



Improving support
for a stronger third sector



Sub-Sectoral Research

Yorkshire and the Humber

Report carried out by Yorkshire and the Humber Regional Forum in
partnership with the BME VCS Regional Panel

2007

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1 Introduction - Research project and methodology

1.1 Summary

This study builds on existing knowledge within the voluntary and community sector in Yorkshire and the Humber by identifying the main VCS sub sectors that exist in the region and the extent to which their support needs are being met through existing generic and specialist infrastructure. It will also identify any links to ChangeUp/Capacitybuilders activity. The regional VCS networks in all 9 English regions are undertaking the same research.

This report into the infrastructure needs of priority sub-sectors in each region recognises the size and diversity of the Voluntary and Community Sector. For the purposes of this report the term sub-sectors refers to groupings by theme (as opposed to method of delivery. With this definition, disability, LGB, community transport and children and young people, for example, are sub-sectors and social enterprise would be classed as a form of deliver

1.2 The Partners

This study has been led by a steering group established for the purpose. The steering group consists of Mark Crowe and Ruth Beattie of the Regional Forum, as the regional generic VCS network, and Justina Oraka and Sara Saxon of the BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) VCS Regional Panel. The work will be endorsed by SubNet, the network of sub regional infrastructure consortia in the region over the summer months.

The Regional Forum for Voluntary and Community Organisations is a registered charity set up in 1997 to develop a coherent and organised voice for the voluntary sector in the region. It is a membership organisation with 200 members, which themselves represent over 20,000 organisations.

The Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Regional Panel is the forum for Black and Minority Ethnic voluntary and community sector organisations throughout Yorkshire and The Humber. It was formed to raise the profile and needs of BME groups in the region and to develop effective links.

SubNet is the meeting of sub-regional consortia that was formed before ChangeUp to provide a strategic discussion forum and steering group to promote co-ordinated activity across the region. Consortia in each of the four sub-regions are supported by either by a sub-regional forum: the North Yorkshire Forum for Voluntary Organisations, and the South Yorkshire Open Forum or by strategic partnerships: WYLDA – the West Yorkshire Local Development Agencies and FoLDA the Federation of Local Development Agencies in the Humber.

1.3 Rationale

Capacitybuilders has a key role in developing infrastructure for all Voluntary and Community Sector organisation across England. Capacitybuilders have therefore commissioned each of the 9 regional Voluntary and Community Sector networks, including the Regional Forum for Yorkshire and the Humber to carry out research to identify what the main sub sectors in the region are and how their infrastructure needs are being met in order to identify some priority actions for Capacitybuilders infrastructure investment.

1.4 Aims

The study aims to identify sub-sectors that would benefit from further investment into either generic or specialist infrastructure and recommend ways in which additional infrastructure support could be provided through developing the capacity of generalist infrastructure or specialist infrastructure.

This study will, through endorsement from SubNet, make recommendations which:

- Identify and prioritise sub-sectors in need of further investment and development to improve access to infrastructure;
- Make suggestions and recommendations about how to meet these needs with an indication of the level of support needed and the necessary timeframe;
- Make recommendations about how best to monitor impact, measure change and evaluate progress in line with Destination 2014 objectives and milestones.

In order to identify the sub-sectors that would benefit from investment the study will address a number of key questions:

- Which are the sub-sectors that are not benefiting from the current infrastructure support?
- What are the reasons that they are not benefiting from the current infrastructure support?
- Is the support “voice and representation” or “capacity-building”?
- What could be achieved with further investment?
- How can Capacitybuilders support these sub-sectors?
- Should the existing national services and local consortia be influenced to engage with these sub-sectors, and if so how?
- How can any additional support to these sub-sectors be measured and monitored and evaluated to track progress in line with Destination 2014 objectives and milestones?
- *The impact of not investing?*
- *What is the life cycle of support need?*
- *Are there any emerging issues likely to need support in the medium term?*

1.5 Methodology

The study will address the questions above by:

- Undertaking desk research to analyse existing research or work undertaken over recent years
- Examine the current support available for sub-sectoral organisations
- Design and disseminate surveys to find out more about sub-sectoral infrastructure support. These will be targeted at sub regional consortia, infrastructure organisations and networks and front line organisations.

- Carry out interviews with sub-sectoral networks where appropriate
- Use the information sought to summarise our findings and make recommendations for priority future investments.

1.5.1 Desk Research

This research has depended on a need to identify previous relevant research and reporting so a review of current literature was undertaken. Materials were provided by a number of networks and contacts in addition to materials already held by the Regional Forum. The BME VCS Panel were also able to contribute a number of pieces of research.

The survey asks participants to identify any key pieces of research or reporting which might aid this work. A number of organisations were able to signpost us to relevant sources of information.

1.5.2 Questionnaires

In undertaking this research the steering group identified a need to hear from different parts of the sector, front line organisations, infrastructure organisations and regional networks. We therefore designed 3 online surveys (see appendix 1) for:

- 1) Front Line Organisations
- 2) Infrastructure and Networks
- 3) Sub Regional Consortia

The questionnaires were widely disseminated using an online survey tool, and we encourage recipients to distribute it through their own networks.

The purpose of the questionnaires was to enable us to identify more fragile sub-sectors, the picture of current provision and additional support needs.

1.5.3 Acknowledgements

The Regional Forum and the BME VCS Regional Panel would like to take this opportunity to thank the following for the contribution to this work:

- Sara Saxon and Justina Oraka from the BME VCS Regional Panel for developing this work with the Regional Forum
- Capacitybuilders for funding the project
- All the people and organisations that have contributed time over the past couple of months by giving us the information, evidence and thoughts which inform this work.

1.6 Limitations of the Research

There are some limitations which should be considered when looking at this research and it's recommendations. Practical limitations which have affected the research included the fact the timeframe for completing this work was very short, affecting both the number of survey results and information received and analysed. These limitations mean that it is essential that the findings and recommendations require further consideration and testing and should not be considered as conclusive findings.

There was a limited number of survey results received which adds an obvious bias to the analysis of the survey data. It is our intention to continue this part of the work to elicit more information. This

will enable us to further analyse the data, and apply different techniques which only become relevant with more information. This will help us to track responses by sub-sector more effectively and identify further trends and recommendations.

1.6.1 Next steps

This research will be continued over the summer and a final report produced later this year. This will include further desk research and analysis of the remaining surveys. This extended time will allow us to consider other emerging pieces of research including further versions of the BRAP, The BME Third Sector in Yorkshire and the Humber and a large piece of research mapping the sector in the region.

Terminology: Sub-sectors

1.7 Definition of “sub-sector”

For the purposes of this report the term sub-sectors relates to the subject or theme rather than the form of delivery. With this definition, disability, LGB, community transport and children and young people, for example, are sub-sectors and social enterprise is a form of deliver

The use of the terminology “sub-sector” is perhaps not a useful one, particularly in light of the Capacitybuilders commitment to simplifying language and reducing jargon.

1.8 Identified sub-sectors for the purpose of this research

For the purposes of this research a list of sub-sectors was drawn up.

- Advice and Advocacy
- Arts, culture and museums
- Black and Minority Ethnic
- Carers
- Children (under 15) including single parents, play and families
- Disability
- Environment, conservation and heritage
- Faith
- Families
- Gypsies and Travellers
- Health
- Homelessness and housing
- Learning, skills and employment
- Lesbian, Gay and Bi-sexual
- Men
- Mental Health
- Offenders
- Older people
- Refugees and Asylum Seekers
- Rural
- Substance Users

- Transsexual/Transgender
- Volunteers
- Young People (16-24)
- Women

During the survey process a sub-sector was identified which did not appear on the original list, this was “Grant making charities. It is likely that there a number of categories that meet the sub sector definition that are not included here.

