
The geographic spread of Community Voices awarded projects and Inspiring Voices award winners represented a broad range of urban and rural communities. All regions were represented to varying degrees as demonstrated in the map below highlighting the locations of Community Voices and Inspiring Voices award winners:

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The nature of the communities awarded grants were vast in range and can be grouped according to their status as 'of interest', 'of geography' or 'both'. The lists below highlights the range of communities awarded:

Community of Interest

- ➢ Looked after/adopted children
- ➢ People with Autism
- ➢ British deaf people (esp. those using British Sign Language), young deaf people
- ➢ Women and children experiencing domestic violence and homelessness

Communities of Geography

- ➢ Derker (East Oldham)
- ➢ North Downham Estate (South East London)
- ➢ People living in Hattersley
- ➢ Meadow Well estate (nr. South Shields)
- ➢ People from the Nunsthorpe estate (Grimsby).

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- ➢ Preston, Lancashire
- ➢ Whitechapel (East London)
- ➢ Seacroft (Leeds).

Communities both of Interest and Bound by Geography

- ➢ People who have experienced (or are experiencing) homelessness in Bradford
- ➢ Refugee and exiled women living in Oxford
- ➢ People with learning and physical disabilities in Goole, East Yorkshire
- ➢ Young people in Gainsborough (Ipswich)
- ➢ People with learning difficulties and/or their carers (esp in Croydon)
- ➢ Communities of faith (esp. those from BAME communities and young people NEET) in North London
- ➢ Carers, people being cared for, Southern Part of the New Forest, elderly people+F33
- ➢ People with epilepsy (specifically adults with epilepsy and associated physical and mental disabilities who have high care needs and live in special residential care in Buckinghamshire)
- ➢ Children and parents of LGBT families (esp. in London)
- ➢ Small family farms and farm workers (within 50 miles of Wincanton, Somerset)
- ➢ Chichester (esp. older people and carers)
- ➢ Elderly people in Merseyside/Wirral

The Community Voices ethos is underpinned by the notion that the communities would identify their specific disadvantage. The following pie-chart thematically groups the types of community problems highlighted by the core 24 supported projects. '**Urban deprivation'** was the most common problem identified by the supported communities, (38%) followed by '**stigma and lack of integration'** (29%) and '**isolation and lack of services'** (17%).

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Community Problems Facing the 24 Supported Communities

Legend:
- Stigma and lack of integration
- Discrimination
- Urban deprivation
- Rural deprivation
- Isolation and lack of services

Pie chart segments: 29%, 12%, 38%, 4%, 17%
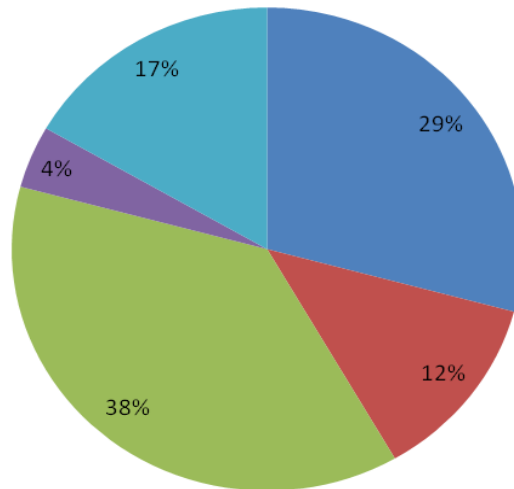
It was noted by both Media Trust staff and funders that the breadth and diversity of the projects involved was a key success factor of the programme. The Head of Charity and Communication Services viewed the ability of Media Trust to attract representation from such wide-ranging types of communities, as crucial to the programme's success:

> *There has been a huge diversity amongst the different communities. The volume has its limitations but the breadth and depth allows us to see the specific issues. So there are issues around rural communities, language and we try to learn their environment.* [Head of Charity and Community Projects. CVMT]

This sentiment was reiterated by one of the central funders:

> *The spread of different activities that they have stimulated. The different ranges of groups that got involved and the reach of the disadvantaged communities.* [Funder BIS]

As the pie-chart identifies, a diverse range of communities were supported through the Community Voices programme. It was interesting to note that some forms of digital media engagement were adopted within certain communities. For example, some isolated or older communities made use of radio to communicate and improve a feeling of connectedness, such as Vintage Radio.

Other communities, aiming to specifically overcome prejudice or stigma relating to geographical areas, made use of documentary film to tell their story and bring to life their

substance.

local issues and real lived experiences, such as Club4 Teenz, Hattersley & Mottram Community Media and NEL Community TV.

Communities of Interest who sought to raise awareness about specific, often hidden social issues, such as domestic violence, refugee integration and discrimination on the grounds of health, created films which depict their otherwise largely hidden stories, thus providing a voice to that community.

The research team analysed the original community project grant applications and project plans, and have subsequently grouped the intended legacy strategies as follows:

Legacy Strategies	Number of Projects
A lasting resource of the output (film) and dissemination further	4
New skills and knowledge for participants	2
To provide 'inspiration' to others and similar groups	7
The new 'Media Team' coming out of the project will continue to produce detailed information for people with learning difficulties and/or their carers	1
Screening to be catalyst for change in/for community	2
Enabling people to realise they have a voice through new media	1
The project hopes to inspire more people to get involved in community organisations	1
To remain voluntary led and keep costs low	1
Increasing the number of volunteers	2
Providing a 'spark' for people to become more interested in each others' communities	1
Training so that (for instance) the Seacroft Women's Group can maintain the web presence of the project	1
Continual broadcasting (made possible by the grant) will enable the radio station to reach/retain more listeners	1

The community projects estimated collectively, though their grant applications, that they would benefit a total of **55,774** people from the Community Voices programme. This can be broken down further between direct and indirect beneficiaries:

- **2,334** direct beneficiaries
- **53,440** indirect beneficiaries

We compare this figure with the figure collected in the late stages of the programme in section 5.1 of this report.

Whilst each project received training and support from Media Trust in setting outcomes we found that there was still some work to be done in educating projects at a local level about setting measurable outcomes. The sub-sections below highlight our review of the project outcomes in relation to size of grant awarded;

substance.

<u>Intended Outcomes for the £1,500 awarded Community Projects</u>

The community projects awarded £1,500 grants demonstrated a range of interpretations on what the term outcome meant in practice. There was strong evidence of how the direct participants would benefit from their engagement with the project. The outcomes have been grouped in nature and by their intended beneficiary audience where appropriate:

Direct Beneficiary Outcomes

Personal Wellbeing	Skills & Ability	Social Connectedness
Increased aspirations	Improved personal development	Improve social connectedness & networks
Improved self-esteem	New media skills acquisition	Improve direct involvement in local decision making
Decreased feelings of isolation	Ability to interpret and promote the concerns of their community	Increase inter-generational relationships
		Obtain a feeling of actively contributing to society

Indirect Beneficiary Outcomes

Improved Awareness	Social Connections
Raise awareness of living with autism	Improve community cohesion
Raise awareness of culture and heritage of refugees	Provide residents with a sense of empowerment
Raise awareness of the lived experience of young people in certain areas & improve perceptions	

<u>Intended Outcomes for the £7,000 awarded Community Projects</u>

Direct Beneficiary Outcomes

Personal Wellbeing	Skills & Ability	Social Connectedness
Reduce feeling of isolation	Ability to make their voice(s) heard	Influence practice (around contact between adopted young person and birth parents)
Improved sense of belonging	Develop transferrable skills	Create a feeling of connectedness with other people with shared personal experiences
	New media skills acquisition	Provide inter-faith relationships and friendships
	Lgbt parents and their	Increase inter-generational

substance.

	children are confident to express issues of importance to them	relationships
	Older people gain valuable new media and digital technology skills to improve methods of connectedness	

Indirect Beneficiary Outcomes

Improved Awareness	Social Connections
Wider community are made aware of social events	Improve community cohesion
Improved perception of communities of geography	Increase community participation
Wider community are made aware about different types of family units	Increase communication between service providers and service users
Wider community have the skills to be more active in decision making locally	Improve local networks and partnership working

Intended Outcomes for the £14,000 awarded Community Projects

Direct Beneficiary Outcomes

Personal Wellbeing	Skills & Ability	Social Connectedness
Increase confidence	New media skills acquisition	Reduce social isolation
Develop a feeling of pride	Improved communication skills	Improve local networks
Confidence to challenge perceptions	Provide a mechanism for women to disclose their stories which would otherwise be hidden – provide a voice	Connect disparate isolated communities

Indirect Beneficiary Outcomes

Improved Awareness	Social Connections
Wider community increase knowledge around homelessness	Improved community cohesion
Increased knowledge of deaf people's lives	Local agencies will be inspired to use digital media to engage and consult the local community
Decrease negative perceptions of communities of geography	
Wider community more	

substance.

aware of issues faced by carers	
Raise awareness of the issues faced by women and families suffering from domestic violence	

It is interesting to note the similar nature of interpretation of outcomes across the three distinct value awarded community projects. The value of the grant had little impact on the aspiration of the intended outcomes in nature. The projects across the board viewed **personal wellbeing**, **skill acquisition** and **social connectedness** as the main outputs for the direct beneficiaries. For the indirect beneficiaries, the community projects largely viewed the central outcomes as **improved awareness of varying social issues** and **improving social connections**.

Media Trust introduced an innovative process for gathering feedback and evaluation information, in the form of 'Ning Tasks'. Ning is a social website platform which allows members to share media content, network and communicate on shared issues. Media Trust set the community projects monthly tasks which were to be recorded using a pocket digital camera provided to them. We will consider the engagement through the Ning in further detail within the next sub-section.

In summary, this sub-section has demonstrated that Community Voices set clear award criteria, which it maintained thoroughly. The range of communities awarded, demonstrates Media Trust's commitment to this process. While the community projects interpreted the notion of an output in a largely consistent manner, there is a need to improve the mechanisms of recording and defining indirect beneficiary outcomes.

3.3   Evaluation of 'Welcome & What Next Days' & Ning Content

The 'Welcome and What Next' regional workshops were held in three locations those being;

- York, 25th May 2010
- Manchester, 26th May 2010
- London, 28th May 2010

Each project was asked to attend and bring along with them one of the community members they were hoping to involve in the project. The Head of Charity and Community Projects described this early face-to-face contact as crucial to the engagement process;

> *The first thing was to meet them. We were not going to agree to give them money without meeting them. We had three regional events and we had the outreach manager who went out to help with project plans and steer them so we could then start to release the money. There was lots of face-to-face contact upfront.*

The Community Voices team provided the projects with examples of other successful community-led digital media projects. This was aimed at widening the projects'

substance.

knowledge of achievable community engagement through digital media. The team also provided the projects with guidance on creating project plans and debated the notion of 'outcomes'.

Each delegate was asked to complete a brief evaluation form, following their attendance at the workshop. The delegates were asked to describe the top three words, which illustrated their reflections from the day. The tag-cloud[5] below represents these words; [Appendix 5 demonstrates the tag-cloud including a count of word frequencies]


It is clear that the most accurate way to summarise the impact of these events is that they were viewed as **informative, interesting, friendly and inspiring.** The overall majority of respondents (95%) noted that the event did meet with their initial expectations.

The evaluation forms demonstrated that the four main impacts of attending the days were seen by the respondents as:

> ➢ I enjoyed myself (91%)
> ➢ I have new ideas for my Community Voices project (81%)
> ➢ I developed new knowledge and understanding (80%)
> ➢ I have been inspired to learn something new (72%)

The bar-chart overleaf displays the full range of impacts recorded:

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[5] Tag-cloud is a visual representation of count of key-words. The larger the term, the more frequent it occurs within a data set.

substance.

