

**Research Report
No 280**

department for
education and skills
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Evaluation of the Community Champions and the Community Development Learning Fund

Pete Duncan and Sally Thomas
Social Regeneration Consultants

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ISBN 1 81485 536 7
July 2001

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Executive Summary

1. This report contains findings from Part 2 of a two part research project. It includes an evaluation of Community Champions and the Community Development Learning Fund, and suggestions for the development of outcome measures linking community activity to education, training and employment activity.

2. Part 1, which is published as RR279, covers the range of methods that exist for allocating government funding to communities, and an assessment of the different allocation methods in terms of who they reach and what they support.

3. The evaluation of Community Champions and Community Development Learning Fund in this report was based on interviews with:

- 9 Community Champions Fund and 2 Community Development Learning Fund administrators;
- 8 Community Champions delivery agents;
- 5 Community Development Learning Fund outreach workers;
- 54 fund recipients (27 from each fund);

plus an analysis of a sample of 54 applications made to each fund during the first rounds.

4. Community Champions is a Department for Education and Skills (formerly Department for Education and Employment) initiative, which aims to support individuals who are already active in their communities by developing their skills, and to encourage more community involvement in regeneration activity by supporting key individuals. Community Development Learning Fund was a Home Office Active Community Unit initiative, which aimed 'to enable small community groups, and the people involved in them to learn new skills, participate in and influence change within their communities.'

5. There was some early discussion between the Government Departments with a view to combining the two funds, but the final decision was to implement them as separate initiatives. The funds were similar in that both offer relatively small pots of money to build the capacity of groups and individuals who might struggle to access other forms of funding. However, they differed in other respects; for example:

- Community Champions, unusually, aims to support individuals as well as fledgling community groups;
- Community Development Learning Fund was delivered nationally by Federation of Community Work Training Groups, whereas Community Champions is delivered regionally through Government Offices; and
- Community Development Learning Fund was available only in 18 local authority areas which had New Deal for Communities programmes, whereas Community Champions was not geographically targeted, except in so far as individual Government Offices had decided to target.

6. The overall conclusion of the evaluation is that implementation of both the Community Development Learning Fund pilot and the early rounds of Community Champions has been successful. Both funds have been well received by recipients and have clearly filled an important gap in small grants funding for local communities. However, the funds could be improved, as detailed below.

Were the funds managed effectively?

7. The management of both funds could have been significantly improved at all levels: Government Departments, fund administrators, delivery agents, and support on the ground. However, some of the management issues related to not unexpected problems involved in launching a new grants programme and requiring delivery of the first round in a very short timescale.

8. The key conclusions are:

- Both funds were fully committed in their first rounds
- There were significant regional disparities, particularly in the Community Champions Fund, with a small minority of regions underspending their Round 1 budgets.
- The funds available for administration (10% of both funds) were too low, and both funds were effectively being subsidised by their administrators.
- The links between fund administrators and on the ground delivery were not strong enough – few community representatives were invited to influence delivery, and administrators did not tend to have much contact with the communities they funded.
- Administrators gathered little feedback or evaluation material indicating how the money had actually been used.
- A positive side effect of both funds was the building of capacity within fund administrators: Government Offices, delivery agents, and Federation of Community Work Training Groups.

Were the delivery mechanisms appropriate?

9. The delivery arrangements for both funds worked reasonably well, although there were some important reservations. The key conclusions are:

- Regional and sub-regional intermediaries have been important for the successful delivery of Community Champions. Regions which aimed

to deliver the fund in-house underspent on Round 1, and there was a need for Government Offices to be pro-active in supporting new fund delivery arrangements where existing intermediary infrastructure was weak.

- Effectiveness of delivery agents for Community Champions varied between regions; for example, in terms of geographical coverage achieved. Community Development Fund outreach workers were most effective when they were being paid for their role, volunteers being more variable.
- Recipients have found both funds highly accessible. Lack of publicity was a problem, but for both funds the application process was straightforward and using the money proved simple and unbureaucratic.
- Recipients of both funds criticised the lack of support post-grant award, lack of additional or follow-on funding. Community Development Learning Fund recipients criticised the lack of funding for capital equipment, and Community Champions recipients criticised the imposition of artificial deadlines relating to financial guidelines.
- There were some good examples of innovative approaches to delivery of both funds, with administrators and delivery agents offering support to recipients beyond simply processing and making awards.
- Provision of support was a key issue at all levels: for recipients in accessing and using their funds, for outreach workers and delivery agents who were the recipients' first point of contact, and for the administrators who had overall responsibility for spending the money.

Were the funds hitting their targets?

10. Both funds had been reasonably successful in hitting their targets – funds had been directed towards socially excluded groups and towards groups which would not otherwise have had access to funding. However:

- Some socially excluded groups needed better targeting, for example, older people.
- Marginal communities were not being reached as effectively by the Community Champions Fund as by Community Development Learning Fund.
- Despite their somewhat different aims, the kinds of activities being supported by the two funds were generally quite similar. Community Development Learning Fund did not seem to fund more learning and skills development than Community Champions, and a high proportion of Community Champions grants had been made to individuals directly connected to local groups.

- Both funds had been used for both geographically defined communities and communities of interest, but with an increasing tendency to focus on geography.
- Both funds had made efforts to seek out suitable recipients, rather than simply relying on the appropriateness of applications coming in.

Were the funding criteria right?

11. Recipients found the criteria of both funds to be easy to understand and flexible enough for their needs.

12. Many recipients said the fund had enabled them to do something new, and delivery agents and outreach workers were often targeting projects they perceived to be innovative and risky. However, fund managers for both funds tended to take a more cautious view, with the Federation of Community Work Training Groups arguing that an emphasis on innovation was inappropriate, given the difficulties groups have in securing funding for on-going activities.

13. The criteria used for the funds varied in important respects. Although both had worked reasonably well for the pilot rounds, some adjustments were needed for any future rounds.

What were the main outcomes so far?

14. The outcomes from both funds had been generally very positive, in important respects, but with some important provisos:

- Both funds had performed strongly on building short term capacity amongst individuals and community groups.
- Both funds supported personal development and wider community benefits.
- There was significant duplication and overlap between the types of recipients supported by each fund. Although these two funds together undoubtedly filled a gap in terms of funding availability, there was no evidence of complementarity between these two funds and other funding streams.
- Opportunities to lever in additional funds had not been pursued.
- More emphasis was needed on outcome evaluations of both funds, with clear expectations around appropriate indicators of outcome.
- Lessons learned from the implementation of these funds had not yet impacted on Government policy towards fund delivery at the time of the research, although there has been subsequent impact.

15. Guidance for future evaluation of the funds is proposed, involving collection of data from individual recipients and aggregation to both regional and national level. The evaluation methodology needs to be based upon a unifying concept of social capital, to be proportional to the scale of the grants given, and to be easily accessible to recipients. Indicators should be simple and easy to administer, and recipients should participate fully in the process. However, there should also be an external element to the evaluation, it should aim to identify failures as well as successes, and results should be widely disseminated.

Should the present arrangements change, and if so how?

16. Our conclusions point to the need for important changes in the operation of both funds, should they both continue beyond the pilot stage. These can be summarised as follows:

- There is an important on-going role for national small grants funds of this type.
- It is important to retain funds of this type which are not directly linked to the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal Action Plan and which build individual and community group capacity.
- It is not clear that the original separation of the Community Development Learning Fund and the Community Champions Fund has added value.
- The distinction between individuals and groups is arbitrary and unnecessary.
- There are likely to be substantial benefits in combining both funds if they are to continue beyond the pilot stage.

17. The recommendations flowing from these conclusions are as follows:

- 1. The Community Champions Fund should continue beyond the pilot stage for at least a further three years with an increased budget of £2 million a year.**
- 2. The Community Development Learning Fund should not continue beyond the pilot stage, but the good practice learnt from the Fund should be incorporated in revised guidance on the management and delivery of the Community Champions Fund.**
- 3. The Department for Education and Skills (formerly DfEE) should retain its lead role in the Community Champions Fund, but should review the administrative and reporting arrangements required of delivery agents. (This review has taken place.)**

- 4. Revised guidance on the delivery of the Community Champions Fund should aim to strengthen the criteria, to ensure that funds reach their intended targets more effectively, and emphasise the importance of the relationship between individuals and community groups. (DfES has now provided a 'Code of Good Practice' for Government Offices, containing this material.)**
- 5. Regional flexibility should be retained, but Government Offices should be required to delegate fund delivery to a range of appropriate voluntary and community sector intermediaries, operating at regional and preferably sub-regional levels. Where such intermediaries are absent or weak, Government Offices should be proactive in helping to support new vehicles, rather than delivering Community Champions in house. (All GOs are using intermediaries to deliver Community Champions in 2001/2.)**
- 6. All intermediaries involved in future fund delivery should use paid and fully trained outreach workers.**
- 7. The Home Office has a key role to play in supporting and expanding the national network of voluntary and community sector intermediaries. The Department for Education and Employment and Government Offices should work closely with the Home Office to ensure that the Community Champions Fund makes full use of this expanding network.**
- 8. The Federation of Community Work Training Groups is an important training and networking resource which could play a new role in supporting the Community Champions Fund, funded by the Department for Education and Employment. (For example, FCWTG could provide training and support for Community Champions recipients, and support and develop a network of community development workers.)**
- 9. The administration budget for the Community Champions Fund should be increased to 15%, with a separate additional budget made available to delivery agents to cover the cost of paid and fully trained outreach support. (This recommendation has been implemented.)**
- 10. New evaluation arrangements, based on the recommendations in this report, should be developed for the Community Champions Fund and implemented during 2001.**

1. Research methodology

1.1 This part of the report sets out the methodology used to evaluate the initial periods of the Community Champions Fund and the Community Development Learning Fund.

1.2 The research involved an analysis of each fund separately as well as comparing their different approaches to delivery. It sought to identify lessons for the current and future operation of the Community Champions Fund and the Community Development Learning Fund and future policy and practice in supporting community-based activity.

1.3 The evaluation was a limited exercise to establish how the initial rounds of both funds were performing. It was not intended to provide a comprehensive analysis of all recipients. Since the evaluation was commissioned at a point where Round 1 allocations from both funds had only just been made, it was clearly too early to make a definitive assessment of either fund's medium or long-term impact.

