

EVALUATING THE **VOICE 4 YOUTH** PROJECT

oneyearon



O N E Y E A R O N

Here we are,
Not quite as lost as we were,
Maybe a little
But we are still standing strong
Nothing to lose
So much to gain
We know what we want
We know what they don't
Are we really respected?
Do they really know?
I don't think they understand!
Maybe they do,
But what do I know?

By Leah
a member of Voice4Youth



Welcome to this evaluation report which is part of the work of the YouthVoice2 project at the Trust for the Study of Adolescence. This document is the result of the careful and diligent work of Carol Mullineux, with the assistance of Karen Bayliss and Sue Feighery. The support of the Coalition4Youth manager, Saskia Neary, has been essential to the evaluation. We are grateful to everyone who has participated and in particular to the staff and young people who were willing to discuss their experiences so openly.

The Benefits to the Community and to the Individual

This evaluation confirms previous research in the UK and in the USA showing the benefits of community participation to the self-esteem of young people. However, it indicates more practical long-term benefits from the young people's participation in the Coalition 4 Youth projects.

Transferable Skills

Many of the young people involved in these projects would have been unlikely to have become involved without the C4Y approach. It is now common practice for workers across a range of disciplines to encourage young people to recognise the skills they already have and to transfer these to their current problems. Building on this, C4Y has taught the young people new skills applied in a very realistic way with tangible outcomes in their community. Listening to the young people, it is clear that they have developed citizenship skills and are more confident in their abilities to manage their own lives more positively within the community.

Additional benefits: Citizenship and crime and safety initiatives

Improvement in self-esteem and an increase in self-confidence can be said to follow activities which are seen by the person to be both effective and worthwhile. On an individual level participation in C4Y has improved self-esteem and self-confidence through providing effective and worthwhile activities. However, the content of these activities in learning citizenship information and citizenship skills and in participating in crime and safety initiatives adds a very important dimension to the long-term benefits of the project. It is clear that the young people have increased in knowledge and appreciation of the workings of local government and, with an understanding of the realities of decision-making, in particular, the time it may take, wish to continue involvement.

Family and School

At a personal level, their experiences of group work, of negotiating, and of presenting their views acceptably has taught them transferable skills that might be applied within the family and the school as well as in the wider community. Parents and teachers have appreciated this outcome.

The Future

It will be important to document and disseminate to other workers the methods and approaches which have underpinned this project. Given the likely financial constraints it will be important to be creative in finding ways of expanding the opportunities for more young people to benefit from similar projects.

Conclusion: Respect, trust and appropriate involvement

There is no doubt that this project has made a significant difference to the current and future lives of the young people involved, and that it has positively changed their self-concept. The achievement of such an impact is due, in no small measure, to the skill and perseverance of the project workers and their ability to communicate genuine respect to the young people, and to create a trusting environment with appropriate methods for the age groups.

Dorothy Eddi Piper

Principal Coordinator:

Mental Health and Youth Empowerment.

Trust for the Study of Adolescence

The evaluation is the work of 'YouthVoice2', a project at the Trust for the Study of Adolescence. Further details of 'YouthVoice2' and of the people involved in compiling this evaluation can be found at the end of the document.

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Coalition4Youth (C4Y) is a youth participation project in Brighton & Hove. It was set up in 1998 to improve the quality of life of children and young people in the city by:

- Encouraging a co-ordinated approach to children and young people's participation and consultation in Brighton & Hove.
- Actively promoting children's and young people's participation in their communities, neighbourhoods and across the city.
- Informing them about their rights and the strategies and decisions that affect them.
- Championing their views, issues and rights to decision-makers and service providers.

In April 2002, funding from the Single Regeneration Project (SRB6) enabled C4Y to employ one full-time and two part-time participation workers to set up the Voice4Youth Project (V4Y) in partnership with Woodingdean Youth Centre and Hove YMCA. These were areas where young people had previously identified the need for a more meaningful way for their views to be listened to (SRB5 participation programme report, 2001).



Two Voice4Youth groups, in Hove and Woodingdean, have been up and running since summer 2002 aiming to increase young people's participation, specifically in regeneration and crime and safety initiatives and to support their involvement in the decision-making processes locally. They have hosted youth events and consulted with young people in their neighbourhoods using an innovative "Big Brother Diary Room" method, developed by the young people. They have also represented young people at local community meetings, led workshops, written articles for the Argus youth page and taken on peer roles within their respective youth centres. The groups have also constituted themselves and have their own bank accounts enabling them to apply for funding themselves.

Funding from SRB6 comes to an end in March 2004. Already the young people are expressing concerns at this and C4Y is currently working with the young people to explore possible ways of sustaining the Voice4Youth project beyond this.

The aim of this research is to evaluate the impact of participating in the Voice4Youth Project on the young people over the past year, identifying and measuring, where possible, the qualitative outcomes of the project. This includes assessing the impact of participating in Voice4Youth on a young person's development and self-concept.*

The milestones and targets agreed in advance by Coalition4Youth and the SRB6 team were mostly quantitative and include targets for numbers of young people that benefit from "training weeks", "community safety initiatives" or "individuals employed in voluntary work". The Voice4Youth project is on track to meet these milestones and reports back to SRB in the form of quarterly returns.

This report is more concerned with the young people's *own* definition of the project's successes. This includes finding out the detail of the impact of V4Y on the development of the young people and of their self-concept through their participation in the project, rather than quantifying the project numerically. The developing interest from professionals in capturing this level of detail is reflected as new standards are emerging nationally within participation (for example, Hear by Right, Wade *et al* (2001)). This is true even at Government level with a recent consultation taking place within the Department for Education and Skills (DFES, 2003) which states various detailed outcomes for young people, schools and services, in terms of participation. Most of these are qualitative such as young people developing new skills and being taken seriously.

Coalition4Youth and the Voice4Youth staff team are committed to responding to the findings and incorporating them into the future planning and delivery of the project.

*Self-concept is taken to mean the way a young person sees themselves and we are interested in how this is affected by involvement in projects such as Voice4Youth.



Photography from the 'Shutter Speed' project

Evaluation involves making a value judgement about a process or project. It is an assessment of whether a project met its objectives or not. Evaluation may include judgements about whether the work was worth doing, whether it was done well, whether resources were used well and what remains to be done.

Many organisations and projects see evaluation as a punitive process that is 'done to them', traditionally at the end of a programme as a necessary requirement of receiving the funding. It mainly measures their output and utilisation of funds.

However, effective ongoing evaluation of projects such as Voice4Youth can also represent opportunities through the life of the project to:

- see whether the project is on target to reach the intended outcomes
- improve ongoing practice and effectiveness, including learning and sharing learning about what works and what doesn't, what things to avoid or ensure in future and making adjustments during the life of the project
- ask some honest questions about what's being achieved
- consolidate and celebrate achievements (encourage participants by providing evidence of their effectiveness as social change agents)
- build the capacity of the participants to undertake future research and evaluation and to promote other forms of participatory development
- extend the involvement of users, participants, stakeholders in the project itself
- measure the difference participation is making in the lives of those involved (one of the main aims of this research).

Evaluation can also increase the credibility and status of participatory methods by providing evidence of how participation works in practice and expanding the criteria for evaluating success. Success has traditionally been assessed in quantitative terms, with a focus on statistics and physical change rather than social change, which is



often more difficult to measure. The norm has been to take an adult viewpoint of what success would be, rather than working with young people on their own definition.

Evaluation therefore matters to participatory projects such as Voice4Youth as it provides evidence of the effects participation has had on the participants. It can also uncover unexpected outcomes that don't relate to existing milestones and targets, that are useful for learning.

Evaluative methods range from independent evaluations from external consultants, to conventional evaluations by project staff in relation to fixed targets established by funders and, in some cases, the idea of participatory evaluation.

PARTICIPATORY EVALUATION

Although participatory evaluation does not yet have a fixed definition, it is understood to:

- be conducted jointly by various stakeholders, including the local participants
- actively involve a wide array of stakeholders in all phases of the evaluation, from planning to information gathering and analysis to action planning.

Despite the implications of time, resources and possibly unfamiliar methods, participatory evaluation is widely

supported. There are arguments that it actually increases objectivity by reflecting a wide range of stakeholders. (Shimazu, 2000)

“The philosophy underlying participatory monitoring and evaluation is an extension of the basic concept of participation itself: if community members have a right to self-expression and self-determination in decisions that affect their lives, then the choice of outcomes that will improve their lives, as well as processes of monitoring their achievement should also rest with the community” (Chawla, 2001)

“Participation in evaluation supports and supplements participation in the actual project/programme being evaluated.” (Sabo, 2001)