Impact of Attending the Welcome & What Next Days
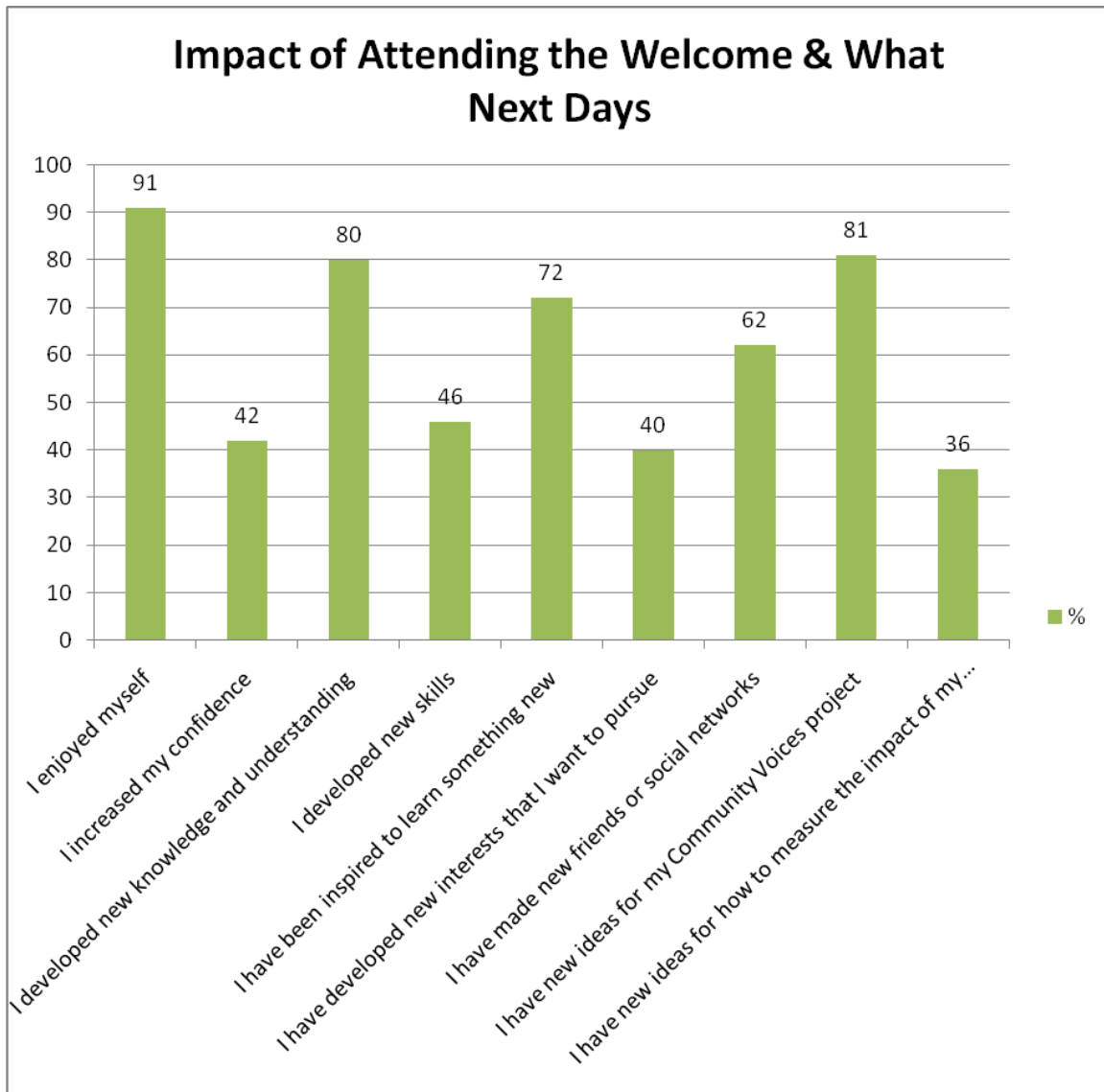
These findings demonstrate that the workshops were informative and productive. It has been suggested that more up-front support from the team, in line with the format of the workshops, may have been beneficial to the local projects. This was noted by the Community Voices Project Manager:

> *Maybe more of that (outreach support) and basic skills in digital media and project skills would have been more beneficial. So more skills upfront would have been helpful.*

The Community Voices team developed the Ning[6] site, which can be described as a 'bespoke, private social network'. The Ning site was created as a private, secure area

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[6] Ning is the world's largest platform for creating social websites. Ning is used to create an online destination that weaves social conversations in content and inspire action.

substance.

where only invited communities, funders and key staff within Media Trust could access the content. The site is not a public facing platform.

The purpose was to enable the communities to develop their confidence in a secure area. All of the projects were asked to complete monthly tasks on the Ning site. Each community was given access to pocket cameras, which were used to create the Ning content. This was aimed at keeping the projects aligned with their project plans and in communication with the Community Voices team. Analysis of the site content for the core seven case-studies demonstrated the following completed tasks:

Community Project Case-Study	Ning Content: Completed Tasks	
Project 61	1	A clip entitled 'Spencer's Citizen Journalism' demonstrates evidence of project activity, evidence of project outputs, communicating the purpose of the project, evidence of project's engagement with councillors, service providers and other participants.
Club 4 Teenz	1	Baseline content which sets out their main issues, those being problems facing young people and intergenerational problems in library.
	2	Question on how to get media interested in project with a video response from Media Trust showing useful advice provided.
	3	Participant profile, which shows the sharing of multiple pieces of content, comments and communication forum.
Vintage Radio	1	Footage of a general meeting with commentary, evidence of project planning
	2	Interview with participant, evidence of new skill development, evidence of further opportunities for training, evidence of general participant development.
	3	Footage of Christmas Carol rehearsals and footage of project activity.
	4	Footage of participant reading a letter out, evidence of project success.
	5	Footage of music programme recording, evidence of project activity.
	6	Question on how to perform interviews, video response from Media Trust, useful advice provided.
	7	Participant profile, sharing multiple pieces of content, comment/communication forum
Adoption Support	1	Question on how to raise additional funding, video response from Media Trust, useful advice provided
	2	Participant to share useful tip
	3	Participant profile, sharing multiple pieces of content, comment/communication forum, communication with Media Trust staff.
Seacroft Links	1	Evidence of project activity
	2	Question on how to use social media platforms safely, video response from Media Trust, useful advice provided

substance.

	3	Participant profile, sharing multiple pieces of content, comment/communication forum, communication with Media Trust staff. One participant noted; '*This is such a great photo guys, the angle and lettering make this so interesting! Great Job*!'
Hidden Homeless	1	Participant profile, baseline of participant circumstances, testimony to the success of the Supporting People service user involvement group and B.A.C.C, evidence of participant progress (volunteering and qualifications)
	2	Providing evidence of participant progress and achievement, participant profile and participant baseline.
	3	Evidence of project activity
	4	Question on how to manage billboard space for the project, video response from Media Trust, useful advice provided, additional mentoring provided.
	5	Participant profile, sharing multiple pieces of content, comment/communication forum, communication with Media Trust staff
The Haven	1	The Haven submitted one Ning task that being a participant profile which shares multiple pieces of content, a comment and communication forum and communication with Media Trust staff. Media Trust comment on the content, '*Brilliant! This is such a great and fun way of including those who want to remain anonymous. Love it!!*

The following quote from one of the Vintage Radio participants brings to life the impact of the project upon those involved;

After recently experiencing one of life's traumas it has helped me to focus on helping to provide an entertainment medium for other older people. Being part of Vintage Radio's Team has opened up new avenues of interest for me (Irene)

Image from a Vintage Radio Interview:

substance.

Generally the case-study projects did complete Ning tasks, but these were not on a monthly basis. The Ning tasks do provide evidence of on-line support and a useful platform for projects and Media Trust to stay connected and report back on progress. While the Ning was generally under-used, it was time-constraints rather than competency around the tasks, which projects identified as the central barrier.

3.4   Inspiring Voices

Inspiring Voices is an awards scheme set up by Media Trust as part of the Community Voices scheme. The awards were granted to disadvantaged communities who were already successfully using digital media to get their voices heard. The awards were designed to encourage and inspire other disadvantaged communities to use digital media by demonstrating a range of existing community-led digital media activity successes.

Media Trust operated two rounds of the awards. The first round operated prior to the main Community Voices grant award process, with a view to encourage communities to engage with and apply for the main funding. From the first round 15 awards were selected from a total of 82 applicants. From the second round 8 winners were selected from a total of 76 applications. The time frame was as follows:

- Inspiring Voices Round One: October 2009 - March 2010
  82 applications
  15 Winners

substance.

- Inspiring Voices Round Two: November 2010 - February 2011
  76 applications
  8 Winners

The selection of the second round winners occurs at the end of round two, rather than on a weekly basis and all eight press-releases were promoted through the Inspiring Voices dedicated website, www.inspiringvoices.org (see overleaf)

The winners were awarded £500 and were supported with a press release promoting their success. The award winners largely viewed the kudos of being an award winner as the central benefit of the award.

substance.

4. Community Voices Project Management Processes

This section of the report considers how the agencies came to access the support services provided by Media Trust and their satisfaction with various aspects of the distinct services. It also considers the different approaches taken by the community projects in attracting their participants and wider community members.

4.1 Application and Project Planning Phase

We asked the respondents to comment on their experiences of the application process and project planning phase. The projects overwhelmingly praised the Media Trust's approach and viewed the training events and personal support as the central success of this phase. One of the projects, aimed at supporting a community suffering from various factors of urban deprivation, regarded the Media Trust support around project planning and outcome setting, as invaluable:

> *Media Trust sent us a word document showing us how to do a plan. It really helped us plan our outcomes and aims. Other people (funders) just give you money and leave you but Media Trust were always checking that we were ok . With the Media Trust we learnt how to plan progress and set outcomes. It was really good, fun and enjoyable.* [Club4 Teenz]

The largest funded project was complimentary regarding the enthusiasm displayed by Media Trust prior to their project commencement:

> *We valued their enthusiasm during the pre-planning phase.* [Nemus. Project 61]

Enthusiasm was another theme reiterated by Adoption Support, who viewed the Ning tasks as important in shaping the project direction:

> *There was a lot of enthusiasm from them [Media Trust] - and the fact they gave us these little Kodak cameras which our young people loved. It was a good stepping-stone for us to start thinking about what we were going to buy.* [Adoption Support]

Another member of the Adoption Support team, viewed Media Trust outreach approach and engaged manner as unique for 'funders':

> *It was certainly the first time I had met funders face-to-face like that...they showed a genuine interest in what you were doing.* [Adoption Support]

Finally, Vintage Radio viewed Media Trust as supportive and approachable and felt the structure and guidance was a benefit to the project:

> *At the start they worked out a project plan – aims and outcomes. It was very structured and throughout the project we were encouraged to ask for help. We were given tasks to do, often a video, they gave us a camera. They have a site called Ning and all projects were encouraged to contribute to it so other groups could view what everyone else was doing. Basically they were always there for us.* [Vintage Radio]

substance.

4.2   Support & Training Received from the Media Trust Team

The projects all appreciated the financing and media resources received from Media Trust. However, projects overwhelmingly pointed to the support they received and the flexibility of the project development as the main success of the programme management.

Vintage Radio valued the level of expertise and support offered by Media Trust, alongside the cash injection:

> *The money from the MT did make a big difference because unlike other grants they had the expertise to back us up if we need any help. It wasn't just getting money; the grant gave us a lot more than that.* [Vintage Radio]

The respondent went on to praise the level of involvement from Media Trust as 'revolutionary':

> *The MT involvement has been revolutionary because we've had the interaction back from them and they effectively project managed us and this kept us focused on the important things for their project which matched our objectives and that's been a real help..* [Vintage Radio]

The project expressed their thanks towards Media Trust, for the support and guidance, and was hopeful of maintaining a relationship with them, post March 201, via the Community Voices website:

> *Hopefully we'll still have something to do with them via their community voices web site where we will have a page and if this happens we'd be delighted to provide some material. This will help keep the contact alive because we believe they did a good job with us and all the other projects they've been involved with.* [Vintage Radio]

Hidden Homeless staff pointed to the flexible nature of Media Trust project management, and the ability to modify project aims, as being of particular benefit to their project delivery:

> *They have been amazingly flexible, when we changed the film, they've been fine about us running over, and that's been brilliant and they have also been brilliant about the fact that we haven't hit the target that we set ourselves. I believe the impact we've had has been way bigger than I expected and it's been different. And they've been great about that. That combined with the knowledge and contact they've been able to give us. It's made them completely different from an awful lot of other funders where it can be very difficult to change anything and if you don't meet targets you get money taken back, it's inflexible and it doesn't suit the communities that you're working with.* [Hidden Homeless]

The community-focused approach adopted by Media Trust and more specifically their Community Outreach Manager was felt by Adoption Support staff to be a vital component to the success of the programme:

substance.