There was also some consideration of the separation of Lesbian, Gay and Bi-sexual (LGB) and Trans sub-sectors with some respondents feeling that separating these is not a useful definition. We will seek further information from this respondent and consider the issue further.

There are also further definitional issues within the sub sectoral definitions e.g. Advice and Advocacy being split between for example between rights based services and services to specific user groups. The steering group proposes to further consider the usefulness of the “sub-sector” definition, and the categories included in this research.

2 Review of existing information

2.1 Background

Through the research and development of this project we have been able to identify a number of research studies and publications which have allowed us to access an extensive amount of knowledge. This has been in the form of research reports, strategies and project evaluations. This section is intended to review this existing range of materials in respect of identifying sub-sectoral needs with regards to infrastructure. As the project progresses a number of other significant pieces of work are being identified which could inform any recommendations; this section represents our initial consideration of the information available.

This section will give a brief description of each of these pieces of work and identify specific issues that require attention.

2.2 Regional Infrastructure Developments, Strategies and Resources

2.2.1 The Regional Infrastructure Development Plan 2005

The Regional Infrastructure Development Plan is the document which governed the spending of ChangeUp money at regional level from 2005-2008. Building on the four sub-regional plans in the region it recommended that a number of short term projects were funded to extend the capacity and reach of regional level infrastructure. The Development Plan was the product of consultation work with a wide range of individuals and agencies in the VCS in Yorkshire and the Humber.

The RIDP recommended that investments be made in projects which contributed to improving infrastructure services available to frontline organisations in the region in at least one of four priority themes:

1. Enabling improved **advocacy and engagement** at a regional level.
2. Better **communications**.
3. Enabling coordination, **networking and collaboration** of those providing infrastructure services at a regional, sub regional and/or district level.
4. Improving and increasing knowledge and access to information through **research and improved knowledge transfer**.

Through both the Bold, Short Term Investment programme and the Network Capacity Building Scheme a number of networks were commissioned at regional level. These networks all represented thematic areas (or sub-sectors). Networks were commissioned on the basis of their potential to make a marked change in terms of their influence at a regional level (see for example the table showing a typical commissioned project. This could involve them overcoming one or more of the following barriers.

- Lack of resources
- Current exclusion from engagement
- Lack of opportunities to engage
- Need for awareness raising of the network's existence with regional partners
- The network maybe thinly spread over the region, or it may need to bring together agencies from a range of networks to strengthen either service delivery or engagement
- Intensive support to move a network to another level of engagement at a regional level

The broad outcomes of investment were established as:

1. More front-line and local agencies able to understand regional impacts on their activities
2. Increased engagement in regional activities and advocacy by local and front-line organisations through networks.
3. Maintaining and developing systems to ensure sub-sector advocacy with regional bodies and agencies – for example the Regional Assembly, Regional Development Agency. Ensuring that regional networks of organisations established for/managed by communities of interest exist and are supported.
4. Establishing regional policy advocates and initiatives on specific subject areas.

Core examples of what networks were aiming to achieve include:

- More productive partnerships with the public sector in terms of service delivery
- Better able to bring their members (and their members clients') experience to bear on public agencies in terms of strategy and their regional agenda
- Exploration of the potential for joint working, for example through using the resource for equal shares funding or making a joint investment
- Developing the network in partnership with the public sector so that it will attract future resources.

In addition to those networks supported through the Network Capacity Building Scheme a number of other sub-sectoral, or thematic, networks or infrastructure activities have been supported through the regional ChangeUp investment in Yorkshire and the Humber.

Networks were supported covering the following sub-sectors:

- Mental Health – United Kingdom Advocacy Network
- Learning and Skills – Regional Learning and Skills Group
- Youth – Voluntary Youth Organisations Network
- Faith – Yorkshire and the Humber Faiths Forum
- Lesbian, Gay and Bi-sexual – Regional LGB Network for Yorkshire and the Humber
- Children – Regional VCS children's centre and children's trust network support
- Mediation – Yorkshire and the Humber mediation Network
- Health – Yorkshire and the Humber Healthy Living Consortium
- Housing and Homelessness – Housing Action Yorkshire and the Humber
- Gypsies and Travellers – Northern Network of Travelling People
- Women – Scoping for a regional women's groups network
- Refugees – Regional Refugee Community Development Worker's Network
- Older people – The Future Years Network

The scheme demonstrated the potential benefits of investing in thematic or sub-sectoral infrastructure particularly in relation to the advocacy and voice of sub-sectors. This relatively small investment in network development yielded great benefit, suggesting that it could be a good means

of investing in developing the advocacy role for sub-sectoral infrastructure. Particular examples of success have included increased engagement with national policy and legislation developments, support for formalising networks, and the development of specialised support for sub-sectors.

Further details of the existing networks in Yorkshire and the Humber are available in the **Regional Networks Guide for Yorkshire and the Humber**.

2.2.2 Making the ChangeUp: ChangeUp in Yorkshire and the Humber 2005/2006

This publication, produced by the Regional Forum, highlights the achievements of the ChangeUp programme in Yorkshire and Humber in 2005/2006. The spending of ChangeUp money at a regional level was governed by the Regional Infrastructure Development Plan.

The Regional Infrastructure Development Plan provided provision for the development of 9 (+) thematic (or sub-sectoral) regional VCS networks at varying stages of development. The programme was a flexible means of supporting a wide range of networks and organisations to better engage with regional structures and develop the capacity of front line organisations.

ChangeUp also led the development of the Yorkshire and the Humber Faiths Forum, the BME VCS Regional Panel and Regional Rural Policy Co-ordinator role.

2.2.3 Regional Voluntary Sector Infrastructure Strategy (RVIS)

Summary

The main purpose of this Strategy is to provide a clear strategic framework for the development of a sustainable voluntary and community sector (VCS) infrastructure in the Yorkshire and Humber region. The Strategy is intended to provide the basis for planning and investment in the provision and development of Third Sector infrastructure within the region to ensure effective, efficient and co-ordinated services and representation for front line organisations. Further it aims to facilitate better planning of services, *the targeted allocation of resources* and the evaluation of the impact of infrastructure services.

The Strategy builds on the priority themes of the RIDP by identifying 4 priority themes as strategic priorities for regional infrastructure development. The priority themes identified in the RVIS are:

1. Enabling improved advocacy and engagement at a regional level.
2. Better communications
3. Enabling regional level infrastructure to develop services, resources and processes that increase frontline VCOs access to infrastructure support
4. Enabling coordination, networking and collaboration of those providing infrastructure services at a regional, sub regional and/or district level
5. Improving and increasing knowledge and access to information through research and improved knowledge transfer

Sub-Sectoral Reference

The strategy asserts that there is a need to strengthen specialist infrastructure provision and also acknowledges the role that generalist infrastructure agencies have to play in supporting VCOs from specialist communities of interest and in promoting equality.

Furthermore it identifies the particular need to strengthen infrastructure led by and meeting the needs of Black and Minority Ethnic voluntary and community organisations. This is the case in

terms of a strategic voice for the BME VCS as well as BME VCOs access to infrastructure support services.

Strengthening the connections between generic infrastructure and infrastructure and VCOs supporting particular sections of society such as Faith, BME and rural communities is an essential part of co-ordinating support to the VCS.

Likewise, making links to the infrastructure support offered by national VCOs to their members in the region. These VCOs are particularly likely to be engaged in service delivery and campaigning on policy issues and for best effect the VCS based in the region needs to capture the energy of what they are doing.

VCOs in the region are often self-organised thematically, with existing ChangeUp monies having played an extensive role in creating/ strengthening a series of thematic regional level networks.