1.4 The evaluation was based on discussions and agreement with the Department for Education and Employment (now Department for Education and Skills) and the Home Office Active Community Unit (ACU) as follows:

Community Champions

- Structured face to face interviews with lead officers in all 9 Government Offices for the Regions
- Structured face to face interviews with all the Round 1 delivery agents (8 regional voluntary and community sector intermediaries)
- A desk study of a random sample of 54 Round 1 and Round 2 successful applications, from a total of 200 approved.
- Structured face to face and telephone interviews with 27 Round 1 recipients, 3 from each Government region.

Community Development Learning Fund

- Structured face to face interview with the Federation of Community Work Training Groups
- Structured face to face interview with a representative of the Community Work Forum.
- Structured face to face and telephone interviews with 5 locally-based outreach workers

- A desk study of a random sample of 54 Round 1 and 2 successful applications, from a total of 128 approved.
- Structured face to face and telephone interviews with 27 Round 1 recipients.

1.5 The fund recipients interviewed were non-randomly selected. The researchers were guided by the Federation of Community Work Training Groups and Government Offices in choosing projects which seemed to involve particularly interesting issues. Although not statistically representative, the researchers believe that the recipients chosen were fairly typical of the range of recipients and projects funded by each fund. Each recipient was approached for a detailed interview covering their experience of applying for and using the fund. Slightly more than half the interviews were carried out face-to-face and the remainder by telephone.

2. The Community Champions Fund – an overview

2.1 This section of the report provides an overview of the Community Champions Fund, focusing on the arrangements and outcomes of the first and second rounds.

2.2 The Community Champions Fund was set up in late 1999 following an initiative from the Secretary of State for Education and Employment. The Minister was keen to see support given to individuals who could act as role models, mentors and sources of advice and inspiration to marginalised communities, particularly those involved in local regeneration activities.

2.3 This was an unusual and challenging initiative for Government, and particularly DfEE. Government had previously focused most of its investment in communities on existing or newly-formed groups, their support agencies and voluntary sector intermediaries. The new Fund built on DfEE experience of its Millennium Volunteers programme, launched in 1997, which was aimed specifically at 16-24 year olds. Direct funding of individuals carries with it an element of risk and there was early recognition that if it was to be successful the Fund would need to be highly flexible and not be tied specifically to Departmental objectives, targets and outputs.

Purpose and strategic function

2.4 The specific objectives of the Fund are to:

- * support individuals who are already active in their communities by developing their skills, through formal and informal training and access to information, wider networks and learning opportunities;
- * encourage more community involvement in regeneration activity by supporting key individuals who can drive forward community projects and pass on their expertise to others in their community and to other communities.

2.5 The Community Champions Fund idea emerged at a time when other community resourcing initiatives were under discussion, primarily through the Policy Action Teams set up by the Social Exclusion Unit of the Cabinet Office, but before any work began on developing a cross-Government strategy in this area.

2.6 Limited consideration appears to have been given by both DfEE and ACU as to how four new community funds launched by the Government in 1999, should be coordinated (see also paras 3.3 - 3.5). Direct consultation between DfEE and the voluntary and community sector was fairly limited and conducted on a largely informal basis, to meet the tight deadlines for establishing the Fund.

Budgets

2.7 The Community Champions Fund had an initial budget of £1.5 million, spread over two years; £500,000 for year 1 and £1 million for year 2. The budget for 2001/2 to 2003/4 is £9million.

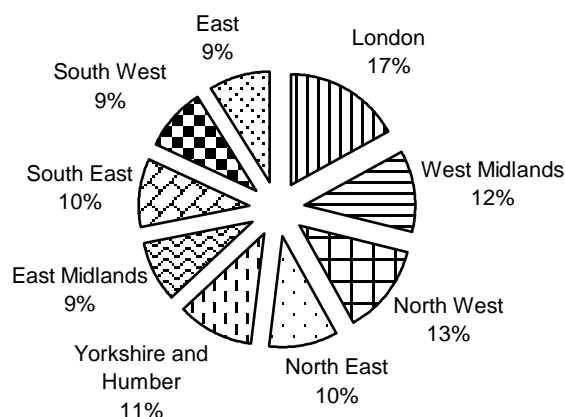
2.8 The size of the pilot fund was not based on any needs assessment. In the first instance, £50,000 was allocated to each Government Office with 10% of the overall budget retained centrally for administration. In 2000/01, the £50,000 core budget was retained, but the remaining funds were distributed in proportion to the regional share of people aged 25-65 who had been unemployed for more than 6 months.

2.9 The effect of this allocation system significantly increased allocations to London and, to a lesser extent, the North West, at the expense mainly of the East Midlands, East and South West. In the first year of the Fund, London's allocation was doubled to take up under spend in other regions. **Chart A** sets out the regional allocations for the 2000/01 programme.

Fund management and delivery

2.10 Roll-out of the full fund was well informed by experience from the pilot round. An early decision was made by DfEE to run the fund through Government Offices for the Regions. The aims were to give the Fund a strong regional profile and help build Regional Office capacity to understand community development issues. Since the Department was already represented in each Government regional office, this was also expected to keep administrative overheads low.

Chart A Community Champions grant allocations by region (Round 2)



2.11 These arrangements were not viewed favourably by the voluntary and community sector initially. The Department's response was to encourage Government Offices to develop links between the community and voluntary sector groups and existing Government-sponsored programmes, and involve the former in establishing regional criteria for the Fund.

2.12 Each region was given a relatively free hand to decide how the fund should be delivered and most (7 out of 9) decided to use regional and sometimes local voluntary sector intermediaries. The selection of these organisations was normally based on the availability of suitably experienced intermediaries in each region. **Appendix 1** sets out the arrangements put in place for 2000/01, which are broadly similar to the arrangements for the 1999/2000 pilot.

2.13 Government Offices were encouraged to consider making grant payments to smaller voluntary sector organisations if they could reach particularly excluded groups. Intermediary organisations were able to claim a management fee of up to 10% or, exceptionally, higher than this if the Government Office considered the advantages of supporting a particular organisation in this way would have clear benefits for the community groups they worked with. Management costs overall were capped at 10% of the pilot budget programme, with regions able to decide how this should be split between themselves and any intermediaries they used to deliver the fund.

Targeting

2.14 DfEE guidance to Government Offices for the Regions stressed that Community Champions should be deliberately targeted on areas where community activity or direct involvement in developing plans for regeneration was still very weak, and where this was seen as a barrier to helping individuals and community groups access support from mainstream funds to improve their quality of life. Communities of interest and those focused on neighbourhoods were both seen as relevant. Government Offices were encouraged to work with key partners including the voluntary, community and private sectors, local authorities, and other appropriate organisations to identify areas fitting these descriptions.

2.15 Community Champions was expected to help key individuals spread good practice to isolated pockets of deprivation e.g. in rural, coalfield and coastal areas.

2.16 Government Offices and partners were also encouraged to use the fund to offer non-financial support to build the capacity of individuals or groups, where appropriate.

2.17 The Fund was not intended to provide core funding for community or voluntary sector organisations or to support large projects where funding is

more appropriately available through other initiatives. Specific activity or purchases which would not normally be supported include:

- * activities of a political or predominantly religious nature
- * supporting existing provision or continuing work previously funded by another organisation
- * supporting provision that can be funded from other sources
- * making large capital purchases of equipment as opposed to smaller purchases
- * expenditure supported from other Government sources
- * works or activities which any person has a statutory duty to undertake

2.18 The targeting arrangements varied between each Government Office in Round 1. Most focused their programme on disadvantaged individuals and groups, prioritising those from black and minority communities. Several placed a special emphasis on innovation and risk taking. Only two regions focused exclusively on individuals and only one targeted funds specifically on deprived geographical areas.

Application and decision-making criteria and procedures

2.19 Government Office procedures for awarding grants varied, but all aimed to ensure that the fund was accessible and flexible enough to encourage individuals to come forward. Applications forms and the procedures for submitting them were kept simple and a particular emphasis was placed on reaching quick decisions. **Appendix 2** sets out the main criteria and procedures used by Government Offices to deliver the pilot round.

Fund outcomes - the pattern of awards

2.20 200 Community Champions awards were made in Round 1. Despite the short timescale available to commit the first round allocation, there was no underspend. The pattern of awards across the regions varied significantly however. The smallest number of awards was 3, in the South East, and the largest 61 in the West Midlands. Average award size ranged between £1111 in the South West and £2369 in the East Midlands. **Appendix 3** sets out the key features of each regional programme.

2.21 **Appendix 4** provides case studies of five typical successful Community Champions from the pilot round.

Conclusions

2.22 The Community Champions Fund was a relatively new departure for Government in general and DfEE in particular – the first fund to specifically target a broad range of individuals and to begin the process of communities learning from each other, rather than from professionals, about how to secure better facilities for their neighbourhoods and/or areas of interest. It is a challenging programme which will take time to deliver measurable results.

3. The Community Development Learning Fund – an overview

3.1 This section of the report provides an overview of the Community Development Learning Fund, focusing on the arrangements for and outcomes from the first round.

Context

3.2 The Community Development Learning Fund was a two year pilot programme, initiated by the Home Office, through its Active Community Unit. It was a direct response to recommendation 33 in the report from Policy Action Team 9, Community Self-Help, to “establish a Training Fund for all those involved in community self-help to gain training from one another”.

Purpose and strategic function

3.3 The aim of the Fund was “to enable small community groups, and the people involved in them, to learn new skills, participate in and influence change within their communities”, the purpose being “to resource learning, development, networking or other support opportunities which the group itself had identified.” The emphasis was intended to be on learning rather than training.

3.4 Initially, the intention was to combine the Community Development Learning Fund with the Community Champions Fund, with administration being provided by the Government Offices for the Regions. During a limited consultation process the Active Community Unit undertook with those national community sector organisations it funds, this approach was questioned. Also questioned was the value of Government Offices running the programmes, the rationale in combining them, and the focus on social entrepreneurs.

3.5 These points formed the basis of a detailed response from the Federation of Community Work Training Groups. As a result, the funds were separated and the Federation was approached, through the Community Work Forum, to manage the Community Development Learning Fund. This decision appears to have been taken on the basis of the Federation’s views about how the Fund should be managed and whom it should benefit, its widespread network of groups, and its emphasis on learning. The ‘uncoupling’ of the two funds caused a delay in their implementation, something which has had a marked effect on the outcomes of the first rounds.