I've been in places where I've taken participants to receive a certificate for funding and the funders have been completely inept at talking to someone who doesn't speak their language. But the Media Trust staff were all, without fail, open, interested and really valued everyone equally, and that was really important as well. It felt like their values were really behind it, it wasn't about we'll give you some money to do something pretty, it was "we're really interested."
[Adoption Support]

The Ning was viewed as an effective mechanism to communicate and receive advice from the Media Trust:

The Ning site has been useful because you've always got a way of contacting them. We liked that you could use the Ning site to ask questions that might otherwise seem simple or strange. [Adoption Support]

The projects also viewed the initial 'Welcome and What Next' workshops as important in shaping their future projects:

We had our initial introduction day in Manchester, which was fantastic. It gave us loads of ideas. But we didn't know how to protect people's identities and then Kim and Aidan have been fantastic and told us that we could do audio recording and blog and they helped and guided us. [The Haven]

The continual spectrum of support alongside linking to mentors locally was viewed by Links & Lights as the main success to their project delivery;

What I think has been very good from the Media Trust has been ongoing and continual support, not just from [The CV team] who all have their different specialism, so Sam would be someone we could talk to about the monthly tasks we get given, so he'll be really supportive around that and what's been great is that we have been able to pick up the phone, and Kim' not just been at the end of the phone. And they also found us a mentor which was fantastic, a gentlemen who has a digital media company in Leeds. So he's been with us through that journey, to have someone here in Leeds who can then support us as well in terms of developing the project and moving it forwards. [Seacroft Links]

In terms of more critical comments, one of the projects did view the level of training received as far too complex:

We had training in editing skills half way through but didn't find it useful. It was too complex and should have been for beginners. [Club 4 Teenz]

Overwhelmingly the projects we spoke to were extremely complimentary about the support structure and approach of the Community Voices team. The projects found that the approachable, one-to-one, community-focused nature of the team as being hugely beneficial to their development.

substance.

4.3   Engaging the Communities Locally

We asked the projects to describe how they initially attracted participants into their project and subsequently promoted their project outputs to the wider community. Projects made use of their existing connections and used promotional methods such as advertisements, flyers, Facebook and Twitter to generate involvement in the project. The promotion of 'outputs' was approached in a similar fashion and projects tended to draw upon local councillors and dignities to attend their event and get their voices heard in influential circles.

Vintage Radio described the community-based approach to raising participation:

> *We attended a Heritage Festival in Birkenhead town hall where there were lots of people and lots of local societies present and there is another one coming up. We learned we need better signage at these events, but by going out and telling people we're there we are getting better known and attracting a wider audience.* [Vintage Radio]

Seacroft Links also opted for a community-based outreach approach to engaging the community:

> *We did outreach workshops so we were able to go directly to the community and take laptops, take cameras, and deliver a workshop in that setting.* [Seacroft Links]

Club 4 Teenz utilised local schools to promote their film and relied on cascade promotion via word of mouth:

> *Word of mouth and through getting the leaflets out to ten schools. We handed out over 500 leaflets. There were about 20 young people involved in the filming and loads of people in the film.* [Club 4 Teenz]

Project staff at The Haven, visited the women's refuges to raise awareness of the project. Social network sites were also used to reach former Haven clients:

> *All I had to do was mention that we were making a film and they were so eager to be involved. I attended all the refuges and went to their coffee mornings to tell them about it and I engaged with former users on Facebook and Twitter. We recorded about 14 stories and I did the interviews so now we have turned this into a nine-minute film from hours of recording.* [The Haven]

These quotes demonstrate the engagement strategies adopted which can be grouped according to:

- Printed publicity
- Word of mouth
- Community based-outreach
- Social network sites

substance.

5. Impact, Success & Succession

5.1 Programme-Wide Impact & Succession

This section of the report brings together data generated from the project planning documents and Media Trust consultation with projects aimed at determining final beneficiary figures alongside interview data from Media Trust Community Voices team and funders.

5.1.1 Core Supported Project Impacts

The original grant applications point to a total of **55,774** predicted beneficiaries, made up of, **2334** direct beneficiaries and **53,440** indirect beneficiaries[7]. Consultation with project staff which ran in the very late stages of the Community Voices programme points to a total of around **2,500** direct beneficiaries of the programme and around **60,000** indirect beneficiaries. However, this has to be read with the proviso that it was collected in retrospect rather than as an embedded evaluative framework.

Indeed, the notion of an indirect beneficiary needs further consideration as it cannot be assumed that, because a person has watched a film on YouTube, they have necessarily benefitted from the experience. The response of the person to the content will always be unknown without an element of evaluation of feedback.

We would recommend that the Community Voices team realign their assumption of beneficiaries to the direct and accountable rather than inferred. Mechanisms for measuring this can be embedded in future roll-out such as feedback, 'like buttons' and consultation. The programme should be confident to assume that it has had significant impacts on the lives of relatively small numbers of people from disadvantaged communities with relatively modest funding. The quality and impact of the support should be viewed in terms of depth rather than quantity.

This assumption was acknowledged by the Director of Marketing and Communication Services;

> *It's multi-faceted so for Vintage Radio there are people involved in that project that have got new skills and are very involved in it and for them it has fundamentally changed their lives for the better. So there are people interviewed for radio programmes so a lady who said 'it made me feel part of the world again, not just old'. We were very clear that digital media was the vehicle to creating social change but not the destination in its own right.*

The central impacts perceived by the Community Voices team relate to the amount of work produced on relatively small budgets and helping the communities help themselves.

High Impact for Small Investment was viewed as the Community Voices business model as described by the Director of Marketing & Communication Services:

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[7] Plus 100,000 intended viewers of the Farming Channel. Not included.

substance.

The value of the grant is less meaningful than the value of the support. Amazing things have been done with small amounts of money. The money kept people on track and incentivised them to carry on. [Director of Marketing & Communication Services]

Crucially, the funders viewed the programme as successful in delivering value for money:

Yes it did deliver value for money and some of the small pots received produced huge things so huge amounts have been done with very small amounts of money. [Funder BIS]

Centrally the programme was viewed by Media Trust as enabling the Big Society ethos of communities helping themselves. Increased social connectedness was highlighted as a main factor of legacy:

Yes it has been really good as the communities we support do need to demonstrate that they have had an impact and so that helped then attract further funding. As if you improve a person's life then that is a big change. They all have plans for the future. They have gelled as a community and want to carry on. [Community Outreach Manager. CVMT]

Ultimately this approach was acknowledged to be timely and politically relevant as described by the Grant and Administration assistant:

Yes it's relevant as it's all about helping yourself and the communities have done the projects themselves. It is a great example of what communities can do for themselves. [Grants and Administration Assistant. CVMT]

5.1.2   Inspiring Voices

As already illustrated Inspiring Voices operated two rounds of award allocations. The first round ran between October 2009 and March 2010 and selected 15 award winners. The second phase operated between November 2010 and February 2011 and awarded 8 successful projects. These awards were viewed by the winners as influential in not only raising their confidence and giving them a boost of belief in their work, it often provided an opportunity to raise the project profile and attract further funding.

One winner, 'This is My Story (Big Up Films)' explained how the award and press release had assisted them in attracting further project funding:

The award from Media Trust was fantastic, as it gave us the confidence and the boost we need to keep Big Up Films running. Due to this award, we also started receiving funding from other sources, which came at the right time to keep Big Up Films going. [Big Up films]

In this instance as with many others the Inspiring Voices award was very much a catalyst for future interest. Below is an image of the promotion of the second round of Inspiring Voices awards schemes:

substance.

The award winners were given a high profile via a dedicated Inspiring Voices website which gave the projects the opportunity and platform to profile their community projects;

The image below depicts one of the press releases form the first round of awards, issued in the Newham Recorder on the 14th April 2010. The article promotes the work of charity 'UEL' who created an on-line guide to the 'East-End' of London aimed at young people and leading up to the 2012 Olympics.

substance.

East End guiders!

Former pupil of Royal Docks Community School, Karafike Bala (left), and Steriani Ponraj at the base of a crane at the Royal Docks

A UEL-based charity has won a £500 national prize for its work with Newham kids in creating an online guide to East London for the 2012 Olympics.

Charity cSpace was recognised by the Media Trust for inspiring young people to create the Young Person's Guide to East London, writes LEE PEART.

Loraine Leeson, project leader and founder of cSpace, said: "We wanted to work with young people on a project that gave them a sense of their own importance and pride in the area in which they live.

"They are the local experts who have created a view of East London that no-one else has ever seen."

The project, which has been running for two years, has so far involved 160, 11-to-19-year-olds from Newham.

Those involved have come from a wide diversity of backgrounds, including schools, youth projects, pupil referral units, and youth offending teams.

Loraine added: "The project will run until 2012, and we plan to include kids from all five of the Olympic boroughs."

The online guide, which can be viewed at www.ypg2el.org, uses film, photography and journalism to give an insight into exciting activities on offer for the young in East London. It is UEL based

The website features views of East London landmarks, as well as helpful tips on things to do and see in the area.

This was just one of the many examples of successful local media coverage facilitated by Media Trust through Inspiring Voices. The Inspiring Voices initiative proved to be a successful catalyst in inspiring other grassroots community projects, to utilise varied digital media, to engage with and provide a voice for their communities. The direct influential link can be evidenced through the Vintage Radio project which initially applied for, and were successful in gaining, one of the first Inspiring Voices awards. Their success led them to increased confidence and belief in their project and inspired them to apply for one of the main £1,500 Community Voices grant awards. It is interesting to note that the project has since gone onto attract further local funding and will continue its digital radio output post March 2011.

5.1.3   Wider Community Support: Volunteer Matching & Training Support

Volunteers were used to help upgrade communities' skills in digital media. Media Trust led a campaign aimed at professionals in the digital media field. Local mentors were sought in order to embed the knowledge within the community and allow for continuing relationships.

In total, Community Voices matched 239 digital media mentors to the isolated community groups. This far exceeded the initial aim of 100 media matches. Digital mentors trained all of the community project leaders and staff, with the 50 attendees at the 'Welcome and What Next Days' benefitting initially. Following on from this a total of

substance.

176 community leaders (including the original leaders) were trained either directly by the digital mentors or via cascade training in various forms of digital media. These community leaders, or community activists as referred to by Media Trust, were supported by their Digital Mentors and themselves became digital mentors to other project participants. The initial bid, prepared by Media Trust outlined their proposed three aspects of the training package to be received by the project leaders, this included:

- Mentoring skills including supporting, inspiring, encouraging, target setting and dealing with vulnerable people
- A hands on introduction to a variety of digital media, with input from industry professionals and real life case studies of existing digital community projects to inspire
- Fundraising for sustainability – ideas and practical suggestion for linking in with Local Authorities and other local funding bodies to secure sustainability and legacy

The research has demonstrated that mentoring skills were largely already inherent within the supported community project staff skill-set. However, where required, Media Trust did offer relevant support and guidance to the project staff. The introduction to digital media was crucial to many of the projects delivery successes and these new and often transferable skills were greatly valued by the participants. While Media Trust did offer support and tailored advice concerning fundraising and sustainability there remained many projects who failed to attract additional funding and do not have legacy strategies. Media Trust initially hoped to gain accreditation for the training module, but this did not materialise and is something that should be revisited in future roll-outs.

The projects demonstrated that the training and support they received around project planning and the setting of outcomes proved to be invaluable. Many projects valued the Media Trust's guidance and support with this aspect of the project management. Moreover, these skills are transferable and can benefit the projects in many other aspects of their work.

5.2   Succession and Legacy of Community Voices

The succession strategy for the programme shifted throughout the two-year programme due to changes in future funding options. As a result the project was no longer considered as a pilot but was used to provide evidence of a Big Society model in practice which focused more upon up-skilling, mentoring and support structures rather than the issuing of grant cheques. The Director of Marketing and Communication Services felt that the skills left behind within the projects, alongside the connections made and increased confidence, will allow for succession and a local legacy:

> *The media itself is powerful enough and the residual skills and confidences allow people to go out and replicate that again and again with decreasing amounts of support. So we can now comfortably withdraw from these communities without them feeling like the rug has been pulled out from under them. Because we weren't giving enough to pay or employ people.* [Director of Marketing & Communications. CVMT]

substance.

