

The Digbeth Trust Ltd



Moving People Forward



Global Grants 2001 – 2005

**Independent Evaluation
Final Report**

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'...without them [grants] people aren't going to be moved forward, so grants are a good thing [...] I'm living proof'

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank Iqbal Basi, Kate Hazelwood & Helen White at the Digbeth Trust for their openness and support.

We also thank the following people for giving their time and sharing their experiences. Their stories have enriched this evaluation and brought the impact of Global Grants to life.

Meena Bharadwara
Anita Halliday
Betty Ogwaro
Selim Zlomumzica
Dorothy Young
Alan, John Hicks and John Shaw

Suzanne Bisani
Mark Lynes
Dorothy Vuong
Steve Conlan
Andy Elder

Executive Summary

Report Purpose and Scope

This evaluation report, commissioned by the Digbeth Trust in May 2005 and funded by SRB4 Birmingham CAN!, reviews the impact of Global Grants in Birmingham as distributed by the Digbeth Trust for the SRB4 Birmingham CAN! programme.

Global Grants formed part of the 2000-2006 European Social Fund (ESF) and sought to build 'local social capital' by helping smaller community groups and voluntary organisations access ESF funding without the need to deal with complex paperwork or find project match funding themselves. The SRB4 Birmingham CAN! initiative provided programme match funding for the Global Grants Programme administered by the Digbeth Trust.

Methodology

The report's findings are based on an analysis of questionnaire returns, case study material, Digbeth Trust internal documents and broader policy papers, together with interviews with key stakeholders, staff at the Digbeth Trust, organisations in receipt of grants and individuals benefiting from Global Grants.

Findings

In the period 2001-5 the Digbeth Trust distributed some £333,000 funding some 59 projects across different 50 organisations. Decisions on funding were taken by a Global Grants Appraisal Panel who were recruited from community and voluntary organisations familiar with the target groups in the Global Grants criteria.

The main purpose of Global Grants was to move people towards the labour market and all applications for funding needed to demonstrate this.

As part of the evaluation survey questionnaires were sent to all 59 projects. 37 projects responded a response rate of 63%.

From those returned questionnaires the evaluators discovered that:

- 107 people moved into a job or became self-employed, costing £998 global grant per person (against anecdotal evidence that it costs some providers up to £5,000)
- 400 people achieved accredited or non-accredited training or moved into FE, costing £394 global grant per person

- The funded projects levered in nearly £1.4million other funding as a result of the Global Grants (ratio of about £7 for every £1 of global grant)
- The funded projects were successful in reaching individuals from communities often considered 'hard to reach':
 - People from BME backgrounds
 - Women
 - Disabled people
 - Lone parents
 - Asylum seekers/ refugees

Whilst not being set up with the express intention of building organisational capacity, 29 out of the 37 projects did, however, report that they felt more confident about applying for new sources of funding following their successful delivery of Global Grant-funded activities.

Observations

The Global Grants Programme has been very effective at:

- Reaching economically inactive¹ individuals.
- Getting people into jobs.
- Moving people towards the labour market by increasing skills, improving communication, building self-confidence and raising awareness of the labour market.

The Digbeth Trust has been very effective at:

- Putting in place robust and effective appraisal process and funding distribution systems.
- Recruiting and supporting a skilled and committed group of people for the Grant Appraisal Panel.
- Maximising the impact of grant funding by linking it to development support.
- Learning from experience and using this learning to inform future Global Grant rounds.

¹ GOWM defines as 'economically inactive' those people who are not engaged in the labour market.

Implications for Policy

- This Global Grants programme has delivered cost effective interventions with 'hard to reach' communities and individuals. GOWM are looking for organisations to manage and distribute Global Grants, but are aware that match funding is an issue. A strategic approach across statutory agencies in the City to identifying match funding would enable the Global Grants Programme to continue.
- The Digbeth Trust should consider acting as an Intermediary Body, registered to manage Global Grants programmes, in its own right.
- Funding linked to effective development support secures real outcomes both for beneficiaries and organisations. GOWM should consider linking funding for a dedicated Development Worker role to the Global Grants monies.
- Global Grants should be targeted at smaller, community based organisations, as they were in this programme, where they can achieve maximum impact.

1. Introduction

Global Grants formed part of the 2000-2006 ESF programme seeking to build on Local Social Capital pilot work funded through Article 6 of the 1994-99 ESF Regulation and carried out in Plymouth, Manchester and Scotland. This pilot work sought to develop innovative responses to moving people towards the labour market.

In Birmingham, two organisations successfully bid for, and delivered, the ESF funded Global Grants Programme – these organisations were BVSC, via SRB4 Birmingham CAN!, and The Birmingham Foundation.

Following this successful bid, BVSC/B:CAN! in its role as Intermediary Body with overall responsibility for managing and monitoring the Global Grants Programme, commissioned the Digbeth Trust to administer the Programme on its behalf.

The match funding for this Global Grants Programme came from the SRB4 Birmingham CAN! Initiative.

This evaluation report was commissioned by the Digbeth Trust in May 2005, funded by SRB 4 Birmingham CAN!, with the intention of reviewing the impact of Global Grants Programmes for years 2001 – 2005.

2. Purpose and structure of report

The purpose of this report is to assess the impact of the Global Grants Programme administered by the Digbeth Trust, both for beneficiaries and for those organisations delivering funded projects.

The commissioned aims of the evaluation are to assess:

- The extent to which the BVSC Global Grants Programme funded activities moved people towards the labour market
- The extent to which Voluntary and Community organisations (VCO's) learned from project delivery and consequently improved their operational capacity
- The impact of the dedicated Development Worker support for applicant VCO's.

This report has been prepared to present:

- the **methods**, approach and activities undertaken by the review team commissioned to deliver this programme evaluation
- full research **findings**
- key **learning points**, with implications for future initiatives

Methodology

- A review of internal Digbeth Trust documents, including application forms and monitoring information
- A literature review of relevant Government and local policy papers
- Scoping interviews with Iqbal Basi and Helen White
- Questionnaires to funded projects sent via post and email
- Post-questionnaire follow-up phone interviews
- Interview GOWM and other key stakeholders including Grants Appraisal panel members
- Semi structured interviews with case study participants. While these are mostly with project managers, the views of some beneficiaries are included.

The case studies serve to illustrate some of the different ways Global Grants have been used creatively by small organisations to move people facing specific barriers towards the labour market.

3. About Global Grants

Global Grants are aimed at small community organisations, working at a grassroots level with local communities, who are unable to access ESF funding through Co-financing or other arrangements.

These VCO's, it was felt, would be best placed to access those disadvantaged communities that 'mainstream' providers found 'hard to reach'.

Global Grants programmes are applied for and managed by 'Intermediary Bodies' (IB). IBs are responsible for not only securing the ESF funding from Government Office, but for securing matched funding, arranging the distribution of the grants and ensuring outcomes are achieved.

Birmingham Voluntary Service Council (BVSC) applied to become an IB using it's SRB 4 Birmingham CAN! small grants pot as matched funding. Once successful with its Global Grants bid, BVSC commissioned the Digbeth Trust to distribute the monies.

Global Grants were intended to develop Local Social Capital, work in conjunction with the then emerging Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy, and support the Regional Development Plan. All Global Grants funded projects '*must help individuals or groups move closer to the labour market*'².