In addition sub-sectors of specialist organisations serving communities of interest have the following needs identified by MEL Regeneration, consultants engaged in developing the strategy:

“‘Community of interest’ is a term used to describe organisations that have a common interest. In principle the nature of the interest could include thematic areas such as health and learning but in practice the interest reflects the demographics of the communities being supported.

Across the region, infrastructure support to communities of interest is provided by ‘general’ infrastructure agencies, infrastructure agencies with ‘thematic specialisms’ and ‘specialist’ i.e. infrastructure agencies supporting a dedicated community of interest. Specialist infrastructure is unevenly distributed across the region. There is the BME VCS Regional Panel, the Regional Faiths Forum and a Rural Policy Co-ordinator employed by the rural Community Councils with ChangeUp funding. The Network Capacity Building Scheme demonstrated progress in establishing network structures within other communities of interest – homeless, gender, mental health, refugees and asylum seekers, Gypsies and Travellers. Even after taking account of this ongoing development work there are still communities of interest without corresponding specialist infrastructure support.”

2.3 Black and Minority Ethnic Infrastructure, Resources, Strategies and Developments

2.3.1 The BME VCS Regional Panel

The Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Regional Panel was established in 2005 following extensive research and consultation with voluntary and public sector stakeholders. The Panel’s purpose is to provide a strategic voice on behalf of the BME VCS in Yorkshire and the Humber.

In June 2004 Government Office for Yorkshire and the Humber (GOYH) commissioned the Social Business Company to investigate and develop **Making a Difference: Options for Effective BME Engagement across Yorkshire and the Humber**. The context for the study was the continuing national and regional commitment to increasing the effectiveness of the BME VCS sector in the region and ensuring that it had an effective voice at the regional level. A mapping exercise of the VCS in the region had reported minimal BME VCS infrastructure and little evidence of how the wider network of VCS infrastructure organisations was serving BME VCOs.

Consultation within the BME VCS, generalist VCS and amongst statutory agencies demonstrated widespread support for a vehicle through which the BME VCS could enhance its contribution to addressing longstanding issues of public service inequalities and social exclusion.

BME Voluntary and community sector is a vibrant part of the third sector, offering services, advocacy and engagement with civic participation. However issues of funding, being networked, being in a position of influence and having access to decision-making forums are often lacking, which can lead to exclusion.

The Making a Difference Report identified the following:

- There is considerable support for a voice from within the BME sector that articulates responses and provides solutions to district and regional policies and strategies.
- All respondents believe that no one is better placed than BME communities to speak on their behalf.
- The larger the BME organisation the more likely they are to 'sit around the table' but it does not always mean the wider BME sector benefits from that presence.
- There is limited involvement of BME VCS at all levels and BME communities do not feel engaged.
- Mainstream organisations should utilise BME organisations in ways that build their own capacity and intelligence, to meet the needs of BME communities.
- The BME sector plays an important role in capacity building, civic engagement and social exclusion of black and minority ethnic communities. This was not recognised by many funders, which focus primarily on service delivery. Partnership was considered by the sector to be beneficial but often the strategic opportunity was lost to statutory agencies that used partnerships in a tokenistic manner.

A Joseph Rowntree report, Experiencing Ethnicity: Discrimination and service provision, (K Chanal, 2004) further identifies that:

- BME service users felt mainstream services were often inappropriate for their needs and that services made assumptions based on stereotypes and prejudice about what the needs of these users maybe or what they may want to access.
- The experience of racial discrimination and prejudice in mainstream service provision often meant that what minority ethnic users were asking for was specialist, culturally competent services.

Key development themes for BME infrastructure include:

a) Regional Advocacy

This work has already commenced through the Panel. Panel meetings have received presentations from policy makers across the region and the Panel has been able to feed into consultation processes e.g. - future European programmes and the Treasury Cross Cutting Review 200

b) Thematic advocacy

The project will support BME Panel's thematic advocacy work on three areas of public policy:

- Learning communities
- Healthy communities
- Safer stronger communities

2.3.2 The BME Third Sector in Yorkshire and the Humber, BRAP May 2007

This draft mapping research identified approximately 1200 groups BME groups on the Council on Ethnic Minority Voluntary Sector Organisations database. It highlights that certain areas received almost no funding for BME activities due to difficulties in meeting the Lottery requirements (Craig, 2005)

“BME VCOs don’t feel included in circles that control access to learning and skills funding; BME orgs don’t have the capacity to attend the various meetings where funding opportunities are discussed; timescales are always too short for small BME organisations to respond with strong bids; LSC funding is slow in coming and BME orgs don’t have the financial strength to survive the payment regime; many BME learners are hard to achieve and can’t achieve accredited qualifications within the funding timescale; funding; skills that build BME economic capacity should be prioritised”

The report identified key barriers to engagement as:

- communication and language
- funding
- capacity and resources
- recognition and understanding
- training
- politics and tokenism
- attitudes to change

The mapping report also identified the type of support needed as:

- funding (3%)
- support and training for accounts (21%)
- advice on law and legal procedures (21%), more personal support (16%)
- longer term and more regular support (16%)
- expert and specialist support (1%)
- more culturally appropriate services designed around BME communities and that are sensitive to their specific needs (1%)
- Language support and translations services (1%)
- More info on services, needs, developments, research and funding (1%)

2.3.3 Report on ChangeUp (Gaps and Needs) – A survey of Infrastructure Support for Black and Minority Ethnic Groups in Bradford and District

This study into the gaps and needs for infrastructure support for BME organisations in Bradford identified a number of recommendations for the increased development of this sub-sector:

More on the ground workers in localities;
Increased awareness of BME issues
Need more outreach work to raise visibility of ISO organisations;
Positive action locally,
Improving participation;
Importance of understanding relationships between different BME communities
Need diversity of provision of services to cater for different communities;
Employment of more BME staff would help to provide better awareness of BME issues and cater for specific needs

2.4 Report of the Support Needs Audit of LGB (Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual) groups and Organisations in the Yorkshire and Humber Region

Shirley Macredie for the Equity Partnership (funded through the ChangeUp Network Capacity Building Scheme²)
March 2007

This was the first audit of the needs of LGB communities and groups undertaken in this region and included responses from 39 groups in the region, of an estimated total of 87 groups.

The study identifies a high level of isolation for LGB groups, as it has been disadvantaged in terms of funding and support in the past. There is a clear analysis of the support needs and difficulties in accessing infrastructure support and discussion of how this can be improved.

The report highlights that most groups in the “sub-sector” are volunteer led and that paid staff often came via other organisations. It was felt that many of these groups wouldn’t exist without this paid worker input. The majority of the groups were managing with very little funding and this restricts their development.

2.4.1 Key issues

Support with funding, putting together publicity information packs and targeting of specific groups of under-represented people were the most popular areas of need. The main barriers faced in fundraising were time, identifying sources of funding, lack of experience and large organisations not being able to access funding. Since only a few groups had paid workers this means that many groups had no-one to work with them on these tasks. The top two priorities for training were fundraising and networking with the statutory sector.

35 of the groups had received some kind of support from other agencies and the three most frequently cited for giving support were local Councils for Voluntary Services, the Equity Partnership (Bradford based LGB groups) and the Police.

Overall the support needs audit shows that LGB Groups are generally well organised, make some use of local infrastructure organisations and gain support from other agencies. Groups access training and support but some encounter barriers preventing them from participating. However, there is a general lack of funding specifically for LGB Groups particularly around employing staff and expenses for volunteers.