Budgets

3.6 The initial budget was £975,000; £325,000 for the last 10 weeks of 1999/00 and £650,000 for 2000/01. A management fee of 10% was included. Fund size was not based on any needs assessment.

Fund management and delivery

3.7 The Federation of Community Work Training Groups managed the Fund, under contract with the ACU, and in partnership with the Community Work Forum. Community Work Forum is a UK-wide consortium of national and local organisations, voluntary and statutory, with an interest in community development learning, training and qualifications.

3.8 The Federation carried out all the day to day administrative functions of the Fund. A Steering Group of the Community Work Forum was established as a decision-making panel which received, cross-checked and monitored initial assessment recommendations on applications to the fund.

Targeting

3.9 The Fund was targeted at certain groups in defined geographical areas. It focused primarily on groups which are too small or too isolated to readily access larger funding programmes or initiatives which may exist in their area. Groups had to have broadly charitable objectives (they did not have to be registered charities) and an annual income of less than £10,000. Individual awards can range from £250 to £3,000.

3.10 The money could be used to support a variety of activities, including formal and informal training programmes and events, networking and peer support opportunities, visits to other groups and projects, and attendance at workshops and conferences. While only groups, rather than individuals, were eligible, it was anticipated that the awards would help individual group members develop and strengthen their involvement and practice for the benefit of their communities. The Fund was not able to support core funding for community groups, nor to purchase capital equipment unless directly related to a learning project.

3.11 The Active Community Unit decided that recipient groups had to be based within one of 18 designated local authority areas across the nine English regions. These areas include all the New Deal for Communities phase 2 programmes. There was no consultation with the 18 local authorities involved or any representative bodies. The areas selected are:

North East	Hartlepool and Sunderland
North West	Knowsley and Rochdale
Yorkshire and Humberside	Sheffield and Doncaster
East Midlands	Derby & High Peak/Derbyshire Dales

West Midlands
East
London
South West
South East

Birmingham and Wolverhampton
Luton and Great Yarmouth
Islington and Lambeth
Plymouth and Gloucester
Southampton and Thanet

Application and decision-making criteria and procedures

3.12 In February 2000, the Federation published a set of four documents comprising an application pack for the Fund. This included an introductory paper about the Fund, the criteria for applications, guidelines for completing the application form, and the application form itself. These documents were re-printed in May 2000 for the second round in the same format, but incorporating various amendments; in particular, showing some examples of successful awards in the first round, defining 'community development learning' and indicating what costs and activities would not be funded.

3.13 In addition, more specific questions were incorporated with the aim of encouraging greater clarity from applicants and generating more appropriate and relevant information. The Federation, in its initial report to the Active Community Unit in April 2000, noted that "some of the most exciting projects were very badly explained", which would seem to indicate the need for more specific and thought-provoking questions in the application form as well as emphasising the need for support in completing it.

3.14 Publicity about the Fund was sent out to intermediary organisations on the Federation's mailing list. In addition, local newspapers and free-sheets were used where possible. The Federation admit that the dissemination of information was very ad-hoc in the first round, due primarily to the short time-scale involved. It was intended to target publicity more precisely and equally in the next rounds, but this was heavily dependant on developing more regional and sub-regional contacts to provide 'outlets' for information.

3.15 A significant feature of the process was identifying outreach workers in as many of the target areas as possible. These workers were given up to six days work to approach small community groups, tell them about the Fund and, if necessary, provide support in making an application. In some areas, members of groups affiliated to the Federation played a similar role on a voluntary basis.

3.16 Decisions on individual awards were made by the Steering Group, based on recommendations from the Federation. Originally, the Home Office wanted regional decision-making forums, but the Federation argued that this would be neither feasible, cost-effective nor helpful. The first meeting of the Steering Group was important in interpreting the broad criteria of the Fund upon which awards would be made.

3.17 The 'turn-around time', from receipt of an application to a decision in the first round was 6 weeks maximum. In the second round, with a deadline

of 24 July 2000, some applicants had to wait for up to four and a half months if they applied in April 2000, as the next meeting of the Steering Group was not scheduled until mid-September 2000. The Federation recognised that this was too long for a small grants programme, but felt constrained by running a new, England-wide programme with limited administrative resources.

Outcomes – the pattern of initial awards

3.18 There were several notable features in the pattern of the first round of awards:

- * All the money was allocated, through 128 awards.
- * The geographical spread of the initial awards was very uneven – this appears to have been due to the availability of outreach workers and/or Federation members willing to take a promotion and support role - applications to the Fund both in terms of number and success were significantly higher in areas where there were identified outreach workers and/or active Federation members.
- * The majority of the grants were for £2,000 and over (90) with 72 of them being for between £2,500 and £3,000. Most of the initial applications were for large, rather than small grants. The remaining 39 grants were for between £250 and £2,000, with only four falling in the £250-500 bracket.
- * 61 of the grants were classified as being for ‘communities of interest’ (including groups based on gender, race, age, and issue), 67 for ‘neighbourhood’ groups (focused on a particular geographical location).
- * Although no accurate breakdown is available, because no monitoring information was requested at application stage, 37 of the awards appear to have gone to black and minority ethnic groups and projects, 11 for groups dealing with issues of disability, 19 for projects focused on children, 20 for schemes involving young people, and 24 for groups working with and for women (some groups and projects fell into more than one category). The money would therefore appear to be going largely to groups which have a tendency to be marginalised.

3.19 **Appendix 5** provides case studies of five typical successful Community Development Learning Fund projects from the pilot round.

Conclusions

3.20 The first round of the Community Development Learning Fund saw some important achievements. The Federation of Community Work Training Groups allocated the total budget, and the funds seem to have reached a wide range of small, often marginalized groups. The fund managers learned some valuable lessons in what works and what doesn't in distributing small grants. Their own assessment of the key lessons learned during Rounds 1 and 2 were:

- * Local outreach support is vital to the take-up of grants, especially by marginalised and excluded groups, but it must be adequately funded.
- * The criteria for small grant funds for communities need to be as flexible as possible.
- * A community infrastructure for small community groups excluded from the existing voluntary network is very much needed; not all intermediary organisations have community development skills.
- * Ongoing training in community development is a necessity for sustaining communities.
- * Promoting community development learning as a specific activity is important.
- * There is a necessity for longer term stability in funding initiatives of this type, to enable an appropriate support infrastructure to be established and maintained.

4. The Community Champions and Community Development Learning Funds – a comparative analysis

4.1 This part of the report examines the outcomes of the first rounds of both funds in more depth and compares their performance. It offers answers to six key questions:

- * ***Were the funds managed effectively?***
- * ***Were the delivery mechanisms appropriate?***
- * ***Were the funds hitting their targets?***
- * ***Was the funding criteria right?***
- * ***What were the main outcomes?***
- * ***Should the present arrangements change, and if so how?***

4.1.1 Within each key question a number of sub-questions were posed and answered, based on an analysis of the questionnaire surveys of recipients, fund managers, intermediaries and outreach workers.

4.2 Fund Management

Was there an appropriate balance between management costs and the funds made available to the recipients?

4.2.1 The Community Champions and Community Development Learning Fund programmes were allocated a 10% budget for administration initially, although the latter's budget was increased to 13% in 2000/2001 to take some account of the increased costs of outreach support.

4.2.2 Fund managers from both funds found it difficult to contain administrative expenditure within the agreed ceilings. Many recipients required on-going support to enable them to deliver their projects and the costs of delivering this are often high. For example, outreach workers used by the Federation of Community Work Training Groups were paid £150 per day. Providing training costs for support staff was also a high cost item.

4.2.3 The administration costs for both funds appeared to be broadly comparable. The costs of delivering Community Champions through nine Government Offices and a range of intermediaries were matched by the high costs of outreach and support in the centrally administered Community Development Learning Fund.

4.2.4 Both funds were effectively being subsidised in one form or another: Community Champions through mainstream Government Office administration budgets and, in one case, subsidy to a delivery agent

(Scarman Trust) by a major charitable foundation, and the Community Development Learning Fund through voluntary effort by members of the Community Work Forum who made up the decision-making Panel.

4.2.5 Only one intermediary (Scarman Trust) had managed to draw in matched funding in one region.

4.2.6 Several intermediaries delivering Community Champions reported that setting up valuable, complex and costly administrative systems had been constrained by the short term nature of the programme and uncertainty about long-term delivery arrangements. Moving to a 3 year programme with delivery agents to reduce costs and provide more certainty would have helped. Review of core funding arrangements between agencies and ACU, to include the realistic costs of supporting additional programmes like the Community Development Learning Fund, would also have been helpful.

4.2.7 Moving to a 15% administration fee for both funds would have been more realistic, although this was unlikely to cover the full costs of comprehensive outreach cover for the Community Development Learning Fund programme. A basic 10% basic administration fee and a separate allowance of 7.5% for outreach costs was likely to be a minimum requirement.

Were the management costs sufficient to achieve impact and coverage?

4.2.8 The research found gaps in coverage in both funds, particularly in Round 1. For Community Champions, the compressed timescale and insufficient administrative resources resulted in little outreach, patchy geographical coverage, over-reliance on intermediaries and no effective monitoring. Two Government Offices were particularly badly affected. Some intermediaries restricted the amount of grant available to a fixed figure (typically £2000), which minimised administration costs, whilst others tended to pick up easy recipients in the first round.

4.2.9 The Community Development Learning Fund also experienced delays in funding approvals due to resourcing problems within the Federation of Community Work Training Groups and had difficulties finding and paying outreach workers in some of the target areas.

4.2.10 An increased management grant to intermediaries might have improved impact and coverage, reaching more socially excluded groups and individuals. However, take-up in itself was not a problem – both funds were over-subscribed.

Was the distribution of funds throughout the country appropriate?