The target beneficiaries are people from marginalised, 'hard to reach' and socially excluded communities. In addition to the activity funded by Global

² Source ESF Global Grants Guidance for Intermediary Bodies

Grants supporting people to re-engage with the world of work, the local nature of the community and voluntary organisations receiving the grants has meant that local people have been supported to contribute to the regeneration of their communities.

The Global Grants Programme in Birmingham supports the implementation of the Birmingham Strategic Partnership (BSP) Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy by moving people into employment. A 2004 report to the BSP highlighted that while the city was making good progress against targets for crime reduction and improving educational attainment, it had been less successful in tackling inequalities in health and unemployment.³

Furthermore, the project also supports the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal (NSNR). The NSNR Action Plan notes ‘...there has been a failure to harness the knowledge and energy of local people or to empower them to develop their own solutions’⁴. The evidence gathered for this report suggests that the Digbeth Trust administered Global Grants programme has enabled some local people to develop and implement some very creative solutions to overcome barriers to employment.

The Digbeth Trust approach to distributing Global Grants

The Digbeth Trust has a long and positive track record in distributing small grants and funding to the community and voluntary sector. The Trust has practical experience of supporting small, new or inexperienced community groups working at grassroots level with local communities.

Accountable for Global Grants to BVSC and the SRB4 B:CAN! Programme Management Group, a steering group comprising of the Birmingham and Solihull Voluntary Sector European Forum, B:CAN!, BVSC, Birmingham Foundation and the Digbeth Trust were responsible for managing the Programme.

The Digbeth Trust established an open and transparent process for soliciting bids. Invitations to bid were sent to all groups on the Trust’s extensive mailing list asking people to contact them for more information.

Prospective applicants were offered telephone support in preparing their bids. It was expected that applying organisations would have an appropriate level of existing capacity to deliver the activities they were proposing, but support could help them to clarify their ideas and develop their bids in line with the programme criteria.

Between 2001 – 2004, support was offered on an ad hoc basis by Digbeth Trust staff, in addition to their regular work roles. The 2004/05 phase of grant applications benefited from the additional support of a dedicated

³ Source Birmingham Strategic Partnership Web Site July 2005

⁴ Source – SRB4 BCAN! Project Proposal Form Commissioning Process 2004 -05

Development Worker for Global Grants (part-time, 25 hours a week); the cost of providing this, though small in comparison, is additional to the average intervention cost – which is directly based on the Global Grants budget.

A grant application appraisal Panel, made up of voluntary sector organisations, including those representing the target groups, made all the decisions about awarding the grants.

Target groups:

- People with disabilities
- Lone parents
- People from Black and Minority Ethnic communities
- Refugees and asylum seekers
- People over 50

4. Research findings

The Digbeth Trust, during the period 2001 –05, has distributed some £333,000, funding 59 projects across 50 different organisations.

A questionnaire survey was distributed to all projects funded by the Global Grants programme during 2001 –2005. Of 59 funded projects, 37 responses were received [63%] which provides a representative sample for analysis.

The following calculations have been made on the basis of the data from the 37 questionnaire returns:

Cost effective interventions

- The 37 projects received a total of **£198,859** in Global Grant funding
- The average grant per project was **£5,375**
- **637** people benefited directly from the support across all 37 projects
- The average beneficiary intervention cost was **£312** per person

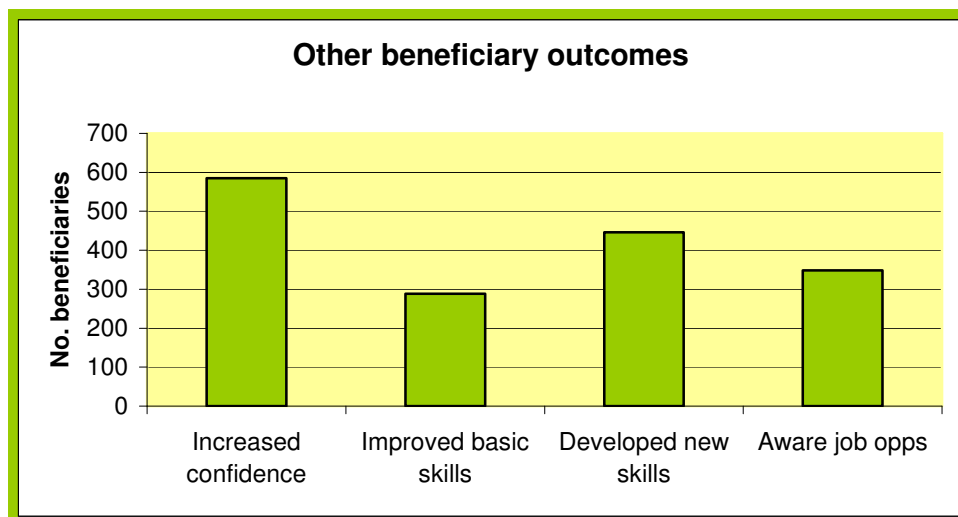
Jobs

- **107** people moved into a job or became self employed as a result of the Global Grant funded interventions
- Calculated on the basis of the funding [£106,817.60] going to projects [21] which achieved the 107 job/self employment outcomes, the average cost was **£998** per person

Training

- **400** people achieved accredited/non-accredited training or moved into Further Education as a result of Global Grant funded interventions
- Calculated on the basis of the funding [£157,419] going to projects [28] which achieved the 400 training outcomes, the average cost was **£394** per person

Other outcomes



This Global Grants programme has achieved a significant number of beneficiary outcomes, across a range communities facing significant barriers to employment, making the most cost effective use of the funds available.

Leverage

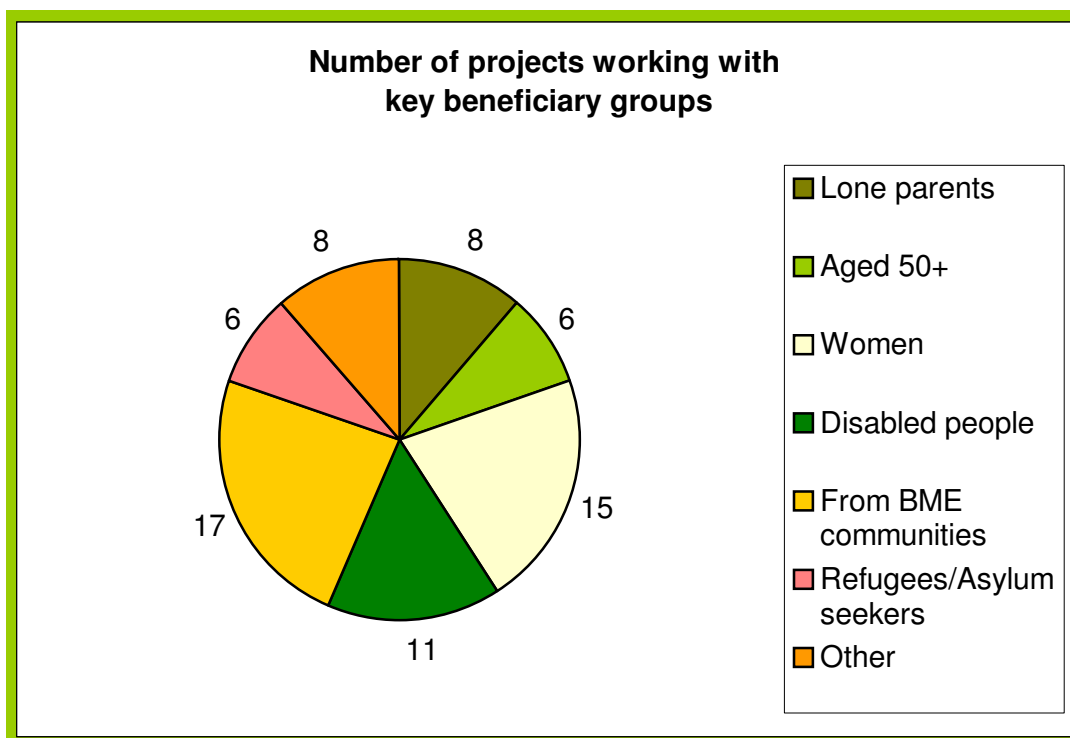
During delivery of their Global Grant-funded activity, 5 projects raised a further **£1,273,000** (note: £1.2 million of this was a delivery contract with one agency).

