

# Paul Hamlyn Foundation

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## Including Youth

Learning from the Refugee and Asylum-Seeker Fund

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## Foreword

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I am glad to be able to share with you some of what we have learned from our Special Initiative, the Refugee and Asylum-Seeker Fund. In this report are lessons for all those organisations interested in bringing about social change, whether they are funders, policy makers, or those delivering services at the front line. I hope both that you recognise some of the conclusions drawn, and are provoked into thinking differently about how we, as a society, can provide more support to some of the most marginalised people in our communities.

We set up this Fund before we launched our Social Justice programme. It was one of our first Special Initiatives and because of that has been a significant source of learning for us, and we hope helped make a positive contribution to people's lives.

The evaluation we commissioned was primarily of process rather than impact, and as well as generating a large volume of rich data, it led to strong bonds being established between evaluators and those volunteers and staff delivering at the grass roots. This report has had to distil much of that data, and deliberately does not detail the difficult political and economic operating contexts for our grantees – these are well rehearsed elsewhere.

Instead, the report concentrates on those elements where we hoped to help grantees develop their capacity, and describes the challenges and successes they experienced during the process.

Many of the refugee community organisations we supported through this initiative operate on a shoestring and achieve their successes against the odds, yet they have become a vital part of our civil society. However, they cannot alone be expected to deal with the human costs of increasingly punitive policies in this area. The reality for many is that they face an uphill task simply meeting the demand for basic human needs: support and understanding, advice and information, practical assistance.

The energy and motivating passions of so many volunteers and grass roots organisations has made a profound impression on this foundation, and we will continue to look for ways to effectively support them – whether directly, or through working for wider change.

Michael Hamlyn

Chair, Social Justice Programme Committee



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## Executive Summary

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The Fund for Refugee and Asylum Seeker Young People was set up by Paul Hamlyn Foundation in 2003 to support UK-wide projects, working directly with young people, to promote their integration into British society. The Fund supported work which:

- Encouraged the integration of young (11–18 year-old) asylum-seekers and refugees – sometimes referred to as ASR young people – within host communities
- Built capacity within refugee community organisations
- Supported the development of effective practice, including:
  - Supporting young people to participate in the planning and operation of projects
  - Working in partnerships
- Sought to influence public attitudes towards young refugees and asylum-seekers

Almost half of total funding went to small, refugee-led community organisations (RCOs). The Fund awarded grants to:

- 24 projects led by RCOs, totalling £1,145,576, half of which worked with voluntary or arts organisations
- 47 projects led by charitable, voluntary and second-tier organisations, totalling £2,175,437, of which 20 were run jointly with RCOs

Most projects worked with young asylum seekers (including unaccompanied minors) and, to encourage integration, with young people from the host community.

Staff at Paul Hamlyn Foundation worked closely with grant recipients throughout the lifetime of the Fund. This was greatly appreciated by the organisations; such a supportive relationship with a funder was a new experience. Projects received practical as well as financial assistance, and some believe that their practice was positively influenced through their contact with the Foundation.

Projects delivered services to young people and their families through:

- Creative and cultural activities
- Training, education and preparation for employment
- Sports and healthy living activities
- Mentoring and befriending
- Legal and other advice and guidance to help young people
- Activities for parents/other family members

Many projects worked with other organisations to deliver activities. Some offered outreach and most delivered group and one-to-one activities.

## Main findings

- || The evaluation was primarily an evaluation of process rather than impact. It took place in three phases and the findings are largely based on what emerged from the third phase.
- || Overall, the evaluation has demonstrated the value of the PHF Fund in helping to build the capacity of organisations and in encouraging projects to develop partnerships, more participatory practices, and imaginative ways of encouraging integration.
- || Some projects were already working effectively, and the PHF Fund enabled them to survive, in some cases to thrive, and to develop – to reflect on their achievements, and barriers to success. It also helped less-developed projects to improve their approach.
- || It has highlighted where partnerships were unproductive, or where external factors hindered the engagement of young people and their integration with host communities.
- || Some projects are exemplary in encouraging young people to become fully involved in the management of the project. However, others consult or involve young people to only a limited degree.
- || For some, the Fund has provided a short-term solution to their funding problems, but they have not been able to secure continuity funding, or to develop partnerships to help sustain their work.

## Integration

Despite the difficulties in achieving ‘integration’, the evaluation has shown that projects have developed a range of activities and practices which assist the process.

**Funders and projects need to be clear with each other about what is meant by ‘integration’ and then realistic about what can be achieved when projects are working with small groups of individuals, often in specific neighbourhoods.**

Small projects and even multi-agency partnerships can only promote and achieve integration on a micro-level and as part of a gradual process. Nonetheless, even these modest incremental gains may be seen as an important contribution to the process of bringing together different communities and beginning to develop mutual understanding between them.

## Supporting the capacity of organisations

The direct result of the PHF funding was to give projects the ability to recruit more staff and to expand activities. Indirectly, the funding also helped the projects’ partners and the communities with which they were working.

**RCOs and other support organisations work in a climate of considerable adversity. During the lifetime of the Fund, a worsening economic climate inflamed tensions and increased hostile public perceptions about ‘foreigners’ living in the UK and taking over jobs and housing.**

The Government's dispersal policy has resulted in asylum-seekers, including many young people, being moved to areas experiencing considerable economic hardship and where competition for scarce resources can fuel conflict.

RCOs in these regions were often without the capacity or resources to respond effectively. Lack of local social networks led to new organisations being set up to cope with the isolation being experienced by asylum-seekers. But these new groups were often also under-resourced. In this situation, project staff need considerable skills, emotional resources and time to address the immediate practical needs of some young people.

**Partnerships with other organisations, which were encouraged by PHF, can help to address some of these problems, but they take a considerable time to build. They need substantial effort and sometimes the assistance of others in the early stages, to design systems, agree shared aims and principles, and develop relationships of trust.**

Grantees need clarity and flexibility from funders. Projects often need guidance during their initial developmental stage in setting realistic and achievable aims and estimating the demand for their service. Even if they achieve clarity around aims, outcomes and the likely demand they will face, unforeseen circumstances may arise and change the direction or purpose of the project. Funders should be specific in what they expect from projects but they also need to be flexible and recognise that formative changes can help projects to develop in more effective ways in the long-term.

Some projects have undertaken needs assessments to give them a clearer estimate of potential demand, inform project delivery and provide evidence to support changes in the service. Others would benefit from doing so. Projects need to use clear language and to develop a shared understanding of terms such as 'integration', 'social cohesion', and 'capacity-building', with agreement on projected outcomes and their measurement. It is equally important for funders to encourage and help projects to monitor and evaluate their work.

Gaps in provision remain, particularly in relation to mental health support.

## Supporting the development of effective practice

Effective projects know how to:

- Connect with their target communities and involve them directly in activities and planning. Time and energy spent in dedicated outreach work with local refugee communities pays dividends.
- Capture the imagination of young people through activities which use their creative and physical energy, maintain their interest and enable them to achieve positive recognition from their peers.
- Develop a participatory approach to provision by encouraging in young people a feeling of belonging to something that matters, and helping them to develop their capacity, skills, loyalty, leadership and responsibility. Paul Hamlyn Foundation encourages approaches that share leadership, in recognition of young people's experience and knowledge and to support

their personal development. Encouragement to take on more active leadership roles helps to ensure that young people's voices are integral to shaping future provision.

- Secure the commitment of project staff and volunteers: extra commitment from workers is what frequently distinguishes excellent projects. Workers who have lived the refugee experience, or have strong social and political commitments to the communities they serve, over and above their paid professional roles, tend to have the respect of their communities.
- Design and prepare a project: time spent in early planning and preparation is never wasted. Consultation and involving partners can take longer than anticipated and it is advisable to have a steering group in place before starting project activities.
- Develop approaches that are responsive to young people's needs: many projects prioritised access to advice and services and the personal development of young people through welcome, providing a safe space, developing life skills and proficiency in speaking and understanding English. Some developed employability skills and learning opportunities for school leavers at 16. Projects met problems in addressing young people's needs at 18, particularly when some statutory support was withdrawn. Others joined local strategic partnerships to try to influence provision for young people and worked with statutory providers. Joint after-school activities bringing together different groups of young people through sports/creative/participatory arts projects/positive and healthy living activities were successful.
- Build in continuity and sustainability: The best projects put plans into place for their ongoing sustainability sooner rather than later, especially where funding is short-term.
- Build systems for demonstrating effectiveness: Many projects have improved their practice as a result of their engagement with Paul Hamlyn Foundation and through their partnership work. However, relatively few have developed ways of demonstrating their effectiveness.
- Work in partnership: Partnerships between RCOs and second tier or statutory organisations work best when there is:
  - A mutually agreed set of aims and a shared understanding of what these mean
  - Agreed systems and protocols in place before delivering activities
  - Regular communication
  - Development of relationships of trust
  - Commitment from all partners
  - Support from the top

It is important to be clear about definitions and expectations of partnerships. While PHF funding has promoted their development and some projects benefited, it remains to be seen how some of the new partnerships formed will be sustainable in the longer term.

When it works well, partnership working is vital for capacity building of small RCOs. But it is not a panacea. Sometimes partnerships do not work and other steps might be required; even the most effective projects encounter problems which they alone cannot overcome. For example, in relation to language and learning, the problems created by cutbacks in ESOL provision, place additional demands on projects and impede integration. Learners require and deserve properly trained and experienced teachers if they are to make real progress in language learning.