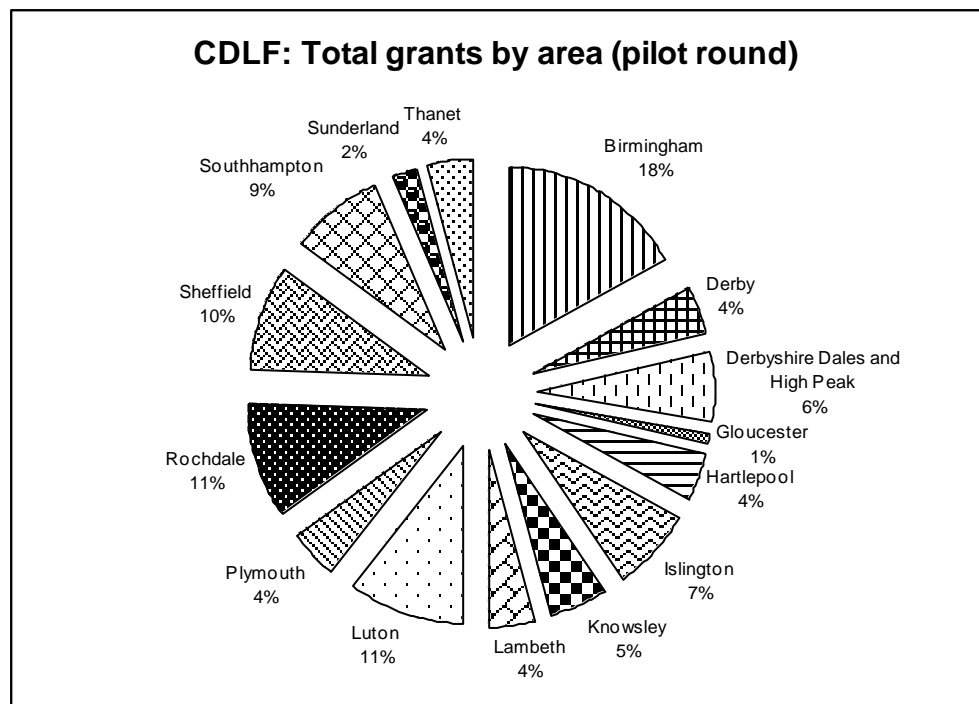
4.2.11 The distribution for Round 1 of both funds was generally haphazard and un-strategic.

4.2.12 The Community Development Learning Fund's focus on 18 New Deal for Communities Round 2 local authorities tended to target the Fund on areas where other forms of funding were likely to be available. However, it did enable the Federation of Community Work Training Groups to appoint outreach workers to deliver clusters of bids, and had the potential to encourage networking between recipients. The targeting provided an additional distinctiveness from Community Champions.

4.2.13 Fund expenditure during the pilot/early round of both funds revealed significant imbalances between target areas and regions. The Federation clearly found it much more difficult to generate Community Development Learning Fund applications in some areas than others, as **Chart B** illustrates. (NB: Doncaster and Great Yarmouth do not appear on the chart, as their share of total grant was very small – just a few hundred pounds each, amounting to a fraction of 1%.)

4.2.14 The initial exclusion by DfEE and the Home Office of Great Yarmouth, Thanet, Derby and Hartlepool from eligibility for Community Champions, because of the overlap with the Community Development Learning Fund, appeared somewhat inappropriate and arbitrary – Government Offices were never notified and three Community Champions applications were in any case approved in Great Yarmouth .

Chart B



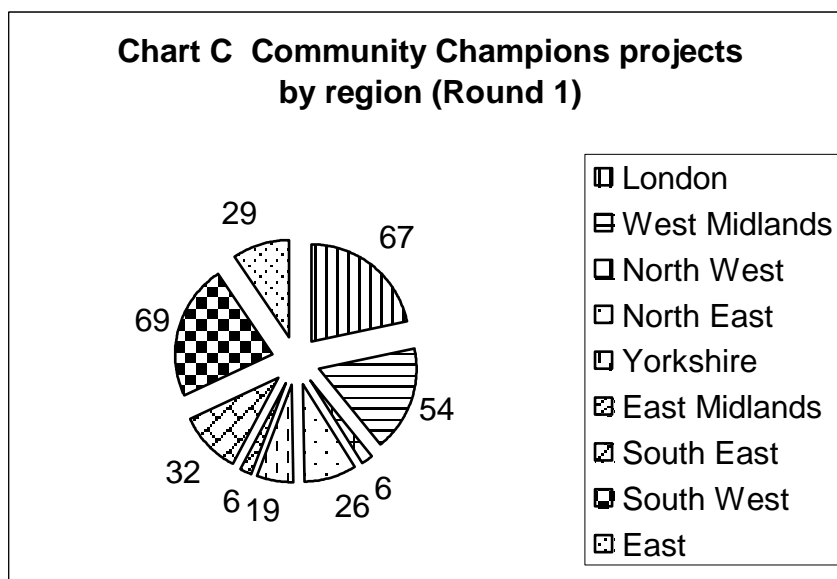
abstract from FCWTG progress report to Home Office ACU May 2000

4.2.15 Within some regions, Community Champions Round 1 recipients tended to be focused on ‘honey-pots’ - areas which were relatively easy to target, were already the focus of regeneration investment, or where delivery agents already had strong connections. Rural areas, urban villages, socially excluded groups and individuals within otherwise affluent areas and black and minority ethnic individuals and groups outside the metropolitan areas all failed to generate significant numbers of applications. Some significant urban areas were not targeted and were missed altogether; for example, Teesside and all of Yorkshire except the south.

4.2.16 There was widespread disparity between regions, with some regions supporting more than ten times the recipients supported by others. Interestingly, some of the large, mainly rural regions managed to support more Community Champions, often spread over a wide geographical area than some of the more compact, urbanised regions. **Chart C** indicates the number of Community Champions funded in each region in Round 1.

4.2.17 The figures for two regions may be misleading. No information on the number of successful Round 1 recipients was available from Government Office for the South East, due to lack of information from delivery agents. Government Office North West focused 54% of its Round 1 funding on one organisation - Progress Trust – which has used it to provide training and support services to 27 black and minority ethnic individuals and groups in Liverpool and Preston. It also funded four other umbrella organisations able to deliver within the compressed Round 1 timetable.

4.2.18 There was a broadening out of Community Champions in most regions during Round 2, but the Round 1 distribution appeared to be driven more by expediency than any assessment of need.



4.2.19 Overall take-up of both funds was good, particularly given the haste with which the initial rounds were established, publicised and awards made. Both funds committed all their first round money and it seems probable that they will also fully commit their second round allocations – a clear demonstration of the need for small grants funds of this type.

How much local/regional decision-making was involved and was there significant regional variation in delivery?

4.2.20 A direct comparison of regional delivery performance was difficult because of the very different delivery arrangements for the funds. However, both funds showed significant variations in fund delivery, both within regions and in the target areas.

4.2.21 Again, quality of outreach workers (CDLF) and geographical reach of intermediary networks (CCF) was the main determinant of fund delivery. For example, for CCF 58% of Round 1 recipients in the North East were from Sunderland, where the Scarman Trust is based; all the Round 1 Community Champions in Yorkshire and Humberside were concentrated in South Yorkshire where South Yorkshire Community Forum is based). Where intermediaries had broader regional coverage – eg COVER in the East Region and Scarman Trust in the West Midlands, the geographical spread of recipients was more comprehensive.

4.2.22 The other main reason why some Community Champions regions did not deliver a broadly-based regional programme was because some Government Offices deliberately focused the programme on deprived areas.

Was there any community representation in the management of the funds?

4.2.23 Community involvement in the management of both funds was limited. Community and voluntary sector organisations were involved in the Community Development Learning Fund panel established by the Federation, but only two Community Champions regions had this type of input from representatives of regionally based community organisations through their delivery agents. The Federation's outreach workers generally felt that the lack of community involvement in delivering the fund was problematic and a missed opportunity.

4.2.24 There were two useful examples of good practice from Community Champions. COVER, the regional voluntary sector organisation delivering the Government Office for the East Community Champions programme, established a Panel with representation from four community and voluntary sector intermediaries. Scarman Trust in the West Midlands appeared to have the only Panel which included former community grant recipients (from their 'Can Do' fund).

Did the capacity of individual fund managers and administrators to handle community grants improve as a consequence of managing the funds?

4.2.25 This was one of the main secondary benefits of both programmes. The Federation of Community Work Training Groups had previous experience of running other grant programmes, but learned lessons in terms of delivery, access, evaluation, and administration. Some officers in Government Offices had experience in this area, although usually related to the larger scale and geographically focused New Deal for the Communities programmes.

4.2.26 Government Offices have learned lessons in terms of:

- the need for effective and appropriate evaluation;
- realising that they need to know more about the issues facing communities in their regions;
- how to deliver small scale funding more effectively at very local levels;
- the benefits of funding individuals;
- and how to work with voluntary sector intermediary organisations.

4.2.27 Individual Government Officers in at least three regions used the Community Champions process to strengthen their community credentials and build a wider and deeper knowledge of community issues. This had the potential to generate beneficial spin-offs across a range of regionally implemented Government programmes. In addition, some of the intermediaries benefited from involvement in Community Champions – some had never been involved in delivering programmes of grant aid previously

4.2.28 The Black Regeneration Network in the West Midlands was a particularly good example of how a small regional network trying to establish itself could be capacity built by contracting with them to provide new grant administration services. A case study of this intermediary is in **Appendix 6**.

Did fund managers and administrators show an interest in the efficacy and impact of the funds beyond spending the money according to agreed criteria?

4.2.29 An analysis of recipient and delivery agent interviews suggested that Community Champions in particular had yet to embed itself in the culture of most Government Offices. The Community Development Learning Fund was closely in tune with the aims and objectives of the Federation of Community Work Training Groups and there was therefore a much closer interest here in the outcomes.

4.2.30 Interest in the efficacy and impact of the funds had been tempered by the administrative and financial requirements of getting the Round 1 money distributed to recipients and the steep learning curve for many of those responsible. This ought to be less problematic in future rounds as systems settle down.

4.2.31 At the time of the research, however, there was very little evaluation of the two funds overall and very little feedback required from recipients. Community Champions performed rather better than the Community Development Learning Fund in this respect, but there was substantial regional variation in the former. Seven of the nine Community Champions regions relied exclusively on final reports from recipients as their only source of information about outcomes. However, we were not able to access any of these for this research; some Government Offices expressed difficulty in getting recipients to send in these reports. Over half of Community Champions recipients and virtually all Community Development Learning Fund recipients we interviewed from Round 1 had not had their project evaluated and most had never been visited by the grant administrators. Many Community Champions projects were approved without any personal contact between those responsible for administering the grants and those who received them.