After completion of funded activity, 6 organisations raised a further **£106,500**.

A number of organisations reported that the Global Grant had generated unspecified amounts of business income and in kind contributions e.g. use of premises and donations of PCs.

Target groups

Not only have projects achieved cost effective interventions, but they have also succeeded in reaching the target client groups as specified in the grant criteria:



Note: projects could indicate more than 1 category

23 out of 37 projects used the Global Grants to work with a new client group, 21 out of 24 projects used the grant to work with an existing client group, but in a new way. 33 projects reported that they were still supporting the groups they were funded by the Global Grants to work with. A few were only working with 'some' of those clients, because others had moved on, and several mentioned that the on-going work was purely voluntary as they had no funding to continue to work with those clients. Others had stopped working with the clients once the funded projects had completed.

Several projects reported numbers of 'indirect' beneficiaries e.g. one project supported c.300 parents to participate in training/ local democracy activity by providing crèche facilities.

Funded activities

When asked what they received their Global Grants for, the majority of respondents reported activity in 4 main categories:

- personal development
- job search
- business start and/or feasibility studies
- ICT training

ICT training was not funded through the programme after 2003, when the Steering Group agreed with recommendations from the Digbeth Trust to tighten the funding criteria. It was acknowledged that free ICT training was readily available through a range of initiatives across Birmingham and that Global Grants could be targeted more effectively to support other activities.

Capacity building of funded organisations

28 of the organisations that responded to the survey reported that, with hindsight, they considered they did have the capacity to deliver the funded activities with the target client groups, in line with their applications. This figure represents about 50% of all funded projects and reflects the focus of the grants programme, that organisations were able to move people towards the labour market.

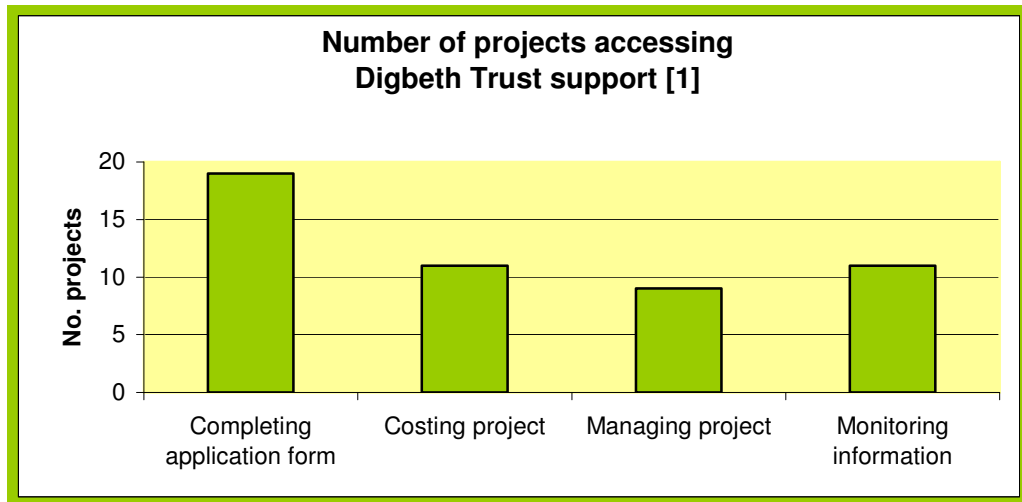
The Global Grants programme was not set up specifically to build capacity within small voluntary and community groups. The Digbeth Trust, however, drawing on its experience of administering small grants programmes over a number of years, recognised that development support would be useful to some organisations wishing to deliver activities within the programme.

- **28** funded projects reported that they had put new systems, policies or procedures in place while delivering the Global Grant funded activity
- **36** out of 37 funded projects reported that delivering the Global Grant activity had helped them to improve their existing services
- **20** projects reported that the Global Grants funded activity had become part of their core business

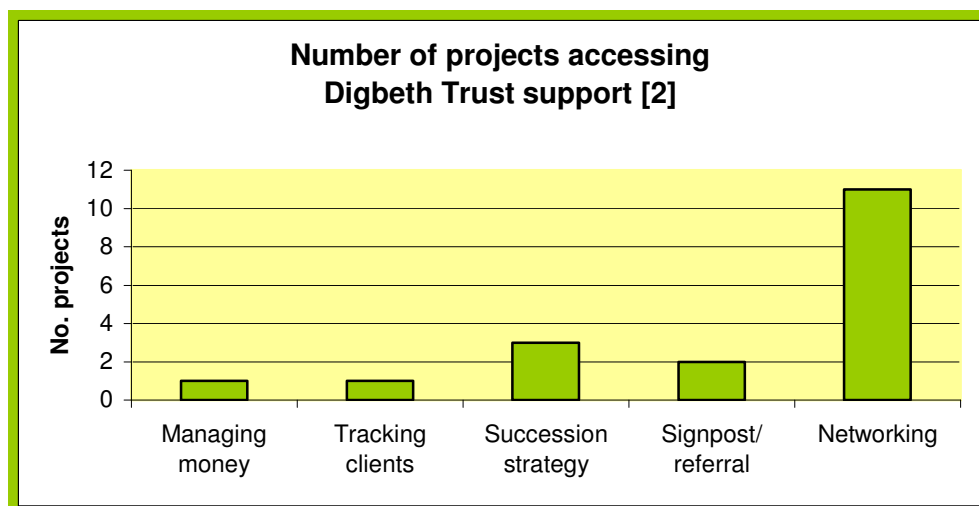
Interviewees noted that Global Grants

"presented an opportunity for the committee to get some experience of what can happen in relation to [employment] policies and procedures"

Helped them recognise "the implications of implementing eg. finance procedures that we had in place but that we hadn't had to use before"