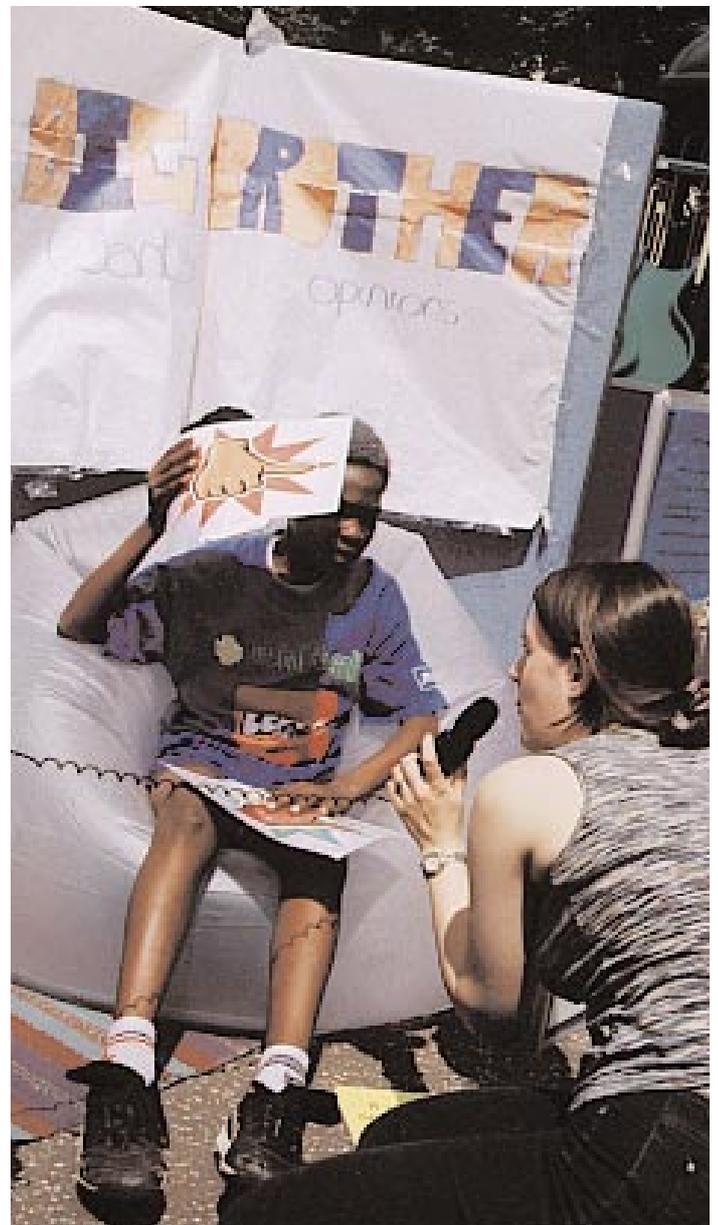
This report cannot claim to be a fully participatory evaluation of the Voice4Youth project. However, it was felt essential to include participants and stakeholders in the evaluation, specifically asking them to identify their own success criteria and to comment on how the project measured up to these. This research evaluates the outcomes of the Voice4Youth project based on these success criteria.

Participatory evaluation is rather hard to capture and ‘present’ in traditional report form, partly because it represents an ongoing process. The participatory process by which C4Y staff involve young people includes various ongoing processes of giving and receiving feedback both within the groups and in 1-2-1 meetings with the project staff, evaluating, setting future aims and action planning, all of which can be seen as participatory evaluation. Through this process C4Y aims to respond to young people’s changing needs over the lifetime of a project such as Voice4Youth and to sustain their ownership in the process and outcomes of a project. This evaluation report tries to document this process.

The broader arguments for participation remain those of

principle and politics (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989) and practical evidence from effective evaluation, whether participatory or not, can only supplement those broader arguments adding detail, not replacing them. C4Y has long supported both the principle and benefits of young people’s participation, their work underpinned by Article 12 within the UN Convention which states:

“Young People have the right to have their views taken into account, particularly in decisions that affect them.”



Several participatory methods were used in this research.

The methods included:-

A) SHORT INFORMAL INTERVIEWS with members of the youth forums in the form of 1-2-1s with the participation worker and each young person. The parent of a young man who has been particularly involved in C4Y was also interviewed, as were the youth workers from the Partnership projects.

B) A SERIES OF SHORT TASKS/EXERCISES

TIMELINES – The young people drew timelines showing their involvement in V4Y over time and how their ideas about themselves changed. This is a very visual way of showing changes over time in how they felt about themselves and the group. The young people were able to identify their own "key moments" in the group. Comments were added to each of the points plotted as the young people talked through the timeline they had drawn (see Appendix 5). The timelines also usefully illustrate group dynamics over this period of time.

"ME ON A GOOD DAY/BAD DAY.." EXERCISE – The young people were asked to draw or write about themselves "On a good day" and "On a day when things aren't going so well" in order to identify what affects a young person's self-concept and whether any aspects of V4Y contributed to a young person's positive sense of themselves.

HUSKINS RECORDING – C4Y has been developing a way of measuring the effect of participation work on young people based on the Huskins (1996) Curriculum Development Model. This is used in youth work to identify the different stages a young person may be at in terms of participation, from initial contact with a worker to taking on more leadership responsibilities. C4Y is intending that a tool based on Huskins could usefully be repeated over time to better understand the different stages of a young person's development and what contributes to this.

This tool was already being piloted with a few of the young people from the youth forums at the time of the research.

C) SUCCESS CRITERIA –The Hove V4Y group spent some time defining their own criteria for success and evaluating V4Y themselves on the basis of criteria they had come up with. The staff involved in Voice4Youth set their own criteria for success and also identified the stakeholders in the project and just what their stake in the project was.

D) INTERVIEWS WITH PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

A QUESTIONNAIRE was sent to 65 decision-makers from across Brighton & Hove who attended the C4Y Showcase Event in April 2003. It asked for their feedback about the evening and for them to comment on how successful C4Y is at encouraging more meaningful participation of young people throughout the city.



YOUNG PEOPLE THEMSELVES



Although the SRB6 bid states several targets, milestones and criteria for success, it was felt important to ask the young people what criteria they would use. The young people were asked "How would you know Voice4Youth had been successful?" and then commented on the criteria they identified.

Young people from Hove said "We will know V4Y has been successful if...."

- People still want to come!
- Young people have knowledge about their rights and confidence to express views, even to adults and teachers
- V4Y has got young people's voice heard to the people who can make a difference
- The group had achieved things!
- Different views, ages, schools, areas were represented, making up a group with varied opinions
- It was fun!
- We achieved targets we set e.g. getting new members
- We'd learnt new skills like writing a constitution, facilitation skills, budgets etc.
- It has been excellent for our record of achievement
- We took more of a role in planning and running meetings

- We learnt how to run a meeting so we could carry on meeting even if we don't get funding
- We'd met new people, different from ourselves
- V4Y had been a safe space.

This list includes a lot of tangible changes, such as the achievement of targets or learning new skills which are fairly easy to assess.

The group then commented on their success criteria list: The young people feel their confidence has grown in expressing themselves to adults.

They agreed that people still want to come to V4Y although some didn't think that the group would expand or was even ready for new members.

They liked the fact they had met people different to themselves although they agreed that most people in the group had similar aims – a desire to get stuff done – and that this was important for the group to gel. They all accepted that some people find V4Y isn't for them but expressed their frustrations at young people who "just come for the food" or use V4Y as a "drop in".

They agreed that some self-set targets had been achieved. One such target was to try and get 3 new members, which had been achieved. They had also set aims and hopes for V4Y over the next year. (Appendix 4)

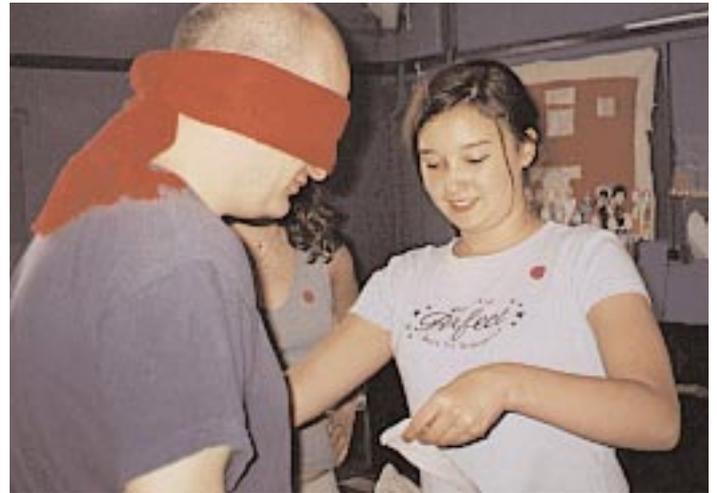
That V4Y is a safe space is particularly important to the group, specifically written into their constitution. By this, they mean that they should feel safe coming along to the group without fear of being bullied or intimidated by others.

The young people commented that this criteria had not always been achieved and that there had been issues resulting from other young people hanging around unsupervised in the YMCA foyer and several bullying incidents. The group had made the decision to move to another room where they are not distracted as much.

They agreed that they have got their views to the people who can make a difference through events and community meetings such as the West Hove Forum and the C4Y Showcase Event. They identified particular figures in the community such as the local councillors and the manager of the Brighton & Hove Bus Company who had been particularly supportive.

Although V4Y has been good for their record of achievement etc. the young people felt it would be good if there were more certificates to prove all the work they had done. It would be useful for them to have further training in facilitating meetings so that gradually they are able to take on more of the planning of sessions, i.e. they identified that this criteria had not totally been met. This is important to them in the light of funding running out from March 2004.

The young people agreed that they had learnt lots of skills being part of V4Y. They had found the session where they wrote their own constitution for the group particularly useful. Although not hugely interesting, they found it gave them a working definition of what V4Y was when trying to explain it to their friends.



These were:

- Good relationships established with the young people in West Hove that help them to develop skills, knowledge and confidence and take on new responsibilities including leadership roles
- Good relationships established with the partner organisations
- Changes in young people's ability and confidence are identified
- Meeting the SRB6 milestones and the milestones the young people set themselves
- Young people can recognise concrete achievements, whatever the size, as theirs
- Development of our own youth work skills and learning as a staff team as to how we can better support young people in the various stages of their development and involvement in V4Y
- Physical changes in the two local areas and good links established in the communities as a result of the V4Y project
- Continuity and sustainability so that the forums are able to continue when current funding runs out in March 2004
- Decisions made locally take young people's views into consideration.

The staff felt that most of these criteria had been achieved, except perhaps being able to sustain the forums when current funding comes to an end. Thinking about the success criteria led to a discussion within the staff team as to who were the main stakeholders of the project.

SRB6 PROJECT STAFF

The SRB6 project staff also identified criteria by which they could judge the project's success.

**“I felt I didn't want
to come for a while...**

**The YMCA shouldn't be
a place where you're
bullied” Jenny (12)**

Stakeholders are those who have an interest in the project and its outcomes. Any partnership project is dependent for its success on relationships between the stakeholders. The key stakeholders identified by the project staff team were:

1 THE PARTNERSHIP ORGANISATIONS

There are good working relationships with both Woodingdean Youth Centre and Hove YMCA despite different working styles, practices and expectations of what the partnership will bring and understandings of what 'participation' is. The organisations have a history of strong youth work in their respective areas and have been able to support Coalition4Youth in promoting the idea of V4Y to local young people. The organisations are respected actors within the communities and have provided good links with key figures in both areas as well as credibility to V4Y as a new project. V4Y has given considerable support to the existing youth work that takes place in each neighbourhood and other participation activities. The success of the partnerships is discussed in a separate section.