The funders point to a future model which will embrace previous experiences but support fewer areas, with less money, but more support:

> *With the £20k we will be investing it in the Big Society model. There will be three vanguard areas that Media Trust will offer training and help support them.* [Funder CLG]

This view was shared by the Community Outreach Manager:

> *The funding we have going forward is not about giving grants but mentoring, training but without the money and providing free support, more in line with Big Society. So there is a succession strategy but it has not been finalised as yet.* [Community Outreach Manager. CVMT]

The other main funder viewed the next phase as the real test for legacy and questioned short-term funding models:

> *Yes I think it has but the key issue is 'what is the legacy' with short-term funding there is no point unless there is a legacy. The real litmus test is what happens next.* [Funder BIS]

The Programme Coordinator of Community Voices identified some individual project succession strategies and noted that the legacy for the smaller community projects was the residual skills and confidence instilled in them:

> *For the individual projects some have been successful in securing more funding. VA Chichester and Prescap have both secured additional funding so they have been better organised. For all of the smaller communities they will continue to be better and they have learnt a lot to bet better at articulating their needs.* [Project Manager. CVMT]

The lasting impact of the programme is viewed by the team as a legacy that entails up-skilling, creating connections and increasing confidence. The team also view their Big Society model as a sustainable and cost-effective alternative to larger-scale grant system programmes. There is much enthusiasm within the team that this model will attract funding from various sources as it has demonstrated that there has been great impact on the lives of the participants due to small levels of financial investment.

We will now consider the impact and succession strategies of the case-study project in order to further contextualize the programme-wide view. Whilst we have already made reference to the suggestion that the projects could have better articulated their notion of beneficiaries and outcomes, we have interpreted the projects' view of 'impact' and made reference to their current plans for succession. The five examples below highlight the most coherent strategies:

Vintage Radio plan to continue their broadcasting and have been particularly successful in gaining further funding to enable them to do this. The central impact of their project is the ability they have to connect an isolated and lonely community and provide their participants with new skills and confidence. This is demonstrated in the quote below from one of the radio participants':

substance.

One of the main things I've gained from being involved has been an increase in my confidence. When I was asked to act in a play it was something I never thought I could do, but I did over 20 episodes and even an hour long play. I didn't have a lot of confidence when I started, I couldn't concentrate on reading things because I was so worried about making a mistake. We got help from BBC Radio Leeds who sent someone to John Moores Uni.

Club 4 Teenz pointed to the new skills being acquired by their participants and the changing of perception locally as the main impact of their film:

Young people have gained new skills and it has changed people's opinion of the area. We showed it to the 'Top-Timers' over 50s group and they said they used to be scared of the young people but now know what the young people are really like. It has given ten young people the confidence that they can be involved in stuff, and two of ten young people came with me to the Houses of Parliament.

This was reiterated by three project participants who reflected on their involvement in the 'Proud to Be IP3' film;

I feel I have learnt so much from this project as I have learnt new skills and been able to show people what our area is really like. [Club 4 Teenz participant 1]

I have definitely benefited from this project as I have learnt new skills and I got the chance to go the houses of parliament. [Club 4 Teenz participant 2]

It has made me feel it doesn't matter where you come from you can still get involved in new stuff. [Club 4 Teenz participant 3]

In terms of succession, the project hopes to set up a website to showcase the film. Aside from the website the project does not have any plans to continue but do have a re-useable and valuable output;

We have no set plans to continue it but we will definitely use the film for bids for funding. [Club 4 Teenz Project Lead]

The image below depicts one of the graffiti walls created by the project participants which features in their film:

substance.

Adoption Support explained how the project enabled young people to talk about an issue that would otherwise have remained hidden, thereby giving a voice to the voiceless:

> *The children who come along to group sessions talk about contact with birth parents, because there's not many places for them to do that. It's another way of giving children permission to talk about it.* [Adoption Support project lead]

The staff at Adoption Support view their Community Voices project as a catalyst for young people talking more openly, especially to adopted families:

> *Some of our young people have very strong views about what should be done by local authorities and social workers and parents really, and I think it's good for them that we are able to record [those views].* [Adoption Support project lead]

In terms of succession, the project hopes to continue to use the digital media in the future and attract additional funding;

> *I think we will keep getting specific contributions to the project in the future...and I think we will extend the use of equipment further, to enhance people's experience with contact. Contact (with birth families) has traditionally used letter-writing as the communication mechanism, whereas this approach uses a more contemporary method that will hopefully be embraced.* [Adoption Support project lead]

substance.

The Haven view the central successes of their project as the increased confidence of the women engaged and providing a platform for the women to tell their story and give them a voice, noting:

> *We are so proud of the film but the main thing is to see their passion for it. I knew people would want to be involved but I did not expect it in this way.* [The Haven Project Lead]

In terms of succession the project aims to begin a promotional campaign and promote the film to wider audiences. They have already had interest from one school to use it as a training tool and hope to attract further interest.

Seacroft Links view the central impact of their project as the personal development and increased confidence of those involved, noting:

> *I think one of the big things is the personal development aspect for the people involved - whether it was just being involved in a couple of outreach sessions or whether it was people having been involved for longer throughout - is seeing the development in people in terms of confidence… Real confidence building for some of the people being involved.* [Seacroft Links Project Lead]

The project has a clear succession strategy and plan to extend their model to work with four further communities post March 2011.

5.3   Success Locally

The successes of the projects as defined by project staff and participants are extremely varied and personable. However, the overwhelming message was one of increased confidence and re-connectedness:

> *The older people involved have gained a lot more confidence, we have helped isolated people who maybe have lost their partners and our project has given them a new sense of direction and a chance to meet new people and develop new skills. One whose confidence was low has even been able to interview local councillors, something she never thought she'd be able to do.* [Vintage Radio]

Other individual successes demonstrated by Vintage Radio included the story of a woman who had suffered a stroke and could only say a few words but with the help of her daughter was able to conduct a full interview. Her involvement in the project gave her, '*a real sense of worth'*. The staff at her nursing home noted an increase in her confidence and said that without her involvement, '*she could so easily have been left in the corner in her own world.'*

We have heard many stories such as this one, which point to significant positive life-changing experiences for participants within the projects. While we acknowledge that the degree of impact and life-change may not extend to the indirect beneficiaries or consumers of the outputs it must be acknowledged that the reach and ability to influence such notable change is justifiable.

Adoption Support similarly pointed to the great impact the project had had upon the

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young participants in their project, noting;

> *I think the experience of being involved in it, and the way they have been involved in it, gives them some control over their input – and their lives, really. You don't have any say about being adopted, or whether you have contact with your birth parents. Having the opportunity to be in control of what's going on, what is included in their stories, how it is 'going out there .I think it is important for them to take some of that control back.* [Adoption Support]

Hidden Homeless, point to new routes into employment as examples of outcomes for four of their participants:

> *For them [on the steering group] it's had a massive impact because their lives have changed. Four of them have got jobs, and one is just about to get a job. So it has made a real difference.* [Hidden Homeless]

Whilst it is difficult to describe a model of best practice when using a sample of only seven projects we have managed to select some projects and their approaches as exemplar in nature. Hidden Homeless has really given a voice to a group of homeless people and the billboards they produced have been very effective. In this sense they have truly given a voiceless community an outward facing voice. The effectiveness has been identified by Society Guardian who is keen to write a forthcoming feature on the project. The project has also been successful in attracting UnLtd funding to set up a homeless paper. The image below depicts the Hidden Homes billboard:

Prescap's community outreach approach, which involved touring around local estates in order to attract more volunteers, was particularly successful. The project was also successful in creating a legacy strategy and has been awarded funding from NESTA to take their project forward. This proves that the projects can not only attract a wider community but also create sustainability through demonstrating their impact and attracting additional funding.

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Community Action Chichester District (VCaCd) has been extremely successful in training older people through their courses. The lived-experience of participants has notably changed. For example, one lady who accessed training in how to use a mobile phone, successfully used her phone to alert emergency services when she had a fall. The project's ability to demonstrate its impact upon participants has meant that they too have been successful in attracting three years of funding from the Lloyds TSB Foundation.

In terms of having a life-changing impact on participants, **The Haven** was viewed as a model of best practice. The heartfelt, hard-hitting eight minute long film is both chilling and inspiring. It demonstrated the commitment of the project to enable participants to describe their personal stories and give a voice to a hidden voiceless community of women experiencing domestic violence. The impact this has had on participants is unquestionable, as outlined concisely by one of the women who told her story;

> *I've suffered domestic violence, sexual abuse, anorexia, drug and alcohol addiction and I have overcome everyone. So I can show people that you can get over these things. It wasn't until I started this that it really helped me open up properly. It has given me the confidence.*

The participant went onto praise the project approach noting:

> *The way Grace handled it gave me confidence. It wasn't just what you saw on the film it was my whole story. They gave me the opportunity to get the whole truth out and there was no rush. As time went on I found I just let it all go.* [*Haven MTCV Participant*]

The quotes here highlight the depth of impact the Community Voices programme has had upon people suffering from various forms of disadvantage. Many of the stories we heard pointed to life-changing outcomes emerging from increased confidence and access to engage with wider communities to share their experiences.

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6. Recommendations & Improvement Areas

6.1 Reflections on Project Plans

The research team reviewed all of the initial 25 community created project plans. Whilst these were well structured and showed clear guidance there were six areas which the research team felt could have been developed further, those being:

- Defining community group and beneficiary numbers
- A clear focus on voicelessness and evidence
- Digital media's role in making a difference in communities
- Outcome definition and measurement
- Sustainability
- Cost-effectiveness

The projects were asked to define their communities. In many cases these are both geographic communities *and* communities of interest. There were a number of differences between how the projects measured and interpreted the people who were deemed to benefit. Some projects reported on project participants, while others reported on both participants *and* those likely to come into contact with project content. Some projects described the wider community and social benefits of their projects. It is recommended that a more explicit 'theory of change' around the impact of the project both on direct and indirect beneficiaries should be developed in the future.

All projects addressed the specific problem facing the disadvantaged or 'voiceless' people in their plans. Despite this, the evidence provided concerning the specific challenges they faced as 'communities' tended to be at macro-level and statistical. While this was not true of all projects, the overwhelming majority of reports detailed few facts about what voicelessness means to individuals and how this disadvantage creates voicelessness at a personal level. Finally, the reports did not explore how *'having a voice'* would improve the individuals' personal situations. Projects should be encouraged to consider the impact on individual lives at the personal level and explore how having a voice would improve individual and social situations.

Projects ranged from the very specific to the very general in their proposed use of digital media and their rationales for adopting specific mediums. Many of the projects involved some level of training for community members. Much of this training was, however, fairly traditional rather than the informal or peer training outlined in the Community Voices initial literature. Most applications were unclear about how new skills would benefit the communities over the long term. In many cases there was little sense given of how skills learned/gained through projects would become a new resource for communities in their ongoing battles against isolation. It is recommended that peer-led training is offered to wider community members in order to facilitate a more sustainable model of empowering communities. Projects should also be encouraged to define how the acquisition of media skills will benefit the community members involved. This may relate to direct skills acquisition or transferable skills.

In terms of defining outcomes, many projects confused participant benefits with community benefits, and more still did not address community benefits at all. This is not to say that the projects did not have wider community benefits: rather, it is to point out

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that wider community benefits were not explicit in the project plans. While many of the projects were very modest in scale this should not necessarily restrict their ambitions to at least be catalysts for wider community change. The projects could have developed more explicit examples of exactly how they would impact individuals and be encouraged to be honest if they cannot accurately measure the indirect or wider outcomes. For example, many projects who were involved in producing one off pieces of content note outcomes relating to wider community impacts. Usually the outcome related to a community screening of a film or similar exhibition. There were no clear mechanisms which would allow for audience or consumer feedback which would allow for a degree of 'impact' to be measured. Being an audience member does not equate to being affected or changed by the content. It is, therefore, recommended that the projects should embed feedback mechanism into their wider distribution methods.

In many applications there was little detail offered regarding training dissemination strategies and therefore it was difficult to see how sustainability was being addressed. One key issue here is that some projects were only designed to produce one-off pieces of content so and therefore do not have a straightforward way to explain any future plans. These types of projects could have tried to explain how the skills and experiences gained during production would help people and communities to continue to 'raise their voices'. However the majority concentrated instead on how the 'message' of their content would continue to be communicated to audiences long after production had finished. Even these projects, though, did not tend to have very clear dissemination strategies (e.g. putting content on You Tube) and lacked engagement strategies for audiences.

Projects producing ongoing content, such as community radio had a clearer sense of how future grants would enable them to be more sustainable. This concept could have been made more explicit by many of the projects.

It is very difficult to assess the cost effectiveness of the grants awarded as projects used different interpretations of who would benefit. As a result cost per head analysis is difficult. According to the key characteristics, projects should be encouraged to utilise under-used resources and/or equipment for their projects in the future in order to further increase their cost-effectiveness.

Nevertheless, based on the figures of **2500** direct beneficiaries across the **24** community projects, whom were awarded **£166,000** collectively, a figure of **£66.40** per head can be draw. However, this figure does not take into account the programme management fee or any other in-kind contributions.