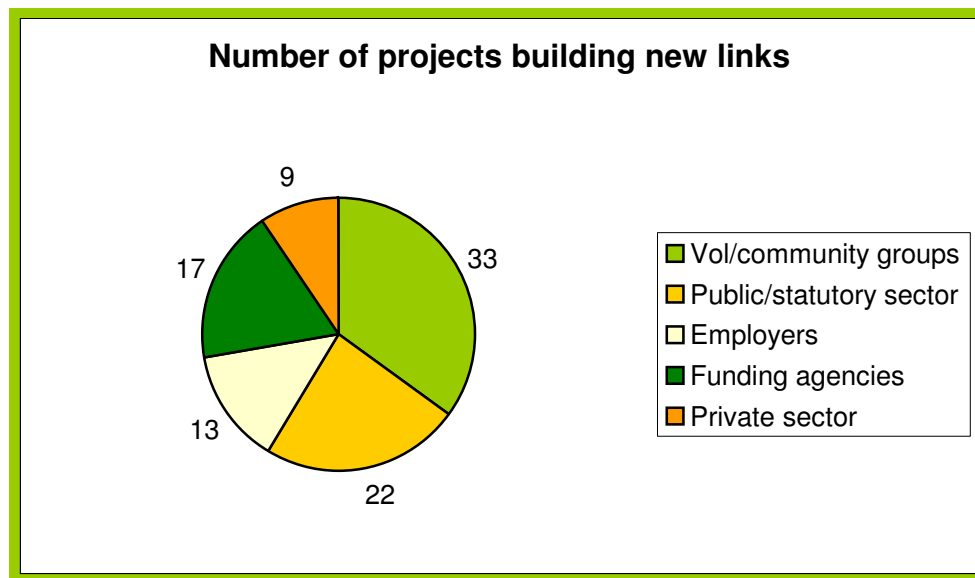
Projects funded across the programme period, 2001 – 2005, acknowledged support from the Digbeth Trust on the key aspects of applying for the funds and monitoring activity. Between 2001 – 2004, this support was offered on an informal, ad hoc basis, fitted around other work priorities.



In Autumn 2004, the Digbeth Trust was successful in accessing funding to retain a dedicated Development Worker to support organisations bidding into the Global Grants programme. Respondents noted support with key elements of the application process, for instance with costing proposed activities and

with clarifying delivery objectives, ensuring projects fit appropriately within the programme's criteria.

In addition, survey respondents identified additional support from the Development Worker in project monitoring and the provision of networking opportunities. Organisations welcomed the opportunities to meet with other funded organisations and to promote their services.



Some organisations expressed the need for support in securing continuation funding or for help in making contact with commissioning agencies and funders. **The signposting and referral services** could be strengthened in future programmes as there is evidence that several enterprising approaches to moving people towards the labour market have ceased once Global Grant funding has expired.

When asked to reflect, with hindsight, whether they would have done anything differently with their Global Grant, 19 projects responded as follows:

- 10 felt they would have planned the activity differently
- 4 would have changed their delivery methods
- 3 would have targeted different client groups
- 2 would have sought more support in developing their idea.

29 out of the 37 projects did, however, report that they felt more confident about applying for new sources of funding following their successful delivery of Global Grant-funded activities.

Appraisal Panel

As part of the evaluation, three members of the Global Grants Appraisal Panel were interviewed by phone. These panel members were recommended to us by The Trust as a representative sample of panel members.

Generally the Digbeth Trust staff team reviewed applications as they arrived and identified obvious points that required clarifying with the applicant group, prior to the bid going forward to the Appraisal Panel. This included such things as checking that the money applied for added up, that costings had been worked out and were realistic and identifying ineligible spend such as volunteer expenses. Panel members then paired up to go through bids, with each pair becoming the 'champions' for the bids they worked on in detail. The Panel then considered each application in line with the published guidelines, taking into account points raised by either the Trust or the 'champions'.

The panel had the option to request further information about an application, and could either defer or give conditional approval in principle and agree on how to proceed – generally the Trust would follow up questions with the applicant organisation, and once clarified the application would either be agreed by the Chair or come back to a full panel meeting.

The Digbeth Trust prepared ground rules for the Grant Appraisal Panel. These ground rules clearly lay out the expectations on panel members in respect of:

- Authority
- Commitment
- Confidentiality
- Conflict of Interest
- Assessing Applications
- Chair/Quorum/Voting

All three interviewees were generally very positive about the appraisal process. All were confident that they had participated in a transparent, open and fair decision-making process that was 'fit for purpose'.

All remarked on and welcomed the quality and timeliness of the support received from the Trust. All felt that they were able to gain from and contribute to the work of the panel.

'I'd been on other grants panels and knew what was expected, but the Global Grants Panel was much better prepared, we got information in advance, and the staff were able to follow up on any queries we had.'

All felt it was important that people on the panel had experience or knowledge about the sector, and that they were able to use this information when making decisions. Two interviewees felt that a degree of common sense was required from panel members.

'Initially it was quite overwhelming, we were given the forms beforehand and the scoring sheet but once I'd been to a couple of meetings it was OK.... I found it a bit intimidating at first, not the process but the panel.'

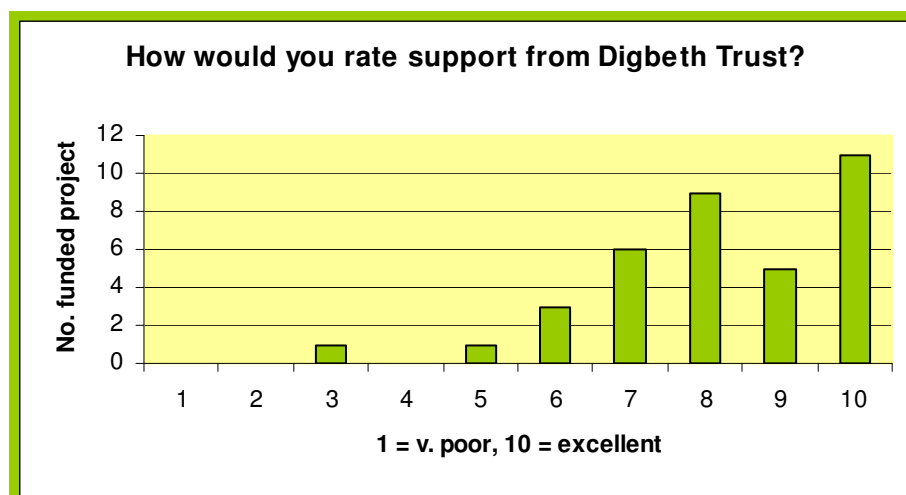
One panel member noted that the process was very clear, and that panel members were clear about the expectations on them. All were clear that Global Grants were about moving people towards the labour market, and that applications needed to demonstrate this.