4.2.32 Three fifths of the Community Development Learning Fund outreach workers we interviewed were not aware of any monitoring arrangements with which they or the recipients had to comply, while two fifths said that the recipients had to provide a report at the end of their project. The picture was equally patchy for the Community Champions Fund. Most intermediaries and Government Offices were not aware of any on-going evaluation procedures for Community Champions.

4.2.33 A great deal of thought needs to be given to the arrangements for monitoring, evaluation and dissemination for both funds. Overly elaborate systems and mechanisms are inappropriate for small grant funds, but clear direction needs to be given on what is expected from managers, delivery agencies and recipients, and what information they can expect in return. This is covered in more detail in Section 5 of the report.

4.2.34 The Federation of Community Work Training Groups has developed an approach towards the evaluation of the Community Development Learning Fund, involving interviews with a sample of recipients by outreach workers, a monitoring questionnaire to all recipients, networking events for recipients and outreach workers, paying some projects to publish their own evaluation reports, and identifying models of good practice amongst recipients. The Federation completed this during 2001 and this was certainly a welcome development.

Was there any evidence of managers/administrators developing longer-term links with the communities in their regions?

4.2.35 The research came too early in the delivery of the funds to make a full assessment of this important issue. The Federation of Community Work Training Groups' longstanding links with community development workers expanded steadily, partly through the Community Development Learning Fund process. However, the research found little evidence of the Federation developing their long-term links direct with local communities as a result of Community Development Learning Fund. This would be commensurate with

the Federation having used outreach workers for delivery, rather than delivering 'on the ground' themselves. Government Offices had to develop new links. The use of intermediaries to deliver Community Champions helped, but these did not usually link Government Offices directly to communities. At least one third of Government Office fund administrators had never visited a Community Champions project, partly due to time and resource constraints.

4.2.36 There was some particularly good practice from Community Champions which tended to be the more flexible and innovative of the funds. For example, Government Office East had been working closely with the Community and Voluntary Forum, Eastern Region (COVER) to deliver its Community Champions programme. COVER used outreach development workers to generate applications and support successful recipients, run workshops and feedback seminars and provide support for unsuccessful applicants. The Government Office was closely involved in this process throughout and a form of symbiotic relationship began to develop as a result.

4.3 Fund delivery

Was there evidence that using delivery agents was more effective than handling the funds in-house?

4.3.1 A direct comparison of the two funds was difficult in this respect, since the delivery arrangements were distinctly different (see Appendix 1 for detail). Nevertheless, there was a direct link between the type of on the ground delivery arrangements for both funds and the ability of funders to commit their allocations.

4.3.2 For Community Champions, both Government Offices which made an early decision not to use intermediaries to distribute their funds (East Midlands and North West) underspent on their Round 1 budgets. They were also the two regions which funded the lowest number of recipients.

4.3.3 The Federation of Community Work Training Groups found it more difficult to commit the Community Development Learning Fund funds in target areas without a paid outreach worker or Federation members providing voluntary support (22% of its target areas attracted just 2% of its grant spend in Round 1). Without this support, the Federation would almost certainly have underspent its Round 1 allocation.

4.3.4 Effectiveness of delivery agents is also about whether the funding has been well used in accordance with fund objectives and provision of information about this to funders. The evidence here was less clear cut.

4.3.5 DfEE put a lot of effort into maintaining regular contact with Government Offices, on at least a quarterly basis, and had reasonably satisfactory reporting arrangements in place which have been regularly reviewed. The relationship between ACU and the Federation of Community Work Training Groups appeared to be less satisfactory in terms of reporting – only two written progress reports were produced; one after each round.

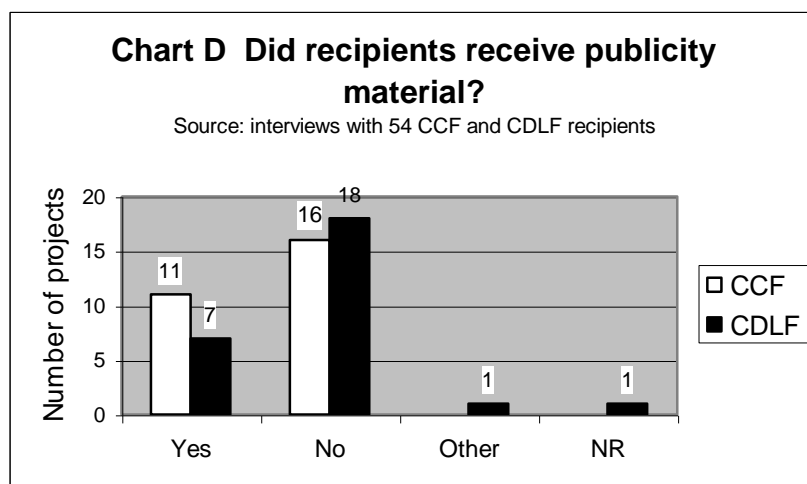
4.3.6 The Federation of Community Work Training Groups and Government Offices were heavily reliant on those delivering projects on the ground to enable them to feed back information on outputs and outcomes to their respective Government Departments. Where the relationship between the respective players was strong, this tended to be reflected in the quality and speed with which the information about the use of the funds was provided. Where delivery agents had not been used by Government Offices, it was sometimes difficult to establish how the grant funds had actually been spent.

4.3.7 Overall, the evidence indicated that the use of delivery agents was beneficial for both funds, in terms of getting the money out to recipients, making sure it had been properly spent and monitoring the overall performance of the funds. Broadly speaking, the closer funders were to the ground, the more effective delivery appears to have been, and the most effective way of getting close to the ground was local delivery arrangements working in strong partnership with Government Departments and agencies.

Were the funds easy to access for individuals and communities?

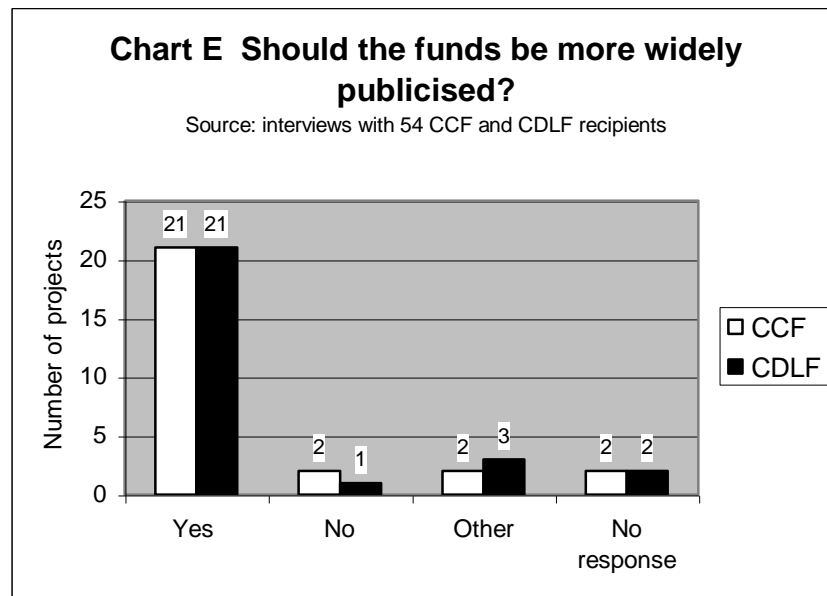
4.3.8 There were some problems with publicity, particularly in the early stages. Community Champions Fund publicity from DfEE was not available for the launch in most regions. The Federation of Community Work Training Groups dissemination of publicity material was very ad hoc in Round I due to the short timescale for committing the funding allocation.

4.3.9 Around two thirds of interviewed recipients from both funds did not receive any publicity about them (see Chart D) – they heard about them mainly by chance or because they were already connected into a local network. Sources of information were broader for Community Champions Fund recipients than those for the Community Development Learning Fund.

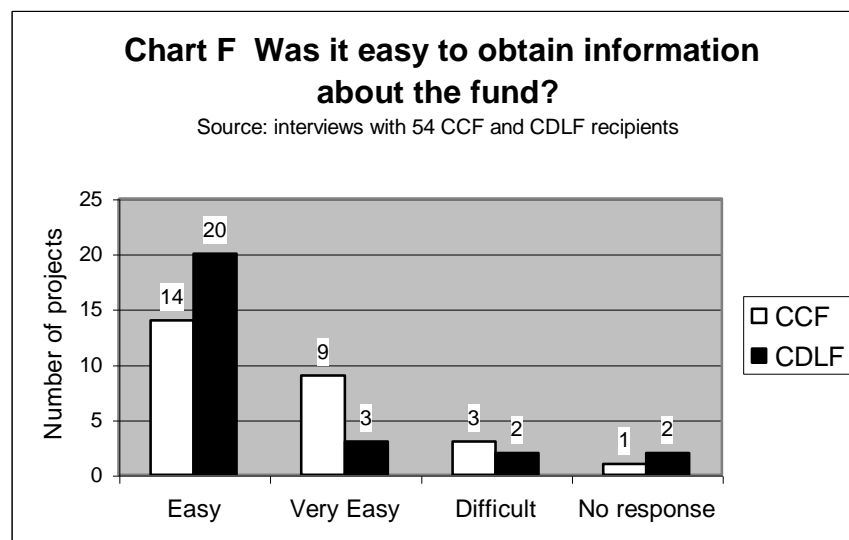


4.3.10 The Community Champions Fund was subsequently well publicised in some regions, particularly in the North East, (through sponsorship by The Journal newspaper), but the Community Development Learning Fund was not a widely known fund, even in the areas on which it was targeted. Some recipients were critical about the continued lack of publicity for the Community Development Learning Fund.