Lessons drawn from approaches to adult learning used especially in the developing world could be applied in the UK to support neighbourhood language programmes among asylum and refugee communities. A programme such as the NIACE Survival English Campaign could contribute to achieving integration over time.

# Background

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The Paul Hamlyn Foundation Fund for Refugee and Asylum-seeker Young People was set up in 2003 to support projects led by locally based voluntary and community organisations, working directly with young people, to promote their integration into British society. Originally, the intention was to focus on unaccompanied young refugees and asylum-seekers, but that focus widened once the Fund became operational. The Fund is independent of government, and its fluctuating targets and priorities. It supported work which:

- Encouraged the integration of young (11–18 year old) asylum-seekers and refugees within host communities
- Built capacity within refugee community organisations
- Supported the development of effective practice, including:
  - Supporting young people to participate in the planning and operation of projects
  - Working in partnerships
- Sought to influence public attitudes towards young refugees and asylum-seekers.

One third of all grants made – almost half of total funding – went to small, refugee-led community organisations (sometimes referred to below as RCOs). By the time the Fund closed for applications in September 2007, it had awarded grants to:

- 24 projects led by refugee community organisations, totalling £1,145,576. Of these projects, 12 worked with either voluntary or arts organisations
- 47 projects led by charitable, voluntary and second-tier organisations, totalling £2,175,437. Of these projects, 20 were run jointly with refugee community organisation

Most grants were given for two or three years, and some for 18 months. They ranged in size from £8,607 (for one project) to more than £60,000 (for four organisations, including one RCO). The Fund received bids for more money than was available.

Grantees worked across the UK, supporting young refugees and asylum-seekers (sometimes referred to below as ASR young people). While some projects worked with unaccompanied young people, none did so exclusively. Most projects worked with young people from the host community, as well as young asylum-seekers, so as to encourage integration.

## Context

During the lifetime of the Fund, the number of asylum-seekers arriving in the UK decreased significantly, in line with government policies. Public attention has shifted to concerns raised by European Union expansion and the arrival of Eastern European migrants. The period was characterised by:

- Inaccurate statistics and misinformation
- Government attempts to focus on highly skilled migrants

- A worsening economic climate, which inflamed tensions
- Local authorities struggling to contain costs and to respond to hostile public perceptions about ‘foreigners’ living in the UK and taking over jobs
- A policy of dispersing asylum-seekers, often to areas experiencing economic hardship, where increased competition for scarce resources can fuel conflict.<sup>1</sup>

All this has increased the hostility expressed towards asylum-seekers and refugees. It has made life more difficult for individuals and for the small voluntary groups and refugee community organisations which try to support them.

Dispersal has had a major impact on the role of RCOs. A report commissioned by the Home Office found that:

*“RCOs in the regions did not have the capacity or resources to respond, other than in ad hoc and uncoordinated ways, to the exigencies brought about by dispersal. Increasing numbers of asylum-seekers had inevitably increased workloads and strained organisational capacity. In many cases RCOs reported that they were unable to respond effectively to the needs of asylum-seekers in the dispersal areas.”<sup>2</sup>*

There were often no social networks in the areas to which people were relocated. For many, dispersal led to crisis and isolation. Those dispersed were therefore forced to create new support groups and defensive organisations. These were typically under-resourced and understaffed. Many had to rely on the Home Office Small Grants Scheme to survive.

Although there is no precise figure for the number of RCOs in the UK, in 2001 there were an estimated 500–600 such organisations in London, 40–60 RCOs in each of Manchester and Liverpool, and growing numbers in other areas.<sup>3</sup>

According to the Association of Charitable Foundations (ACF), two thirds of charitable organisations in the voluntary sector – including, doubtless, many RCOs – survive on less than £10,000 a year. Funding for RCOs comes mainly from UK trusts and foundations. In 2005, 65 per cent of RCOs’ income came from the Big Lottery Fund, the Diana Memorial Fund, the Lloyds TSB Foundation and other charitable trusts. Other trusts and foundations support disadvantaged young people, some of whom may be asylum-seekers or refugees.

Just as policy towards refugees and asylum-seekers has changed, so have funding regimes. Some RCOs have raised concerns<sup>4</sup> that charitable trusts are increasingly favouring applications from registered charities – at the expense of RCOs. Trusts, they believe, are scrutinising all applications more carefully, avoiding groups which might not appear very professional in service delivery, budgeting, capacity to provide evidence of needs, or good governance.

<sup>1</sup> Robinson, D, K Reeve and R Casey (2007) The housing pathways of new immigrants. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation; Threadgold, T, S Clifford, A Arwo, V Powell, Z Harb, X Jiang and J Jewell (2008) Immigration and inclusion in South Wales. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

<sup>2</sup> Zetter, R, D Griffiths and N Sigona (2003) Refugee community based organisations in the UK: a social capital analysis. Oxford Brookes University

<sup>3</sup> Zetter et al, 2003.

<sup>4</sup> In a letter to The Times, 26/10/07.

Government spending has been cut and European funding has been reduced. The Home Office's Small Grants Scheme no longer exists. Government has tended to shift away from grant making, towards commissioning services from the voluntary sector.

This shift may reflect a change in political and ideological assumptions about the significance of the grass roots. Arguably, it represents a shift in public policy, away from notions of 'community development', 'multiculturalism' and 'respecting diversity', towards a greater emphasis on 'community cohesion' across racial and religious divides, as the preferred way to promote integration. This has made it harder for organisations, including those supporting specific groups of asylum-seekers or refugees, to compete successfully for funding. Larger organisations sometimes use partnerships with smaller ones as a way of accessing funds – thereby shifting the responsibility for managing smaller RCOs to larger organisations, with which they are nominally in partnership.

## **Aims of the evaluation**

The brief given by PHF to the independent evaluators was to:

- Assess the value of the Fund, i.e. the extent to which funded projects are achieving the following:
  - Integration of refugee and asylum-seeker young people within host communities
  - Capacity-building of Refugee Community Organisations (RCOs)
  - Supporting the development of best practice
  - Drawing public attention to the importance of integration
  - Involvement of participants in project design, delivery and evaluation
- Measure the extent to which individual projects are fulfilling their aims and objectives, focusing in particular on the barriers and how these are being addressed; and to continue to act as 'critical friends' to projects
- Assess how projects are making use of the PHF grant to secure match or further funding from charitable and statutory sources
- Capture/record the qualitative impact of the projects on participants, project workers, partners and communities
- Identify the main success factors, such as partnerships, capacity, experience, background of organisation, staff and the nature of the intervention
- Assess the value of PHF's application process and 'grants plus' work

The evaluators have collected rich and detailed information about the funded projects; their approaches, achievements and difficulties; and their ability, or otherwise, to make a difference – to young people, their communities and support organisations, and to the wider society they hoped to influence.

The evaluation was primarily an evaluation of process rather than impact. To the extent that it did focus on impact, in this respect it was 'light touch'. The evaluation was undertaken in three phases, with interim reports produced at the end of each of the first two phases. This final report focuses primarily on the survey and 12 case studies undertaken in the third phase, though the evaluators' findings also draw on the first two phases.

## Overview of projects

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### Respondents to the final survey

A survey carried out during the third phase of the evaluators' work formed part of the evaluation. Of the 51 respondents, 35 per cent were RCOs. The remainder were other voluntary and community or second-tier organisations. The breakdown by geographical area was as follows:

#### England

London	14
North West	9
West Midlands	5
East Midlands	4
North East	4
South East	4
South West	3
Eastern Region	1

<b>Scotland</b>	4
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<b>Wales</b>	2
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<b>Northern Ireland</b>	1
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The responding organisations were mainly small, with two thirds having fewer than ten staff. Often, there were almost as many volunteers as staff. Nearly all projects worked with mixed groups of young people – one worked exclusively with young women and three worked only with young men. Over the lifetime of the PHF funding, between 14 and 960 young people attended the projects – an average of 70.

Some features of responding projects were as follows:

- 28 respondents worked on the development of skills and education related to employability.
- 20 projects aimed to strengthen integration and the links between communities.
- The majority of projects said they offered a holistic service addressing a range of issues through a variety of mechanisms.
- Some respondents were precise in their aims, and how they intended to meet them; others were less so and gave a broad account of anticipated outcomes.

## Aims of funded projects

It is likely that most RCOs offered practical advice and support, even if they did not specifically mention this in their statement of aims. The aims mentioned most frequently by respondents were to:

- Develop skills and learning opportunities through creative and social activities, rather than formal education or training
- Raise awareness and challenge misconceptions about asylum-seekers and refugees
- Increase confidence/self-esteem and self-advocacy
- Promote personal development
- Improve life chances of young people
- Improve access to services and advice
- Network or partner with other projects
- Promote integration, inclusion and cohesion
- Provide (safe) spaces for ASR young people

## Modes of delivery

Projects used a range of methods to deliver services. Some noted that the PHF Fund had influenced their way of working. Many projects worked jointly with other organisations to deliver activities. Some offered outreach and most delivered group and one-to-one activities.

The main areas of delivery were creative and cultural activities. Almost all the projects stated that they delivered creative activities in some form. These included:

- Structured programmes over a period of time
- Regular creative activities
- One-off events, including trips to the theatre

Creative activities such as music and dance needed less command of the English language than other education or training provision, while giving participants the opportunity to learn English in an informal setting. Projects also helped young people to express their ideas and feelings through the use of creative media, including photography. Some of the more structured programmes were accredited and/or set achievement targets, based on the underlying philosophy of the programme.