2.4.2 Recommendations for action

The report makes the following recommendations:

- That a structure be funded that ensures that LGB Groups have access to a wide range of support and information. (*Some developments have happened here through the funding of the YH LGB Network through the Network Capacity Building Scheme*)
- That the LGB sub-sector is promoted to funders and services, and information developed about how to support them effectively and appropriately.
- Ongoing mapping work should be carried out including the production of a directory of the LGB groups and organisations in the
- Explore options for supporting a regional LGB network/fourm

This report was an integral part of a ChangeUp funded project to develop a regional LGB network for Yorkshire and the Humber. This funding has subsequently ceased and leaves the emerging network in a vulnerable position.

2.5 Refugees and Asylum Seekers – Research, Resources and Strategies

2.5.1 Refugee Voices for Change: Conference Report

This report formed part of a ChangeUp funded regional project in 2005. Since dispersal began in Yorkshire and the Humber in 2000, over 25,000 have arrived in the region. Since then the number of refugee groups has quadrupled.

The report highlights that most Refugee Community Organisations in the region are run by volunteers on very little or even no money. This often limits their ability to participate in local or regional structures. RCOs have developed in some areas of the region and have had some success in engaging with service providers and decision makers at local or district level. There has, however, been a real lack of engagement on a regional level. Regional engagement is key for this sub-sector as due to the influence of the Home Office, whose lowest level of work is regional, on the work of the sub-sector.

A group of organisations in Yorkshire & Humber work in partnership through the Refugee Community Development Workers Network (RCDWN). Like Refugee Community Organisations, the vast majority of these are voluntary sector organizations with concerns over the sustainability of this area of work.

It is identified that:

“it is absolutely vital that such 'mainstream' voluntary sector capacity building organisations are accessible to all members of the community for the broad range of services that they can offer.”

There is also a real need to develop lobbying for meaningful representation in decision making bodies and the support for individuals to achieve this. Since the publication of this report, and on recommendation from the conference, a regional refugee umbrella body, Jantela has been established. Whilst this has been successful in securing start up funding, it is in a vulnerable position from April 2008.

A particular need highlighted in an interview with Jantela included better linkage with existing workforce development infrastructure. This includes both accessing existing infrastructure but also the need to ensure this work meets the specialised needs of refugees.

2.5.2 Refugee Engagement with Regional Structures – A Report for the Yorkshire and Humberside Refugee Community Development Workers’ Network, May 2006 The Social Business Company

This report explored the need to support refugee engagement with regional structures. It concluded by identifying a real need for strategic investment in RCOs and to need to enable effective involvement in policy and strategy:

“ If the Refugee voluntary sector were to develop a more strategic approach to service delivery to RCOs and RCF, this would allow better use of resources, financial and otherwise (particularly in dispersal areas

2.6 Regional Children trust and Children’s Centre Network Support, Findings Jan 2006 – April 2006

Author: Resh Spefford for the National Children’s Centre

This report highlights the issues for VCOs delivering services to children and families in engaging with the emerging Children’s Centres agenda. The Children Centre concept is part of the government strategy to deliver better outcomes for children and families 0-The services within it have opportunities for voluntary and community sector engagement that meet Children Centre requirements.

2.6.1 The issues identified were:

- The sector is missing out on opportunities
- There is a need to develop experience in partnership and consortium working
- training needs might be addressed through the Child Care Bill (Workforce Development Council and Transformation Fund)
- The sector needs to get better at skills auditing to ensure there is the skills base sought by commissioners.”

Regional infrastructure needs identified included:

- developing and delivering training in response to needs identified by the sector
- taking advantage of the national infrastructure and guidance from the Department for Education and Skills and GOYH which is championing the VCS
- Using the Regional Forum and NCVCCO to raise the needs of this part of the sector
- Using national and regional voices of large VCS organisations to lobby and promote the whole sector.

2.7 Destination 2014 Response – SubNet

SubNet is the meeting of sub-regional consortia and regional infrastructure organisations in Yorkshire and the Humber. At SubNet, Chairs of consortia and Chief Officers of accountable bodies meet with officers of the Regional Forum (the Regional VCS Network), the Churches Regional Commission, Rural Community Councils and the Regional VCS BME Panel to co-ordinate activities in relation to infrastructure and share practice and experience.

The response to the consultation on Destination 2014 from SubNet highlighted a need for Capacitybuilders to have a better focus on diversity in order to meet the critical needs of certain groups. It also highlighted a need to broaden Capacitybuilders’ focus to encompass the broad spectrum of equalities, not just BME, Faith and Rural interests. The response recommended that equalities issues and programmes are needed to build the capacity of both infrastructure and frontline organisations in equalities groups. The aim should be to build their access to services

offered by generic infrastructure. Likewise, generic infrastructure needs to be supported in being able to offer the volume, quality and appropriate services for equalities groups. Better practice on diversity is critical

The response recognised that equalities issues need to encompass the broad spectrum of equalities, not just BME, Faith and Rural interests. Special programmes are still needed to build the capacity of both infrastructure and frontline organisations in equalities groups. The aim should be to build their access to services offered by generic infrastructure. Likewise generic infrastructure needs to be supported in being able to offer the volume, quality and appropriate services for equalities groups.

The response urged Capacitybuilders to recognise the dynamic nature of the sector, often making targeting of services difficult. Organisations need access to the right support for them at the right time. The range of organisations and their needs makes it difficult to predict coverage of services.

2.8 Voluntary Youth Organisations Network

Change Up has supported the rapid development of voluntary youth organisations networks across the region. Many voluntary youth networks in the Region are still in the early stages of development. The tasks of establishing trusting relationships at the local level leading to effective mechanisms for sharing information, representation and partnership working are complex and multi-layered. The Voluntary Youth Organisations Network is continuing local network development by sharing best practice, working through the principles outlined in the, ChangeUp developed Start Up pack and Self Assessment Framework in order to help voluntary youth organisations make a clear contribution to Local Strategic Partnerships and the next generation of Local Area Agreements.

There is real concern that these groups, (that make a significant contribution to Children and Young People's Plans) will be vulnerable to losing future Local Authority support because they may not be, or cannot evidence that they are compliant with future requirements of the Every Child Matters agenda. There is a need to further develop this support for quality assurance development within voluntary youth organisation to counter these realities.

2.9 Healthy Living Centres

Healthy Living Centres (HLC) were set up through Big Lottery Funding to tackle health inequalities in areas of deprivation, using a social as opposed to a medical model. Each HLC has statistics relating to indices of deprivation, life expectancy, and other relevant factors such as rates of heart disease, diabetes, mental health problems for their geographic area. The need for this project was identified through HLC Coordinator meetings from across Yorkshire and Humberside whilst looking at structures to maintain and develop HLCs across the region. There has been a great decline in funding for many HLCs and the need to look at joined up working opportunities identified. This was with a view to sharing expertise within the HLC's and therefore providing a broad service, which can reduce health inequalities in the most disadvantaged areas of the region.

ChangeUp has funded the development of a regional Healthy Living Centres Consortium to encourage this sharing of information. Whilst this has had a positive beginning the stop start nature of the funding received puts it's future in jeopardy

2.10 Faith – Information from Active Faith Communities

The speciality of Active Faith Communities is in supporting the faith-related sub-sector of the wider voluntary & community sector –specifically as it involves engagement with projects and activities than benefit the wider community, i.e. community development, regeneration, cohesion, civil engagement etc.

There is a feeling is that faith-specific support must be delivered in partnership with the mainstream infrastructure organisations. However that doesn't mean that faith specific support isn't needed.