2 THE YOUTH SERVICE

The Youth Service and Brighton and Hove Council were seen as being reliant on projects such as V4Y to fulfil their participation agenda, as laid out in the "Common Planning Report".

3 PARENTS

Parents see V4Y as an alternative to the open club environment and sometimes a more useful and structured way for young people to spend their time, offering opportunities they wouldn't otherwise have had.

4 COALITION4YOUTH

For C4Y, the youth forums develop the links with young people 'on the ground' within their communities. V4Y also represents two established groups of young people which

can from time to time, support C4Y to organise an event or run a workshop etc. C4Y is aware of the demands placed on such groups of young people and is careful to respect the limited capacity of both groups. There is a willingness of the members of V4y to support C4Y events and in effect they recognise they are a part of something bigger, with the same aims.

5 THE YOUNG PEOPLE

The young people were felt to be the biggest stakeholder. It is their group, "...their blood, sweat and tears!" one worker commented. Their emotional and spiritual investment and the fact V4Y plays a large role in their lives was recognised. The strategy for sustaining the youth forums when existing funding comes to an end is vitally important to them. It is also in their interests that V4Y is a safe place where they don't feel intimidated by other young people.

6 YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE TWO NEIGHBOURHOODS

V4Y raises the profile of young people in the wider community through positive publicity, celebrating their achievements, and challenging negative stereotypes in the press etc. Also, any concrete achievements of V4Y in the local area have been achieved for young people in general in that community, e.g. the V4Y in Woodingdean securing money towards a youth shelter that everyone can use.



HOW HAVE THE PARTNERSHIPS WORKED?

Woodingdean Youth Centre

Youth workers at Woodingdean have been really supportive of the work of the Participation Worker and there has been a lot of joint working with groups and projects at the centre. Young people from the Voice4Youth group have become involved in other projects, e.g. Junior Leaders and young people from other groups have supported V4Y and become involved in running events with them e.g. Woodingdean young skaters group, the Sk8 Crew. The positive relationship between the groups means there is much communication of issues between groups of young people and staff.

One of the difficulties has been the fact that the lead worker and several part-time youth workers have left the centre and have not been replaced. This has put extra pressure on the Participation Worker and remaining staff to cover sessions in order to maintain youth provision in the area.

Another issue that has caused difficulties in delivering the work has been the state of the building. This has come to a head during the summer of 2003 when what began as routine maintenance uncovered more serious electrical problems, resulting in the building being closed for four months. However, on a positive note, this has resulted in closer links being built with the community group running the internet café who have allowed workers to use the café to meet with young people out of hours.

Hove YMCA

Hove YMCA is very supportive of the work of the Voice4Youth. It sees V4Y as a significant alternative to the open club sessions and an opportunity to increase young people's participation within the organisation, e.g. through the setting up of a Youth Board to help make decisions within the youth clubs. The Senior Youth Worker is keen to make full use of members of the Voice4Youth as peers/Junior Leaders on this board with the experience they have gained through V4Y.

The expectation from the local community development worker that V4Y is a ready group of young people with which to consult does sometimes conflict with their own planned programme.

PARTICIPATION WITHIN THE OPEN CLUBS

The youth centre is a place where young people can chill out and not be overly hassled by adults and so, sometimes over planning an activity doesn't go down well. On occasions several members of staff have had different questionnaires they need to get filled in and there is a risk of consultation fatigue. One young person expressed it like this:

“Oh no. You're going to make me fill something in again, aren't you?”

Quick capture exercises such as quizzes, website questionnaires, graffiti table/wall work appear to work best in the club environment where attention spans are short.

The V4Y workers in Hove and Woodingdean were employed to support youth activities in the two centres and to encourage participation work in the youth clubs and opportunities to get involved in V4Y. One youth worker at Hove believes young people participate by “walking through the doors of the youth centre”. This definition of participation is not the same as V4Y's understanding.

During the first year Achievements have been really important for sustaining young people's enthusiasm.

1ST BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Hove V4Y marked their 1st birthday (the first anniversary of workers being employed to set up the forum) by organising a party, complete with jelly and ice cream! Three members of the group organised everything and bought and prepared all the food, including baking a cake. They made a jigsaw puzzle in the shape of a number 1 with different achievements on each piece of the jigsaw.

The jigsaw highlighted the achievements they had identified themselves (Appendix 3).

The young people felt that the jigsaw showed that "while we might not have got big stuff done, there are lots of things V4Y has done well". – Amy

SUCCESSFUL SCARMAN APPLICATION

Hove V4Y spent three weeks planning and writing their application to The Scarman Trust's Can Do fund to build a website and virtual forum. The young people found this process rather intense. However, their application was successful and this really encouraged the group. The two young people who had opened the letter said they'd been really nervous and then were jumping up and down celebrating together.



BUS TIMES

A group of V4Y members, also junior leaders at Woodingdean, were successful in their application for money to develop the group. They were granted £887 to go on a residential, do team building activities and training around leadership.

£5,000 TOWARDS YOUTH SHELTER

The Woodingdean V4Y group successfully managed to get the time of the last bus from Saltdean to Woodingdean moved from 9.20pm to 10pm. This was quite an instant result, following a video night where the young people invited decision-makers along to hear the views of young people in the area. It had been followed up with the local bus company by youth workers and a local councillor.

Following Woodingdean's V4Y video showing, which was attended by a local councillor, the issue raised by young people of having somewhere to meet and hang out like a youth shelter was taken forward to the Woodingdean Tenants and Residents Association. They gave their support by putting in a bid for funding. This bid was successful and £5,000 has now been put aside towards the cost of a youth shelter. Match funding needs to be sought, which the young people have been doing. The young people were encouraged by the support they had received from the local community.

LINKS WITH THE COMMUNITY

In general the profile of young people within the Woodingdean community has been raised and they have been able to use this to challenge negative stereotypes around the behaviour of young people. In particular young people responded to the suggestion that they were linked with vandalism by writing an article for the local community newsletter which goes out to 4,000 households. The success of this has resulted in them being given a regular slot in the newsletter. They also attended an open youth forum, organised by the Tenants and Residents Association and gave their views on local issues including policing, safety and anti-social behaviour.

Friendship is a key factor, with young people coming along to see friends and socialise together. Woodingdean is quite isolated from the rest of Brighton and most members of the Woodingdean V4Y have grown up together and been to the same school. The school has played a major part in forming links between young people, particularly in Woodingdean. One young man who lives outside the area has become involved through a classmate, even though many of the local issues don't involve him. He has commented that he wishes there was something like this in his area (Moulsecoomb).

In West Hove the core group is made up of a few very local young people and a group from further afield who already had links with Hove YMCA. In Hove the younger members of the group appear to need more time to relax and have fun. After the heavy sessions of doing the Scarman application they, particularly, felt the need to relax.



Wednesday night activity to do V4Y 'cos it's more fun!! 'n' more important."

"(At V4Y) I'm around a group of people I know. It's a safe environment coz we've got Carol and Richard watching us, making sure everyone in the group is OK and there are no interruptions."

"I'm with friends who make me feel 'me-ish' (me feeling happy for being me)."

"Our hard work gets recognised."

THIS IS ME ON A GOOD DAY...

This exercise helped young people identify what a "good day" is for them. For many young people V4Y activities contributed to a day being 'good'. The fact they are consulted and can shape what V4Y does feels "good" to them. This is presumably partly why they come to V4Y, and, that they can shape what V4Y offers to them and how it meets their needs.

"We all have different needs – Lorraine, Jenny, the boys compared to Amy and me" Leah (15)

Young people are genuinely interested in getting involved and getting young people's views heard to the people that count, particularly if it's an issue that affects them, like lack of skateboarding provision in their local area.

"I like trying to get young people's views heard."

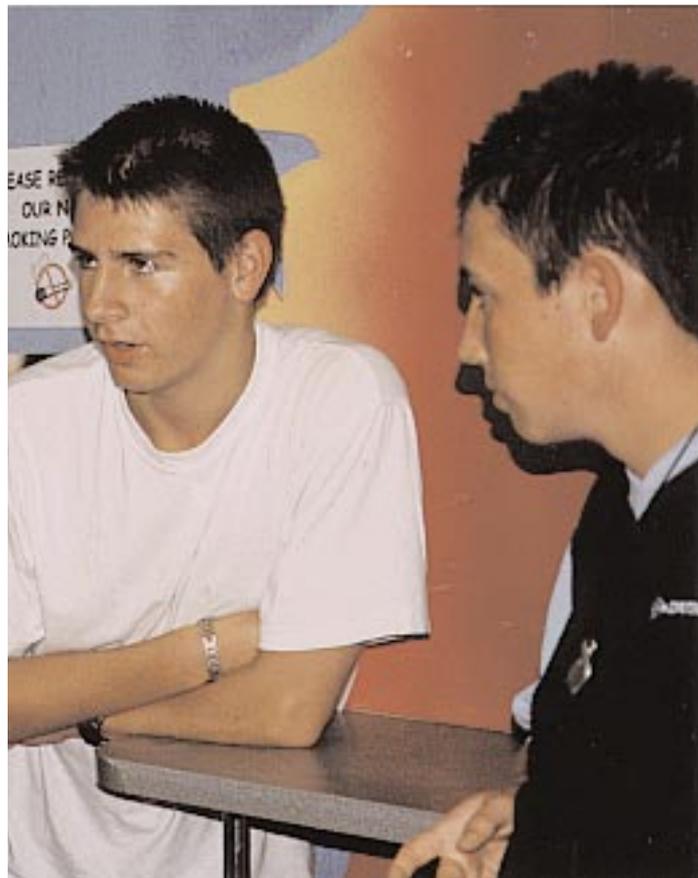
"I now come to whole sessions as I gave up another

For example, Lorraine (12) said "Eating fruit makes me feel healthy". The group commented that they would prefer to have fruit instead of biscuits as refreshments!

Chris identified that on a good day he would be having a go at a new task and feeling confident in his abilities. He mentioned the V4Y photography project he's been involved in and his encouragement at being told that he'd really thought about his photographs (by a professional photographer). Several young people said that on a good day they were happy about being themselves and happy at where they were heading. They also expressed that V4Y was a place where they could be themselves, shrug off negative comments and just "get back up and carry on".