## Training, education and preparation for employment

Approximately half the projects delivered education and training for young people, or prepared them to enter mainstream education. Projects provided some or all of the following by way of educational support:

- Homework support
- Language and curriculum support
- Entry to employment (E2E)

- Further education
- After-school clubs with classes in different subjects

Formal or informal training included:

- Mentoring skills
- Health awareness
- Creative writing to develop communication skills
- Vocational training in areas such as youth work, IT and certain sports

Accreditation included qualifications from ASDAN, Duke of Edinburgh awards and Open College Network (OCN).

Preparation for employment included guidance on how to construct a CV, interviewing skills and sometimes work experience.

## Sports and healthy living activities

Many projects offered sports activities as a means of bringing ASR young people together with those from the host community, or of allowing young people to express themselves, as well as being part of a programme of healthy living activities.

## Mentoring and befriending

Approximately a quarter of projects offered peer mentoring or befriending by volunteers from the host community. Others offered a variety of volunteering opportunities to ASR young people.

## Legal and other advice and guidance to help young people

Many projects referred young people for specific support, but some acted as advocates – in writing letters to the Home Office; writing letters in support of citizenship applications; speaking on behalf of the young person in cases of debt or housing problems; or helping to find solicitors to represent them. A few projects offered their own legal advice or guidance on issues such as welfare benefits and housing.

## Activities for parents/other family members

Some projects worked with young people and family members by offering family liaison, drop-ins, awareness sessions for parents, parenting classes, and seminars to encourage parents to become school governors.

## Case studies

The evaluators visited 12 projects during phase three, based in England, Wales and Scotland, sometimes making multiple visits. Brief details of the aims and scope of each project are given below.

The **Arlaadi Somali Community** serves the Somali community in the Fallowfield district of Manchester. It has one part-time worker (supported by PHF funding) and seven volunteers. The Community's Building Bridges project, funded by PHF, focuses on young people's education and specifically on involving parents in parent-teacher meetings. It partners with three local schools. The project runs an education awareness programme for parents and out-of-school activities for young people. The project worker acts as an advocate for individual young people. The project intervenes if they are having problems at school.

The **British Afghan Women's Society** is a registered charity and self-help group for Afghan women in London. The group arranges social and cultural events, sports and educational activities, and runs weekly information and guidance sessions on asylum and immigration issues. PHF funding has enabled the Society to add a youth programme aimed at young Afghan arrivals. It provides a Saturday School for 10–16 year olds and some after-school workshops and occasional outings. It provides sessions on language support, culture, history and geography, with volunteer teachers from the wider Afghan community.

**Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire Partnership Ltd** includes the Coventry and Warwickshire Connexions service, where the PHF-funded project is based. The PHF funding enabled the recruitment of a peer mentor, himself a young refugee, who works with other young refugees and asylum-seekers, aged 13–18. The peer mentor:

- Provides mentoring and befriending support
- Acts as a positive role model
- Encourages young people and demonstrates that they can access worthwhile jobs
- Works in partnership with other agencies
- Helps participants to train as peer mentors

The **East London Somali Youth and Welfare Centre** is a charitable company based in Tower Hamlets which is managed by a board of elected directors from the Somali community and has a Youth Forum representing the views of young people. The PHF-funded Somali Refugee Integration Project helps young people to gain skills, work experience and, ultimately, paid employment. It provides:

- Advocacy and self-help
- Training and skills development, including youth work training in association with London Youth
- A job club
- A health promotion programme

- A youth club
- Volunteer development

The project works closely with the local authority and shares a database and three youth workers with Connexions.

**Leicester North West Community Forum** is a community-led regeneration company. It employs five staff, one of whom supports the PHF-funded project. The project provides arts- and sports-based activities for ASR children, assisting them to integrate and rebuild their lives. It offers:

- A weekly drop-in for local residents
- A programme of parenting classes
- Awareness-raising training for local residents
- Awareness training for organisations
- Cross-cultural community celebrations
- Opportunities for civic involvement for young people through training and mentoring support

Volunteers help with outreach work, and the project is building the capacity of four RCOs to work with ASR children and young people.

The **Somali Community Support Project** is the result of a partnership between **Link Action**, a Somali-led RCO based in Sheffield, and the **Northern Refugee Centre**. PHF funding has enabled the partnership to:

- Pay a worker to build contacts with Somali young people
- Provide information sessions and peer support groups for young people and their parents and carers
- Help them to access relevant services and strengthen volunteering capacity and community involvement

The project also tackles concerns about the education of young people and problematic drug use and its links with gang culture, territorialism and crime.

The **Pan-Afrique Centre** is a refugee-led charity based in Doncaster. It provides IT and basic skills training and drop-in space for young people. Through the PHF-funded Doncaster Refugee and Asylum-Seeker Integration Gateway Project, PAC works with young refugees and asylum-seekers aged 14–19 who are not in employment or training. It offers a 12-week accredited training programme, using trained staff and volunteers to break down barriers to participation in vocational training or employment and increase integration.

**Reading Refugee Support Group** is a registered charity. The organisation has three paid staff and approximately six volunteers. The PHF-funded project aims to help young people to take part in out-of-school leisure and social activities which they would not otherwise have been able to afford. The focus is on activities which do not single them out as refugees or asylum-seekers, enabling them to mix with young people from the host community on an equal footing. The project helps to link them with the club they have chosen and, with their parent's consent, enrol on their chosen activity. It then covers subscription or joining fees.

The **Roma Support Group** is a registered charity and refugee-led community organisation based in the London Borough of Newham. It has three full-time and eight part-time staff, and 22 volunteers. The project funded by PHF aims to reduce the marginalisation and social exclusion of young Roma in London, and to support their integration. It provides after-school activities, including music and dance clubs; inter-generational music-making sessions; studio recording training; and specialist music tuition and dance classes. It helps young Roma to organise and take part in events that promote an understanding of their culture, arts and history. It also runs three youth clubs which have developed new cultural activities.

**Scottish Sports Futures** is a charitable organisation in Glasgow. It focuses on the pleasure and personal fulfilment to be gained from basketball. Its wider purpose is to challenge racism and gang-based hostilities, steering young people instead towards fitness, and a more positive attitude to life and integration. The PHF-funded project contacts young people aged 10–18 through various agencies, and persuades them to take part in free weekly basketball sessions.

The **Somali Integration Society** is based in Cardiff. It employs two full-time and three part-time members of staff. Somali Asylum Seeking and Refugee Adolescent Help, funded by PHF, employs a youth worker to deliver a healthy living and educational support programme. It has established a weekly drop-in session for young Somalis and partners with mainstream agencies to improve services to the Somali community.

**Tees Valley Arts** is a charitable community arts development company. It has six permanent and six freelance staff. The PHF-funded Parachute Project works in three areas, encouraging ASR young people to engage in positive creative activities to assist their integration. The Project works with RCOs, organisations such as the North of England Refugee Service, and local authority asylum teams.

# Findings

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## Introduction

The findings set out below are drawn mainly from the results of the survey carried out in the third phase of the evaluation, though they also draw on the first two phases. This was primarily a process evaluation. Time and other constraints prevented the evaluators from undertaking a full impact analysis, though the evaluation did to some extent assess the impact of the funded work on young people, organisations and communities. In addition, it looked at the future prospects and sustainability of the funded projects, and their work. All the quotations are from project managers and staff unless otherwise indicated.

To recap, the Fund supported work which:

- Encouraged the integration of young asylum-seekers and refugees within host communities
- Built capacity within organisations
  - Supports the development of effective practice, including:
  - Supporting young people to participate in the planning and operation of projects
- Worked in partnerships
- Sought to influence public attitudes towards young refugees and asylum-seekers

This section covers the findings in all these areas.

## Integration

### Brief and definitions

The evaluators' brief included an assessment of the extent to which the funded projects are achieving the integration of refugee and asylum-seeking young people within host communities. There are various definitions of integration – PHF describes it as a two-way process in which society at large and specific communities adapt, understand and benefit. This is different from 'assimilation' or 'multiculturalism'. The funded projects frequently used the terms 'integration', 'inclusion' and 'cohesion' interchangeably – by which they meant bringing different groups together in one-off or occasional events, or as part of a sustained process. There is no clear consensus about what the term 'integration' means.

## What projects did about integration

Ninety per cent of the projects responding to the final survey felt that their joint work with others had helped to promote integration. Some felt that the following activities were effective in this respect:

- Bringing young people from different cultures and projects together on joint trips, sports activities, or arts activities
- Partnering with other organisations to engage young people in creative activities
- Joint sessions on citizenship awareness, promoting understanding of different cultures

*“We have encouraged our youths to be more active members of society, as both citizens, and individuals with rights. We have done this through organising workshops with The British Transport Police, a local Imam, a professional counsellor, and our weekly confidence boosting activities.”*

*“... arts projects with young people and community members have had a strong impact on bringing people together ... Awareness-raising projects have shown that attitudes change.”*

Other activities to promote integration include:

- Increasing networks
- Information sharing
- Exchanging best practice
- Mutual support
- Helping ASR young people to participate in community activities, including speaking at conferences and participating with their peers in activities outside school
- Working in schools alongside teachers and students

*“Other young people have seen the positive regard, which the young ASR are treated by workers ... [They] see the positive ways in which ASR engage with advice, thus dispelling some of the myths and stereotypes that are shown in the media.”*

*“The most important need for the young people is having a safe and stimulating environment to engage in positive activities. There are many negative distractions in the immediate locality so it is very important that they have something to occupy their time.”*

Several projects were successful in working across different communities. For example, **Scottish Sports Futures** works across white working-class and refugee/asylum communities in Glasgow, where racism, territorialism and gang culture are endemic. SSF runs school-based workshops, after-school clubs and twilight basketball sessions. These are mixed in terms of ethnicity, age and gender. The project shows that, given the opportunity,

youngsters begin to value basketball as something they have in common, rather than retreat into their many differences. As the programme develops, friendships form across divisions of race and nationality. It is harder to sustain hostilities when, as J says, “*they are just like us*”.