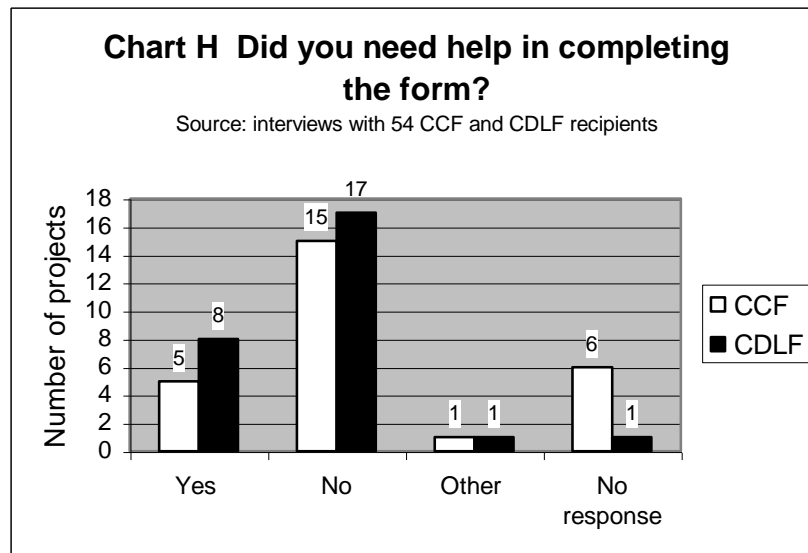
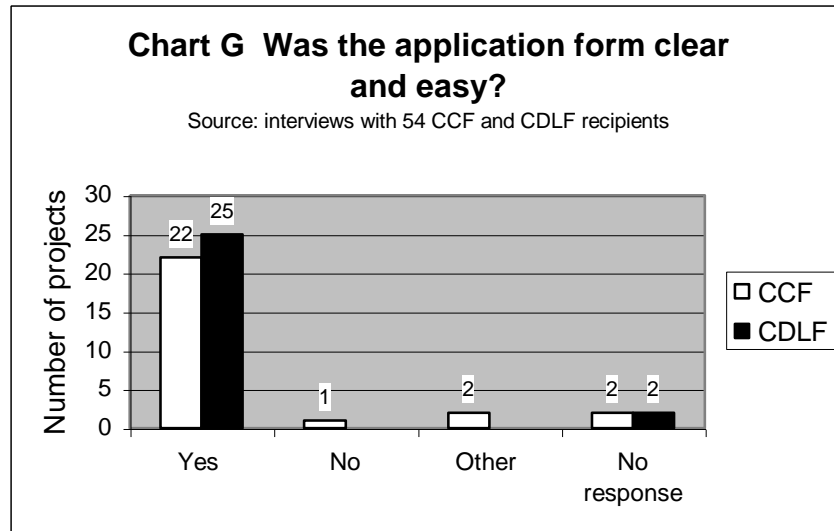
4.3.11 Three quarters of successful recipients from both funds felt that more publicity about them was necessary, to attract a broader range of applicants (see Chart E). This links to evidence we found that both funds have found it difficult to get to socially excluded groups and individuals.



4.3.12 Both funds were very accessible once individuals and groups were made aware of their existence. Over three quarters of recipients from both funds found it easy or very easy to obtain information about them (see Chart F).



4.3.13 Application forms for both funds were felt to be simple and easy to complete (see Chart G). Three quarters of Community Champions Fund recipients and virtually all Community Development Learning Fund applicants had no significant difficulties and no more than a third needed any help at all to make their applications (see Chart H). Both funds clearly gave a lot of priority to getting their application forms right and this paid off in terms of accessibility and minimising the need for support during this stage of the process.



Did recipients find the grants they received easy to use?

4.3.14 There was widespread satisfaction amongst recipients about both the ease with which they could access the grants and the limited reporting and accounting requirements they had to comply with to make use of it. The

general view was that the lack of bureaucracy was helpful and appropriate for grants of this type and size. Virtually all recipients from both funds felt they were an excellent way of getting small grants to communities.

4.3.15 The main problem areas raised by grant recipients we interviewed included:

- * Funding capital equipment (CDLF)
- * Funding additional or follow-on work (CCF and CDLF)
- * Lack of support post-grant award (CCF and CDLF)
- * Artificial deadlines related to financial guidelines (CCF)

Did the funds use innovative techniques to assist with delivery?

4.3.16 There were a number of good examples from both funds of efforts to be innovative in fund delivery. Community Champions was generally the more innovative and flexible of the two in its delivery.

- * Government Office North West's link up with Progress Trust to deliver regional training and support to black and minority ethnic groups, funded through Community Champions Fund.
- * Awards days for successful Community Champions Fund recipients, run by both the Scarman Trust and South Yorkshire Community Foundation.
- * Scarman Trust's payment of subscriptions to the North East Grant Seekers Guide as an exit strategy for Community Champions.
- * Community Development Learning Fund's use of a Sunderland training call centre and outreach workers to provide local support and training.
- * Government Office London and the Scarman Trust's use of Round 1 Community Champions for peer support work and evaluation for Round 2 recipients.
- * The Black Regeneration Network's dissemination of Community Champions information through a series of local workshops for potential recipients.

Were the intermediaries (CCF)/outreach workers (CDLF) used to deliver the funds appropriate?

4.3.17 Delivery of the Community Development Learning Fund through outreach workers varied in effectiveness, with paid outreach appearing to have worked well, but use of volunteers and Federation of Community Work Training Groups contacts being more variable. The absence of training and support from the Federation resulted in some lack of clarity about the overall aim of the fund, the target groups, and the criteria that should have been applied to potential applicants. Some outreach workers were unsure about the length of time between application and approval, how applications were processed and whether or not there were any monitoring/evaluation requirements. These are all issues which applicants need to know about.

4.3.18 However, the outreach workers interviewed displayed a commitment to their role often beyond that which they had agreed to do voluntarily or were being paid for.

4.3.19 Some Community Champions Fund intermediaries had more experience than others in this field. In some regions only one obvious intermediary was available, while in others the use of two or more intermediaries has been beneficial to fund delivery. COVER's use of outreach workers to deliver the Community Champions Fund in East Region was successful and valuable in a large rural area where networking was difficult. (see the case study in **Appendix 6**) The use of the Community Champions Fund to capacity build regional voluntary and community sector intermediaries was also important. However, there appeared to be a lack of coordination between ACU funding for regional voluntary and community sector agencies and their role in Community Champions Fund and Community Development Learning Fund delivery.

4.3.20 The advantages of these funds using intermediaries and outreach workers can be summarised as follows:

- * They help to build local capacity
- * They provide good accessibility for recipients and a community friendly profile
- * They provide local support for recipients
- * They may help to improve regional range and coverage

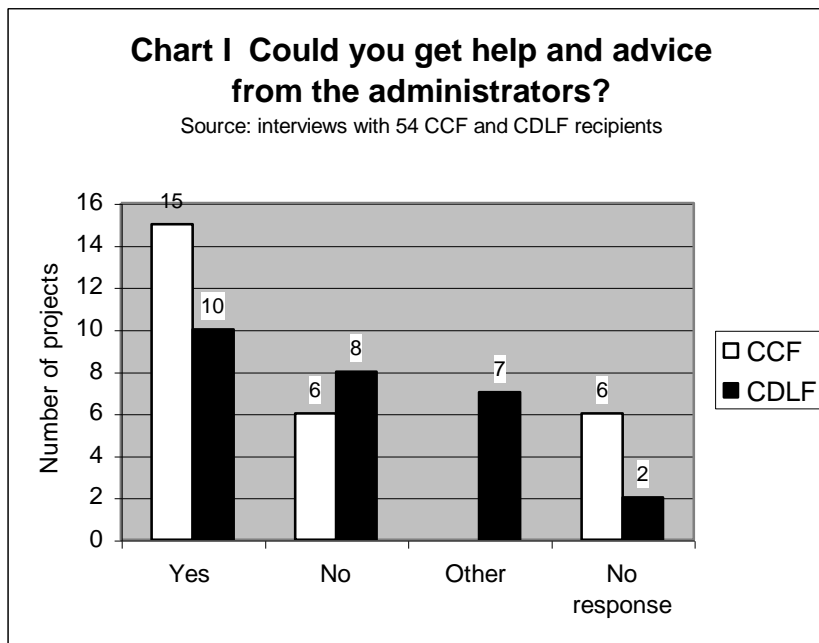
4.3.21 The disadvantages of using intermediaries and outreach can be summarised as follows:

- * Higher administrative costs

- * Difficulties in controlling delivery
- * Inconsistent reporting
- * Variable quality of on-the-ground delivery
- * The limited geographical reach of some intermediaries

How important was on-the-ground support for the delivery of these funds?

4.3.22 Support was the most important issue for more than half of both the Community Development Learning Fund recipients and the Community Champions recipients. A higher proportion of Community Champions recipients than Community Development Learning Fund recipients said that they did get help and advice from the fund administrators in the early stages (see Chart I).

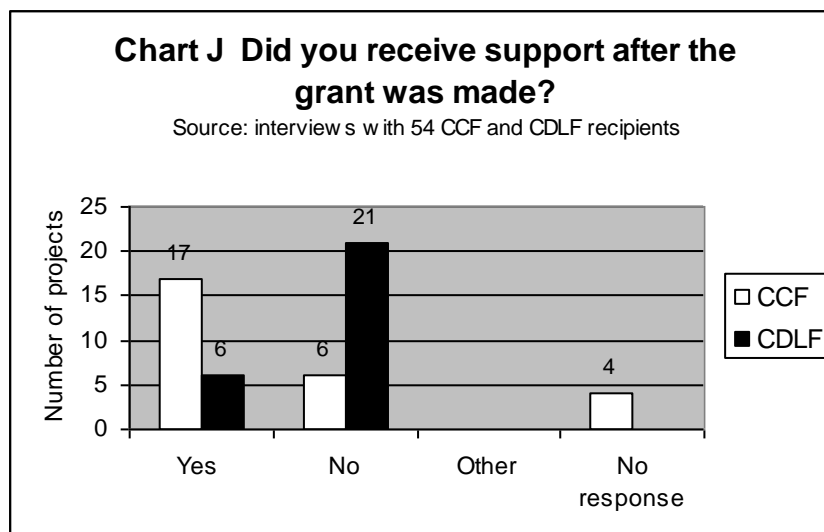


How much support did recipients receive beyond the initial dissemination of fund information and applications forms?

4.3.23 There was a recognition amongst most delivery agents that support was important, but this is an area of both programmes which had been squeezed by lack of resources and time. Not as much support was provided as recipients say they needed (see Chart J over page).