What we have found is that there are several specific areas where distinctive support and expertise are needed:

2.10.1 “Technical”

where inside knowledge of how a faith community works is essential either because of specific legal matters (e.g. around the use / leasing etc. of church or other faith buildings) or because an agency that includes faith practitioners is better placed to build the capacity of a particular faith group to adopt appropriate structures, policies etc. This support is helpful both the faith groups and to the wider sector. For example AFC often provides advice to workers in CVSs and elsewhere on issues around religious discrimination legislation, the peculiarities of ecclesiastical structures and governance as related to use of buildings, etc.

2.10.2 Signposting & confidence building.

Very often faith communities are not aware of wider generic networks or support resources available to them. Some of them have some reticence in approaching what they sometimes see as “public” organisations. Having agencies that understand how the mainstream infrastructure services can best support particular groups or pieces of work, and can develop the groups’ confidence to access them is vital to maximum effectiveness and reach.

2.10.3 Mentoring.

This is not exclusive to faith-based ISO’s – there are other organisations that provided ongoing joined up support, but by no means all. AFC’s experience is that there is a real need for the sort of support that works with a group through the whole spectrum of support needs and for as long as is needed. For example, quite often individuals access training in making funding applications provided by mainstream infrastructure providers but then require further work after they’ve done the training to maximise the impact of their subsequent applications.

2.10.4 Building bridges.

“Our experience is that, despite increased statements from public agencies about the value of faith communities in recent years, there is still evidence uncertainty and lack of engagement, confidence and trust on the part of faith groups and hesitancy and sometimes suspicion from public agencies. Having faith-specific support services that work within the wider sectors and networks is an important ingredient in removing these barriers and promoting effective working.”

“I for one believe that all sub-sectoral and specialist support agencies should work within and in co-operation with mainstream networks and structures in order to maximise the contribution of their sectors and facilitate the most effective uptake of services provided by mainstream organisations. I think that working in “silos” is unhelpful and prevents the added value of groups working across cultures and sub-groups. There is still a need for specialist organisations / services to maximise that process.”

3 The results

3.1 Background

We have been able to gather quantitative information from 122 questionnaires that had been received by the deadline. It should be acknowledged that due to the short timescale available for this research it meant that the sector was given an unreasonably short amount of time to complete the questionnaire. Should we have had more time available to complete this work it is assumed that there would have been a much greater response. This would greatly improve the validity of the information received and the assumptions and recommendations we are able to make.

The survey was designed and disseminated using an online survey tool (Survey Monkey) to ensure that it was both practical to disseminate and less time intensive for recipients to complete.

Completed Surveys

- We had 68 responses from infrastructure organisations and networks
- We had 54 responses from front-line groups

3.2 Sub-Sectors that Front Line Organisations and Infrastructure Organisations work with

We asked both front line organisations and infrastructure organisations to identify the sub-sectors that they work with. Responses to this question will assist us in comparing data at a later stage in the questionnaire by demonstrating where the information has come from.

3.2.1 Sub Sectors that front line organisations work with

This question asked front-line organisations to identify the sub sectors that they worked with. Sub sectors were able to indicate as many sub sectors as they felt was appropriate. Some respondents identified less than three sub-sectors, and some identified three. All of the responses are included in this analysis. In the defined period of we had 54 responses from front line organisations. Whilst this is not a big enough sample to draw definitive conclusions and recommendations there are a number of interesting patterns emerging.

Front line organisations were provided with a list of identified sub sectors from which to select those that their organisations work with see section

The completed surveys show that the number of front line organisations working in the following sub sectors was:

Sub Sector	Numbers
Volunteers	13
Older people	6
Mental Health	9
Carers	6
Advice and Advocacy	5
Disability	5
Rural	5
Lesbian, Gay and Bi-sexual	5
Trans	2
Health	5
Families	4
Young People (16-24)	16
Women	13
Men	10
Homelessness and housing	2
Faith	3
Children (under 15) including single parents, play and families	5
Trans	1
Refugees and Asylum Seekers	8
Learning, skills and employment	3
Gypsies and Travellers	1
Black and Minority Ethnic	4
Arts, culture and museums	8
Environment, conservation and heritage	1
Substance Use	5

It is worth noting that no responses were submitted by front line organisations working with Offenders.

3.2.2 Sub-sectors supported by infrastructure providers and networks

We also asked the infrastructure providers and networks to identify which sub-sectors they worked with. The responses are shown here:

Sub Sector	Numbers
Advice and Advocacy	19
Arts, culture and museums	17
Black and Minority Ethnic	28
Carers	16
Children (under 15) including single parents, play and families	23
Disability	19
Environment, conservation and heritage	16
Faith	21
Families	21
Gypsies and Travellers	13
Health	20
Homelessness and housing	20
Learning, skills and employment	21
Lesbian, Gay and Bi-sexual	8
Men	18
Mental Health	15
Offenders	14
Older people	18
Refugees and Asylum Seekers	20
Rural	18
Substance Users	8

Trans	6
Volunteers	24
Young People (16-24)	22
Women	16

From this data we can identify that all the identified sub-sectors received support from one or more of the infrastructure providers. BME, Volunteers and Young People were identified as the sub-sectors supported by the greatest number of respondents. Trans, Substance Misuse were the least supported sub-sectors.

This information will allow us to better analyse the data emerging from the questionnaire by identifying the bias stemming from the proportion of respondents from each sub sector. This further analysis will be carried out at a later date in the next stage of the project.

3.3 Sub-Sectors most in need of further support

We asked front-line organisations and infrastructure organisations to identify the 3 sub sectors most in need of further support.

Sub Sector	Front line	Infrastructure Providers	Total
Advice and Advocacy	11	4	15
Arts, culture and museums	4	5	9
Black and Minority Ethnic	11	21	32
Carers	3	4	7
Children (under 15) including single parents, play and families	5	11	18
Disability	3	6	9
Environment, conservation and heritage	1	3	4
Faith	4	6	10
Families	5	4	9
Gypsies and Travellers	3	6	9
Health	4	3	7
Homelessness and housing	6	7	13

Sub Sector	Front line	Infrastructure Providers	Total
Learning, skills and employment	9	9	18
Lesbian, Gay and Bi-sexual	6	1	7
Men	0	3	3
Mental Health	8	1	9
Offenders	5	2	7
Older people	8	6	14
Refugees and Asylum Seekers	9	10	19
Rural	2	10	12
Substance Users	2	0	7
Trans	1	1	2
Volunteers	6	7	13
Young People (16-24)	6	8	13
Women	2	3	5

The sub-sectors most in need of further support:

Advice and Advocacy (11)
 Black and Minority Ethnic (11)
 Refugees and Asylum Seekers (9)
 Learning, Skills and Employment (9)

The sub-sectors most in need of further support:

Black and Minority Ethnic (21)
 Children (under 15) including single parents, play and families (10)
 Rural (10)
 Refugees and Asylum Seekers (10)

When aggregating the data from both front line and infrastructure organisations, the most commonly identified sub sectors in need of further support were:

Black and Minority Ethnic (32)
 Refugees and Asylum Seekers (19)
 Learning, Skills and Employment (18)
 Children (under 15) including single parents, play and families (18)
 Advice and Advocacy (15)
 Older People (14)

3.4 Access to information, support and advice services – support needed and support received

This question was designed to identify what support is accessed by front line sub-sectoral organisations and provided by infrastructure providers.

The survey asked infrastructure providers and networks to identify the support that they currently offer. Respondents also indicated where a need had been identified and any changes in planned provision to account for identified areas of need. The survey included a standard list of support functions.

3.4.1 Information, support and advice services received by front line sub-sectoral organisations

The survey asked front line respondents to identify from a list of information, advice and support services, where they received the right support, where they don't access support but need it and where they receive support but it could be improved. A standard list was provided and the opportunity to add additional areas of need was included.