The communities on the estate where **Leicester North West Community Forum** is based have been very polarised. There is a history of violence, abuse and anti-social behaviour towards refugees and asylum-seekers. The project has brought the different communities together through awareness-raising, joint workshops and creative activities. Neighbours from different communities have now become close friends. As one parent from a refugee family said: “*My kids sleep in their house and their kids in mine, so we share family now.*”

## Challenges

Getting a grant from PHF prompted asylum-seeker and refugee communities to consider the need to integrate with the host community and to address the ongoing problems which prevent successful integration. The work was not without difficulties. Resources were often strained as organisations struggled to cope with everyday pressures, as well as with hostility from local communities and the general lack of provision to meet the needs of young new arrivals.

Over half of the respondents to the survey questionnaire felt that resource problems limited their ability to meet the practical needs of young people.

Family reunions place a strain on resources in Tower Hamlets. This impacts on the **East London Somali Youth & Welfare Centre**: “*The project is doing advocacy work that the local authority or PCT should do. There is no single officer dedicated to cover a person’s A–Z needs.*” During the first few months after young people and families arrive in the borough, they need help with things such as access to a GP, resources, housing, benefits, the English language and council tax. There is also a gap in support for mental health needs.

But the practical needs of the young people change over time. In the longer term, help is needed with securing employment and skills, and with living independently. Resources are needed to provide that help.

Lack of English language provision is a major practical problem for young ASRs and for the projects. Language development is particularly important for integration. But there is a shortage of qualified ESOL teachers, as well as long waiting lists for local authority ESOL classes, high costs and inflexible arrangements. Some projects have responded by skilling up personnel to give individual assistance. For example, the Somali Integration Society is paying for one of its volunteers to train as an ESOL specialist. Many projects are helping to develop language skills through informal mechanisms.

**Tees Valley Arts** works with young people of many cultural backgrounds. Its clients include young refugees and asylum seekers, who are mainly from Kurdish communities and African countries, and Asian young people who are more established in the community. As a result of this mix, project participants are improving their language skills and learning about British and local cultures.

It is hard for young people and projects to adapt to cultural change as well as to a new language. Projects play a significant role in supporting young people to build a new life in a strange country:

*“We are aware that it is often difficult for these youths to balance two or more cultures at the same time, as they are often taught a different culture at home, to that which they are taught in schools, colleges, and the like. They often are negotiating their relationship with British culture, whilst simultaneously trying to hang on to what cultural norms, practices, and traditions they can from their country of origin. This is no simple task, and it is not uncommon for these youths to become isolated as a result of the language barriers they face, which of course limits their opportunities, and can lead them to be discriminated against.”*

But other cultural differences can arise:

*“The groups we are working with range from destitute and newly arrived asylum-seekers and young people in care whose most basic practical needs may not be being met, to refugee communities in which young people are settled and stable, but friction is arising within communities or families as cultural differences develop between older and younger generations.”*

Many young people have enormous and complex welfare and emotional needs, and some bear a heavy responsibility for supporting others. This faced projects with significant problems:

*“Most of [our project participants] ... originate in some of the world’s worst areas of conflict ... the majority are refugees and asylum-seekers with multiple physical and mental health needs, compounded by their limited understanding of how British society operates. The majority have fled conflict situations in their country of origin, and face barriers to their social inclusion for reasons relating to language, discrimination, culture and lack of awareness of their rights and responsibilities.”*

*“Many young people have experienced situations where they are taking responsibility for ‘looking after’ and supporting others, either within their own families, communities or amongst their peers.”*

Projects also experienced difficulties as a result of government policies, particularly when they were unable to continue supporting young people who had exhausted the asylum process and who, when they reached 18 years of age, faced dispersal or removal from the country.

## How effective have the projects been at promoting integration?

Project activities have led to a gradual breakdown of stereotypes and misconceptions, and therefore have promoted integration. The most effective activities have been:

- Joint activities of mutual interest, bringing together young people from different communities on a largely equal footing, particularly creative, sports and leisure activities
- Awareness-raising activities for community groups and statutory organisations, to develop their understanding and capacity for working with young asylum-seekers and refugees
- Volunteering – either project participants volunteering in the local community, or young people from the host community volunteering with the project
- Working with sympathetic individuals in the media. (This was effective for a few, more experienced projects)

### Key messages: Integration

■ Funders and projects need to agree on what ‘integration’ means and be realistic about what it is possible to achieve when projects are working with small groups, often in specific neighbourhoods. Despite this, the evaluation has shown that projects have developed activities and practices which have assisted integration.

■ Integration takes place gradually and on a small scale, and requires substantial groundwork. Short-term gains may be difficult to recognise. It would be useful to explore ways in which projects could measure the impact of their work on other organisations.

■ Integration is a process to be initiated only when all parties are receptive. It often comes second to young people’s immediate practical and emotional needs.

■ Funders should beware of unrealistic expectations of funded projects and help them to celebrate what may appear to be small gains, but which may nonetheless be significant.

■ Fun activities are important for young people who have caring responsibilities for others. These allow them to express themselves and to have some brief respite.

■ To enable integration, young people need:

- A space where they feel safe and supported
- Security of accommodation
- A sense of safety in their local neighbourhood
- The opportunity to socialise with their peers from the host community
- Positive and ‘purposeful’ activity

The problems created by cutbacks in ESOL provision place additional demands on projects and impede integration. Some projects have trained their own staff /volunteers, but expert advocacy bodies such as The National Institute of Adult Continuing Education are clear that learners require and deserve properly trained and experienced teachers if they are to make real progress in language learning.

RCOs have to be relevant to the needs and aspirations of different groups of ASR young people at different stages of their lives and able to respond appropriately.

## Building the capacity of organisations

The evaluators were asked to assess the extent to which the Fund had helped to build the capacity of the funded organisations. For the purposes of the evaluation, ‘capacity-building’ has been taken to mean:

*“Helping RCOs and others to strengthen their resources of knowledge and expertise, in ways that are obviously and increasingly beneficial to the communities they represent, as well as improving how they operate and fulfil their remit.”*

In establishing the Fund and giving more than a third of the available funding to projects led by RCOs, PHF signalled its commitment to strengthening the effectiveness of small RCOs, especially outside London. In addition to making grants, the Foundation:

- Arranged free workshops and learning seminars
- Involved projects closely in the development of an Evaluation Resource Pack
- Encouraged projects to form partnerships with local second-tier organisations to help with capacity-building

This strategy has worked well in many cases, although there have been some challenges, as outlined elsewhere.

Over 90 per cent of the projects that responded to the survey felt the PHF fund had been important in helping them to build capacity. It allowed many to recruit staff and expand provision, which would otherwise have been impossible. It enabled them to provide training and development opportunities for staff and volunteers. It helped those less accustomed to participatory practice to be more responsive to young people. Some recognised that the Fund helped to raise their profile. It enabled others to undertake research and consultation with young people before developing their project.

Projects particularly valued the support given by PHF staff. For example, applicants had the chance to discuss their proposals with Foundation staff and, if they wished, they could then revise them. This helped them to know what was expected by the Fund. In many instances, PHF funding gave project staff the valuable space to start thinking beyond the limit of the funding:

*“PHF contributed enormously to the development of the project and organisation as a whole. This project is a success story that has been used already across country amongst Bosnian organisations. It would not have been possible to achieve all those success without help from PHF.”*

*“The majority of the work could not have been carried out without the support of the PHF grant. Not only has it directly supported a worker in this post. Through the PHF grant we have been able to draw down other funding to continue the work.”*

*“By having a development worker in place we have been able to work with partners more effectively through this period and ensure learning gained by other agencies is maintained.”*

Nevertheless, more support may be needed to ensure that projects' aims and projected outcomes are more specific, realistic and measurable, that they are able to develop indicators for assessing outcomes, and that they can evaluate themselves.

The Fund encouraged capacity-building through grants to certain organisations:

**Leicester North West Community Forum** aims to help develop the capacity of RCOs, to enable them to deliver projects for young asylum-seekers and refugees. This includes helping them to build up systems and protocols, and to develop and manage a range of activities. The Forum's Refugee Community Development Officer is offering support to four RCO partners – a women's group, a children's group, a Somali group and an arts group for African refugee communities. An RCO member who sits on the project's steering group said of the development officer: *“He's helped our organisation lots. In terms of developing our policies, giving advice and experience on how to work with children and how we can develop art materials so that we can work with children and young people. He's helped with our management committee”*.

The Fund helped to build capacity by encouraging projects to partner with local second-tier organisations. Second-tier and larger voluntary organisations enabled smaller projects to develop their capacity by promoting partnership work more widely than small projects could do alone. They offered specialist advice and training, helped connect projects to appropriate agencies, and in some instances gave financial support.