4.3.24 Despite the Community Development Learning Fund's use of locally based outreach workers, three fifths of outreach workers had not been involved in any form of on-going support. Those that had, maintained contact

mainly by telephone. Community Champions recipients tended to have received more support. Although it might be thought that individuals were likely to need more support than groups, our research suggests that few successful Community Champions operated outside a group context.



4.3.25 Most Community Champions Fund support appears to have been reactive, responding by telephone with advice as and when required. Nevertheless, in 4 of the 9 regions intermediaries were involved in more proactive outreach to recipients post-grant award, through awards and briefing days (Scarman Trust and South Yorkshire Community Foundation), monitoring visits (Black Regeneration Network), and networking seminars (COVER).

Did the individuals responsible for fund delivery on the ground get appropriate support from those managing the funds?

4.3.26 Despite widespread recognition amongst administrators, intermediaries and outreach workers that support was a crucial area of successful fund delivery, there is evidence that fund managers had not been providing enough support to those responsible for on the ground delivery.

- * **The need for more induction training and support at the start of the grant process.** One third of the Government Offices and most of the Community Development Learning Fund outreach workers felt their initial briefing on fund delivery was inadequate.
- * **The need for on-going support during the funding process.** Community Development Learning Fund outreach workers were concerned about the lack of information about fund criteria and application deadlines; Community Champions Fund intermediaries were often not clear about their reporting arrangements and found themselves having to produce more

information for Government Offices than anticipated or budgeted for.

- * **An apparent lack of understanding within the Home Office and Department for Education and Employment (now Department for Education and Skills) about the real costs of setting up and running the grants programmes.** Tight administrative budgets, lack of financial guidelines, financial inflexibility associated with Treasury rules and the need to handle the Community Champions Fund as an add-on to existing responsibilities created a strong feeling in 4 of the 9 Government Offices that the Community Champions Fund required more bureaucracy than a grants programme of its size warranted. This tended to be reflected in the amount of support provided to delivery agents. The Federation of Community Work Training Groups also felt that the administration budget was insufficient to enable it to offer appropriate support and training to its outreach workers.

Was feedback to lead Government Departments encouraged from recipients and individuals involved in fund delivery?

4.3.27 There was no evidence that DfEE or the Home Office had encouraged direct feedback from recipients, at least in Round 1. DfEE recognised the importance of such feedback and made arrangements for an Exceptional Champions/National Event in February 2001 which brought a range of recipients together to feedback views and opinions about the fund in general and their projects in particular. The Federation of Community Work Training Groups also organised a similar event in February 2001. Government Offices which had organised Award Ceremonies to celebrate Community Champions' achievements had not normally used them to feedback recipient views about the fund.

4.4 Fund targeting

Were the funds targeting those in most need – i.e. deprived communities and individuals?

4.4.1 The majority of intermediaries and outreach workers for both funds targeted individuals and groups who they considered to be in the most need. Around half targeted innovative or risky projects, new groups, and specific geographical areas, and a substantial minority targeted particular areas of interest.

4.4.2 These broadly similar results indicate that the delivery agents for both funds were attempting to identify where the greatest need was in their 'patch',

directing the funds towards them. It also indicated attempts to achieve a broad distribution of funds across a range of different projects and groups. Some of the Community Champions Fund intermediaries specifically targeted black and minority ethnic groups in Round 1: the Scarman Trust in London, Oxford Council for Voluntary Service (South East) and Black Regeneration Network (West Midlands). A significant proportion of Community Champions Fund intermediaries also targeted and funded groups as opposed to individuals.

4.4.3 Some significant differences between fund managers and intermediaries should be highlighted. The intermediaries appeared to be more disposed towards funding innovative and risky projects than fund managers and to targeting geographical areas rather than particular areas of interest. Only in the South East and East Midlands did Government Offices specifically target black and minority ethnic communities, although more are now doing so in Round 2.

Was there sufficient take-up of the funds by socially excluded groups?

4.4.4 The Government's Social Exclusion Unit defines social exclusion as *'a shorthand term for what can happen when people or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, bad health and family breakdown.'*

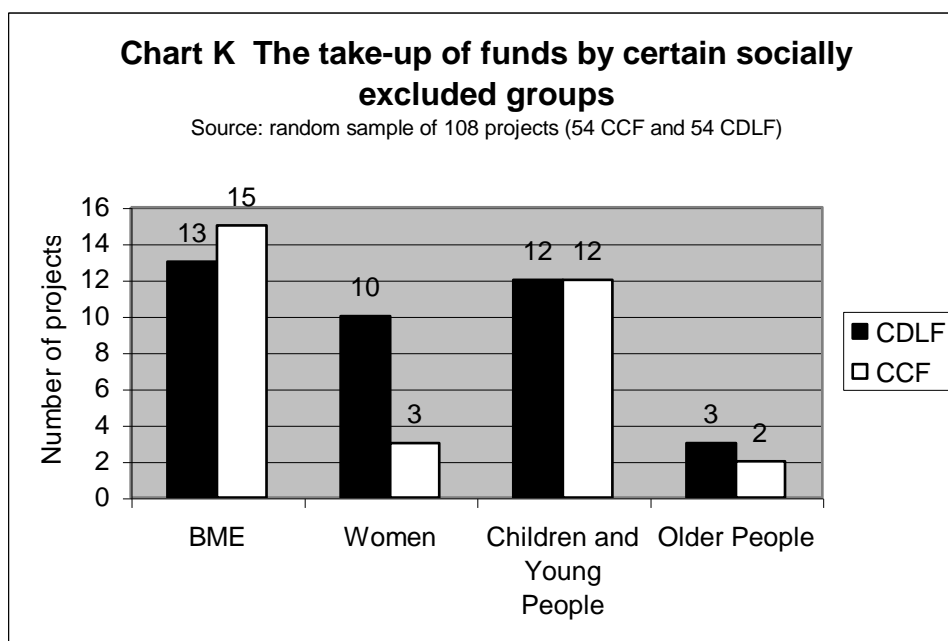
4.4.5 Certain groups of people are more likely to experience social exclusion than others because they make up a disproportionately high number of those living in areas exhibiting the problems detailed in the definition; for example, unemployed people, black and minority ethnic communities, women, children and young people (up to 18), older people (over 65), people with disabilities, and ex-offenders.

4.4.6 From the research, both Funds appeared to be perform equally well in tackling social exclusion, although projects targeted at excluded women were a particular feature of the Community Development Learning Fund. The random sample of 108 projects produced the breakdown shown in **Chart K** (over page).

4.4.7 Some socially excluded groups, for example older people, were not being reached so well. It was not possible to determine from the application forms whether some other groups had benefited from the Funds; for example, people with disabilities, gay and lesbian groups or ex-offenders. This information could usefully be recorded on application forms for future monitoring, and DfES has subsequently developed a form for this purpose.

4.4.8 Thought needs to be given to whether targeting of socially excluded groups is a key issue for funds of this type and, if so, how this might best be

achieved, probably through a combination of changes to the current fund criteria, targeting, monitoring and evaluation arrangements.



What type of activities were supported by the funds?

4.4.9 Both funds supported a wide and similar range of activities (see Chart L over page). This may be expected given that, for both funds, the type of activity was less important than other factors.

4.4.10 We have been unable to obtain a full breakdown of all applications by type of activity approved by Government Offices and the Federation of Community Work Training Groups in Round 1. There may therefore be other activities which have been supported which are not reflected here.

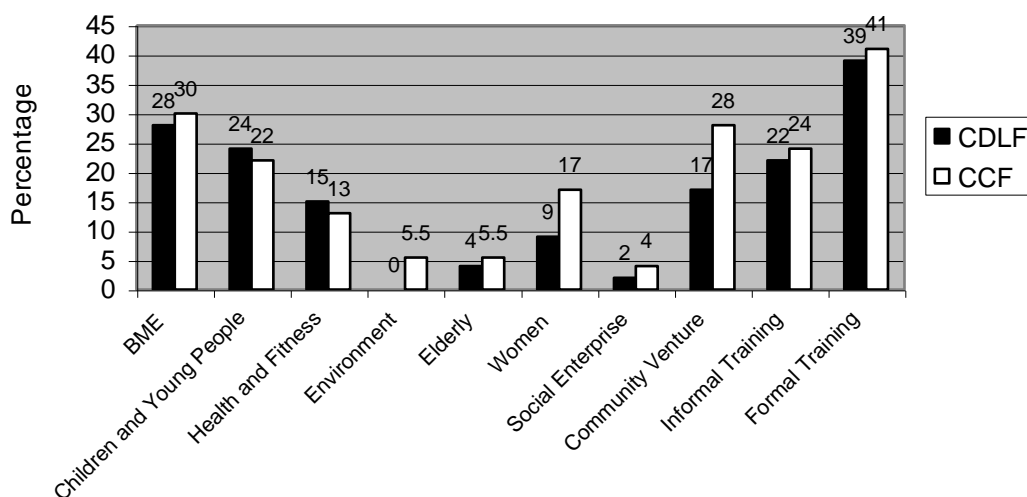
4.4.11 However, the Community Development Learning Fund was expected to broadly focus its funding on projects involving learning and skills development, so this is one area where a significant difference between the two funds might be expected. In the event, the difference appeared to be small.

Was there sufficient coverage of communities of interest as well as geography?

4.4.12 While it is clearly important to target specific geographical areas, strengthening communities also depends on supporting communities of interest – tenants federations’, carer support groups and community-based training projects - which cross neighbourhood boundaries. Such groups are vital elements in the ‘social glue’ that holds communities together.

Chart L Evidence of duplication between the two funding streams

Source: Random sample of 108 CCF and CDLF Round 1 & 2 recipients



4.1.13 Both funds provided support for both types of communities, with a somewhat greater emphasis on geography in Community Development Learning Fund, as might be anticipated. While the Community Champions Fund figures were broadly consistent with it not being an overtly geographically targeted programme, some intermediaries used specific measures to target their funding on deprived neighbourhoods. For example, COVER in the East used the Local Index of Deprivation, while Oxford Council for Voluntary Service in the South East used Single Regeneration Budget and Sure Start programmes to direct their funding. Two fifths of the Community Development Learning Fund outreach workers interviewed were prioritising geographically focused bids.