Function	Receive the right support (A)	Receive this support but it could be improved (B)	Do not receive and don't need this type of support (C)	Do not receive but need this type of support (D)	Total of B+D
Accountancy/payroll	15	6	12	6	12
Advocacy	3	8	15	9	17
Capacity building	2	14	6	19	33
Consultancy	8	10	7	10	20
Discounts and deals	2	7	11	16	23
Diversity/equalities	12	10	10	4	14
Employment/HR	12	10	7	9	19
European information	3	17	8	8	25
Finance	8	14	9	6	20
Funding	7	16	3	16	32
Governance	11	12	7	7	19
Health and safety	12	12	7	7	19
Information	13	16	5	3	19
Insurance	11	7	13	4	11
IT/computers	7	16	8	6	22
Legal	7	12	7	9	21
Lobbying	5	11	10	9	20
Marketing and	2	14	5	15	29

Function	Receive the right support (A)	Receive this support but it could be improved (B)	Do not receive and don't need this type of support (C)	Do not receive but need this type of support (D)	Total of B+D
communications					
Networking opportunities	11	19	5	6	25
Organisational development	6	17	5	12	29
Performance improvement	5	15	6	15	30
Project management	9	10	10	8	18
Representation on strategic policy issues	7	17	4	10	27
Research	7	11	6	13	24
Specialist information	9	14	6	5	19
Specialist technical support	7	12	9	7	19
Training and professional development	5	22	2	9	31
Volunteer recruitment and management	8	15	5	9	24
Web hosting	4	11	10	9	20

3.4.2 Analysis

The most common areas where support and information is required but not accessed or received by front line organisations, as identified by front line organisations are:

Capacity Building (19)
 Funding (16)
 Discounts and Deals (16)
 Performance Improvement (15)
 Marketing and Communications (15)
 Research (13)
 Organisational Development (12)

The most common areas where support and information is received but needs improvement, as identified by front line organisations are:

Training and Professional Development (22)
 Networking Opportunities (19)
 European Information (17)
 Organisational Development (17)
 Representation on strategic policy issues (17)
 Information (16)

ICT (16)
 Funding (16)
 Performance Improvement (15)

It is recognised that it difficult to identify firm priorities from this data. However, there are some trends emerging. On aggregating this data it can be seen that the most commonly identified areas in need of further support and development for sub-sectoral infrastructure support are:

Capacity Building (33)
 Funding (32)
 Training and Professional Development (31)
 Performance Improvement (30)
 Organisational Development (29)
 Marketing and Communications (29)
 Representation on Strategic Policy Issues (27)
 Networking Opportunities (25)
 European Information (25)

3.4.3 Information, support and advice services provided to sub-sectors by infrastructure organisations

We also asked infrastructure organisations to identify, from the same list of information, support and advice services, which they provided to front line sub-sectoral organisations. This has enabled us to compare the perspectives of both the receiver and provider of services.

Function	Provide this type of support	Needs identified	Changes Planned
Accountancy/payroll	9	6	6
Advocacy	17	16	5
Capacity building	44	31	17
Consultancy	27	17	12
Discounts and deals	5	6	4
Diversity/equalities	19	13	7
Employment/HR	18	12	6
European information	6	9	4
Finance	16	12	6
Funding	32	25	12
Governance	30	17	8
Health and safety	15	9	4
Information	33	17	13
Insurance	6	2	1

Function	Provide this type of support	Needs identified	Changes Planned
IT/computers	8	6	4
Legal	8	6	3
Lobbying	17	14	5
Marketing and communications	12	12	7
Networking opportunities	39	25	13
Organisational development	34	20	10
Performance improvement	20	16	8
Project management	19	14	5
Representation on strategic policy issues	34	23	12
Research	24	16	6
Specialist information	24	12	5
Specialist technical support	11	9	6
Training and professional development	28	19	15
Volunteer recruitment and management	21	17	8
Web hosting	3	7	3

3.4.4 Analysis

Analysis of these responses is particularly difficult as some responses came from specialist infrastructure services and some from locally based infrastructure organisations, making it difficult to identify particular trends in terms of need.

The most identified information, support and advice services provided by infrastructure organisations to sub-sectors were:

- Capacity Building (44)
- Networking opportunities (39)
- Representation on key strategic policy issues (34)
- Organisational Development (34)
- Information (33)

Funding (32)
 Training and Professional Development (28)

The most commonly identified information, support and advice services where needs have been identified and changes planned were:

- Representation on strategic policy issues
- Networking Opportunities
- Training and Professional Development
- Funding
- Capacity Building
- Consultancy

In addition to this question front line groups were asked to identify 3 types of support that were most needed. The areas identified were:

- Funding
- HR
- Health and Safety
- Training information
- IT support and finance for this
- Tendering and contracting guidance
- Grant making practice information
- Free or cheap training for staff and volunteers
- Information about the region, sub region
- Representation for the sub-sector
- Legal advice
- Policy development advice
- Lobbying
- Legal Consultancy

3.5 Barriers for sub-sectoral organisations in accessing the right support

3.5.1 Background

Both front line organisations and infrastructure providers (and networks) were asked to consider and identify the barriers faced by front line groups (representing sub-sectors) in accessing the required type and level of support. It is important to note that the responses of infrastructure providers are based on perspective and working knowledge of the barriers faced by front line groups not accessing their services.

We asked both front line organisations and infrastructure providers what barriers they face, or in the case of infrastructure providers, perceive, in accessing the support that they need and collated the following results. Respondent were able to indicate all of the barriers they identified.

Barriers	Front line groups	Infrastructure providers
The support we need does not exist as it is very specialised to the sub-sector	10	10
Information is not accessible enough	13	22
Cannot get to the local infrastructure organisation as it is too far away	3	6
Information is not available in an accessible format eg. language	1	7

Too much jargon	8	16
Don't know where to go	9	26
Don't have reliable/regular access to the internet	1	5
Too confusing	6	14
Not enough time	25	30

The most commonly identified barriers to accessing the support they need, as identified by front line organisations were:

- Not enough time (25)
- Information isn't accessible enough (13)
- The support we need does not exist as it is very specialised to the sub-sector (10)
- Don't know where to go (9)
- Too much jargon (8)

The most commonly identified barriers for infrastructure organisations in accessing the support they need, as identified by infrastructure organisations were:

- Not enough time (30)
- Don't know where to go (26)
- Information is not accessible enough (22)
- Too much jargon (26)
- Information is not in accessible format (22)

3.5.2 Analysis

Consideration of this data enables us to consider the barriers faced by sub-sectoral front line organisations in accessing the support they need. The overwhelming factor is the lack of time and limited resources faced by front line organisations to find the time to both sources and access the appropriate time. Whilst this is an unsurprising acknowledgement, it is worthy of noting here. Many sub-sectoral organisations are markedly small thus increasing the difficulties. Many organisations face a daily battle in maintaining current operations and staying afloat; finding the time to weave their way through a maze to find the support they need at any particular time is complex and time consuming. It relies on an ability to know exactly what is need, where to go for it and often a great resource in actually accessing the support. It appears that the confusing nature of support, accessibility and not knowing where to start, or even what exactly you are looking for, can make the very act of looking for the right support an onerous task.

This information also suggests that an absence of specialist support is an issue, particularly for LGB groups (4 out of the 13 groups answering yes to this question were those working with LGB or Trans groups) It was not possible to identify other sectors that in particular identified the lack of specialist support as an issue.

There is a clear message here that there is a real need to consider how infrastructure services are marketed and accessed to ensure that services can be accessed at the right time and in the right place.