Projects working in partnership shared their resources, including recruitment, fundraising, outreach and training. Some partnerships led to the provision of expertise, such as mentoring or 'buddying', and in some instances material support such as office space or a venue for events. These help partners to build their capacity.

*“We often organise joint recreational activities during the school holidays to enable us to pool resources and staff.”*

Partnership is a two-way process and it is important for RCOs to help others, such as landlords and housing associations, to develop their ability to respond to the needs of asylum-seekers, not least to prevent them becoming 'intentionally homeless'. Some RCOs felt they were treated as 'lesser partners', or felt 'used' by larger organisations, when in fact they have a considerable amount to offer.

## Key messages: Building capacity

- || The direct result of the PHF funding was to give projects the ability to recruit more staff and expand activities, and indirectly to help their partners and the communities with which they were working.
- || RCOs and other support organisations are working in an adverse climate. Organisations therefore need to operate as effectively as possible but lack of capacity can limit their achievements.
- || The existence of a dedicated Fund such as that from PHF helped RCOs to build their capacity and deliver services and it helped some to survive, but only a few have developed mechanisms for demonstrating their effectiveness.
- || Projects often need guidance in their initial stages of development, particularly in setting realistic aims and achievable and measurable outcomes, in developing indicators for assessing outcomes, and in establishing methods of evaluating their work.
- || It is important to develop a shared understanding of what is meant by 'capacity-building', with some agreement on the projected outcomes and how these will be measured.
- || Project staff need to be supported. They need the skills and emotional resources to respond to stressful situations, and the time to address young peoples' immediate needs.
- || Gaps in provision remain which require extra capacity. Mental health support is of particular note.
- || The following are key to effective project delivery:
  - Making time to define short- and longer-term goals and to devise mechanisms for measuring outcomes
  - Building in initial implementation time to accommodate recruitment of staff, administrative processes, and engagement of young people and, where relevant, their families.

## Supporting young people to participate in project processes

### Attracting young people

The initial stages of a project are frequently difficult. It can be tricky to assess how many participants might become involved in a project; under- or over-estimates present different problems. There are advantages in undertaking a preliminary needs assessment to ascertain the likely take-up and needs of participants, and the potential impact on a project's ability to deliver services. This approach requires funders to be flexible.

As some projects found, it was not easy to attract and keep participants and they had to work hard to 'sell' themselves to young people to keep them:

*“Most of the young people had lots of confusion of who they are and underestimated themselves because they were not being asked to talk about their problems, it was really hard to convince them to believe in what we deliver.”*

*“Participants are busy with their lives and sometimes distracted by asylum concerns.”*

Projects found that, in order to involve young people effectively, they needed to:

- Persevere with young people to encourage them to be involved in project planning and to develop their skills
- Explain different systems and policies to young people
- Work with other family members and the communities before working with the young people themselves
- Engage previous participants as peer mentors – this was often more effective than formal education and training

In **Coventry, Solihull & Warwickshire Partnership**, the peer mentor helped more than 70 young people over two years, particularly in gaining new skills, putting ASR young people in contact with others from their cultural background for mutual support, and helping to integrate young people within the host community. Young people were very positive about the support offered and the way in which it complemented other education and training activities:

*“[The peer mentor] helped us a lot, because if we didn't know any words then we asked him. For myself I didn't know any English or anything about computers and my teacher, anything she said to me I didn't understand and I asked [the peer mentor] and he helped me a lot. It was ... fantastic.”*

## The nature of young people's involvement

When young people do become involved, the nature of their involvement may vary. The Fund was keen to encourage organisations to find both what is the best fit for them at present, and to move towards a more developed engagement with young people.

Of projects responding to the survey, 94 per cent stated that their service users were involved in project planning. Usually, 'involvement' meant regular consultation on activities to be delivered or seeking feedback on sessions, rather than more systemic and ongoing input:

*"We consult them about the activities that they would like us to run and we ask them whether the service they receive from us meets their needs in terms of enabling them to make the best of school."*

Over a third of projects involved participants in their steering group or in directing the work of the project in a more formal way.

*"The young people help manage the project through the user forum and a steering group who will make sure all parts of the community are engaged with the project ... A youth panel is active, this panel is there to be involved in all recruitment and interviews of potential staff, facilitators and session workers. We have young people represented in our management committee (four out of six are under 26)."*

Several projects established effective formal systems for involving young people in planning and developing activities. For example:

- The East London Somali Youth & Welfare Centre, Leicester North West Community Forum and Scottish Sports Futures have youth forums with a direct link into the organisation's Board/Management Committee
- Pan-Afrique Centre and Leicester North West Community Forum have young people represented on the steering group for the PHF-funded project
- Roma Support Group has two young people represented on its board of management

The **Pan-Afrique Centre** aims to be demand-led. It involved young people in the early stages of the project, including making an input into the original proposal to PHF as well as being represented on the steering group. A minimum of two young people serve on the management committee and contribute to the organisation's decision-making process. Young people are also involved in training and advocacy for the project.

Around one fifth of projects stated that they took a participatory approach to delivering their project, which implied that young people would be closely involved in selecting activities and determining how they would progress. For example:

*“They are involved in the content for the programmes, research and development in programme making, editing, interviewing and producing programmes for broadcast. The young people meet monthly to decide the direction and timeline for the project.”*

Others involved young people in needs assessment exercises and social audits.

One project felt that a wider participatory approach was more effective than only having input through a traditional formal hierarchy. By adopting a broader approach, all young people were able to be involved in a wider range of processes. Others found that informal discussions or drop-ins were constructive, at least in the short-term.

Involvement in project development and activities such as fund-raising and campaigning also give scope for engaging young people in relevant and effective ways.

Participants in the **East London Somali Youth & Welfare Centre** are involved in fund-raising through raffles and competitions. The project draws on the skills of staff to help young people to become more enterprising through developing their own websites.

*“We’ve got a pool of workers and talented young people to be nurtured and we are looking at self-sustaining programmes.”*

Young people at **Scottish Sports Futures** advise on locations, format, the style and distribution of promotional materials, and the content of educational inputs. They agree a code of conduct and the ground rules for every activity and are encouraged to take personal responsibility for behaving in a team-spirited way. Older members of the group help coaches to establish good-natured activity sessions and try to set a positive example to younger and newer recruits. Educational time-out slots, negotiated with participants, are attached to all sessions to provide for relevant discussions or to introduce invited speakers who can offer inspiration. Youngsters choose names for their teams and logos for their kit and take part in fund-raising activities to buy equipment and team strips.

The result is a tangible feeling of solidarity. When a twilight basketball player and his mother were threatened with deportation, SSF project workers and young people were a visible presence in the public demonstration outside the local offices of the immigration service.

## Benefits of participation for young people

Young people learned new and transferable skills through participation in project planning at different levels. For instance:

*“One of the aims of the programme is to enable ... young people to learn and practice decision-making processes which will enable them to engage in further education, training or employment.”*

Projects felt that one of the main reasons for their success was that young people were consulted and involved in shaping policies:

*“... giving leadership of the project to the users makes this work well. Ownership gives people inspiration.”*

## Key messages: Supporting young people to participate in project processes

- Participatory approaches to delivery involve young people in shaping project provision and determining how the project develops. This helps them to express their views creatively and in their own style, within a safe and supportive environment. This style of working is effective in capturing the imagination of young people and can help to motivate them, but it is important for projects to persuade young people of the direct benefits to them, as they may be initially reluctant to engage.
- Most projects are responsive to what young people say they would like to do and they involve young people in project planning in informal ways. But this is not always the same as ‘sharing leadership’ with young people, which requires a more systematic process. While it may be seen as good practice to build in more formal involvement of participants in directing the work of their projects, this may not always be feasible – some young people may be reluctant to take on a role that singles them out from their peers, or which focuses attention on them in a more public way.
- Participation may be seen as an incremental process, with minimal consultation and feedback at one end, and formal involvement in management structures at the other. Ideally, all projects aim to reach a situation whereby participants are engaged in project processes and direction on a regular basis and are instrumental in effecting change. This can be seen as an essential part of the personal development of young people and it acknowledges the value of their experience and voice.
- Despite adopting reflective practices, not all organisations were able to be constructively self-critical in ways that move them forward. The Roma Support Group is thoughtful and reflective, and a good example of a learning organisation, in which new staff and volunteers are inducted into ways of working that have served the organisation well over the years. This helps to build strength and knowledge.
- Many projects may need more guidance on setting up basic monitoring systems, as well as developing effective consultation and evaluation methods. The self-evaluation resource pack produced by PHF should be useful here but some projects would benefit from training in how best to use the materials.

## Perceived impact of the project on young people, organisations and communities

The survey results indicate that projects consider they have had an impact on several levels: on individual participants; on funded organisations and their partners; on host communities; and, to a limited extent, on local policies.