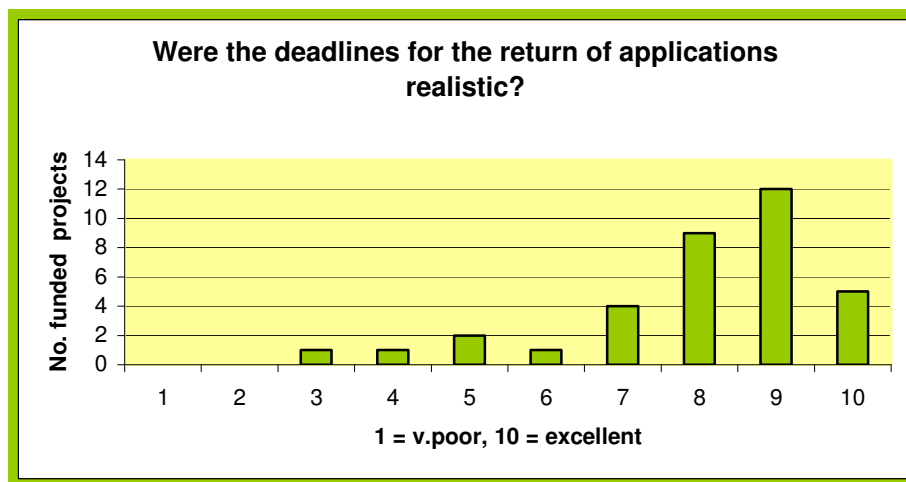
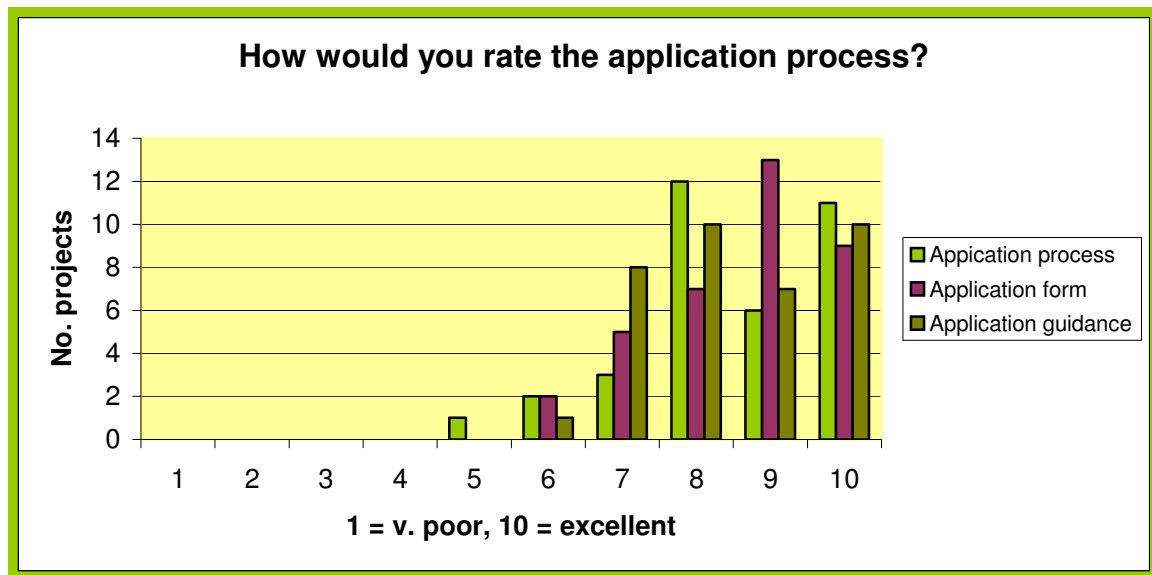
Interviewees were asked how the process could be improved:

- Two interviewees felt that they would have benefited from a more formal training process prior to joining the panel, particularly on criteria, scoring and ranking.
- One interviewee would have liked the opportunity to 'buddy -up' with an experienced panel member for the first couple of meetings.
- One interviewee noted that it was sometimes hard to argue the point with some (more vocal/more experienced) panel members and wondered if more could have been done to build the confidence of new panel members. This interviewee felt this was particularly important when the Trust was trying to develop a younger, more diverse panel to ensure that new members did not feel excluded by *'in jokes'*.
- One interviewee felt that more consideration could be given to supporting panel members joining an already established panel.
- One interviewee would have welcomed understanding more about ESF in general.

Programme administration

Project questionnaire respondents were asked to score the administration of the application process and the support they had received in applying:





The charts above clearly demonstrate a positive response from funded projects about the application process and support offered by the Digbeth Trust. In addition, a number of suggestions were made for improving support including:

- *More communication*
- *By enabling the Digbeth Trust to use its local knowledge and experience to distribute larger and longer grants*
- *Support was flexible but perhaps could have been a little more hands-on*
- *Support in seeking further funding strategies*
- *Come and visit, see what we're doing*
- *Further support on costing project items would be useful*
- *More availability or flexible grants*

It should be noted that responses to the evaluation questionnaire came from projects spanning the period 2001-05 and that it was an awareness of some of these requirements that initiated the application to fund a dedicated Development Worker for 2004-05.

Case Study 1

Global Grants and the Vietnamese community

Engaging with economically inactive women

The Vietnamese Development Centre [VDC] used a Global Grant of £6,000 (during the 2004–05 period) to invest in training a group of women in Nail Art techniques.

The Vietnamese Community has been in this country some 25 years, many women in the community have never engaged in paid work, some because of language barriers, others because of family constraints, women within the community are primarily seen as carers. However, economics are forcing change.

With unemployment in the community running at 45%⁵, the Development Centre has been working with its members to explore ways in which people can move into self-employment not related to the food industry. At about the same time, a number of women approached the Centre wanting advice and support about seeking part-time employment to boost family incomes.

The **Nail Bar** concept was identified for a number of reasons:

- Initial **low start up costs** – about £5,000 compared to £30,000 for catering start up
- Many of the women were **artistic** and nail art offered them an opportunity to exploit these **talents**
- Self-employment offered **control over hours** etc – a must for women in a community where men still dominate
- Artistic **flexible** work was more **acceptable** to husbands and in-laws
- It was something that could be offered as **women only** – the Centre had been looking for way to reach out to women
- It offered an opportunity to **improve English** while learning a new skill

The Development Centre used the Global Grant to employ a Vietnamese woman, who is both a nail art technician and an ESOL tutor, to run a 10 week course in Nail Art and English. The Course ran on Sundays from 12-00 – 4.00pm.

⁵ Source interview with Dorothy Vuong for the Vietnamese Development Centre

Beneficiary outcomes

- 16 women started the course and 16 women completed it.
- All 16 increased in confidence.

'It's been great to know that by working together we can achieve things, women in our culture tend to be marginalised. Men tend to run things. Amongst other things, this course has given the women confidence to engage in the community.'

- 16 women developed new skills, not only English and Nail Art.

'The women went on a trip to London which they organised themselves, sorted out coaches, lunch etc. I know this doesn't sound like much but in our community it's usually the men would do all of the organisation for something like this'

- 16 women achieved accredited training.
- 6 women became more aware of job opportunities.
- 2 women moved into employment.
- 2 women are self-employed and working towards securing sufficient working capital to open their own nail bars.

Organisational outcomes

- Improved understanding of the needs of the client group.

'We have learnt to listen to the trainees. We asked women what they wanted before putting in the bid and they owned the programme and everyone attended for all the 12.00-4.00pm slots each week.'

The organisation now understands that for many of these women the barriers to work are multiple and complex. For example, the two women who have become self-employed have identified that it would have been helpful to learn more about health and safety and the financial aspects of working for oneself. Other women have identified that in order to be successful they need to learn to drive. Others have identified the barriers they need to overcome before even thinking about work, primarily the need to convince husbands and in-laws living with them about the appropriateness of working.

- New skills.

*I know it was a small grant, only £6,000.00 – but once you learn the techniques then all bids are the same. It's really helped us to build our own capacity, and helped us realise that we need to train up more of our own people to have project management skills. **It built my confidence to apply for - and get - £52,000 from the Active Communities Unit.***

- New partnerships built. They are currently working with ENTA [a training organisation] to run Citizenship Courses at South Aston Church community hall. They are also in discussions with South Birmingham Community College about running more ESOL/Nail Art Training.
- New contacts made and networks extended through the networking activities of the Development Worker for Global Grants at the Digbeth Trust. The VDC has been linking into other Global Grants funded projects.