Drama, dance and having time to chill out with friends helps them to forget about things they might feel worried about.

The young people's 1st birthday celebrations included favourite party music. The Hove group has also really taken to drama and has used various drama techniques over the year when presenting their views to adults.



Voice4Youth has been successful in terms of the success criteria they identified. (See Chapter 5). Participation in the V4Y groups has resulted in other positive outcomes and individual changes in the young people themselves.

The young people identified several changes in themselves during their 1-2-1s, summarised as follows:

A BETTER ABILITY TO EXPRESS THEMSELVES AMONG THEIR PEERS AND WITH ADULTS

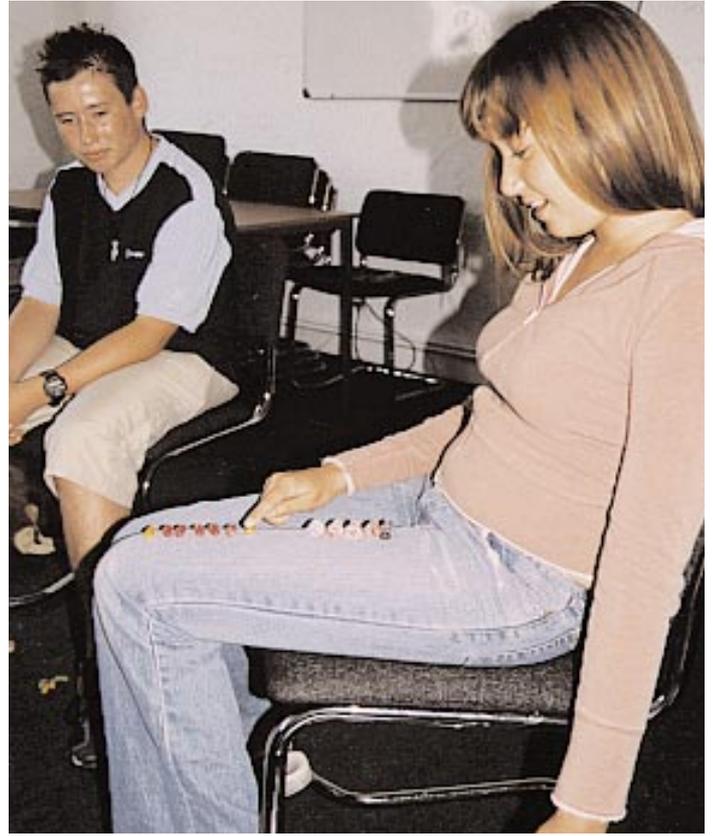
V4Y has helped them express themselves better which is important to young people because it increases their confidence, both with their peers and with adults. The young people also recognised these changes in each other. Jenny (12) feels she is more confident to challenge other people's views and put forward her own opinion.

"I feel more able to say 'I disagree'. V4Y has helped me disagree with a teacher and put good views across calmly. I didn't shout. I felt really good."

"I went back to West Hove Juniors and a teacher said to me: 'I really couldn't see you as a person who would stand out and speak out.' Now I can talk to year 11s. I'm a lot more confident and can argue points and make suggestions. I have learnt to take disagreement."
Lorraine (12)

"I can talk to people better and have the courage to not argue but discuss and get points across...instead of mouthing off I can get my point across calmly."
Richard (16)

Some of the young men in the Woodingdean group have experienced greater difficulty at school since their involvement with V4Y. It would appear that their increased ability to question, voice their opinion and express curiosity about decision-making processes has led to conflict with teachers who do not always encourage this style of participation amongst students. The social



action approach which C4Y has used to empower young people seems to conflict with the way power and authority are held in schools. Initially this is confusing for young people who enjoy being asked how they feel, what they think and how decisions could be made that take their views into account. When they try to use these skills at school, they find themselves being seen as troublemakers, trying to challenge authority. This appeared to reinforce their disillusionment with school and not being listened to at school. None of the Woodingdean V4Y members were involved in their school council, probably due to the image that they held of it and the fact they don't see it as effective. Whereas in Hove, several members are involved in their school council. This follows the more traditional pattern whereby youth forums have tended to attract young people already involved in their school councils.

Increased confidence in expressing themselves also appears to help a young person in other relationships and in resolving conflict. Ed's Mum recognised how Ed (16) had changed in his responses to conflict within the family.

Previously a typical conflict would have involved lots of arguing and confrontation. Ed now sees conflict more as an opportunity.

"He's learnt to talk at the same level...He'll go to John (Ed's step-dad), sit down, centre himself, lower his voice and say 'I understand what you're saying but now I want to tell you from my point of view.' The first time I realised what he was doing I said 'wow!' John was also a bit thrown."

ABILITY TO CHALLENGE THEIR PERCEPTIONS/ ASSUMPTIONS, EXPLORE DIFFERENCE AND WORK TOGETHER

Shutter Speed, a joint V4Y photography project with Fabrica Gallery, brought together two young people from West Hove who had previously been very intimidated by each other. The project provided an opportunity to explore the differences between them and accept that it was OK to be different but that they could still get a lot out of working together.

A young man in Woodingdean felt he has changed in terms of how he sees people who are different to him.

"Mentally, the way I look at things, people on the streethas changed.. A year ago, a group of us would have shouted abuse at people who are different from us....Now I just think, yeah, fair enough, that's their way of doing things...I guess I'm more tolerant but maybe that's just growing up. ...I've had to think through my reasons..."

INCREASED MOTIVATION AND BELIEF IN THEMSELVES

Concrete successes and achievements help sustain enthusiasm. Success with the Scarman Trust application has given the Hove V4Y group increased confidence to consider further funding applications and the group has expressed a desire to try and secure funding to continue the project after March 2004.

The young people from Woodingdean recognised they are more confident at hosting events and workshops and in talking to adults.

"I know I can talk to people now."

"One thing I'm proud of is knowing we've got the capability to agree to do something and actually pull it off. We managed to get people from all around Brighton to come and help at our event."

C4Y Workers try and encourage the young people to take on new responsibilities, with their support.

Involvement in V4Y has given many of the young people increased confidence in their own abilities. For Jenny, from Hove, this has been the confidence to step out from the shadow of her friend.

"I've realised I can work with other people apart from Lorraine" Jenny

Another young man, Chris (15) really responded to the Shutter Speed photography project, working with a professional photographer.

"I was really pleased when Magali said my photos were really good, the way I've angled them and stuff. It makes me want to work harder. Aim for the goal above you and aim towards it."

There is also a healthy ability to identify when something is too much.

"If there's a new task I'll have a go...if I can't do it I'll say 'Sorry, I can't do it.. I've tried!'"

LEADERSHIP SKILLS

V4Y appears to be a very natural environment for peer and leadership skills to develop and flourish with the support from workers. C4Y's approach is grounded in the belief of encouraging personal development through youth work and group work, always encouraging young people to think about a possible 'next stage', taking on new responsibilities, including leadership.

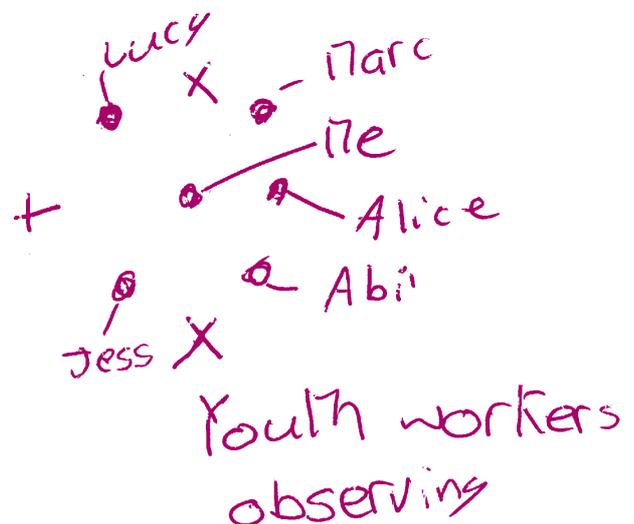
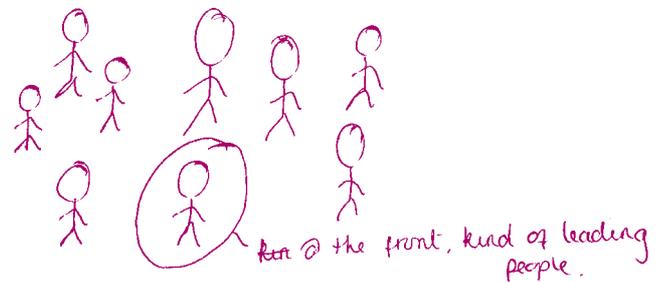
I-2-Is, a brief meet up between the participation worker and the young person, encourage them to consider the 'next step' whether it be to take on leading part of the session or sorting out refreshments. This has worked well alongside the YMCA's own "introduction to youth work" course and with the Junior Leaders scheme at Woodingdean, where some of the members of Voice4Youth also volunteer as Junior Leaders and help run a youth club for year 6s. The Scarman Trust bid has enabled this group to focus on what it wanted to do, develop a constitution and receive training in skills such as facilitation, so they are able to run more sessions in future. Leadership is just one of the roles that a young person takes on. Richard, from Woodingdean mentioned that he has different roles in different settings e.g. as Junior Leader and member of the V4Y and has learnt to adapt.

As part of the Huskins (1996) recording that C4Y is piloting the members of Hove V4Y were asked to think about themselves within the group

- i) the first time they came to V4Y
- ii) Now

They were asked to draw a picture or chose a photo that represents them within the group. Several young people identified that they had or would like to take on leadership responsibilities this way.

"If I were to describe me in this picture it would be kind of flustered as I'm trying to get people to listen to each other and not interrupt each other. But I'm content as I'm thinking that I can do it. I feel I'm quite boring because I am regaining control all of the time." Amy (15)



"I'd like to take the lead in a game once to see how it is.. like at work they're slowly giving me more stuff to do...I'm not chucked in at the deep end." Chris (15)

YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE INCREASED KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THEIR RIGHTS, LOCAL POLITICS, AND THE PROCESS OF GETTING THINGS DONE LOCALLY

Young people from V4Y have a greater awareness about the political process. This includes knowledge about how decisions are made and how the community works and develops.