The most obvious benefits of project work appear to be in relation to the increase in skills of individual participants and in their ability to access services. Projects reported that participants were:

- Felt to have built self-esteem
- More aware of and able to access local services
- Able to develop their life skills, including management of their own finances and healthy living
- Better able to express themselves with confidence
- Seen to have developed higher aspirations
- More integrated into the host community

Survey respondents felt that building confidence and self-esteem was important:

*“The relaunch of the welcome guide ... followed up by information sessions has also been effective in empowering young people with knowledge of the asylum process and care and support systems. This has increased confidence in creating their own care plans and challenging decisions with which they do not agree.”*

*“Our youths have developed more confidence in themselves, and the desire to continue moving up the achievement ladder. They have taken up the often-daunting prospect of trying new things with new people, which has enabled them to feel a sense of pride in themselves.”*

Creative arts were seen as particularly important in building self-esteem:

*“The groups themselves have offered powerful affirmative experiences for the young women involved. They have used the spaces provided to express themselves, voice their experiences and feelings, learn new creative skills, and build their confidence and self esteem.”*

Projects noted the impact of the PHF-funded work on their own organisation, particularly the skills or personal development of staff and volunteers, the development of partnerships and joint initiatives, and their ability to offer more support to young asylum-seekers and refugees:

*“The project has brought a wider network of refugee organisations and individuals, partners, volunteers, etc to the organisation.”*

*“The project has also enabled our charity to embed our services in the community as it relates to young people as well as their engagement.”*

Over a quarter of survey respondents felt that the PHF-funded project had influenced their practice, particularly in involving young people in the design of activities and developing ways of getting input and/or leadership. As a result of coming into direct contact with and interacting with ASR young people, members of staff developed greater understanding.

In other organisations, awareness of the needs of ASR communities and their different cultures was raised, and popular misconceptions were countered:

*“We work with the police to overcome stereotypes [eg ‘asylum-seekers carry knives’, ‘there will be an increase in rape cases as these young men become sexually active’] and explain issues of identity from a client’s perspective.”*

Where partner organisations had not previously worked closely with ASR young people, the project was seen to have helped them to:

- Deliver services more effectively
- Build capacity through joint working, providing specialist expertise and developing good practice guidance and the contribution of volunteers

*“Building good relationships with an isolated section of the community through the programme has offered local Police Officers and Youth Development teams a platform to introduce themselves and their services to a previously hard-to-reach group of young people.”*

Unfortunately it was not always possible to engage with other agencies.

Over half of the groups who responded to the survey felt that the main impact on the host community had been greater awareness of asylum-seekers and refugees. This was mainly achieved through young people presenting their work publicly, through sports and educational activities, and through young people becoming good neighbours. The host community’s awareness was also raised by meeting ASR young people who volunteered their time in local centres, and because volunteers from the host community worked with the young people.

*“The project is breaking down barriers between the young asylum-seekers and those young people from the host community. The young people born and brought up in [this city] are more able to see the young asylum-seekers and refugees as individuals, finding commonality in their experiences rather than just regarding them as a homogenous group.”*

*“Where our clients move into a flat of their own we encourage them to introduce themselves to their older neighbours. This is largely appreciated and can reduce any fears the older neighbours might have about loud noise. For example, one client relocated his housewarming party over Christmas to a friend’s flat in order not to annoy his neighbours.”*

Some organisations tried to make an impact on local policy by:

- Organising events where funders and strategic partners are invited
- Involvement with statutory organisations, particularly local authorities
- Encouraging awareness of the situation of ASR young people

Others tried to exert influence through indirect means:

*“The project has not made a direct impact on local policy, but has contributed indirectly through the attendance of consortium members at forums like the multi-agency Refugee Forum (convened by the city council) and the Mental Health Partnership Board.”*

*“We are regularly asked by the government office, local authority, school, college and local committees to give presentations for asylum-seekers and refugees in West Midlands.”*

Some projects are part of strategic groups, through which they voice issues relating to ASR young people (not always successfully):

*“We are members of the Priority neighbourhood teams and the stronger communities group and ensure asylum issues are voiced. For example we have tried to influence the approach to ESOL and skills training but progress is slow.”*

*“We worked with statutory and voluntary agencies in 2007 to put together a collective response to the Home Office White Paper ‘Planning Better Outcomes and Support for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children’. Young people were also consulted as part of this process. [Our response] was quoted in the January 2008 publication by the Home Office, though unfortunately they seem not to have taken into consideration many of our concerns about their proposals.”*

Occasionally, ASR young people themselves have been able to raise issues of concern in wider forums. This has had some effect on how their needs are catered for locally:

*“... [T]hrough the project young refugees have been going to local community forum meetings and this has enabled them to raise issues that concern them. The youth have also been active in campaigning for the non-closure of a local market which is one of only a few selling produce from the refugee youth home countries. They have so far been able to halt the closure.”*

## Key Messages: Perceived impact on young people, organisations and communities

- || Effective projects know how to connect with their target communities and involve them directly in activities and planning.
- || Involving young people and keeping them interested is most effective when the activities on offer are those which capture their imagination and their creative and physical energy, and which enable them to achieve positive recognition from their peers. Young people were animated by making music and physical exercise/expression in a way that those receiving information in a more didactic way – albeit about their rights – were not. Peer mentoring is effective in engaging young people's interest and commitment.
- || Participatory practice engages young people's imagination and trust. Belonging to something that matters helps young people to develop loyalty, leadership and responsibility. Encouragement to take on more active leadership roles helps them to advance their capacity, skills and personal development and to ensure that their voices are integral to shaping future provision. Youth workers grounded in philosophies of shared leadership are more likely to deploy participatory methods.
- || The PHF Fund has helped projects to develop the skills of their staff, increase their resources and their capacity to deliver services which are user-focused and informed by their participants. It has helped projects to raise awareness among statutory agencies to enable them to better serve their ASR populations. A culture change is required to achieve effective large-scale change for ASR communities.
- || As a result of their involvement with the projects, young people were seen by project staff and communities to be more confident to deal with adversity in a climate that could often be strange and hostile, and to develop close friendships and networks with their peers.

## Effectiveness of partnership working

### Number and types of partnerships

One of the aims of the Fund was to promote partnership working, so it is not surprising that 80 per cent of responding projects stated that they had developed new partnerships as a result of their PHF-funded project. Nearly all worked with VCOs, with many also being in partnership with local authorities and RCOs (Table 1).

Table 1. Organisations projects work with

Type of organisation	No. of respondents	% of respondents
Refugee community organisations (RCOs)	43	84
Local residents' associations	15	29
Faith groups	24	47
Other voluntary and community organisations (VCOs)	48	94
Local authorities	45	88
Other statutory organisations (e.g. libraries, health authorities)	39	76
Other organisations	35	67

N=51

'Partnership working' appeared to comprise networking, information sharing and dissemination. Joint activities, particularly sports events and creative activities, were also important.

However, there were many examples of partner organisations being more deeply involved. Sometimes they were integral to project management and programme delivery:

*"Partnership working is critical in delivering services to young people. In view of this, [our project] has constituted a project steering committee from a very diverse range of organisations such as the CVS, [the local] College, the Police, PCT, Connexions, Job Centre and other RCOs."*

Projects such as Coventry, Solihull & Warwickshire Partnership, the East London Somali Youth & Welfare Centre and the Pan-Afrique Centre have developed partnerships that enable young people to be supported in learning and working in a multicultural context.

Young people from the **East London Somali Youth & Welfare Centre** are now starting to progress to other initiatives. Two young people are now in local authority training posts, two are going for accreditation in ABC youth work, and one has already got accreditation. The main success in 2008 was to get young people into the local authority. The project manager felt that without the local authority coming down to the project and participating in workshops on a regular basis, they would not have achieved this. The result is that a small number of young people are integrated into a mainstream setting:

*“It affected the whole mood of the community, because a buzz has gone through the community ... these are the fruits of the work we’ve been doing and we’ve got even more respect from the community.”*

## Pre-conditions for successful partnerships

It is clear that effective partnership takes considerable commitment and time in training and sharing practice with partners – especially at the outset. It is important that:

- All partners are committed to the partnership
- *“People [do] what they say they’ll do”*
- There is clarity at the outset about aims and objectives, respective organisational roles, expectations of each organisation, and the end goals of the joint work
- Relationships of trust, mutual respect and understanding are developed
- There are clear channels of communication and regular contact between partners
- Partners develop a mutual understanding of each other’s work
- There is commitment at all levels within the organisation. Sometimes more junior staff involved in day-to-day partnership work felt that people higher up ‘talk the talk’ but in practice offered little support to sustain the partnership. Leadership from the top and public commitment contribute significantly to good partnership
- There are strong inter-personal relationships, complementary skills, mutual exchange and shared vision
- Ideally, there is a formal partnership agreement

## The benefits of partnerships

Projects spoke very positively about the added value from good partnership arrangements, which they identified as a crucial component of project delivery. Working well with a range of partners can help to address problems of capacity and the need to raise awareness and promote integration. In the longer term, partners may act as powerful advocates for projects and for ASR young people.

Partnerships enabled projects to:

- Make new contacts, network with new organisations and build links with different communities
- Assist others in developing their own services for ASRs
- Explore new ways of working together
- Develop and strengthen pre-existing partnerships
- Share experiences and resources
- Avoid duplication and competition
- Provide a wider range of services for their participants
- Increase capacity to develop integrated services to meet the changing and complex needs of young refugees and asylum-seekers
- Ameliorate some of the negative effects of national policies which may disrupt service provision and have a profound effect on individual young people
- Raise awareness and promote integration
- Facilitate cross-referrals and thereby help to avoid duplication: *“We are able to connect our young person to [partnership organisation] for specific support and this makes it easy and more effective to make direct link and signpost. Referral to local and mainstream organisations is [made] through partnership work”*
- Develop effective practice through sharing expertise and learning. In some instances this led to a change in local policy and governance structures: *“[our partnership, between an RCO and a second-tier organisation] had produced a report about Somalis in [this city] which investigated the best practices of other cities... This also pressured [the] city council to learn from and follow their steps, it resulted that [the] city council invited Somali Community organisation... and formed a Somali Task Force group that our organisation is a great member of”*

Where partnerships are long-standing and seen by all parties to be of benefit, there is greater opportunity for organisations to build on the learning from their joint work.