6.2   Recommendations for Future Improvement: The view from the Community Voices Team, Funders and Stakeholders

This sub-section points to reflections from the Community Voices team, the funders and the projects we spoke to regarding the delivery of the programme and recommendations for future changes to its structure and delivery.

Project time-lines were viewed as a core issue which could be improved upon. The team felt that more time could have been factored in for the selection process, supporting the communities and project planning.

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Project planning in particular was viewed as tine-consuming:

> *The time scales and time needed and the support that communities need. We could have more time to help with the project planning.* [Community Outreach Manager. CVMT]

The grant award selection process also required more time than was initially anticipated:

> *With the selection process we struggled with timings, selection, project board and sign off. There was a really diverse range of both geographic and interest groups. We could be a bit more efficient with it we might not have been cut throat enough and spent lots of time looking over the applications.* [Grants and Administration Assistant. CVMT]

Technical issues around the creation of the on-line grant application and the wealth of phone calls were both contributing factors leading to the expansion of time allocated to award selection:

> *We got the offline process together in good time but the website development slipped a little so a few days were lost with technical issues. It was very intense, we had about 400 phone calls so that was fine and the process for selecting took a lot longer than anticipated. We originally planned to do a first year then a second year so that may be a way forward so to phase the applications to make it a bit more manageable.* [Project Manager. CVMT]

Other areas for improvement or consideration included the **matching of projects to mentors**, which proved to be more complex than initially envisaged;

> *Mentor relationships are much more complex so we maybe did not get the numbers we wanted but we have learnt from that.* [Head of Charity and Community Projects]

There was some disappointment with the media-hub and content of the Ning;

> *We envisaged a vibrant on-line rich media hub to showcase the communities' work and provide access to peer support. For various reasons the digital community hub did not work so we set up the Ning within the team and it worked well but we could have done much more.* [Head of Charity and Community Projects]

The **under-use of the Ning** site was evident through our analysis of case-study tasks, which highlighted small numbers of tasks submitted by the projects overall. It was also felt that the scale could have been increased through adapting the level of support offered to the communities;

> *The scale could be improved upon. This was a pilot and the idea was to roll it out which now won't happen funded by the government but hopefully will from other funding. We would have to find ways of more efficiently dealing with the communities and perhaps being less intensive with our support to the 24.* [Director of Marketing & Communication Services. CVMT]

substance.

The reflections from Media Trust staff interviews provide the team with opportunities for future programme modifications and improvements. These reflections were reiterated during the Community Voices team 'Lessons Learnt' workshop, held on 23rd March. The team ordered the discussion around the three strands of the programme, starting with the 'inspire' phase. The following observations were made during this internal meeting.

Inspire Phase
The team acknowledged that this was the first time that Media Trust had operated a grant agreement process and a large amount of the inspire phase was spent considering the types of outcomes that could be measure.

It became clear to the team that it was going to take longer than initially expected for them to assist the projects to write their project plans. It was evident that many of the projects were not clear on what their outcomes were. What was envisaged to be a one-month task ended up taking three months.

The team felt that the 'Welcome and What Next' days were crucial in creating a feeling of a 'partnership' rather than a traditional funder/funded relationship. It was suggested that peer-facilitators would improve the support structure to projects.

Project 61
The selection of the largest funded project (awarded £61,000) was initiated as a solicited-bid. The geographical area of Lincolnshire was selected as it was felt to be an under-represented area of the United Kingdom for digital inclusion. Lincolnshire Community Foundation were approached to put forward three proposals. In general Media Trust felt that they would have liked more contact and 'hands-on' support with the project.

Empower Phase
The team reflected on the showcasing phase of the programme and noted how they had recently assisted many projects with their press-releases and offered advice on how they could attract funders and dignitaries along. It was acknowledged that there were a small number of projects whose showcasing events remained outstanding.

The team felt that the projects did not always have a clear notion of what information would be of interest to the Media Trust team. One project were visited by Princess Ann but failed to communicate anything around the visit to the Community Voices team. It was suggested that more structured tasks should be issued alongside guidance of what needs to be recorded such as event coverage documentation and photographs of the events. While the Ning site allows for this type of communication it was felt that the secure structure prevented any opportunity for 'public' engagement.

Mentors & Volunteers
Due to staffing changes the process of mentor matches proved to be a little fragmented. The process of matching a local mentor to projects took longer than expected and in future the team would hope to begin their search for mentors sooner into the project planning project.

Successes

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While the team collectively felt that the core activities had been met they felt that the recording and delivery of impacts could have been improved upon. The team viewed their greatest strengths as also occasional weaknesses, those being;

- Flexible nature
- Friendly approach
- Informal relationships
- Approachable team
- Trusted individuals and organisation

The central outcomes were viewed as being based upon the nature of the relationships and the understanding of the communities rather than the transfer of knowledge around digital media.

The funders were overwhelmingly positive in their reflections on the Media Trust's prgramme management. However, there were two central areas where they viewed room for improvement, those being, the **evaluation process a**nd the representation of the project steering group. It was noted that the evaluation process began during the last month of the two year programme and that this should have been embedded earlier on in the programme time-line.

The representative from the Department for Business, Innovation & Skills, felt that wider **representation on the steering group** would have benefitted the project planning process:

> *If it is a criticism I'd say if we did it again I'd suggest we had others in the room like Martha Lane Fox, UK Online and other digital players. We have spent £3m on a similar projects and we could have secured other advisors who were not just funders.* [Funder BIS]

In terms of succession, the funders felt that the proposed Big Society model of smaller grants and less intensive support may be a viable alternative but may not result in the same level of outputs:

> *I can see a model where you give out small grants and less reporting back but you might not get the outputs. Less one-to-one engagement and support would be unlikely to yield these outcomes.* [Funder. CLG]

Turning our attention to the project staff, Adoption Support felt that they would have benefitted from **receiving their equipment much sooner** than they did, noting. '*The gap between receiving funding and purchasing the equipment was unnecessarily long.*' It was recommended that further investigation into the needs of projects could have been factored into the grant application up front.

Project 61 felt that **increased flexibility in the project planning** was required;

> *Factor in some flexibility into the planning – allow aims and targets some scope to be moved. It sounds like a bit of cop-out answer, but when you are dealing with large amounts of people, all with different wants and needs and aims, you need to be able to achieve your interests without pushing people aside.*

substance.

Hidden Homeless felt that **fewer targets** would have been more productive. The numbers of beneficiaries were also considered as a red-herring. Hidden Homeless noted that there was a huge drop out but those who remained gained invaluably;

> *Plan small. Assume a massive drop out. The small successes will be the really import ones. Work, plan with people right from the beginning.* [Hidden Homeless]

substance.

7.   Conclusion

In the previous section we have measured the impact of the Community Voices programme. This was approached using beneficiary figures, which were collected by Media Trust in March 2011, and through speaking directly to community projects. We acknowledge that it is difficult to measure the degree of 'impact' from the programme as many of the projects' final output have only recently been completed, or in a few cases are still in production. With this in mind we would recommend that Media Trust introduce a systematic mechanism for projects to measure both direct and indirect beneficiaries post March 2011 in order for it and local projects to understand their impact and legacy.

The next sub-section highlights the breadth of digital media used by the projects to engage and reach their target audiences. Whilst we cannot be certain that the intended audience has consumed the output, valued it or benefitted from it, we can confidently say that the direct beneficiaries have benefitted from a vast range of meaningful life-changing impacts be they related to personal wellbeing, skills acquisition or social connectedness.

As such, Community Voices is best described as a qualitative initiative, which has utilised digital media successfully to address varied issues of disadvantage to relatively small groups or individuals within communities. For Community Voices the depth of change rather than scale or quantities changed is the key. The ability for digital media to represent the outputs to large numbers of intended audiences is a crucial next phase of the Community Voices programme.
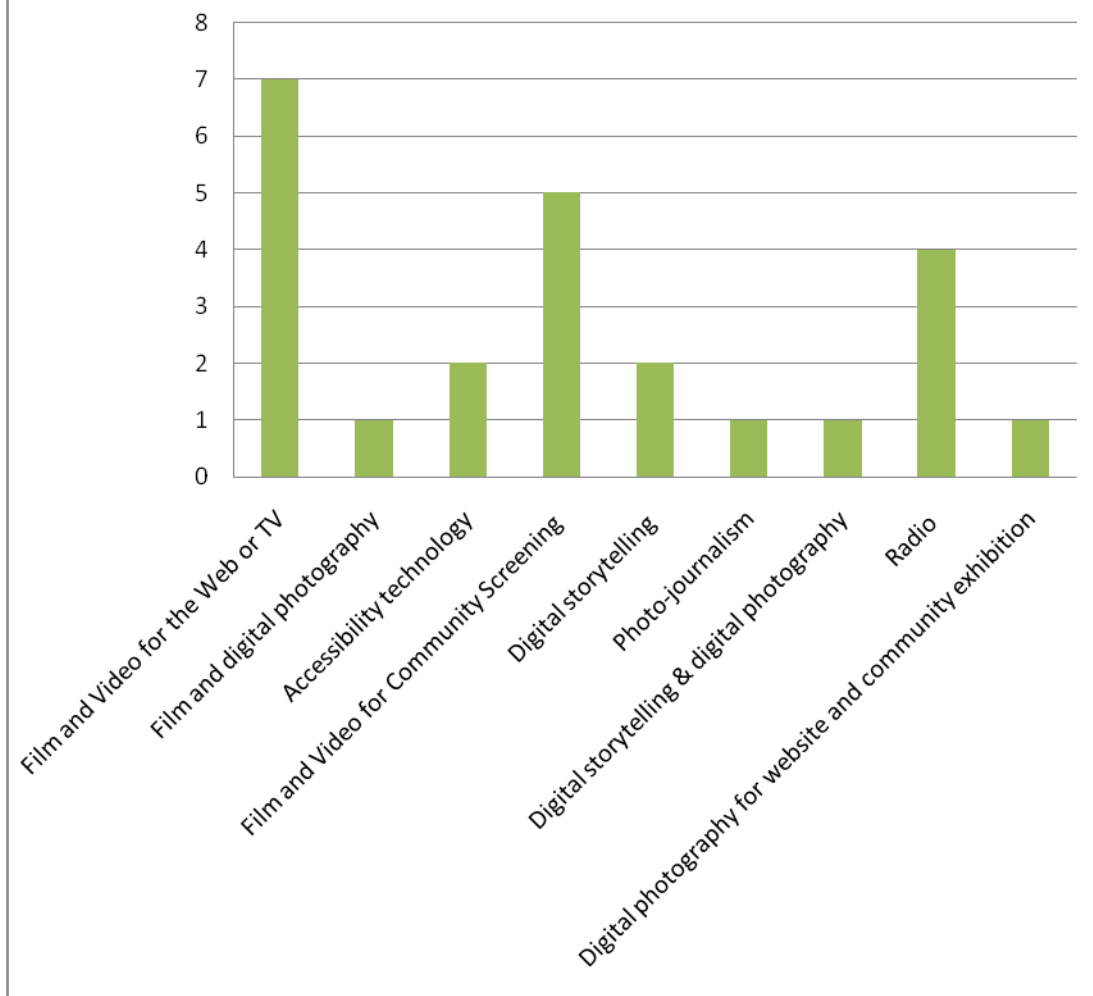
7.1   Breadth of Digital Media

The report had demonstrated that the programme has delivered life-changing meaningful impacts to around 2500 individuals from deprived, isolated, under-represented or 'at-risk' communities. The depth of this impact is noteworthy and points to a variety of outcomes relating to personal wellbeing, skills acquisition and social connectedness. However, attention must be drawn to the breadth of reach of the digital media engagement strategy adopted by Media Trust. Figures recently collected by Media Trust point to around 60,000 indirect beneficiaries from the programme. While recommendations have been made to improve both the definition and recording of indirect beneficiaries, this estimate, if accurate is hugely significant when compared to the level of direct financial investment and direct project participant numbers.

The use of varied digital media engagement strategies for distinct community audiences was noted and the table below highlights the range of digital media forms used by the Community Voices projects. The three most popular digital engagement strategies were:

1. Film and Video for the Web or TV

2. Film and Video for Community Screening

3. Radio output

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Range of Digital Media Adopted by the Community Voices Projects

Research commissioned prior to the commencement of Community Voices[8] pointed to a breadth of digital media being utilised by community groups. This has been highlighted throughout this report and it can be concluded that two main characteristics have contributed to success with regard to the reach of project outputs.