Costs effectiveness

A highly cost effective intervention reaching an isolated, economically inactive, group of women. None of the women attending the course had ever had paid work or even thought about working before attending the course.

- Each beneficiary intervention cost £375.00 for the 10 week course
- Each job outcome has cost £1,500
- Each accredited training outcome cost £375.00

Community impact

The Grant has had an impact on the community as a whole and, while this is seen as positive, the VDC are having to manage some tensions that have been created by the men in the community confronting their feelings about their wives moving out of their 'traditional role'.

'Its moving towards more equality by making them more economically active, mums are happier, more confident, this has positive spin offs on the family and especially the children.'

The role of the Digbeth Trust

The interviewee had nothing but praise for the Trust.

'The Digbeth Trust were very supportive, from when I first thought about putting in the bid I rang them and they were very helpful about what I could do with the money and really helped me refine and develop my idea. Helped me cost it out, how to make it clear what we wanted to do and keep the focus and not go off at a tangent.'

The input of the Development Worker was valued

'The trainees felt valued by the ongoing support – Helen came to see us on a Sunday, she was from outside the community and she came to see us on a Sunday, it really gave us some encouragement.'

Case Study 2

Global Grants stimulating and support social enterprise

A key aim of the Global Grants programme was the creation and support of social enterprise. This case study demonstrates how a small amount of funding can be the key to developing a sustainable enterprise.

In 2002, Heartlands RSO used a grant of £6,000 as working capital to establish a social firm.

The organisation was developed by the Priority Estates Project – a large national social enterprise /consultancy that works within housing management, tenant participation and Tenant Management Organisations – who used a two year Phoenix Fund grant to employ a development worker. This development worker then applied for and used the Global Grants funding as the seed corn monies from which has been built a self-sustaining, non grant aided social enterprise.

Heartlands RSO established itself with the development worker and just £8,000 start up monies - £6,000 via Global Grants and £2,000 from SRB5. The Global Grants money was instrumental.

' Global Grants gave us the start up capital and revenue we needed, cash flow the business in the early days until it started to pay its way. Nothing would have happened without this money'.

Heartlands RSO now has a turnover or over **¼ of a million** pounds and employs **10 staff** – 8 of these jobs they attribute directly to the Global Grants funding.

Reaching out to the long term unemployed and the economically inactive⁶

Heartlands RSO aims to recruit people who are unemployed and to date has only advertised vacancies through job centres etc.

'Of all the jobs that have been created (10) 9 were unemployed before coming to work for us. All employees live within 4 miles of the business. One of them is resident on Bloomsbury estate.'

⁶ GOWM defines as 'economically inactive' those people who are not engaged in the labour market.

Furthermore, Heartlands has a track record offering people their first employment opportunity and prides itself on providing 'entry level jobs' which people can then use as a jumping off point.

'A Chinese women started with us, this was her first job –she'd never been employed before. Working with us developed her confidence and other skills and helped her to identify what she really wanted to do was work in the care sector, she got a job in the sector and is now moving into training as nurse. Another example was a Somalian man who got his first job with us and is now in a full time job with the Post Office.'

*'We have employed people who were ignored by other employers. Our office person also had her first job with us – although she had done lots of voluntary work, and had lots of interviews, she never got a job – she thinks it's because she is a wheelchair user. One of our gardeners has a visual impairment – because of the support needed, no one would employ him. We employ these people – and what's the problem? what's the difficulty? **We have an extraordinary team, but other employers have passed them by or not spotted their potential.'***

Real work, real contracts

Heartlands RSO competes for work on the open market. It currently holds contracts with 10 wards within the city for work funded via Neighbourhood Renewal monies, plus contracts with a number of Tenant Management Organisations across the city.

Services provided include:

- Cleaning – low-rise blocks
- Graffiti/fly posting removal
- DIY and decorating
- Gardening/landscaping

Cost effectiveness

- A self-sustaining community enterprise established
- 8.5 jobs were created as a direct result of Global Grants monies
- **Each job** outcome cost **£706.00**

Community impact

The team work at ward level and engage with local people and local councillors to develop solutions to local problems.

The role of the Digbeth Trust

Heartlands RSO found the process of applying for a Global Grant straight forward and clear. They found that the grant was turned round quickly, the monitoring processes easy to understand and simple; in all a positive experience.

*'Access to the Digbeth Trust was fantastic – Iqbal is fantastic.
He trusted us to get on with it. Thanks very much'*

Case Study 3

Marketable skill development for women from refugee communities Horn of Africa Hair Braiding project

Windows for Sudan worked with a group of women from the Horn of Africa countries – Somalia, Eritrea, Sudan, Djibouti and Ethiopia - to explore ways in which they might move towards the labour market. The women identified hair braiding as a skill that is in high demand but that women have to travel some distance to access and which is quite expensive. They shared their experience and found that:

- Most families have at least 3 females with a hair braiding need
- Hair braiding costs families on average £50 - £100 per month
- The percentage of African and African Caribbean people choosing to have their hair braided appears to be rising

Learning hair braiding offered a number of opportunities:

- to save a substantial amount of money for each family by women being able to do each other's hair
- to develop their skills and set up small, home-based, hair braiding businesses locally where supply is low
- to ensure the development and sustainability of traditional hair care skills within African communities – passed from mother to daughter

Windows for Sudan successfully applied for a Global Grant [£6,397.46] to provide the women with advice and information on hair health and care, information on Hair and Beauty training courses and a practical course of 15 sessions in hair plaiting, braiding and weaving.

Beneficiary outcomes

- 20 women participated in the project and increased their knowledge of healthy hair care
- 20 women increased their awareness of training opportunities in Hair & Beauty through local colleges
- 20 women learnt how to braid hair – with or without extensions – and to plait cornrow
- Women who have daughters have been able to save substantial amounts of money by learning to braid hair

'Even when I cannot plait as good as the expert [...] I am now going to save £50 every month and 2 hours of my time travelling to and fro to make my hair or my daughters' hair because I will be making the hair of my daughters and my daughter will make mine now!'

- 4 women have begun a home plaiting service generating an income of £100 - £150 per week
- Women increased their confidence and some joined the textile course being run at Windows for Sudan, to broaden their range of skills
- Some women, previously very isolated, have developed their social skills and are now volunteering with the organisation helping to deliver services

Organisational outcomes

- Extended scope of the organisation. The project enabled Windows for Sudan to support the development of a new network for women from the Horn of Africa countries. It also involved women from Asian and White British communities, creating a sense of community cohesion and support for newly arrived women.
- Introduced children from other communities to the services of the organisation. Women participants brought their children with them on the course. The children were able to access the Windows for Sudan homework club and the recreational activities provided by the organisation.
- Improved community participation in the organisation. Windows for Sudan used the Global Grants process to improve the management of the organisation by opening it up more to the membership. A focus group was formed to identify the project and participants signed up to complete the training and commit to the project. Women beneficiaries have subsequently become volunteers for the organisation, helping to provide services.
- Improved fundraising confidence. Windows for Sudan were awarded 3 Global Grants over the period 2002 – 2005 and during that time the organisational capacity has been built and the organisation now has the confidence to apply for larger grants from a range of funders, for example the Big Lottery.

Cost effectiveness

Another innovative project, responding directly to the identified needs of the beneficiaries, which has produced cost effective outcomes with a group of isolated, economically inactive women from newly arrived communities.