**Link Action** has benefited enormously from its relationship with the **Northern Refugee Centre**, a much larger (second-tier) organisation which, in turn, has learned a lot from Link Action. Both organisations are committed to continuing the project when PHF funding ends. They hope to offer capacity-building support to other RCOs. They want to extend their working relationships with secondary schools in the city and continue to develop training opportunities for young people that will increase their leisure, volunteering and employment opportunities. This collaboration illustrates excellent practice. For both organisations it marked their *“first experience with a huge gap of capacity ... but it was a positive experience from which there has been much to learn which can benefit others”*.

## Other benefits

Some partnerships made positive statements in the media – for example, through promoting joint events and developing links with sympathetic reporters. Others developed ‘one-stop shops’ with other agencies, enabling organisations to provide a wider range of services and bring together different groups. Working with mainstream or other agencies helped to reduce dependency on one project. In some partnerships, volunteering opportunities were taken up by ASR young people, helping to build awareness and familiarity between different groups.

Importantly, some statutory organisations in partnership arrangements wanted projects to know that they could be relied upon to provide sustained support. One commented:

*“I hope we have given some of those groups the confidence to know that they’ll be going next year with support from us.”*

## Problems with partnerships

Some partnerships have not been as productive as anticipated, owing to a range of factors, some of which appear to be beyond the control of small projects.

For the **British Afghan Women’s Society**, the PHF-funded project began well. The Refugee Council acted as a champion and was keen to offer training and advice. Enfield, Haringey and Croydon Children’s Departments provided contact with Afghan young people in their care. A project co-ordinator was appointed and trained. However, the office space they had been promised by one borough council did not materialise. Some of the society’s activities had to be suspended, new venues found, and protest letters written to local councillors and MPs. Eventually they were given a modern and well equipped rent-free room shared with four other RCOs. But it is on a trading estate beyond the tube line and major bus routes, two hours by public transport from where the majority of London’s Afghan community has settled. It is, in effect, inaccessible except by car. One of the social services departments has become increasingly difficult to pin down about developing further collaborative activities. The energy involved in trying to sustain partnership relations has almost defeated their small organisation but they are determined to succeed.

Where there were problems in partnership working, they often related to:

- Lack of clarity over partnership aims
- Lack of commitment from some partners or conflicting demands
- Poor communication, which could lead to misunderstanding
- Partnership motivated primarily by access to funding
- Varying degrees of commitment and inequalities between organisations, because of factors such as their size and organisational capacity

Sometimes, where smaller RCOs are involved with larger and more powerful partners, working in partnership has created significant difficulties for the

smaller partner. Although small RCOs often have the more relevant direct experience, local knowledge, contacts, and constituency credibility, they usually have fewer resources in terms of paid staff, accommodation, facilities for delivering activities, long-term funding and capacity. Concerns expressed included:

- Larger organisations which have sought their participation in order to access funding, without the benefit of them being treated as equal partners
- Being treated as a resource by statutory services to fulfil certain functions, particularly access to their target communities, without funding or ‘in-kind’ recognition of their contribution
- Lack of commitment from some partners, leading to an unequal balance of roles and responsibilities
- Being treated as the ‘lesser’ partner, because their contribution is valued purely in terms of the organisation’s size or resources

Sometimes partnership relationships and financial reliance can place projects in contradictory and potentially compromising situations. Most projects responded to difficulties by quickly raising concerns directly with partners and having regular contact to discuss issues.

Despite the considerable number of settled Roma families living in Newham, the local council has consistently refused the **Roma Support Group** any financial assistance. At the same time, the project manager reported that attempts are often made by local bodies to use the Support Group to ‘control’ the behaviour of Roma arrivals. The project manager describes being:

- Contacted by the police to help them arrest Roma children found begging in the High Street
- Contacted by a headmistress in order to remove Roma women from her playground
- Approached for accommodation by a homelessness charity with a policy that explicitly excludes working with homeless Roma

In all these cases, the project manager refused to cooperate and challenged those concerned about their assumptions and attitudes towards the Roma community.

Working in partnership can enable projects to address multiple needs more effectively but gaps remain. Specialist input such as welfare rights advice and interpreting and translation is often not available.

## Key Messages: The effectiveness of partnership working

- || While PHF funding has promoted the development of new partnerships, some of which have grown stronger, it remains to be seen how sustainable these will be in the longer term. There are many challenges to achieving effective and sustained partnerships.
- || When it works well, partnership working is vital for capacity-building of small RCOs – and it should be recognised that they bring substantial strengths to a partnership arrangement. Partnerships are not a panacea for all problems and sometimes small organisations are forced into them for survival. Partnerships take time to build up, with substantial effort needed in the early stages to draw up systems, agree shared aims and principles, and develop relationships of trust. While small organisations may need help to develop and sustain partnership working, sometimes partnerships just do not work and mediation might be required. Alternatively, organisations may need to move on to new partnerships.
- || Capacity-building for RCOs often took place through partnership. Through increased partnership work, many projects – small and larger – increased their capacity to deliver effective services to their target groups, through sharing learning, ‘in-kind’ support and joint planning. Many have built in ways to ensure continuity. In other cases, it is not clear how some organisations will survive beyond the intervention of the Fund.
- || From the perspective of small RCOs, partnerships with second-tier or statutory organisations work best when there is tangible evidence of mutual respect and equality built into the working practices from the outset, such as open communication, leadership from the top and public commitment to the partnership.

## Future prospects and sustainability

### Continuation funding

Despite the Fund's assistance with capacity-building, sustainability remains a challenge for some organisations. Although several of the funded organisations have managed to secure additional or continuation funding, for others attracting future funding is a longer-term aspiration. In some cases the Fund has provided the only funding for the projects. The British Afghan Women's Society and the Somali Integration Society have used PHF funding to pay for specific projects and to keep their organisations afloat. Because of their voluntary nature, both groups could continue with their grassroots work in future with relatively little core funding. However, this approach may not sit well with the 'professionalisation' of the sector, or with the need to demonstrate effective service delivery and accountability to funders. However, this is the reality faced by many groups.

The **Arlaadi Somali Community Association** has made good use of the funding from PHF and seems to be well-run. Its office and advice centre is always busy. Endorsements from local schools, the Manchester Refugee Support Network, Job Centre Plus and Manchester City Council show that Arlaadi's work and close contact with its constituency is well-regarded and appreciated. The office space costs approximately £1,000 a month. It is unclear how this cost will be replaced when the PHF grant runs out. Arlaadi is seeking further funding. In this respect, it is typical of many small support groups. Arlaadi was advised by the Council to contact other Somali support groups with a view to amalgamating.

*"They told us to get an office ... which we did ... but they wouldn't help us with the rent ... now they say become an umbrella organisation ... no guarantee of funding ... feels as though we are being given the run around rather than any practical help."*

The advice to 'become an umbrella organisation' may echo the mood of the times but it encourages a bureaucratically neat and tidy vision of service delivery, reflecting a top-down approach to sustainable development. It will be hard for a small, under-staffed association such as Arlaadi to respond appropriately and may increase the many difficulties experienced by the asylum and refugee families whom the organisation currently supports so well.

Almost two thirds of projects were successful in some or all of their bids for further funding (some projects were funded by several sources).

Table 2. Sources of future funding

Source of funding	No.
National trusts, charitable organisations	10
Local council	7
Government funding (Scotland, England & Wales; inc Arts Council)	5
Awards for all/Big Lottery	5
Local trusts, charitable organisations	2
Other local statutory organisations (e.g. PCT, Connexions)	1
Educational bodies	1

Projects' experience of securing more funding was mixed. Just under 40 per cent attributed at least some of their success to PHF's help. PHF enabled projects to show credibility and a track record – this increased other funders' confidence in them. It also helped to raise the profile of issues affecting ASR young people:

*“It helps to have the support of a larger, reputable funder such as PHF to persuade smaller funders with less capacity for assessing our work, that the work is worth supporting.”*

Self-promotion and good partnership work helped several projects.

The **Pan-Afrique Centre** has been very successful in securing funding to sustain and expand its provision. This mainly results from the hard work put into partnership development, the project's evident achievements, and its business-like approach to service development. The project has received three years' funding for a new health advocacy programme which aims to recruit volunteers to promote health and access to services amongst the community. It is working closely with the PCT and the Volunteer Bureau. The funding for this was received on the strength of the PHF-funded project.

The local authority has also approached PAC to propose funding of three new positions in the organisation to provide specialist business advice and mentoring to community members wanting to set up their own business. PAC would benefit from further support from public agencies to help it to deliver the new initiatives, but there is a strong commitment from all partners to ensure the project continues to build on its achievements.

Others encountered particular difficulties.

The increasing importance attached by government and other funders to commissioning services from organisations such as the **Roma Support Group** is seen by the project manager as highly problematic. The manager feels that the shift towards commissioning more generic services will privilege larger and more established organisations. The RSG is well placed to provide support and services for Roma children and young people, but would not claim any definitive expertise when it comes to Gypsies and Traveller children

more generally, or young people from other minority communities. The project manager believes small refugee- and migrant-led organisations like theirs will be increasingly marginalised by the emphasis on integrated commissioning, and that Roma families and young people will be easily overlooked by large umbrella bodies which have no detailed knowledge of Roma culture, or specific commitment to their interests.