1. The project participants viewed the digital media platforms (e.g. radio, film, web-content, social-networking or digital images) as accessible and often familiar environments. This alongside appropriate training, mentoring and guidance meant that digital media proved to be a successful engagement strategy.

2. The ability of digital media content to be distributed widely, not only public facing, but often to specific targeted audiences through existing community based social-media networks such as e-networks; Facebook; Youtube and Twitter has

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[8] Research and Consultation Findings. Community Voices. September 2009. Corporate Citizenship

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enabled a cost-effective distribution method. The open-source element of the majority of output channels has proven to be a cost-effective and sustainable model for output legacy.

7.2   Digital Media Type used by Distinct Communities and related Beneficiary Numbers

With limited numbers of projects to provide a basis for any typology or modelling, it was concluded that the most appropriate method to demonstrate the effects of digital media strategies within distinct communities was to consider these as grouped communities by 'direct beneficiary' figures. It must be made explicit that all three variables (1) community problems; 2) digital media engagement method and; 3) direct beneficiary numbers, were derived from the project application and project plan documentation provided to the research team. The first bar-graph depicts the digital engagement strategies of those projects working with communities suffering from discrimination.
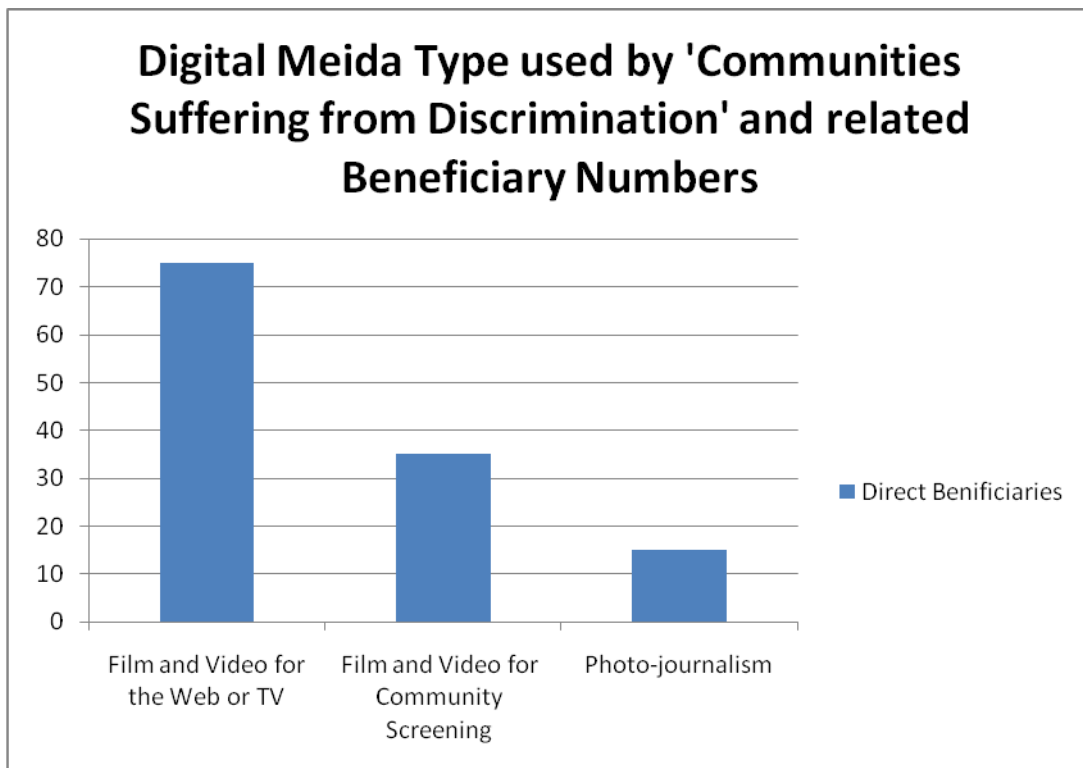
From the above bar-graph we can conclude that projects working with communities facing discrimination may wish to use filma and video aimed at TV or web-content. This is largely due to the fact that film can be used to challenge discrimination and bring to life the lived experiences of those communities perceiving themselves as discriminated.

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Digital Media Type used by 'Communities Suffering from Isolation and Lack of Services' and related Beneficiary Numbers
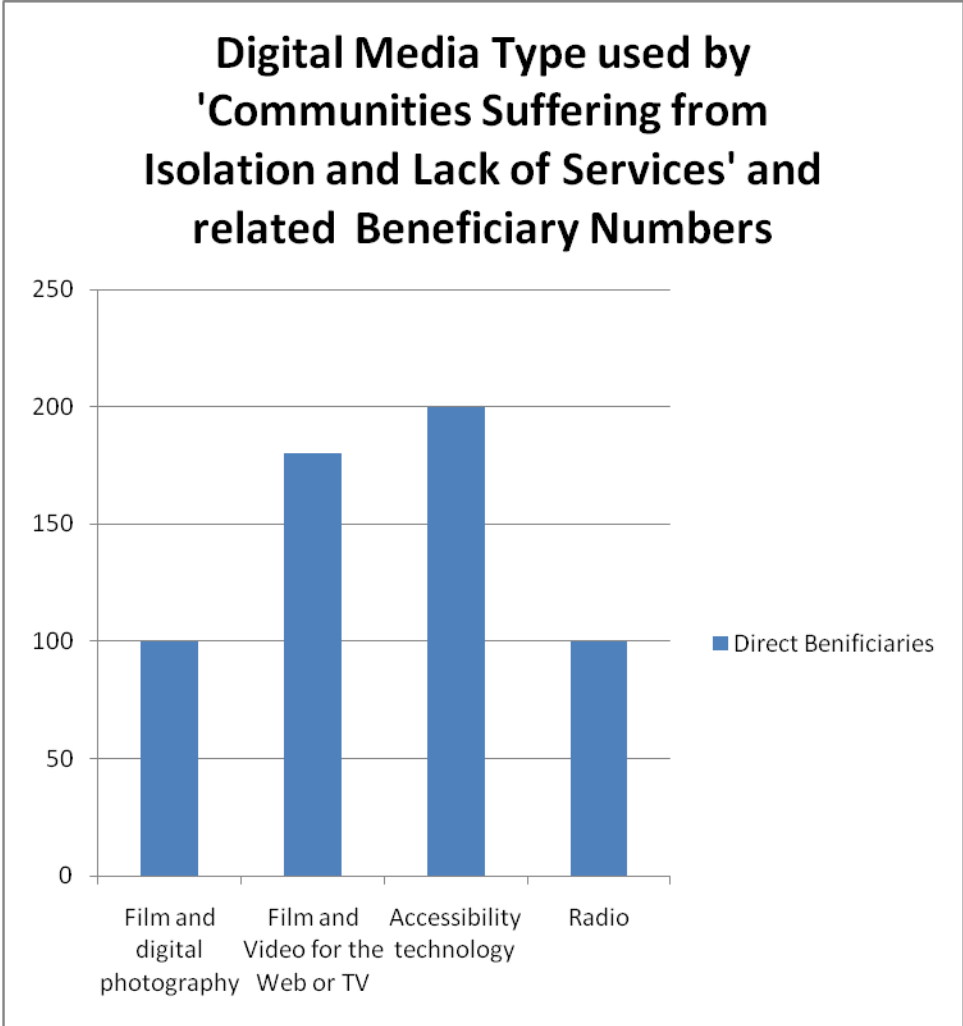
For those projects working with communities suffering from isolation and a lack of services, accessibility technologies aided more direct beneficiaries than any other method. Film and video for the web or television also proved a successful method of engaging with isolated, and in this case, rural communities.

The projects working within communities suffering from stigma and a lack of integration used a variety of digital media engagement strategies. The most effective at reaching direct beneficiaries were viewed as film and video aimed at community screenings and digital storytelling. These two methods are clearly effective in providing a vehicle for these communities to express their views and attempt to represent their community in a manner that will facilitate the overcoming of prejudice or stigma.

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Digital Media Type used by 'Communities Suffering from Stigma and a Lack of Integration'and related Direct Beneficiary Numbers
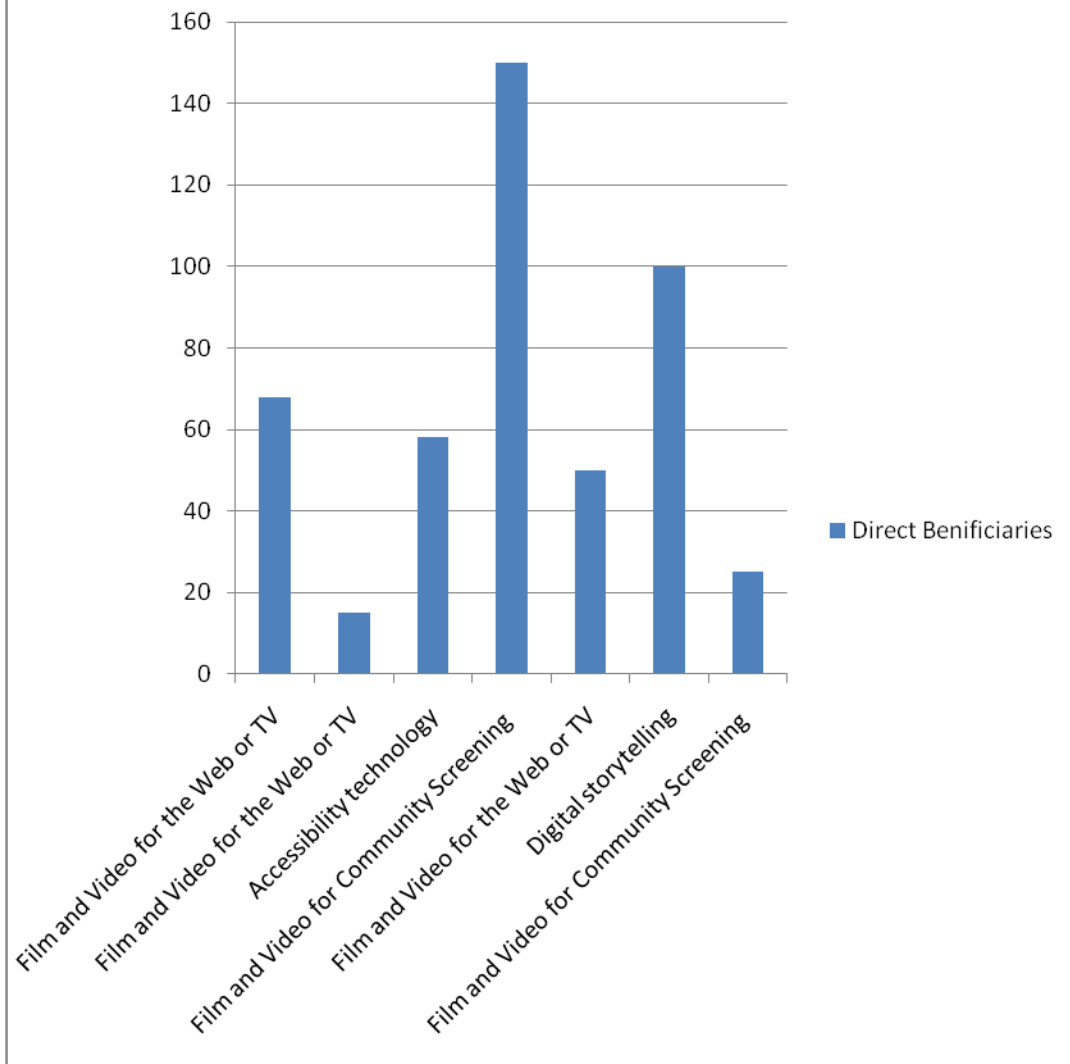
Finally, we considered the digital media engagement method of the projects working wthin deprived communities. We found that the most effective method of directly benefitting community members was through radio, followed by film and video be it for the TV, web or community screening. It can be concluded that the accessibility of radio, web, TV and community venues may contribute to the uptake of involvement of people living in deprived communities.

substance.