3.6 Frontline routes to infrastructure support and information

Front line organisations were asked to indicate who they would go to if they wanted to find out what support was available to them. This question was answered by 11 of the 14 respondents. The responses were:

- Age Concern England
- Directory of Social Change
- Voluntary Action Leeds
- East Riding Voluntary Action
- Hull CVS
- Hull Community Network
- Hull City Council
- Press for Change
- Stonewall
- Humberside Learning Consortium
- Diocese of Middlesbrough
- Voluntary Action Sheffield
- VISA Funders
- Volunteering England
- 0-19 Partnership Board
- The Arts Council
- SYFAB
- National Council of Voluntary Organisations
- Scedu
- Voluntary Actions Leeds
- Leeds Voice
- The Regional Forum
- Fit4Funding
- Private sector support providers (legal, HR etc)
- Leeds Connecting Communities
- West Yorkshire Learning Consortium
- WYCAS
- ACAS
- Pay and Employment Rights Service (PERS)
- WyseLink
- Trustees
- Partners
- The internet

This demonstrates the variety of routes to support for sub-sectors. The list includes specific sub-sectoral infrastructure support such as Stonewall (LGB) and the Humberside Learning Consortium (Learning and Skills). It also shows that access occurs at district, regional and national level

3.7 ChangeUp and Capacity Builders

We asked a question about the links of the respondents to ChangeUp and Capacitybuilders. We asked front line and infrastructure organisations whether they had benefited from ChangeUp or Capacitybuilders:

61 infrastructure organisations answered this question. 66% of the infrastructure providers had benefited from ChangeUp or Capacitybuilders. Of these:

- 64% had received funding
- 64% had received information
- 52% had been consulted
- 45% had been to an event
- 26% had accessed ChangeUp services
- 55% were a member of a consortium
- 48% had been involved in decision making
- 47% had used a hub/national support service.

49 front line organisations answered this question. 18% of front line organisations had benefited from ChangeUp or Capacitybuilders. Of these:

- 70% had been to an event
- 50% were members of a consortium
- 40% had received information
- 30% had accessed a ChangeUp funded service through an ISO
- 30% had been consulted
- 30% had received funding

Only 2 of the front line groups had accessed a hub or national support service.

It is difficult to come to any firm conclusions to this issue, but these responses do indicate a good awareness and involvement in ChangeUp and with Capacitybuilders. It is interesting to note that similar proportions of ISOs and front line organisations had accessed ChangeUp funded services. This could reflect issues as to whether ChangeUp is reaching out to front line groups enough, but could be explained through the fact that many infrastructure providers, especially specialist networks, are front line providers as well.

3.8 The Role of the Hubs or National Support Services

We asked infrastructure organisations about their perspective of whether the Hubs/National Support Services should be influenced to engage with these sub-sectors and how.

Indications from respondents suggest that there are some key concerns about the Hubs and their relevance at local or sub regional level. A selection of the responses clarify this position:

They have no idea what goes on a local level."

"Not really been very effective in my view – money [would be] much better spent if given to the region. I have not seen any significant support from national hubs to regional networks.

"I'd rather see the investment currently going into the hubs go into some of the sub-sectors. I don't think the hubs are best placed to engage directly with sub-sectors, but they could provide better support to infrastructure to do that."

"The Hubs have, frankly, been completely irrelevant to us, as their thinking is so far behind."

"The Hubs are doing good work. However, there is very little which has not already been done at a district or regional level. Their role should be to identify good practice where it exists then spread it around. They should not assume that they are the source of all good practice – they aren't. Ultimately it comes from within the sector."

There is a clear feeling that the work of the National Support Services is often not relevant at local or sub regional level and that the substance of their work has not been either particularly new or useful on the ground. This suggests moving towards looking within the sector to find models of good practice and support and the role of Capacitybuilders being to facilitate the sharing and knowledge transfer process to ensure it reaches the parts of the sector it needs to.

3.9 Other Issues Raised

3.9.1 Background

Whilst undertaking this research a range of issues were raised through conversations and the open ended questions in the survey. These are included here as they are of relevance when considering the support needed by voluntary and community sector sub-sectoral organisations.

3.9.2 Issues of Funding and Sustainability

There was an unsurprising concern throughout this research about the funding and sustainability of the sector. Both in terms of infrastructure providers and front line organisations there were concerns about the potential closure of a number of, particularly small, organisations. It is likely, on anecdotal evidence, that a number of sub-sectoral organisations will fall into this smaller groups category at be more at risk of closure.

It was highlighted that there is a tension between the support of effective infrastructure and the day to day resourcing needs of front line organisations. There was a feeling from some front organisations that ChangeUp can be perceived as supporting and funding infrastructure organisations, and whilst these are important in assisting a vibrant voluntary sector, capacity issues for individual organisations are often under resourced. Whilst individual organisation face internal funding crises the resource issue become more and more strained, thus further reducing their ability to access infrastructure when it is most needed.

Both the survey responses and anecdotal evidence highlight that there is a wealth of infrastructure support available in the region. Funding for these services is, however, both patchy in terms of coverage and vulnerable to changes to the funding regime. One respondent said:

“The issue is not about access. The issue is that existing infrastructure is about to disappear as funding strands end. Investment is needed to preserve and retain the best of the infrastructure functions.”

3.9.3 Access to Support

It must be recognised that front line organisations have a limited resources to find the support they need. Whilst this is seemingly a general point this issue is particularly pertinent with regards to some smaller more fragile sub-sectors. Awareness of the increasingly challenging funding climate for both front line and infrastructure organisations highlights a real need to ensure that the limited, though wide ranging, infrastructure support is reaching particular sub-sectors.

3.9.4 Specialist Support for sub-sectors

The generic versus specialist infrastructure debate is much discussed within the sector and with external agencies. There is recognition within the region that ideally, all infrastructure support should be accessible to groups seeking this service. There is, however, a tension between the need for generic and sub-sectoral support mechanisms. It is suggested that there is often a need for some level of specialist support for sub-sectors, in addition to support to access generic infrastructure services.

It has been identified that consideration would need to be given to the most appropriate level for this sub-sectoral support. Whilst support would ideally be presented at a local level there are issues, particularly in North Yorkshire which is largely rural, around the critical mass of sub-sectoral groupings to make this a viable option

The consortium in West Yorkshire offers a potential model for sub-sectoral infrastructure development. WYLDA (West Yorkshire Local Development Agencies) is the voluntary and community sector (VCS) infrastructure forum for West Yorkshire. WYLDA operates at a sub-regional and district level to ensure good communication between the VCS infrastructure

organisations and to develop joint working opportunities to maximise resources across West Yorkshire. The consortia works through 5 district level infrastructure consortia and 5 district level BME infrastructure consortia. Current investment was determined through prioritising exercise, asking members to identify the types of front line organisations that would benefit from development in infrastructure support. This approach ensured that the limited funds available were targeted at priority sub-sectors in the sub-region.

3.9.5 Support for networks and linking

The information considered identifies that a lot of good work has happened so far through linking organisations through networks. This must be continued through investment in developing links between these networks and continuing funding for networks to give them *“time to bed in and look at ways of becoming more sustainable*. The efforts made so far in developing sub-sectoral network structures would be lost if no further capacity building strategy and long term investment was forthcoming.

3.9.6 The need for basic support

It has been suggested that support such as training and consultancy advice is often offered and available to sub-sectors but it is often not appropriate or time. Whilst groups recognised the *potential* value of this support it often comes at a time when there are more pressing immediate needs which require attention.

“Our main need for 'support' is in the very basic access to funding and direct resources. We can be trained & networked & have consultants tell us what to do till the cows come home - what we need is MONEY to buy the TIME to implement it, especially with increasing demands on monitoring & performance management.”

“We do not need more consultancy & training. We need adequate & consistent funding, especially from the statutory sector.”