"Before I came to V4Y I wouldn't have thought of writing a letter to the buses or speaking to Dee (local councillor)... Now if I saw her in the street and needed to say anything to her I would. " Richard (16)

"We got Councillor Heather James and the West Hove Forum to seriously think about lights in the park." Amy (15)

There is also increased awareness of the timescales involved in getting things changed and that there may be other views within the communities where they live which may be different from their own.

"I understand why it can't happen overnight... You have to take everyone's opinion into consideration.... Some people might not want lights in the park." Ed (16)

In Woodingdean, the young people are considering a door knock to gauge residents' opinions about the youth shelter's location and understand this would give them useful evidence to show others who may be less supportive of plans for a youth shelter.

GROUP WORK SKILLS

The format of V4Y tries to encourage young people to develop skills such as putting their view across calmly,

speaking one at a time, facilitation, how to make decisions, recognising the different roles and stages in a group etc.

There is the need to achieve a balance between getting things done (the task) and focussing on group dynamics and development (the process). The two groups are very different in this respect. The Hove V4Y is particularly driven and focused on setting targets and aims. Several members are high achievers at school etc. The young people seem to have shaped it this way and are frustrated when things don't get done, seeing this as a failure and making the criticism that the group "doesn't do anything".

At one stage, one member was even considering leaving the group for this reason, expressing her frustrations about the group like this:-

"It could be a very well-oiled machine that gets things done."

..implying that it wasn't quite there yet.

The rest of the group shares these frustrations:

"You feel bad when you get home and you've done nothing." Amy (15)

"When we have something specific to do we work well."

"We put things off and play a game. When we play a game everyone loses concentration. We were so close to getting it done. Like with the website. We said 'we'll do it in those 4 weeks' but we didn't. It got put off." Leah (15)

Leah was also extremely clear about her solution to this.

This group must:-

- i) focus and
 - ii) say no to people who request they do other things.
- (see Appendix 5)

In terms of group theory the Hove group would appear to be at the "performing" stage where they are at a highly

productive stage in the life of the group and are working well together. This has resulted in meetings which are fairly intense with pressure on the workers to “keep the group performing and on track”. There are intense periods of work followed by similarly intense breaks with meetings where the young people rush out of the meeting room, releasing pent-up energy in this ‘work hard, play hard’ atmosphere.

The workers have highlighted that there are not always the opportunities for them to pick up on individual's issues and catch up with the group.

“It was intense doing the constitution. We didn’t really have a break. I’d get outside and have to breathe –relief at finishing. But at the same time I was also quite proud at the achievement.” Amy (15)

The group appears to measure success in terms of achievements and reaching goals and the young people have expressed that people need common ground in order to work together towards goals. It seems that at this “performing” stage, members have got to know each other and there are limited insecurities about relationships with other members in the group. At the same time there are insecurities about potential new members coming into the group and disturbing the good working relationships they have.

Workers in Hove are considering spending more time on group process in the near future and how the group copes with change, new members etc. It is a hard balance to achieve when the group appears to be so goal focused.

The Woodingdean group achieve lots but in a more relaxed way. The group at Woodingdean consists solely of young men. From feedback in their 1-2-1s it was apparent that one of the things they really valued about the group is the opportunity to meet and discuss issues in a safe, supportive environment. The group enjoys the recognition and the sense of achievement they get from being part of the group but this isn’t their primary reason for staying involved. They appear to be less goal-oriented and get a

lot from just being part of the process. The group has established rituals such as making cups of tea on arrival with everyone sitting around for a while catching up. These are useful times for youth work. The group tends to plan in a less ordered way, sticking to its rituals and banter but is still able to perform when required. For example, when planning for their C4Y Showcase workshop they were resistant to going through plans in any great detail but were all committed to turning up and taking responsibility for their specific roles. At times this can cause anxiety for the workers.

CHANGES IN HOW YOUNG PEOPLE SEE THEMSELVES

Group work and the experience of being part of a supportive group provides opportunities for reflection on themselves and each other with young people encouraged to give constructive feedback to one another. In a 1-2-1, Jenny, admitted that she never believed compliments that are given to her.

“I think they’re either being sarcastic or sympathetic...I’m not sure how to take compliments and feel I have to compliment them back.”

After the showcase, Jenny was able to reflect on the fact she had been complimented by some of the adults on the group’s workshop and had been able to accept it.

The young people were asked to finish the statement **“Before I came to V4Y I...”**

Here are their replies:

Before I came to V4Y I...

“..was confident, happy, bored, spent my life on a P.C.”

“..Wasn’t friends with Lorraine. Wasn’t confident and was bored.”

“..didn’t use long words. Didn’t know about young people’s rights.”

"...was not very confident. I tried to hide in the shadow of my friend. I didn't know how to write a constitution or facilitate a meeting."

"...would be at home doing nothing."

V4Y now appears to play a large part in the young people's lives and affects how they see themselves.

INCREASED SENSE OF OWNERSHIP AND THE RESPONSE TO NEW PEOPLE IN THE GROUPS

Although it is good that the young people in the forums recognise it is their group, part of the outcome of increased ownership is that the young people have become wary of potential new members who may come along. This results in the danger of the groups becoming exclusive.

Within the Hove V4Y group, the sense of ownership has been particularly strong since the successful Scarman Trust bid. The group feel they were the ones putting in the effort writing the application and so it would be unfair to invite others along to 'reap the benefits' (which include a popular team building residential) if they aren't really that interested in contributing to V4Y. Similar feelings ran high at the 1st birthday celebration where three peripheral members, who have only occasionally attended meetings, popped in and out as they felt like it.

Some very strong language is used when the young people talk about people coming in new to the group and how they will fit in.

"I don't want any of these people coming in and saying 'We're V4Y' and taking credit for work we've done."
Lorraine (12)

"I hated it when they walked in, invading our space. I know that's closing the doors of V4Y but they've not been involved. They won't be there the week after."
Lorraine (12)

"I feel a little bit worried they won't fit in." Chris (15)

"People should either come or not come." Matt (15)

This feeling is much the same in Woodingdean.

"Gaz and Dan take the piss. They just want to come in and keep warm before youth club starts. They don't really want to get involved.... It's frustrating when younger members of the Sk8 Crew come in and nick our crisps."

"Everyone knows each other in the group. It's difficult to trust new people. But at the same time we're getting more people involved. If we had a meeting with Dee and that (the local councillor), it would look better if there were more of us."

The Hove group re-visited their ground rules to try and work this issue through. This is reflected in their new group agreement, which tries to balance the following statements.

- V4Y is open to everyone
- V4Y is not a drop in. You're welcome to come and try us out but if you want to come regularly, please get involved.

The group made the decision to put these statements on the website so that people interested in coming along would be aware of them.

The Scarman Trust website project involved planning a residential and discussing who to invite. The group was torn. They accepted it could be a good opportunity to get new members but they were cautious as to whom to invite. They agreed to invite a couple of young people who have been involved in V4Y occasionally in the past and are interested in finding out more. The group is becoming more comfortable with the idea.

"I don't mind Karen coming to Blacklands, I just wanted her to come to the meetings first."

It can be hard for a potential new member to get involved when they are coming into an existing group that knows what it's doing and exactly what to expect. Chris recalled that at his first meeting no-one actually explained what V4Y was. The groups are now considering doing taster sessions from time to time specifically planned with new members in mind to address this.

A series of incidents where members of V4Y have been intimidated or bullied by other young people using the YMCA may also explain the reluctance of the Hove group to accept new members. Several members feel particularly insecure about meeting at the YMCA for this reason.

Staff at the YMCA have suggested that key figures from the youth clubs should be getting involved with V4Y. However, these influential figures can be intimidating towards others and are friends with those who have previously bullied members of V4Y. On one occasion where they were invited along to a meeting, the rest of the group was visibly uncomfortable, nervous and defensive.

"You can cut the atmosphere with a knife when they come into the group."

"I never feel safe at the YMCA. When we meet in town I don't even have to think she might be there."

People on the Fringes

Interestingly, feelings of intimidation run both ways and at least one young person is put off attending the group because she feels the others don't like her and that the group is rather a clique.

As well as being intimidated by other young people at the YMCA, the Hove V4Y group realises that people may find them intimidating as a group. The Hove V4Y recently took part in a facilitation training session involving a role play meeting. Each member took on a particular role. For example, one young person was the chair, one young

person was the new person coming into the group for the first time, one always spoke, not giving room for others to speak etc. Leah, who had been given the role of the new person, said during the feedback afterwards,

"I've realised how intimidating we are as a group"

This was a major breakthrough for certain members of the group and it is suggested that more work is needed in this area.

RECOGNISING HOW WORKERS COULD SUPPORT YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR OWN PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

The young people were asked in their 1-2-1s how workers could support them in the group better. They identified these areas:-

"I want a worker to help me regain control during the meeting and by meeting up with me to show me how they plan a meeting and helping me to plan mine."

"I want a worker to be on the edge and watch to see if they need to intervene and sort us out."

The young people would appreciate more regular 1-2-1s. and one young person, reflecting on whether the time had been useful, said:-

"I'm surprised I could remember all the things I'd done."

The young people also said there could be more recognition made of achievements. Presenting certificates

at events gives the signal to the young people that their contributions are valued and enables them to feel proud at what they've achieved.

The young people appreciate having a youth worker to talk through issues with. Even if there are no immediate issues it seems helpful for a young person to know there is someone they can talk to that isn't their parents.

“It just helps me and I feel like I have people to talk to that I trust”

The facilitation skills and methods a youth worker uses can encourage a young person to work through an issue and think of all the possible choices or solutions available to them. This is a useful skill to transfer to relationships, career choice, etc

Facilitation is key to the work of C4Y and V4Y and has a positive effect on a young person's development.

CHANGES IN TERMS OF HOW THEY SEE DECISION MAKERS

The young people are able to distinguish between being listened to (as in a young people's 'slot' in a meeting) and having their views acted upon.