Digital Meida Type used by 'Communities Suffering from Urban Deprivation' and related Beneficiary Numbers

Categories (x-axis): Film and Video for the Web or TV; Film and Video for the Web or TV; Film and Video for Community Screening; Digital storytelling; Film and Video for the Web or TV; Digital storytelling & digital photography; Film and Video for Community Screening; Radio; Digital photography for website and community exhibition

Legend: ■ Direct Benificiaries
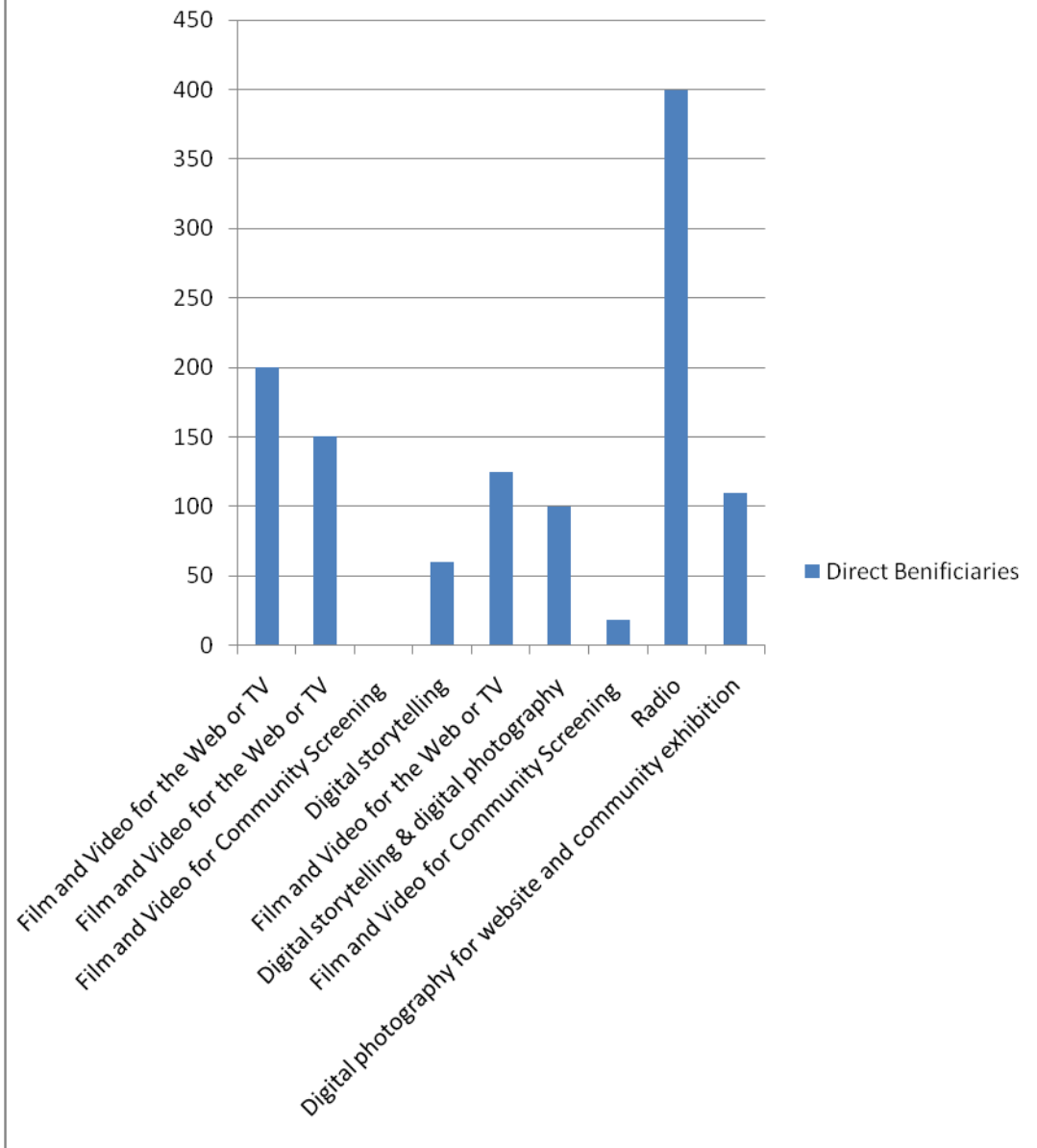
7.3   The Central View

Community Voices is an empowering initiative, which has provided key developmental life skills to around 2500 participants. For the core participants directly involved in the programme, the skills developed have often been life-changing and relate to raised self-confidence, self-esteem and other key transferable skills. Essentially Community Voices is a qualitative initiative, which has the potential, through digital media dissemination, to impact upon wider communities.

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Substance has an established track record of working with community groups who utilise various activities to engage with disadvantaged communities and people. The range of engagement strategies used includes sport, arts and culture, angling and, as with Community Voices, digital media. We have found that within each specific discipline there is at some level, a general consensus from the programme and project staff, that the activity is fundamental to the success of the outcomes achieved. However, our findings have shown that, aside from the activities providing an initial hook, the critical success factors relate to actions and processes that are not specific to the activity. These can be found within Community Voices and include aspects such as grassroots support; the empowering of communities; improving self-esteem and confidence; sustained provision; widening social networks; improving social connectedness and the transmission of new transferable skills.

In accordance with these findings, research focusing on the use of sport as an engagement tool pointed to, 'the limitations of attempts to utilise particular activities in the pursuit of specific objectives.' (Crabbe[9]: 2006: 16). However, it is acknowledged that each engagement strategy will have distinct characteristics that may suit specific communities of need. Community Voices acknowledged this and were non-prescriptive in both the definition of 'disadvantage' and the use of digital media. The varied approaches taken by the projects in using film, radio, digital journalism, billboards and other activities is testament to this flexible strategy. Moreover it is clear that, aside from the attractiveness of digital media as an engagement tool, by its very nature it provides a key platform for communities to share their views around notions of disadvantage and is therefore an ideal conduit to reducing voicelessness.

Media Trust's ability to understand the practice of voluntary-led organisations, which can result in fluctuating staff-hours and a requirement for face-to-face support, has been instrumental in their relationship management. The flexible support from outreach staff aided this responsive approach to project support needs. The grassroots approach to support lent itself to successful communication with the communities engaged with.

Community schemes often target certain community of interest or geographic groups such as, young people at risk, carers, ex-offenders or vulnerable adults. However for Community Voices, there was no single perceived disadvantage addressed by the programme. A holistic approach was taken in order to respond to the varied needs of the communities. It is unusual for a national programme to work across such diverse communities of interest. There have been generic benefits recorded across vastly diverse communities of need.

Community Voices acknowledge that the formulation of meaningful relationships does not happen over-night. With this in mind the programme developed a significant period of 'getting-to-know' the communities and allowing the projects to form and gel prior to any production of material. Future roll-outs should acknowledge the importance of this stage of project development and ensure that duration does not fall short of around ten to twelve months.

Many aspects of the Community Voices programme directly relate to current policy and community agendas, those being:

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[9] Knowing The Score: Positive Futures Case Study final Report. Crabbe .T.(2006) Home Office. London

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- **Big Society** – Community Voices helps people come together to improve their own lives and the lives within their communities
- **Informal Adult and Community Learning** – A range of direct media skills alongside many transferable skills have been developed across 2500 direct beneficiaries
- **Improved Social Capital** – Community Voices creates networks amongst people with shared values and therefore creates enhanced social capital for these participants
- **Social Wellbeing**[10] – Community Voices provides many key supportive relationships and provides a sense of belonging to the group
- **Personal Wellbeing** – Community Voices provides participants with self-esteem, confidence, resilience and a sense of purpose and meaning

Based upon the central research findings we will now conclude considering models of best practice for local project staff, project characteristics and programme management.

7.4   Best Practice Model

From the vast range of primary, secondary, qualitative and quantitative data analysed we have concluded that there are certain characteristics which facilitate the success of projects using digital media to support communities to make meaningful differences to their lives. The characteristics relate to both project and programme level staff.

Principle Project Staff Characteristics
Shared characteristics or empathy with the community of interest/geography
Ability to accurately define the specific problems facing the community
Ability to accurately identify key outcomes for the project
Have links with other existing local community networks
Principle Programme Management Support Mechanisms
Early identification of project support needs and signposting to relevant mentors/peer-mentors
Flexible, pro-active outreach support staff
Facilitation with project plan writing
Facilitation with setting of tangible measureable outcomes
Clear guidance on differentiating direct and indirect beneficiaries

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[10] Nef: National Accounts of Wellbeing Index

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Mechanisms to facilitate beneficiary measurement
Embed a notion of legacy and sustainability in each project

The Community Voices programme has proved successful in supporting a range of disadvantaged communities address their perceived disadvantage. It is interesting to note both the diversity of the disadvantage tackled, and the varied use of new media. The research has found that while Media Trust embedded the ethos of digital communication at the centre of the programme, commencing with the on-line application form and including the online Ning task site, it has overwhelmingly been the fact-to-face, 'hands-on' approachable nature of their support which has been deemed to be paramount to the success of projects. The ability for Media Trust to understand and interpret the needs of the communities was similarly influential to success. Therefore, any best practice model should place outreach support at the very heart of the programme.

It must be acknowledged that many community groups are currently struggling to attract increasingly scarce grant awards. As a result, many projects are more often than not led by or supported by volunteers. Media Trust has a strong understanding of voluntary-led programming. With this knowledge, the Community Voices team has created a suitably flexible and diverse support team who are mindful of factors often inherent with community-voluntary organisations such as, irregular working hours, lack of access to organisational support structures and facilities. The team used a proactive approach to supporting the needs of each community project, at the point of need. This can be seen as another crucial aspect of the best practice management model.

The following characteristics can be seen as important in a 'Best Practice' model of delivering a community project.

Community-led project
Clear set of measureable outcomes
Realistic and measurable figures relating to direct and indirect beneficiaries
Effective and responsive participation engagement strategy (fit-for-purpose)
Make effective use of the varied Media Trust support structures
Identify and make use of volunteering opportunities
Have strong local partnership links with other community groups, funders or digital media experts
Promote the output through various on and off-line sources
Provide a sustainable model through continual community recruitment and peer-led mentoring in order to cascade valuable knowledge and training

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Ultimately this model can be seen as one which is currently being displayed, in varying degrees, by a selection of the current wave funded projects. With this in mind, it is clear that future roll-out of the initiative would see increased numbers of exemplar projects.

7.5   Key Recommendations

The research has identified a wealth of success in the delivery and management of the Community Voices programme and the associated outcomes. However, the following recommendations bring together observations from the research team, Media Trust staff, funders, community project leads and participants and together provide clear guidance for improved roll-out of future Community Voices projects.

Community Voices should continue to support those projects with legacy outputs such as films or physical content and should promote and distribute these outputs. Vitally the notion of impact on wider beneficiaries should be embedded into the dissemination strategy. Feedback on the impact of viewing or consuming the various outputs should be sought whenever possible.

Periodic review of outcome setting and aims should be introduced as often the focus of a project can alter over the course of its operation as unexpected outcomes can begin to take precedence. Quarterly outcome setting regional workshops would benefit the projects and facilitate their direction and focus.

The cost of rolling out the Community Voices programme post March 2011 would be considerably less than the first stage expenditure. This is largely due to not requiring any up-front costs associated with setting up a national programme, such as recruitment, programme development, partnership development and management structures. In addition to these factors, the existing training resources, embedded team knowledge of programme management and crucial lessons learnt emerging from this research can result in a scaled–down more cost-efficient programme.

Embedding a programme of peer-led cascade community training would result in a more sustainable and cost-effective model of delivery. Media Trust should seek to retain and harness the knowledge acquired by the project leaders within the core 25 Community Voices projects. These individuals could be empowered as regional training teams and utilised as community facilitators for forthcoming successful Community Voices projects.

The twinning of new projects with experienced projects who may share either similar social disadvantages, geographical locations or digital media methods would also provide another important layer of 'communities helping themselves' and associated Big Society ethics. Ultimately Community Voices should continue its proven approach to engaging, inspiring and empowering disadvantaged communities via digital media, adopting a modified model which encompasses key learnings and responses to current external financial and policy factors. The central characteristics of this future model would include:

- Reduce the value grant awards - Recommendation based on our research findings which discovered extremely similar outcomes derived from the three allocated grant awards (£1,500, £7,000 & £14,000)

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- Increase the outreach staff role – Recommendation based on the research finding which pointed the huge value associated by the projects on the hand-on support from Media Trust and Digital Mentors
- Empower existing community project leads to enroll as future advisors and trainers – Recommendation based on the ability for communities to translate their experience to other similar communities and cascade their knowledge. Provides legacy, empowers the leaders and allows for a cost-effective supplementary training module
- Improved mechanisms to match mentors to projects sooner
- Continue to offer the varied range of support provision to the existing projects to enable them to sustain their models in the future
- Provide more basic and accessible digital-media training courses
- Embed a mechanism to more accurately evidence the indirect-beneficiary figures such as feedback and evaluation processes
- Introduce a simplified mechanism of feedback to Media Trust could be introduced such as less and more straightforward Ning task requests
- More explicit understanding of outcomes should be relayed to projects in order that they understand what they will be measured upon
- More time and focus should be dedicated to promoting and disseminating the output of the projects (post production)
- Any subsequent rounds of tender notices should factor in more time for tender selection processes
- The team should be in place soon after commencement of any future programme-roll-outs
- Evaluation should be embedded in the programme delivery process from the outset

With the knowledge and experience gained by Media Trust throughout this 'pilot' phase it is hoped that the programme will continue to use the Big Society model of empowering, up-skilling and inspiring communities to help give a voice to communities who feel disadvantaged or isolated.