- Each beneficiary intervention has cost **£320** for 4 informational talks and 15 practical sessions
- Each self-employment outcome has cost **£1,600**
- Each woman is at least **£600** per year better off, on average

Community impact

During the period in which the organisation accessed Global Grants funding, the community has increased its ownership of the organisation. The profile of the Sudanese community has been raised with a number of public sector agencies including the city council, the Learning & Skills Council and Jobcentre Plus.

The role of the Digbeth Trust

Windows for Sudan acknowledges the on-going support of the Digbeth Trust. With earlier applications for Global Grants, the organisation accessed support from the Trust in completing application forms. For the hair braiding project, the organisation was able to make the application themselves but they received support from the dedicated Development Worker with working out project costings.

Case Study 4

Supporting a community business for disabled people from feasibility to start up and relocation – Cycle Chain

The driver for setting up this business was the identified need to provide meaningful work experience to visually impaired people who were completing cycle maintenance training courses at Queen Alexandra College. Some visually impaired people have spent years moving from one course to another, developing useful skills but not having an outlet through which to use them.

The vision was that a business would be set up to provide sustainable employment for 2 or 3 people but that the work experience, provided to a rolling programme of trainees, would

- enable them to use their new maintenance skills within a 'real' context
- build their self-confidence to apply for jobs
- open up other opportunities for employment.

3 Global Grants were awarded over a period of 2/3 years to support the development of this business, one for a feasibility study, one for business start up and one for alterations to new premises [capital grant].

Beneficiary outcomes

- 40 people have benefited – all with visual impairment, Mental Health service users or people with learning disabilities
- 20 have demonstrated increased confidence – too early to say with Mental Health users
- 40 have developed new marketable skills – cycle maintenance, retailing, stock control, book keeping
- 36 have undertaken accredited training – some still completing
- 2 have gone on to Further Education
- 40 are aware of job opportunities
- 40 have – or will be – offered real work experience
- 3 jobs have been created and sustained
- 2 people have moved into self-employment

'Global Grants have put me where I am today [training disabled people]. Without them I would probably have gone back on the benefits, 'cos I was unemployed for 12 years – 'cos I got finished [made redundant] because I was visually impaired'

Organisational outcomes

The Global Grants facilitated the feasibility research to make a business case for Cycle Chain; provided start-up funding for the shop in Digbeth and then funded the alterations to new premises in Yardley.

Cost effectiveness

Feasibility and start up funding has supported the development of a community business which sustainably employs 2 visually impaired people and provides work experience to trainees who are visually impaired, users of Mental Health services or with learning disabilities.

- Each beneficiary intervention has cost **£330** – includes training, work experience, confidence building and job opportunity awareness
- Each employment /self-employment outcome has cost **£2,642**
- Each accredited training outcome has cost **£367**

Community impact

Cycle Chain was not intended to be a 'therapeutic' social enterprise, designed to keep people busy but not to make a profit, it was always intended to be self-sustaining through income generation – a 'real' business.

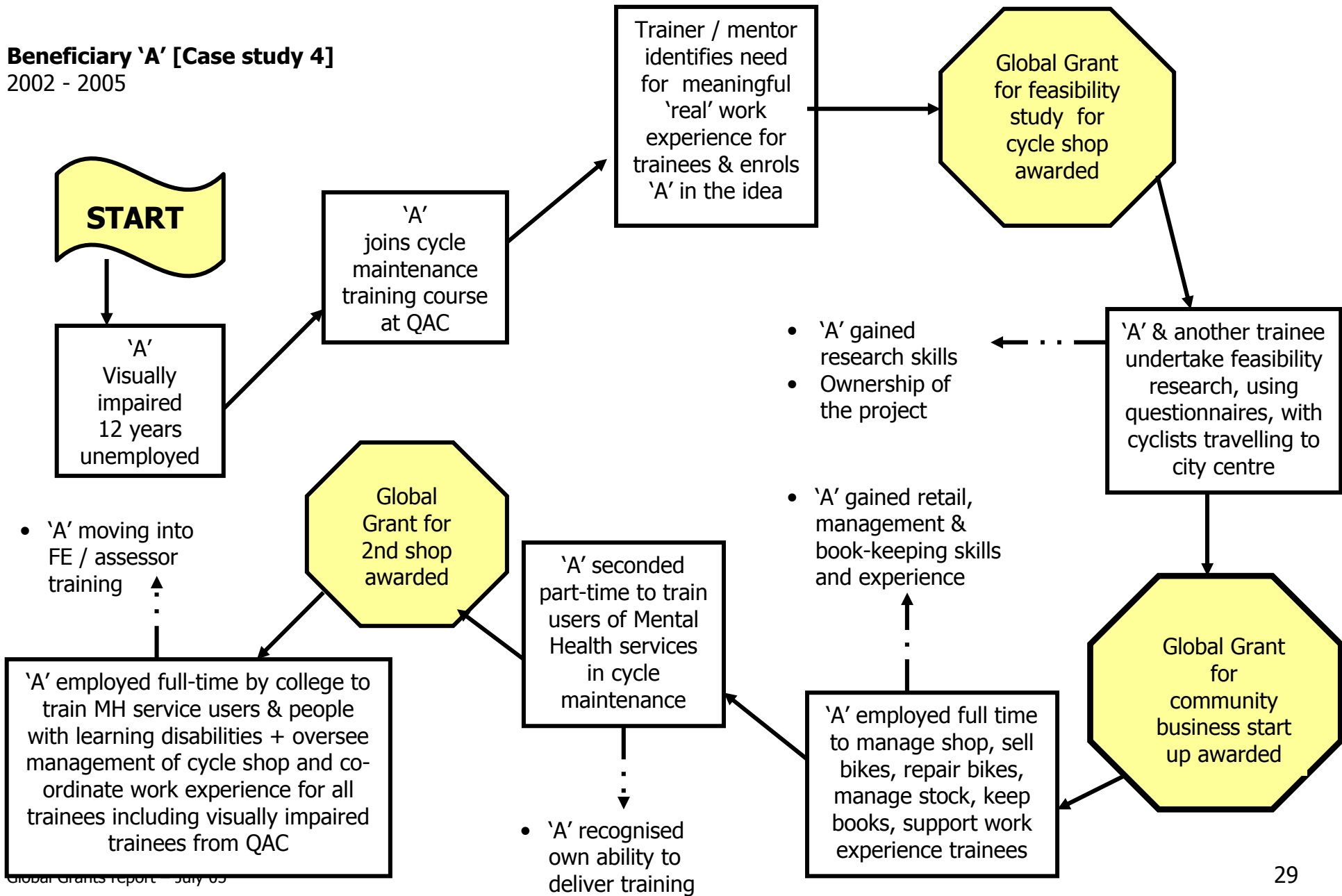
Cycle Chain challenges perceptions of what visually impaired people can do – through this business they are repairing bikes, running a sales and hire shop and passing on the skills they have gained by supporting work experience trainees and training users of Mental Health services and people with learning disabilities.