3.9.7 Government priorities

“I'm concerned that 'sub sectors' do not necessarily place the VCS well strategically (e.g in relation to Local Area Agreement priorities, Regional Economic Strategies, Local Strategic partnership priorities, DCLG priorities etc. They tend to assume that the Office of Third Sector/DCLG etc will be the only potential funder/ supporter of this approach? Does the sector need to be more linked to the 'mainstream', maintaining its independence and seen to be a core component of wider Govt. aspirations? This is the age old chicken and egg debate. However the sub sector headings are a very fragmented way of looking at the ways the sector can 'cluster' and be more effective. Could there be more 'combinations of sub sectors, linked to the above points? “

3.9.8 Monitoring and Evaluating Performance

There was widespread agreement that the monitoring and evaluation of developments needs to take into account the changing environment and distance travelled against this landscape. There was recognition that evaluation should be consistent and allow comparison at national level whilst recognising the vibrancy and diversity of the sector. Monitoring of performance should be:

“As simple as possible - these sub-groups have the hardest jobs just getting started and need to be able to report back as easily as possible”

“As lightly as possible, whatever methods are used, to avoid overburdening the already overburdened !”

“Establish a consistent approach across the country. Build in funds to evaluate at key points - some of this to be commissioned externally. Share the lessons learned.”

“Longitudinal evaluation with a combination of hard and soft success factors.”

4 Sub Sectoral Research: Initial Recommendations

4.1 Background

Through desk research, survey analysis and anecdotal evidence considered in this project a range of proposal relating to the support of sub-sectors have been identified. This project will be continued over the coming months in order to test these proposals with a number of reference groups. This will ensure that they are both relevant and realistic, and that they align with other planned and current developments.

The next phase of the project will:

- Check that the proposals are reflective with the analysis of the survey data and desk research;
- Check that the proposal could be delivered for the benefit of the whole region;
- Explore further details such as method of delivery and costs;
- Map the proposals against the Destination 2014 objectives and strategy;
- Align the proposals with the Regional Voluntary Sector Infrastructure Strategy (RVIS)

4.2 Gaps in support

Consideration of both existing research, survey results and anecdotal evidence highlights the difficulties in considering the need for specialist, as opposed to generic, infrastructure support. It has been clearly observed that infrastructure provision was provided to all of the available sub-sectors by infrastructure organisations but with the tension that sub-sectors faced a number of barriers in accessing this support.

This suggests a two pronged approach to developing specialist infrastructure support. The sub sectors listed have all received support from ChangeUp and/or Capacitybuilders in the region for network development which has focussed on a regional engagement and influence role.

Recommendation

Further work should be undertaken to assess the reach of support to the sub sectors at the sub-regional and district levels, paying particular attention to support offered in rural areas and areas of deprivation.

Further work should be undertaken to identify what functional support needs there are relating to the specific themes of each sub sector.

4.3 Network Development

The Network Capacity Building Scheme has been identified as a key success in improving support for sub-sectors in the region. Building on this past success and using the evidence about gap in infrastructure it is suggested that funding be sought to continue this approach. The key outcomes of this would be:

- Sub-sectors able to network internally and develop links and routes to specialist sub-sectoral support;
- Sub-sectors, in particular those that are under represented, will have a greater voice in existing and emerging structures such as the Regional Consortium and Regional Equalities Network;
- Sub-sectors represented more effectively within the Regional Forum's policy and influence role;
- Best practice examples of sub-sectoral network development shared to ensure that learning and experience are shared.

Recommendation

Funding is sought to continue support for the development of new and emerging networks representing the needs of individual sub-sectors.

4.4 Improving and Simplifying Access

The survey results demonstrate that, by and large, the infrastructure support needed by sub-sectoral organisations does exist but there are real issues around access. Respondents identified that there is a real need to ensure that existing generalist support services are easily accessible by front line organisations. The evidence suggests that organisations find accessing the support they need is too confusing, that they don't know where to go to find what they need and that lack of time makes finding their way through the maze difficult. It is widely recognised that infrastructure support arrangements are complicated and that providers should seek to simplify these.

It is recognised that infrastructure directories exist at largely local and sub-sectoral level but there could be a need to have a more effective signposting mechanism. It is proposed that a web based infrastructure portal could be explored. The benefits of this proposal could be:

- The portal could build on existing directories by working at a regional, sub regional or district level as well as opportunities for thematic and sub-sectoral options;
- It could act as a broker for front line agencies accessing information about support through a single point and being signposted to the appropriate support;
- It would simplify the marketing of infrastructure support for infrastructure organisations;

Pilot actions could be funded to bring local infrastructure organisation's services to frontline organisations through the sub-sectoral networks as a means of improving access to and take up of services.

Recommendation

Options for increasing access to infrastructure support for sub regional organisations explored. To include using existing sub-sectoral networks to bring local infrastructure organisations to front line services. This should involve the development of 2 way communication to ensure that issues and needs are fed through sub-sectoral networks to generic infrastructure providers and networks and that services are marketed by providers through the networks.

Recommendation

Consideration should be given to developing existing infrastructure portals and models (at the most appropriate level/s) to simplify the infrastructure maze.

4.5 Marketing and Communication of Infrastructure Support

In considering the reasons for existing infrastructure support not reaching sub-sectors it is proposed that consideration be given to how infrastructure organisations could be supported to improve the reach of their services. This could include:

- Consideration of the specific functions required by sub-sectoral organisations and consideration of who is best placed to provide this support
- Addressing the specific barriers faced by sub-sectoral organisations in accessing support considered sub-sector by sub-sector

Recommendation

Consideration of how infrastructure organisations market their services to specific sub-sectors and how this could be improved. This would need to consist of discrete pieces of work identifying the specific issues for the relevant sub-sectors.

4.6 Focus on Equalities

It is recognised from both the survey results, desk research and anecdotal evidence that the sub-sectors most in need of further support tend to be from equalities groups. The highlighted sub-sectors were:

Older People
Children
Refugees and Asylum Seekers
Black and Minority Ethnic
Homelessness and Housing
Substance Users
Young People
Learning Skills and Refugees
Rural

It is also recommended that LGB, Gypsy and Traveller and disability sub-sectors be considered as additional priorities. These are recognised as fragile sub-sectors, who have historically had little access to infrastructure support.

Recommendation

It is proposed that these sub-sectors be considered as priorities for this region. Work should be done to ensure that user-led and staffed organisations receive support that is appropriate to their circumstances and needs. Consideration should be given as to what appropriate support mechanisms might look like.

4.7 National Support Services

National support whether through Capacitybuilders or other national charities is often vital for frontline organisations working in sub-sectors. These services are often delivered direct from the centre to local organisations, missing out on co-ordinated marketing and infrastructure delivery opportunities.

Recommendation

Opportunities to resource partnership working between national and local infrastructure would be useful in maximising the value of national interventions in the region and bring a wider range of services to frontline organisations.

The National Support Services could play a more useful role in identifying good practice where it exists and sharing this. Good practice often comes from within the sector. It is widely perceived that investment should be made within the sector and more locally to develop, and build on existing, models of sub-sectoral support. This would ensure that support is part of a coherent infrastructure framework at the local level and align with generic infrastructure services.

Recommendation

Funding should be realised to ensure that infrastructure organisations can develop to provide the support required by sub-sectors and that the National Support Services are used to collect and share models of good practice.

4.8 Developing the infrastructure workforce

It is suggested that in order for generic infrastructure providers to increase accessibility for front line organisation there is a need for infrastructure development workers to have a working knowledge of the sub-sectors to whom they may need to provide support.

Recommendation

Further work to look at options for staff development for infrastructure providers.