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Appendix 1: Research Methodology and Approach

1   Desk Based Analysis of Overall Community Voices Project Material

The research team began the desk-based research with a thorough analysis of the project criteria and sample process. We specifically focused on the way in which Media Trust allocated grants to a variety of communities of interest and looked at the range of community problems and ways in which the digital media project aimed to benefit these communities. Alongside the application forms we reviewed the project plans, which highlighted the ways in which each project was planning to implement its project and meet their central aims. The analysis of the application tenders generated a matrix of funded projects which highlighted the spread and range of successful applicants with specific regards to;

1. Grant value
2. Purpose of grant (usage)
3. Securing of additional funding
4. Communities of Interest and/or Geographies
5. Range of specific communities
6. Range of community problems
7. Range of benefits to the communities
8. The type of digital media adopted
9. Legacy and sustainability
10. Number of direct and indirect beneficiaries

The analysis of the application tenders alongside project plans resulted in the interpretation of the overall success of the 25 projects with reference to seven specific indicators, those being;

1. Community driven and benefits community
2. Well defined community group and appreciation of number of people who will benefit
3. A clear focus on voicelessness and evidence
4. Digital media is effective
5. Well defined outcomes and measurements
6. Sustainability
7. Inspiration to others

In all this desk-based analysis gives a clear overview of the processes adopted in the awarding of grants and the breadth and scope of communities awarded. This enables us to focus upon the success of the programme in meeting its central aims and highlight models of best practice.

2   Analysis of Existing Monitoring and Evaluation Material

Early on in the delivery of the Community Voices programme, all 25 successful projects were invited to attend one of three 'Welcome and What Next' days. The events took place at the following locations;

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- York, 25th May 2010
- Manchester, 26th May 2010
- London, 28th May 2010

The focus of these days was to introduce the projects to various methods of engaging through digital media and help the projects think about developing clear project plans. The notion and concept of setting outcome desirables was also discussed.

We have subsequently analysed the 45 completed evaluation forms and created a tag cloud which represents the three words participants used to describe the event. The tag cloud is a visual representation of the frequency of common key-words and points to an overall picture of the interpretation of the days. In addition to the tag-cloud we analysed whether the respondents felt the events met their expectations and the result of attending the events. This analysis allows us to represent the main impacts of these early project consultation days.

3   Qualitative Interviews with Media Trust Staff and Stakeholders

The lead researcher interviewed each of the five Media Trust Community Voices team and a representative from both funders of the programme, those being the Department for Communities and Local Government and the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills. The focus of the interviews with the Media Trust team was to ascertain the varied roles of staff in the team and discover their views on the ethos of the programme, the successes in reaching their aims, challenges faced in the delivery and management and the impact of Governmental administrative change during the programme delivery schedule.

The focus of the funders' interviews was to ascertain their input into the programme and their satisfaction with Media Trust in delivering the programme on schedule, to budget and in achieving the central aims. The effects of Government change were also considered.

Ultimately, the feedback from these interviews will provide us with a clear understanding of the perceived successes and barriers to success from a project management perspective, as well as a deeper knowledge of the rationale for the processes in place in terms of project feedback and reporting. [See Appendix 2 for the Interview Schedule for Media Trust and Funders Interviews]

4   Qualitative Interviews & Studies of a Sample of Supported
        Communities

Substance selected seven of the 25 supported communities to be researched as case-studies through interviews and project visits. The seven case projects were initially selected according to various indicators, those being:

- Size of grant
- Community of interest
- Geographical spread
- Method of digital engagement.

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Substance felt that these projects demonstrate an informative range of community groups, digital media engagement methods and geographical locations. These projects were the focus of the in-depth studies and will identify how Media Trust has supported these communities and look at how the projects have met their key aims and objectives. We reviewed their distinct community-focus approaches through a combination of desk based material reviews, project visits and individual interviews. [See Appendix 3 for the Interview Schedule for the Community Project Staff and Participants].

Project Funding	Project Selected	Region	Community of Interest	Digital Media Engagement Method
£47,693	Project 61	Boston, Lincolnshire	Isolated rural population	NEMUS digital communication media platform
£1,500	Club 4 Teenz	Ipswich, Suffolk	Young people living in IP3 suffering from negative perceptions	Film making to promote positive images of young people
£1,500	Vintage Radio	Wirral, Merseyside	Older people with lack of opportunities.	Radio station
£7,000	Adoption Support	Birmingham	Work with adopted children and young people	Film making project producing a training resource
£7,000	Seacroft Links	Leeds	Community living in the isolated Seacroft estate	Photography, projection, e-newsletter and website
£14,000	Hidden Homeless	Bradford, West Yorkshire	Homeless or ex homeless people	Digital images for exhibitions, DVD and creative writing book
£14,000	The Haven	Wolverhampton	Charity supporting women and their children who are affected by domestic violence	Film to explore experiences and discuss stereotypes.

The face-to-face and telephone interviews were conducted by the Substance research team between 1st and 14th March 2011. [See Appendix 4 for full list of Interview dates].

The interview recordings were transcribed and thematically analysed by the research team in order to provide an account of repeat themes and ultimately demonstrate strengths of the various approaches and barriers to success.

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5   **Observations: Community Project Outputs, Project Board Meeting &
Media Trust internal Programme Review Workshop**

The lead researcher observed a Community Voices Project Board meeting on 24th
February 2011. This gave the researcher an ideal opportunity to observe the dynamics
of the Community Voices team and gain a deeper understanding of the project to date.

The lead researcher attending the screening of the Haven project's film on 11th March
2011. The film entitled, 'Home Sweet Home' was described as 'a moving and heart-felt
look into the lives of women affected by domestic violence'. Through attending the
screening it allowed the researcher to witness the output of the case-study projects and
learn more about the intended audience and beneficiaries of this project.

The lead researcher also attended the Community Voices 'Lessons Learnt: Outputs'
internal workshop. This workshop provided the research team with insight into the
honest and frank reflections of the team on the delivery and management of the
programme.

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Appendix 2: Interview Schedule for Media Trust Staff & Community Voices Funders Interviews

Interview Schedule with Media Trust Staff

Q1   When did you join the Community Voices team?

Q1a   What was your role in the Community Voices Team? Has this role changed or evolved during the programme lifetime?

Q2   Can you describe your initial thoughts behind the project, and how you felt about?

Q3   How did MT develop its approach to reaching with disadvantaged and isolated communities? How was the selection criteria process developed?

Q4   Did the process of selection and awarding grants go as planned?
       Prompt – were there any challenges or aspects around this that could have been improved on?

Q5   From the outset how did the team support the 25 projects on the ground?
       Prompt – maybe with project planning or setting outcomes?

Q6   As the projects developed how was support maintained from the central team?
       Did this differ greatly depending upon value of grant?

Q7   What have been the central successes from your point of view of the in terms of:
   a) The overall impact Community Voices programme?

   b) meeting and delivering the stated objectives for the individually supported projects?
       Q8   What aspects of the overall programme approach could be improved upon in the future?

Q9   In your opinion do you feel Community Voices is relevant to the challenges facing communities today, in terms of:
       a) The political landscape?
       b) Helping to bring about lasting positive social change?

Q10   In your view has the change in Government and funding landscape affected the CV programme in any way?
       Prompt – what is the succession strategy from a National and local project level?

Interview Schedule for Funders Interview

Q1   Can you explain your role in the Community Voices project?

Q2   As funders do you feel you have had sufficient input to steer the project according to your own organisational hopes and aims?

Q3   What has been the extent of your input?

Q4   Did Media Trust succeed in reporting back on relevant milestones and progress?

Q5   Do you feel satisfied that the project has met its central aims and objectives?

Q6   Have you noticed any areas of delivery that you felt could have been managed differently?

Q7   What has been the central successes of the project?

Q8   Do you feel the project delivered value for money and has a sustainable model?

Q9   Is there anything else you would like to add about the project management?

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Appendix 3: Interview Schedule for Community Project Leads and Project Participants

Media Trust Community Voices Evaluation Interview Schedule for 'Community Project' staff

Q1   What is your role with the project?

Q2   When you were initially awarded the grant how did the process of project planning take place?
       Prompt – How did MT help you develop your project plans?

Q3   How well do you feel the project has met its central aims?

Q4   What training and support did you receive from MT? Has this been helpful in terms of delivering the project?

Q5   What was your strategy to engage with other members of the community in the project?
       Prompt – how did you attract other members of the community to get involved with the project?

Q5a   Do you feel this approach worked, were there any unexpected challenges or surprises?

Q5b   What have you learnt through this process, would you do things differently in future?

Q6   What was the main output of the project?

Q7   Since the project began how many people, other members of the community have taken part in the project directly, for instance creating film content for the project?

Q8   Do you have any notion of how many other 'beneficiaries' have benefitted from the project?
       Prompt – maybe audiences or other communities?   How many people attended (or have you invited to) the screening or launch event.

Q8 a   Have you spoken to other communities involved with Community Voices for advice, or have they wanted to ask your advice?

Q9   What has been the main success of the project?

Q9 a   Did you expect this success to happen in the way it has?
       Prompt - What have been the central impacts upon the individuals and the communities involved? Do people involved with the project feel differently about themselves today, how and why?

Q10   What have been the main challenges or barriers to delivering your project? Did you expect these barriers/problems to appear? What advice would you give to other communities who wanted to undertake a project like this in the future?

Q11   Do you have a plan to continue the project in the future? Why is this?
       Prompt – do you have the finance or resources to do this?

Q11   Do you have any further comments?

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Interview Schedule for Project Participants

Q1   How did you first get involved with the project? What were your reasons for getting involved with this project?

Q2   Can you tell me about what you have been involved in?
       Prompt – what did you do with the project?

Q3   Do you feel you have benefited from being involved with this project? How and why is this?

Q3a   What new skills have you learnt, are there things you do now that you didn't used to do, for example interviewing people with a pocket video camera?

Q3b   Was your project matched with a digital mentor? Have they helped you to learn new skills?

Q3c   Did your project connect with other professional people, for example film makers, community workers, council members? How have they helped the project?

Q4   Have you met new people that you will continue to be in touch with after March 2011?

Q5   Do you feel the project has raised awareness of your community or given people a voice in your community?
       Prompt – do you feel you have more of a voice now?

Q6   Do you feel more confident as a result of your involvement? Why is this?

Q7   What has been the best thing about being involved?

Q8   Do you hope to continue with 'digital media' projects in the future?

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Appendix 4: Welcome & What Next Evaluation Tag-Cloud with Key-Word Frequencies

accessible (1)   activity (1)   clear (1)   comfortable (1)   commitment (1)   communal (1)   confidence-building (1)

constructive (2)   creative (1)   different (1)   educational (2)   encouraging (3)

enjoyable (1)   eventful (1)   exciting (5)   excitng (1)   eye-opening (2)

friendly (9)   fun (5)   guide (1)   helpful (1)

informative (24)   insightful (1)   inspiring (8)

intensive (1)   interactive (3)   interesting (10)   long-day (1)

motivating (2)   networking (1)   nicely-paced (1)   optimistic (1)   planned (1)   positive (2)

relationships (1)   relaxed (2)   relevant (1)   social (2)   supportive (1)   technical (1)   thought-

provoking (2)   understanding (1)   unexpected (1)   useful (3)   varied (1)   very-useful (1)

worthwhile (1)

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Substance is an experienced social research company specialist in the areas of sport, youth inclusion and community regeneration. Members hail from backgrounds in leading university research institutes, social enterprise and ICT. Substance helps to make connections between people and organisations at the grassroots and policy makers, funders, government, commercial corporations and charitable foundations and work with them in order to demonstrate impact and value, influence policy and effect social change.

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