The role of the Digbeth Trust

The Directors of Cycle Chain needed minimal support from the Digbeth Trust, they had the appropriate skills and experience to deliver the project. They knew support was there, if they needed it, and appreciated the relevant information provided, particularly at the start, and signposting to other sources of funding. They also liked the 'light touch' approach to monitoring used by the Trust:

"They let us get on with the job we were supposed to be doing and they asked us for information, after we'd done that job, to find out what we did with the funding"

Beneficiary 'A' [Case study 4]
2002 - 2005



5. Observations

- The Global Grants programme has been very effective at reaching economically inactive⁷ individuals e.g. Women from refugee and BME communities with no experience of paid employment as in the case of Windows for Sudan and the Vietnamese Nail Art Project.
- The Global Grants programme had a wide 'reach', the funding supporting successful interventions with those groups traditionally considered 'hard to reach' including people with disabilities, refugee and BME communities. The success of groups from these communities in being awarded Global Grants has raised the confidence of other groups to apply to a number of funding streams, which is an 'added value' outcome from the programme.
- The Global Grants programme has been very effective at getting people into jobs. Based on questionnaire returns, 107 people moved into paid or self-employment. The cost of securing a job outcome calculated from questionnaire returns was **£998**. This is remarkably cost effective when set against anecdotal evidence that suggests some providers spend up to £5,000 per head to achieve a job outcome.
- The Programme funded a number of initiatives seeking to support and stimulate social enterprise. For example Heartlands RSO used a £6,000 Global Grant combined with £2,000 from SRB 5 as working capital to establish a social enterprise which now has a turnover in excess of £250,000 per year. All of this income is earned from selling services, none from grant aid. Of the 10 staff currently employed 9 were either unemployed or economically inactive before joining the company.
- The Global Grants programme has been very effective at moving people towards the labour market by increasing skills, improving communication, building self-confidence and raising awareness of the labour market.
- The Digbeth Trust put in place robust and effective appraisal process and funding distribution systems – no-one waited more than 12 weeks for a decision.
- The Trust was effective in ensuring that the Global Grant monies were spent both on time and in line with the criteria set by GOWM.
- GOWM⁸ are still seeking to fund Intermediary Bodies to deliver against Global Grants Programmes. In GOWM's opinion, the challenge for Intermediary Bodies is twofold – managing the 'paperwork' within a

⁷ GOWM defines as 'economically inactive' those people who are not engaged in the labour market.

⁸ 5% of £2.2 million can be directed towards Global Grants activity. Currently GOWM are unable to spend this amount due to difficulties Intermediary Bodies experience when securing matched funding

budget of 5% of the programme's value and finding suitable 'clean' monies for match funding future programmes.

- As the majority of the paperwork was undertaken by BVSC and the Digbeth Trust, those groups in receipt of grants benefited from 'light touch monitoring' and this was welcomed by a majority of organisations taking part in the evaluation.
- The Programme offered smaller voluntary and community organisations the opportunity to access funding, develop new ideas, and develop their organisational and individual capacity to manage projects and funding.
- For those organisations in receipt of a grant in 04-05 the impact of the Development Worker has been considerable. We have anecdotal evidence from case studies that networking and support opportunities were welcomed and that projects found the additional support helpful both in the delivery of services and for organisational development. One organisation noted that the Development Worker was a useful resource and the information and advice received had enabled the group to secure further funding.
- A small amount of funding with timely support enables small community organisations to reach out to economically inactive and or socially excluded individuals. The Digbeth Trust maximised the impact of grant funding by linking it to development support – informally between 2001-2004 and in a more structured way in 2004-2005 via a dedicated post (funded through SRB 4 and ESF Objective 3).
- There is clear evidence of the Digbeth Trust building on and learning from experience to ensure that the programme really reached out into socially and economically excluded communities to secure job outcomes and opportunities to (re-)engage with the labour market.

For example, after the first two years of the Global Grants programme, the Trust recommended to BVSC/BCAN! that in future the Global Grants programme criteria should 'exclude larger organisations in terms of staffing and turnover'. This saw the Programme being directed to organisations with a turnover of less than £150K per annum with the effect of ensuring increased take up from 'grassroots' organisations.

Taking the same reflective approach, the Trust could respond to suggestions made by some respondents to the survey to extend the signposting and referral elements of the development support offered. This might support the sustainability of some funded activities once the Global Grant has expired. Similarly, additional support to the Appraisal Panel could include a more structured induction programme, perhaps including a 'buddying' scheme for new members and background information about the programme and ESF.

6. Recommendations and policy implications

- Funding linked to clear and structured development support is an effective way to build the capacity of smaller voluntary and community organisations. Many of the smaller organisations we contacted found the help and support of the Digbeth Trust invaluable in making the application and the majority identified that they would be able to build on their learning to ensure longer-term sustainability.

Support from the Trust to applicants has ranged from help at the initial inquiry stage, through to support with writing the application and on going development support. We have heard about wide ranging interventions - anything from constitutions to costings, networking opportunities to organisational development, attending presentations and meeting beneficiaries to supporting the appraisal panel.

It has been widely recognised in recent years, particularly through the implementation of Community Chest programmes for Community Empowerment Networks, that small community and voluntary organisations will often not access small grant funding without development support.

- Global Grants are able to place funding and support within 'grassroots' and community organisations that are run by, and offer real benefit to, many of the same minority communities (including many 'newly arrived communities') that government departments like the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit and the Active Communities Unit are striving to reach.

Anecdotal evidence reports that the success of small groups in accessing Global Grants has increased the confidence of other groups within community networks to apply. By the same token we have some evidence of Global Grants funding having a 'knock on effect' in terms of increasing beneficiaries engagement with their local community and decision-making structures.

There may be opportunities for Global Grants funding to complement other funding streams designed to move people towards the labour market, for instance Neighbourhood Renewal Fund or mainstream programmes through Jobcentre Plus. This review has found that these small grants can successfully support activity with isolated or 'hidden' communities at the pre-entry to employment level.

- Global Grants have provided an 'action learning' process for many small community and voluntary organisations. In using the grants to expand their existing activities, many groups have built their capacity – improved project management skills, implemented new policies and procedures – but they have also produced real, hard outcomes for beneficiaries. 'Learning by doing' has been part of the added value of this Global Grants

programme which has created more sustainable capacity building in the smaller community and voluntary sector.

Recommendations

- Global Grants has been a cost effective programme in Birmingham. For a small investment, many organisations have reached out into excluded communities and achieved real job outcomes. However, the lack of strategic response to Global Grants from agencies with the capacity to offer matched funding threatens the continuation of the Programme. Using the findings from this evaluation we recommend that the Digbeth Trust approaches statutory sector partners⁹ to discuss opportunities for building on the cost effective success of Global Grants.
- The Digbeth Trust should explore opportunities for registration with Government Office for the West Midlands as an Intermediary Body for the delivery of Global Grants in their own right. This would require an identification of opportunities to match other funds administered by the Trust with Global Grants funding.
- Development support for small community and voluntary organisations should be built into future Global Grant programmes as a crucial element for success. The evidence supports the case made by the Digbeth Trust for a dedicated Development Worker post to continue to deliver the level of support that has proven to be highly effective in securing positive outcomes.
- Re-focusing the application criteria towards smaller, more locally based organisations ensured funds were employed where they could have maximum impact. This focus should be maintained within future programmes.
- The Trust should explore developing an induction programme for new Appraisal Panel members and extending its signposting and referral function.

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⁹ This could include Primary Care Trusts, the Local Authority, the Learning and Skills Council and Job Centre Plus.

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