“We should really say that we are not always involved in making decisions rather than saying we're not listened to because that's not true anymore.”

Hove V4Y's drama at the C4Y Showcase event illustrated the barriers to getting involved in decision-making.

YOUNG PEOPLE FEEL MORE CONFIDENT TO ATTEND YOUTH CLUBS

They wanted to acknowledge that often there is space in a meeting for young people to give their views but there is seldom any feedback as to what action will happen or how their views can be incorporated into any decisions that are made.

The intended outcome of the V4Y project was that through contact made at the youth clubs, young people would be encouraged to attend V4Y. In reality the reverse has happened, with young people on the fringes of the youth clubs making contact with V4Y and then feeling more confident at coming along to open youth club nights because they know some of the youth workers and young people. The actual intended outcome has been more difficult to achieve. It has been difficult to 'sell' V4Y at the youth clubs.

Involvement in the V4Y project has been an opportunity for young people to learn more about themselves, how they react in situations and around others, and to develop skills and confidence. These all contribute to their self-concept, the way young people see themselves.

The young people have identified that they are able to express themselves better with their peers and with adults. They also appreciate their relationships with the youth workers. They are learning what is it like being part of a group and are empowered through being able to make decisions and shape the direction the group takes. These skills and abilities are directly transferable to social and employment contexts and have helped them in their relationships outside the groups. They have appreciated being involved in the evaluation of the project so far and in being able to make suggestions for the future.



Photography from the 'Shutter Speed' project by Magali Nougarede

The effect of the projects has certainly made a difference to the lives and self-concept of the young people. However, they have identified that one of the measures of success would be that they had achieved tangible things – that getting involved had actually made a difference to the community they live in. Has this been the case?

CHANGE ON A NEIGHBOURHOOD LEVEL

One of the successes of the SRB6 project has been that change seems a lot more achievable on a neighbourhood (as opposed to a city-wide) level. Both groups have received support from the local actors within their communities, e.g. residents societies, community development workers and councillors, all of whom have a vested interest in the local area and some power to make decisions and take action. The young people were saddened when Councillor Heather James of Wish Ward was not re-elected in the local elections, seeing it as a threat to getting things actioned in West Hove. In Woodingdean the residents group generously gave a sum of money towards the youth shelter.

Getting things changed appears to be easier on a neighbourhood level, particularly in areas that have a strong history of community development, community groups and a 'doing things for themselves' mindset. The support of partnership organisations which enjoy good reputations within their communities and good working relationships with key figures and decision makers has also helped in getting things changed (or on the way to change) locally.

Young people are encouraged by instant successes, such as the change in bus times to Woodingdean. They want to see that something has been done as a result of them getting involved in a project such as Voice4Youth and it is easier to see things happening on a local level. In Hove, where the number one issue for young people is to get lighting in Stoneham Park, the young people have been able to identify small steps forward – such as gaining the support of the police – as successes, however small.

Maybe there is more accountability on a neighbourhood level too, with councillors and community representatives accountable for the things they promise.

The Coalition4Youth has certainly had more success with specific changes on a local level, rather than changing city-wide services. C4Y plans to replicate this model of neighbourhood youth forums in other parts of the city, subject to funding.

GAINING GROUND WITH THE DECISION-MAKERS

One of the success criteria identified by the young people is that V4Y has got young people's voice heard by "the people who can make a difference". They have already made steps towards achieving this within their own neighbourhoods. But what about on a city-wide level?

One of C4Y's strengths has been to develop many innovative and creative ways of consulting young people, encouraging participation that is both meaningful and fun. However, over the last year C4Y has sometimes struggled to make sure that decision-makers actually listen to children and young people, commit to change and feed back what changes or improvements (if any) have been made as a result.

The C4Y Showcase Event, held on April 30th 2003 at the Dudley Hotel, was a response to this. A range of local decision-makers from across the city were invited to bring their creativity and knowledge to a large-scale showcase event. The event aimed to be creative, participative and fun, maximising chances of informing key people about the results of the work and inspiring them into creating positive change for young people. Towards the end of the evening, participants were invited to pledge publicly something they could do for children and young people over the next 6 months.



The Showcase Event was a chance for the V4Y groups to make contact with some of the key people in Brighton & Hove. The young people led workshop 'stations' and secured support from many decision-makers. They hope that the decision-makers will respond to issues raised through the V4Y groups.

This event was evaluated by C4Y through a "post it" exercise at the end of the event. The event was also evaluated independently by TSA via a questionnaire sent to those who attended. Most people who attended appear very supportive of the work of C4Y staff and young people and appreciated the time and energy required to plan and host the day and use some very creative methods.

A lot of people found the event inspiring, informative and fun and felt that C4Y managed to keep the energy levels high and the timings 'pacey', despite a long event. It was appreciated that lots of good work was done in the time. Someone commented,

"Best 3 hours of work ever!"

One suggestion was to have allowed more time for breaks in between the workshops.

People described the methods used as 'effective' and 'excellent', identifying that they could improve any meeting, not just those with young people! The methods

provided people with an opportunity to think how they could better encourage young people's participation in their own area of work, including in decision-making. This is important given that the young people from Voice4Youth feel that they are listened to but not involved in the actual decision-making. Most people felt that making a pledge to action, even if it was something already in their work plans, was a good idea, giving purpose to the event and motivating them to get on and do it!

People agreed with the suggestion that C4Y's 'next step' should be to feed back the adults' pledges to young people and to support those who made pledges to carry them out. Other suggestions included the development of more youth forums across the city and feedback in community newspapers and partnerships about pledges that were made. A lot of participants mentioned that the effect of the evening on themselves and their organisation had been to increase awareness of the factors that help/hinder young people's participation and to keep this in mind in daily practice and work contexts. There was also increased awareness of the fact that C4Y could be approached for advice in this area and that links between organisations and C4Y could be strengthened.

Some people were reluctant to make public pledges and said they had felt rather cornered, "preached at or stereotyped."

Several people were unsure as to how methods could be used in their own area of work, partly because of the time and resource implications.

More positive comments included:

"Stunning", "Memorable", "Excellent event, great fun and a wonderful opportunity to be creative", "Excellent planning", "Dynamic, sense of adventure, the unknown".

It is clear the Showcase had a big impact on those who attended. Of course, the real outcomes of the day that C4Y is hoping for is that people act on the pledges they made. This remains to be seen and part of C4Y's ongoing work is to follow this up.

Useful discussions spun off from this piece of evaluation, as it was a chance to discuss with the young people that as of March 2004 there is no funding for workers to support the groups.

The groups identified they should take more of a role in planning and leading sessions so they are prepared and more confident in their ability to continue after next March, when they could potentially have to organise a venue and plan sessions themselves.

There is even the suggestion that, as constituted groups, they could employ a worker themselves! This may prove the only way to sustain the V4Y project beyond this point. The other possible alternative is for the partner organisations to take on supporting the groups in some way. This is being explored in Woodingdean with the possibility that the group be supported in future by the P.A. from the local school and a youth worker from the Youth Centre. In Hove the participation worker is providing help to the YMCA development worker to put in a bid for a participation project to follow on. The agenda for this will be focused on involving young people specifically in the management of the YMCA rather than wider neighbourhood issues.

Coalition4Youth is currently exploring other avenues of funding from March 2004 for the Voice4Youth project, as

well as other areas of work. While the council is supportive of C4Y's work and many government initiatives delivered locally are keen to involve children and young people, C4Y currently only receives £ 11,900 of its budget from the Local Authority. It appears that just as the forums are emerging as groups which have built strong relationships within their communities and have had powerful impacts on the young people themselves, the threat of funding running out looms, making their future uncertain.





- C4Y to seek continuation funding for the Voice4Youth Project.
- More certificates and recognition of the work done by the young people and celebration of their achievements.
- Regular times built in for 1-2-1s between worker and young person as a priority. 1-2-1s represent a great informal, continuous evaluation method, providing

useful times to reflect with a young person on their individual development and on the dynamics of the group. They are, however, worker intensive, taking up to 1 hour for each young person.

- Better balance could be achieved in West Hove between group task and process. Since the group is very goal oriented it would be good to spend more time on group processes and dynamics, particularly to address the fact the group can be quite 'closed' to new people.
- Continue to encourage young people to take leadership role, and take on more of the planning and facilitating of the sessions.
- Try to increase the representation of young people from the youth clubs in Hove, possibly through a piece of work to set up "Youth Board".
- Investigate the possibility of the groups applying for further funding themselves.
- Investigate the possibility of running open days for parents of those involved in V4Y or inviting them to events so they understand more about what the projects do.

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1. Challenge the opinion, not the person.
2. We are all equal – don't make anyone feel less than that.
3. Listen to each other, we all deserve to be heard.
4. You're very welcome to come along and try us out – but please don't use the club as a drop-in.
5. We're not the average youth club – we aim to get young people's views heard so expect hard work!

WHERE ARE U AT?

Which of these statements most describes where you are at with V4Y?