## Impact of the Fund on project practice and its delivery

The Fund influenced future practice, project infrastructure and the application of learning. Just over 80 per cent of projects intend to continue some project activities after PHF funding has finished, and nearly half of respondents felt the Fund had influenced the way in which they would deliver future services, even if they have to scale down.

Several projects had been influenced to put in place financial and other systems in order to be able to deliver services more effectively. Others felt that what they had learned could be applied to other areas in future.

Projects which had succeeded in influencing local policy development felt that this would not have happened without the PHF funding:

*“The learning from the work that is currently being undertaken ... is having an impact on future provision for young people at the Scottish Government level. This is likely to be a significant legacy.”*

## Key messages: Future prospects and sustainability

- The best projects plan for sustainability sooner rather than later.
- Many projects developed new working practices which will endure beyond the lifetime of the Fund. However, an exit strategy needs to be in place in good time – to focus on how services might continue should projects have to reduce or cease operations. Referring young people to partner agencies and enabling them to start to support themselves are important aspects of provision and project continuity.
- Many have used the Fund to access other funding or to develop partnership applications to funders. But others have not been so successful and there are serious questions about their ability to sustain services after the funding ceases. Consideration might be given to how smaller organisations, without the business drive needed to sustain themselves, can be supported to develop their future fundraising ability.

# Conclusions

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## Key messages for PHF and other funders

Funders, including PHF, should:

- Help projects to set clear, realistic aims to meet the needs of participants and other stakeholders
- Be specific in their expectations of projects
- Ensure that all parties understand the meaning of the language they use, so that the aims of funding programmes are met
- Be flexible to accommodate changed circumstances and external demands on projects
- Promote effective monitoring and evaluation, and self-evaluation
- Provide media training for those working with asylum-seekers and refugees

## Key messages for RCOs and small community groups

RCOs and small groups need to:

- Set clear, realistic and achievable aims and indicators for assessing outcomes, and at the outset, allow time to develop processes and assess potential demand
- Establish referral systems with appropriate agencies
- Institute regular 'health checks' or social audits
- If necessary, seek external advice or mediation where there are problems in partnerships
- Consider adopting creative learning and participatory approaches to project planning and delivery
- Actively engage young people in project leadership on an ongoing basis
- Consider the establishment of a steering group for new projects which advises, reviews and guides the work and includes beneficiaries
- Develop exit strategies which build in continuity at an early stage
- Preserve their independence and community links – especially when entering into partnerships

## || Key messages for second-tier and larger voluntary organisations

Second-tier and larger organisations can:

- Help smaller groups to participate in local strategic partnerships, and ensure that their concerns are raised
- Advise on work with the media
- Support smaller ones to develop their systems and secure funding, including through joint applications

Though they may be the ‘senior’ partner, second-tier and larger organisations should take into account the expertise that smaller organisations bring to a partnership arrangement.

## Appendix 1. Methodology

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This is a summary note on methodology; more detail is available at the PHF website.

The evaluation took place in three stages. Stage 1 (April 2005–March 2006) assessed how far individual projects were meeting their aims and objectives. This consisted of the following elements:

- Practical advice was offered to projects. This included the provision of a framework and the tools to measure the outcomes and impact of their work, so they could build on what works and provide evidence of the effect of their interventions
- A questionnaire distributed to 23 projects to assess the extent to which they were meeting their declared aims and objectives and identify examples of relevant learning and good practice that could be shared with others and would inform the ongoing operation of the Fund. The evaluators discussed their experiences and issues with them as ‘critical friends’ and compiled a detailed report of their overall observations, discussions and recommendations
- A stakeholder event, to feed back their draft report findings and to gather any additional information, good practice, reflections on the process and evaluation needs from those grantees and trustees who took part. The reflections and information gathered at the stakeholder events were fed into the final report and helped to support the development of an evaluation framework

Stage 2 (June 2006–July 2007) consisted of the following elements:

- A questionnaire to 43 projects, in order to continue assessing whether projects were fulfilling their own objectives and learning from their experiences in ways that could inform others, including PHF, as well as beginning to capture the qualitative impact of projects on their participants, project workers, partners and communities
- Site visits to ten individual projects
- The evaluators continued as critical friends to individual projects, feeding back their findings to inform future project development, welcoming comments from project staff and discussion on these findings
- Preparation of an evaluation resource pack for PHF, to support capacity-building within projects and to assist them in evaluating their work. This was developed by the evaluators with the close involvement of projects, in association with the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education, and was published by PHF in March 2007

The executive summaries of both interim evaluation reports were distributed to all funded projects with the full reports available on the PHF website and on request<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> Comments were not specifically invited by PHF at this stage, and none received.

Stage 3 (October 2007–July 2008). The third and final phase of the Fund’s evaluation continued to assess the value of the Fund in relation to the outcomes specified above. This final evaluation included:

- A questionnaire survey designed by the evaluators, in discussion with PHF staff, and emailed to all funded projects. This was distributed in January 2008 to 66 projects currently in receipt of PHF funding, with 51 questionnaires received, representing a response rate of 77 per cent. This was supplemented by data from project reports and materials supplied by projects to PHF
- Case studies of 12 projects chosen to give a wide representation based on their geographical spread, the type of organisation, the focus of projects and activities undertaken. This included extended (2–3 day) site visits to meet and talk to project workers, participants and project partners and to observe activities. At least two visits were made to nearly all projects.<sup>6</sup> Face-to-face contact was supplemented by additional email contact and telephone interviews. Observation of project activities and semi-structured interviews, focus groups or less formal discussions with young people enabled exploration of relationships between staff and participants, any problems arising and how these were addressed as well as the effectiveness of the project in working with refugee and asylum-seeker young people. Visited projects were also chosen partly to reflect their presumed engagement with at least one key issue which the evaluation team, in discussion with PHF, thought would help to broaden understanding of the day-to-day experiences and achievements of the projects
- A learning seminar to discuss the commissioning process was facilitated by Paul Hamlyn Foundation

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<sup>6</sup> In one case, only one visit was possible due to unforeseen personal circumstances resulting in the staff member being absent for some period of time – this project had been a case study in an earlier stage of the evaluation, however, and thus a substantial amount of data had been collected on a previous visit.

## Appendix 2. Case study projects in phase three of the evaluation

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1. Small refugee-led community organisations
  - Arlaadi Somali Community
  - British Afghan Women's Society
  - East London Somali Youth & Welfare Centre
  - Pan-Afrique Centre
  - Roma Support Group
  - Somali Integration Society
  
2. Small voluntary and community sector organisations
  - Leicester North West Community Forum
  - Reading Refugee Support Group
  - Scottish Sports Futures
  - Tees Valley Arts
  
3. A statutory partnership
  - Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire Partnership
  
4. A refugee-led organisation partnered by a large charitable organisation
  - Link Action/Northern Refugee Centre

## Acknowledgements

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The evaluation team is most grateful to:

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- Respondents in partner agencies of the case study projects, family members of participants and others who participated in interviews
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- Barbra Mazur for enabling our evaluation and providing support and Rob Bell for his helpful comments on earlier drafts of this report

JP/JT

### **Editors' note**

We were presented with a long report written by the researchers. We have sought, as asked by Paul Hamlyn Foundation, substantially to reduce the length of the report, to present it in a way which retains and clarifies the key messages emerging from the research, and to add an executive summary. The original report made extensive use of direct quotation, and we have retained this; quotations are italicised.

AH/SB



## Paul Hamlyn Foundation

Paul Hamlyn (1926–2001) was a publisher, businessman and philanthropist who was concerned about social injustice and disadvantage – particularly as it affected children and young people, and those ‘outsiders’ seeking to integrate into British society. In 1987 he set up the Paul Hamlyn Foundation for general charitable purposes, and on his death he bequeathed the majority of his estate to the Foundation, making it one of the UK’s largest independent grant-making organisations.

Paul Hamlyn Foundation works across the UK through three programmes – Arts, Education and Learning, and Social Justice. Each comprises an Open Grants scheme, to which organisations can apply with proposals for funding innovative activities, and Special Initiatives, which are more focused interventions that aim to have deeper impact on a particular issue. The Foundation also has a programme of support for NGOs in India.

The mission of the Foundation is to maximise opportunities for individuals to realise their potential and to experience and enjoy a better quality of life, now and in the future. In particular, the Foundation is concerned with children and young people and with disadvantaged people.

## Social Justice programme

The PHF Social Justice programme aims to help marginalised individuals and communities to become integrated, with integration defined as a two-way process in which society at large and specific communities adapt, understand and benefit.

The Open Grants scheme focuses on arts and education and learning-based approaches, and seeks to further the understanding of the relationships between Social Justice and the Foundation’s Arts and Education and Learning programmes. The scheme aims to have impact on individuals and communities, organisations, and policy and practice.

The programme’s Special Initiatives have included the Reading and Libraries Challenge Fund, the Refugee and Asylum Seeker Fund, and more recently Right Here, a partnership with the Mental Health Foundation, to help develop new ways to deliver mental health services with and for young people.

For more information about any aspect of Paul Hamlyn Foundation’s work, please visit [www.phf.org.uk](http://www.phf.org.uk)

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