"It's my first contact with a worker or people in the group"

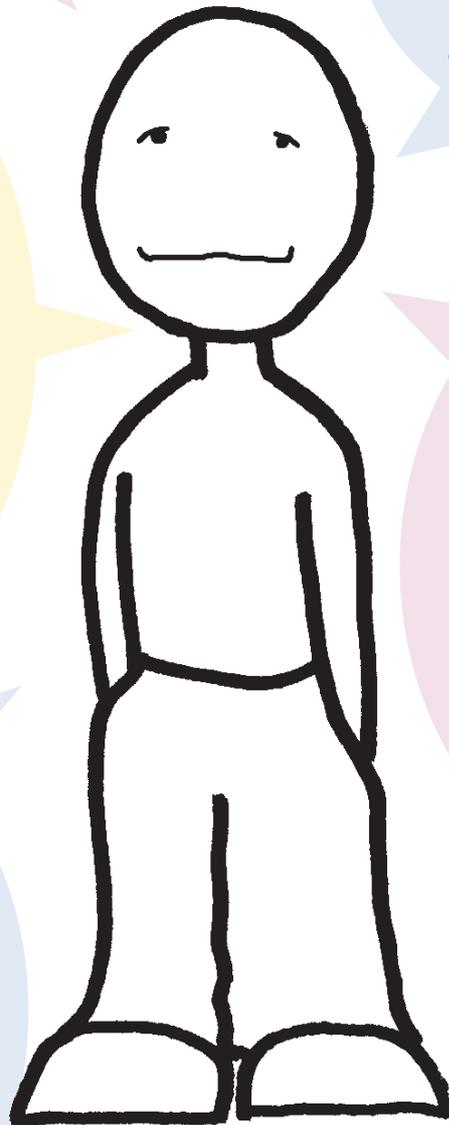
"I've met with people again and I'm working them out and deciding if I'm interested in what the group has to offer"

"I'm really involved in what's going on with the group. My youth worker is encouraging me to help plan and organise"

"I know a few people and am beginning to join in with things that are going on. I am also beginning to express my views in the group"

"I am taking a leadership role among my peers and have responsibility for others as well as myself"

"We are running the activities ourselves"



MY FIRST TIME IN THE GROUP

DATE:

DESCRIPTION OF WHAT I'VE DONE OR EXPERIENCED
i.e. HOW I KNOW I'M AT THIS STAGE

WHAT I DID WAS

.....

.....

.....

.....

HOW I FEEL AMONG MY PEERS. THINGS I AM AWARE OF ABOUT MYSELF WHEN I'M IN

.....

.....

.....

.....

1 THING I WANT TO AIM FOR

.....

.....

.....

.....

I WOULD GIVE MYSELF A CONFIDENCE SCORE OF:

10

I WOULD GIVE MYSELF A COMMITMENT/INVOLVEMENT SCORE OF:

10

HOW I WANT A WORKER TO SUPPORT ME IN THE GROUP/ACTIVITY

.....

.....

.....

.....

HAVE MY SCORES CHANGED SINCE LAST TIME? IF SO, WHY DO YOU THINK THIS IS?

.....

.....

.....

.....

WORKERS' COMMENTS ABOUT HOW THEY FEEL THEY HAVE SUPPORTED YOU AT THIS STAGE AND THE RELATIONSHIP THEY HAVE

.....

.....

.....

.....

MY FIRST TIME IN THE GROUP

PHOTO OR CARTOON OF ME
(USING STICK FIGURES)

PICTURE OF ME IN THE YOUTH GROUP/ACTIVITY

WORDS TO DESCRIBE ME IN THIS PICTURE

.....

.....

.....



The achievements identified on V4Y's 1st birthday jigsaw puzzle (see page 4).

IN THE PAST YEAR WE HAVE...

- Had fun and made new friends.
- Reached our new member number target.
- Got young people's opinions on concerns that they have about their area.
- Received money from the Scarman Trust.
- Provided people to write articles and edit the Argus Youth page.
- Run a popular dance and DJ event 'Caught on Film'.
- Been to the YMCA's AGM. We got opinions from both adults and children and showed all the people that didn't really know that this group existed!
- Represented our area at the National Youth Council Conference at Swindon.
- Made a video of all the information we received from young people. Showed it at V4Y's premier where many important people in the area attended and took note of the problems.
- Hosted the West Hove Forum. After that night Heather James agreed to take action on the lighting in Stoneham Park and wrote: "It was clear that there are common concerns across all age groups and that young people are keen to be constructive, to listen and to work with others in the community".
- Changed the aims of Hove V4Y from a group that didn't just get young people's opinions heard but to one where we actually get things done in the area.
- Filled in an application form to receive money from the Scarman Trust. We planned a website that will give young people the chance to air their views and get them accessed easily by important people. We also planned training for updating websites and teambuilding at Blacklands Farm.
- Helped compile the young peoples diary for this year.
- Represented young people at events such as Tomorrow the World.

Members of Hove V4Y were asked what their aims and hopes were for the year ahead.

"That we can do something material that people can see i.e. lighting in Stoneham Park"

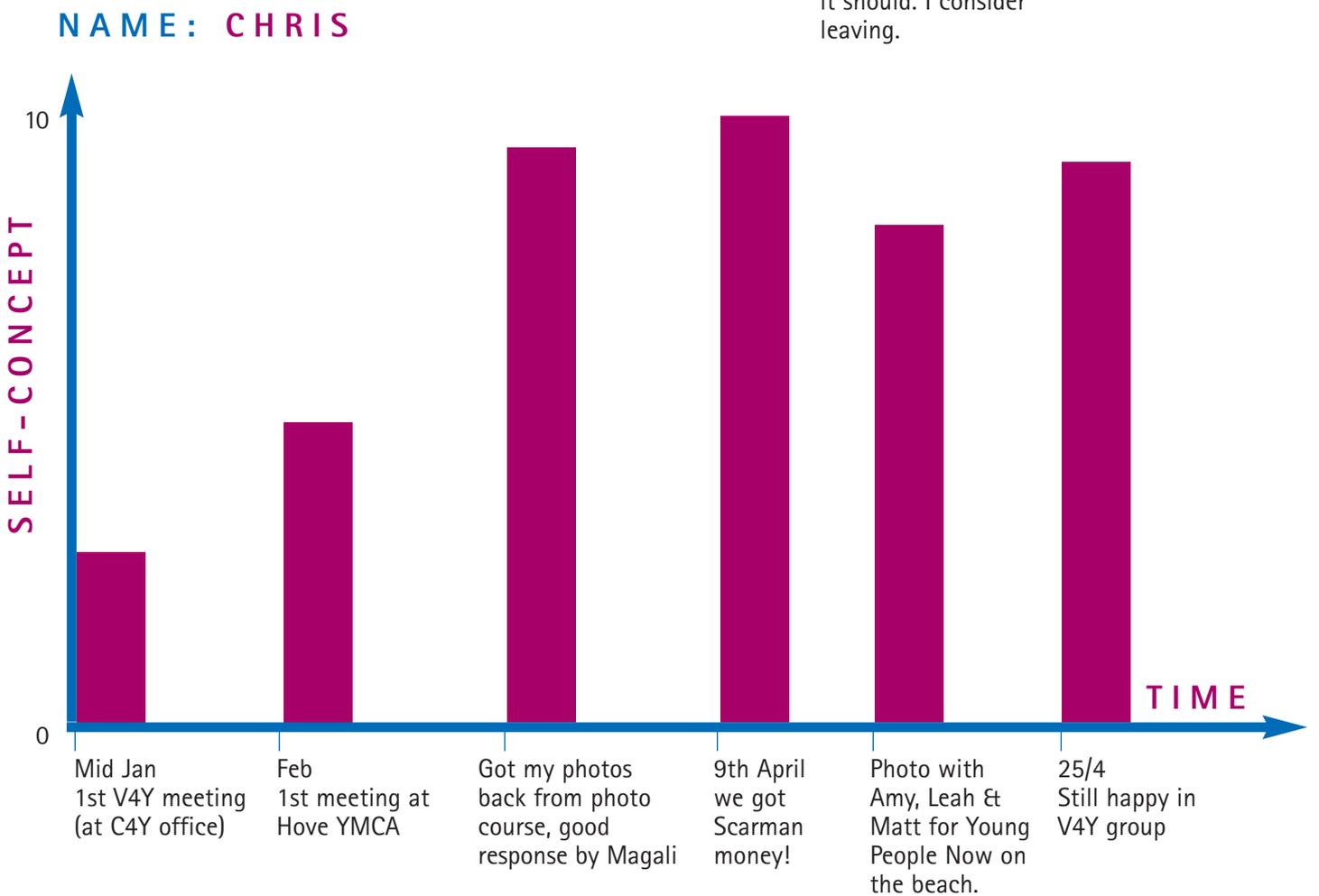
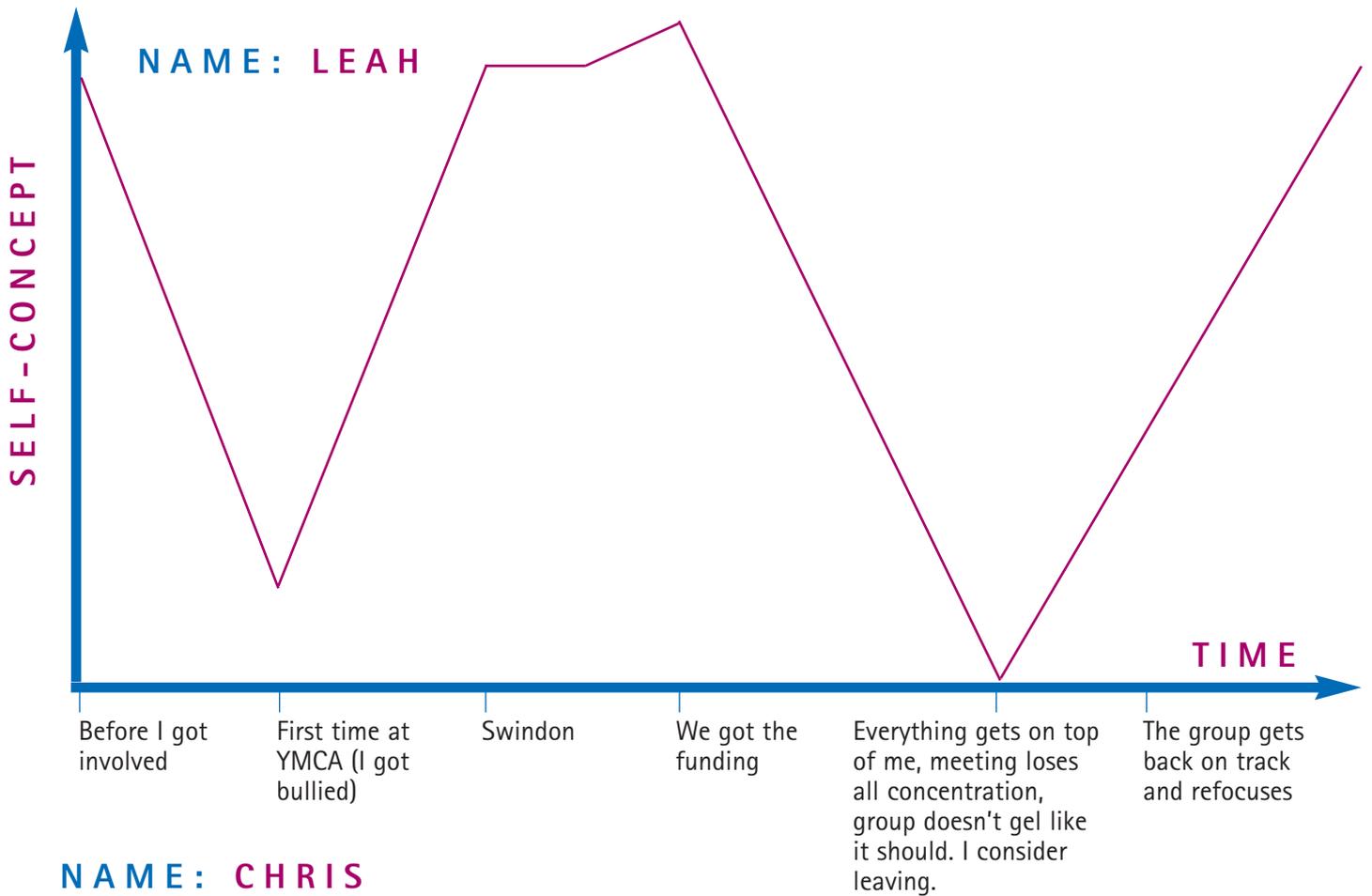
"Just to continue the work we have been doing ... and have fun!"

"To keep young people's views up to a maximum and continue to keep young people noticed"

"For people to have fun and make a difference"

"Get the website done!"

"For us to have more of a role in planning the V4Y meetings"



THE TRUST FOR THE STUDY OF ADOLESCENCE IS CURRENTLY DOING A PIECE OF RESEARCH ON THE COALITION4YOUTH. IT WOULD BE HELPFUL IF YOU WOULD BE WILLING TO CONTRIBUTE TO THIS BY GIVING YOUR FEEDBACK ON THE RECENT SHOWCASE EVENT, WHICH YOU ATTENDED AT THE DUDLEY HOTEL ON WEDNESDAY 30TH APRIL 2003.

What do you think the Coalition4Youth is trying to achieve through their work and events such as the showcase?

Was this clearly presented at this event?

My comments on the format/timings...

What do you think of the methods used? Could they be used to encourage young people's meaningful participation in management or in decision-making in your own area of work?

My main motivation for coming was...

Did you understand all the instructions sent out in the weeks leading up to the day?

How do you feel being asked to commit to a pledge/action point during this evening? Is this something which you are able to action (or at least get the ball rolling) straight away?

What should the next step be for C4Y or their role in the city? (e.g. one suggestion is to hold events across the city to feed back to young people what the adults said/pledged at the showcase)

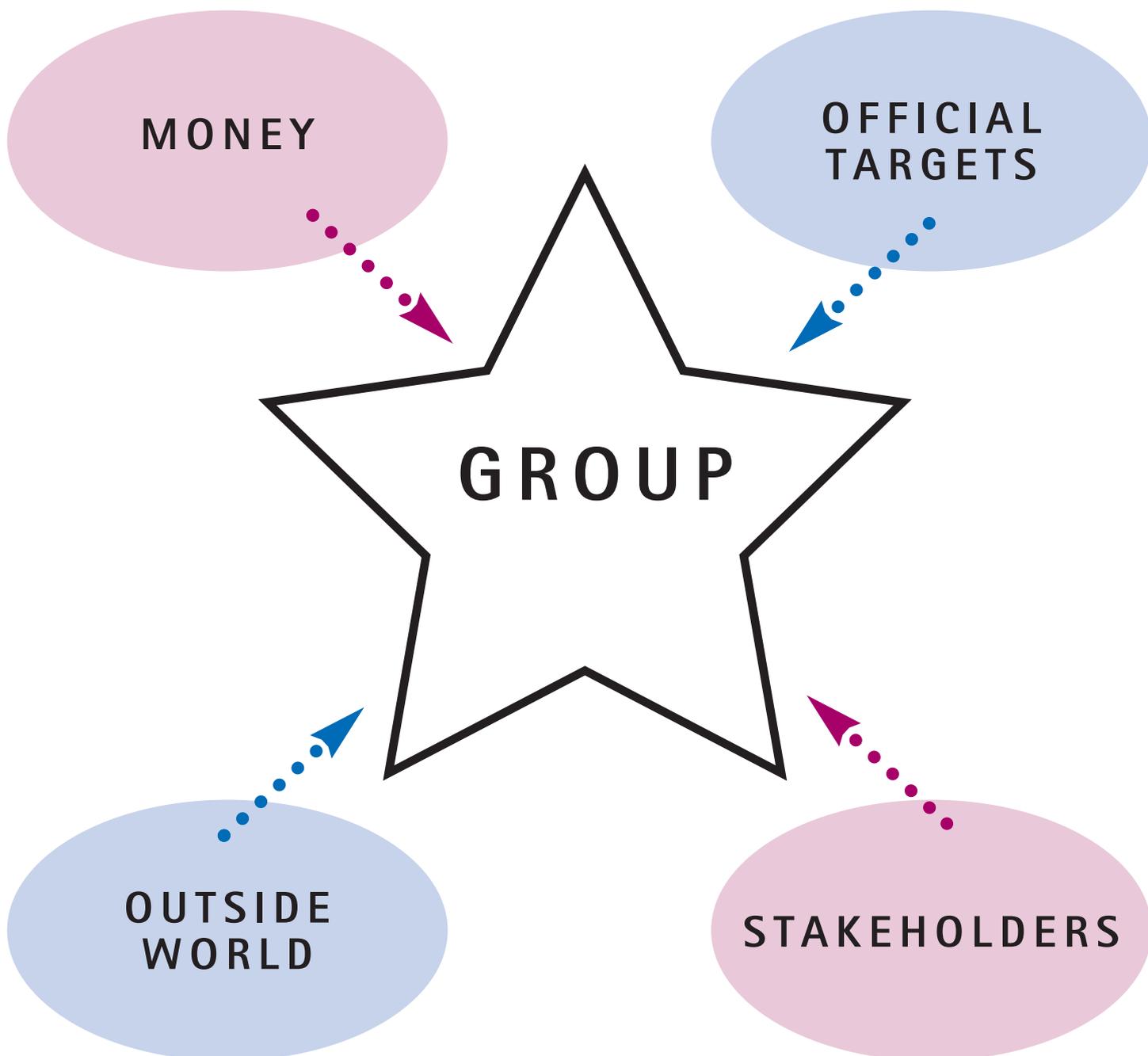
What do you think the effect of the evening will have on you/your organisation?

ATTENDING THE EVENT INCREASED MY UNDERSTANDING OF...

	 YES	 DON'T KNOW	 NO	HOW? IN WHAT WAYS?
The time commitment of involving young people (and adults) in an event/structure/process etc				
The frustrations young people sometimes feel when participation is tokenistic				
Young people's issues in Brighton & Hove				



WHAT EXPECTATIONS AND INFLUENCES AFFECT THE WORK THE GROUP CAN DO?



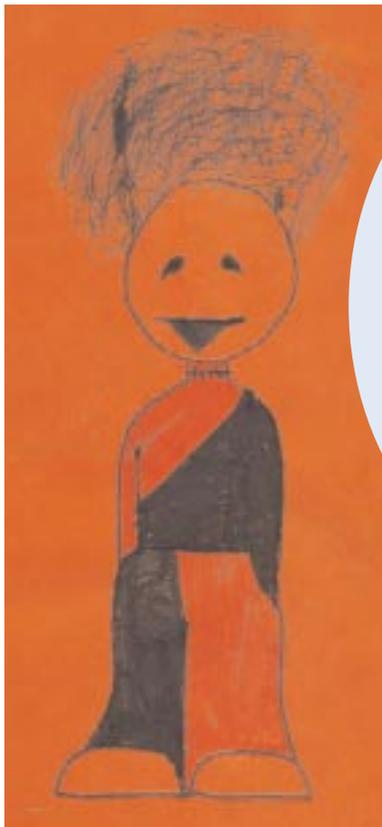
MY NAME: MERNA
'MY FIRST DAY AT
SCHOOL COUNCIL'

I felt really happy because
 we had the best days.
IT WAS GREAT!
 I thought Mr. Bentley was
 really strict but he's the best
 teacher ever!

I thought
 I would get told
 off by Mr. Bentley
 but I enjoy it very
 much now!



ST. MARY MAGDALENE PRIMARY SCHOOL COUNCIL
DATE: 21.7.03



**I want
 to go
 home!**

MY NAME: OLLIE
'MY FIRST DAY AT
SCHOOL COUNCIL'

NERVOUS

ST. MARY MAGDALENE PRIMARY SCHOOL COUNCIL
DATE: 21.7.03



Youth Voice2 (YV2) is a 3-year Self Concept and Youth Empowerment Project at the Trust for the Study of Adolescence (TSA). The project is funded by the Pidem Fund.

YV2 aims to

- i) Learn about young people's opinions about the factors that influence their view of themselves, their self-concept, either positively or negatively.
- ii) Look at any changes in self-concept of young people who are involved in a range of participatory youth projects.

The project will involve young people aged 11-23 years. YV2 particularly aims to involve young people who may be in isolated situations or may not usually be able to participate in youth empowerment projects. Several national and local projects have participated so far, including Coalition4Youth, The Peer Support Forum and the Mental Health Foundation in Scotland. Young people are actively involved in the management of the project and in

the design of the evaluation tools. The Core group have already begun to think about what factors affect self-concept, through meetings in person and through discussions on a virtual forum, accessed through the project's website, www.yv2.org.

The first task of the Youth Voice2 Project was to collect information about projects that affect self concept and this involved this evaluation of Voice4Youth, a participatory youth project, which is part of the Coalition4Youth in Brighton & Hove.

TSA has also been working with C4Y to develop a Self-Evaluation Tool, which will enable young people to record change in their self-concept during their involvement in a project.

For more information on the Youth Voice2 project or the Self-Evaluation tool contact Eddi Piper on epiper.tsa@ntlworld.com www.tsa.uk.com



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