Was there evidence that delivery agencies were actively seeking out those in most need rather than simply reacting to applications?

4.4.14 There was evidence that delivery agents were trying to attract applications from those in most need. A high proportion of Community Champions Fund intermediaries and Community Development Learning Fund outreach workers we interviewed were targeting innovative/risky/new projects and groups, particularly those that had never received funding before.

4.4.15 Most of the Community Development Learning Fund outreach workers and all of the Community Champions Fund intermediaries used publicity, including information packs, flyers, letters and newsletters, to attract applicants.

4.4.16 Most Community Champions Fund intermediaries relied on this publicity, along with their existing knowledge of the area, which may or may not have been comprehensive, current and accurate, to attract applications from projects set up by those most in need. Some, however, went further.

4.4.17 For example, the Black Regeneration Network in the West Midlands held workshops for community groups to encourage Community Champions Fund applications and the outreach worker for Community Development Learning Fund in Hartlepool actively identified suitable applicants from applications to another fund she was involved in.

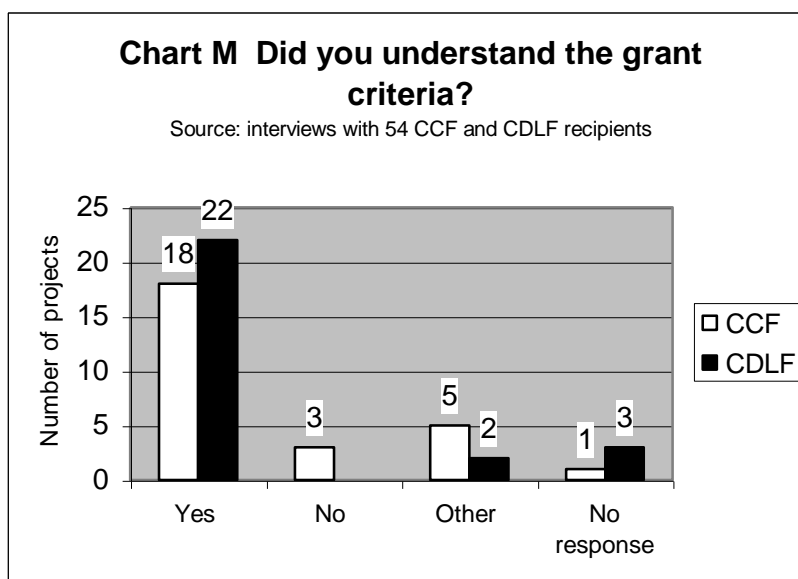
4.4.18 The Community Development Learning Fund outreach workers were able to target publicity and information quite carefully, given their detailed local knowledge, using mailshots and telephone calls. There was, however, no evidence that this necessarily produced more and/or more suitable applications. Neither did it seem to result in recipients feeling they received sufficient post-award support.

4.5 Fund criteria

Did the overall criteria for both funds meet the needs of recipients as well as the aims and objectives of Government?

4.5.1 The criteria drawn up by the Department for Education and Employment for the Community Champions Fund to meet the overall aims and objectives were wide-ranging and general. The Home Office imposed rather tighter criteria for the Community Development Learning Fund, something which posed difficulties for some recipients.

4.5.2 Most grant recipients we interviewed from both funds said they found the grant criteria easy to understand (see Chart M).

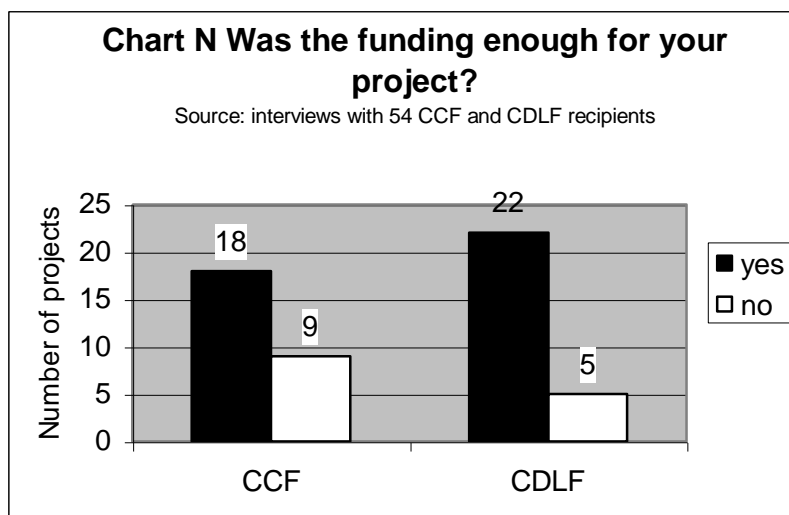


4.5.3 Given that the criteria used, whether national or regionally adapted, were general and wide-ranging, and that in both funds managers were keen to award money quickly, the majority of recipients felt that the grants met their needs (two thirds of Community Development Learning Fund recipients and nearly three fifths of Community Champions Fund recipients). Community Champions Fund recipients we interviewed were particularly positive about the ‘fit’ between the project purpose and the grant, with none feeling that they had to twist the project to meet the criteria.

Were the fund criteria flexible enough to respond effectively to local and personal circumstances?

4.5.4 Both sets of recipients felt that the funds were easy to apply to, efficiently operated, accessible and flexible in their approach. Community Champions Fund recipients in particular, felt that that the grants were tailor-made for their purposes. One fifth of Community Development Learning Fund recipients interviewed, however, felt that this fund had limitations, including unreasonable deadlines, poor publicity and inefficient administration.

4.5.5 Lack of sufficient funding was a problem for a large minority of Community Champions Fund recipients, particularly those who were offered a fixed amount of £2000. The £3000 ceiling for Community Development Learning Fund projects created fewer problems in this respect, raising the question as to whether the current grant ceilings are set at the correct level (see Chart N).



4.5.6 Because the majority of outreach workers were unsure about the grant criteria for the Community Development Learning Fund and the application process, they felt some anxiety about whether the applicants they encouraged would fit the criteria and uncertainty about the degree of flexibility that would be applied

4.5.7 Three quarters of the Community Champions Fund intermediaries understood the fund to be flexible and aimed mainly at benefiting the community and encouraging personal development. Community Champions Fund managers also felt the fund was flexible, although to a lesser degree and, surprisingly, were less clear about other criteria, with only one third viewing it as benefiting the community and encouraging personal capacity building. This may have reflected a more cautious approach by managers and perhaps the lack of first-hand experience in administering the fund from which clarity about who/what should be funded could develop.

4.5.8 Despite the concerns of outreach workers, Community Development Learning Fund managers allowed recipients to change the details of their project after they had been awarded the grant, and both funds encouraged applicants to improve their applications if the original idea looked good, but was maybe unclearly expressed or not enough information provided

Have the funds supported innovation and risk or have they focused on projects which are known to work?

4.5.9 Two fifths of Community Development Learning Fund and three fifths of Community Champions Fund recipients we interviewed responded that the grant had enabled them to do something new, either through starting a new project or developing an existing project in new ways. As was noted in para 5.4.1, many intermediaries and outreach workers are aiming to target innovative or risky projects.

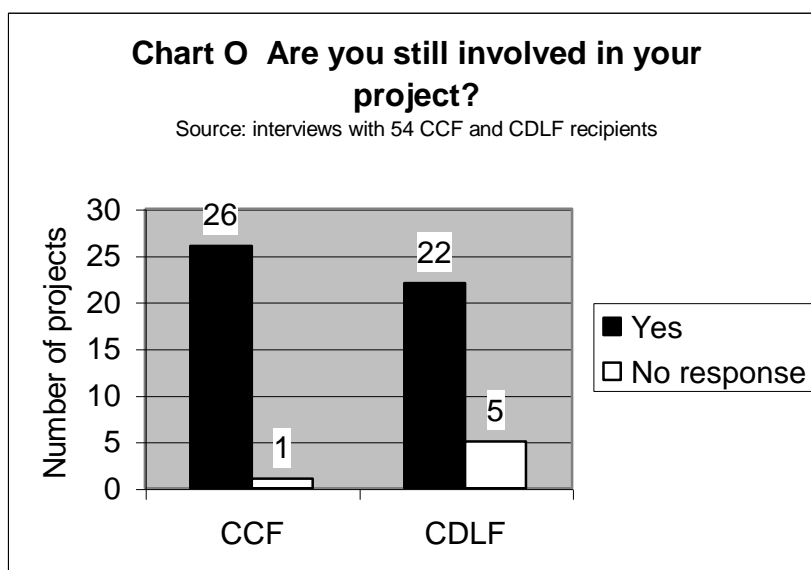
4.5.10 In keeping with their more risk averse culture, fewer than half of Government Offices targeted innovative and risky or new projects. The Federation of Community Work Training Groups did not aim to target innovative and risky groups or new projects at all, arguing that the emphasis on innovation in many funding regimes is inappropriate for many community groups, which need funding to secure their on-going activities rather than distorting their activities and wasting energy trying to be innovative. Although there is certainly some merit in this view, the evidence from the Community Development Learning Fund recipients and outreach workers we interviewed suggests that innovation is an aspiration of many groups and is not generally seen as restrictive.

4.5.11 Given that both funds awarded comparatively small sums of money, it could be argued that too much caution was being exercised at managerial level and that this was influencing targeting by those delivering the programmes on the ground.

4.6 Fund outcomes

Were the funds helping individuals and communities to build their short-term capacity?

4.6.1 Both funds resulted in short-term capacity building benefits, mainly through personal development and secondly through wider community benefit in the form of project development. The great majority of recipients interviewed from both funds were still involved in their projects (see Chart O).



4.6.2 Just over half of the Community Development Learning Fund outreach workers and Community Champions Fund intermediaries said that they maintained contact with projects after the grant was awarded. The contact with outreach workers tended to be more direct, including telephone calls and visits, whereas the intermediaries mainly did it through awards ceremonies, evaluation forms and briefing days. Maintaining regular contact with recipients undoubtedly assisted with developing short-term capacity, maintaining interest in the project and a commitment to continue the work started.

Did the funds contribute towards supporting individuals and communities in the long-term?

4.6.3 The timespan over which the two funds were evaluated does not permit an analysis of their long-term impact. Research on sustainability suggests it is doubtful that either fund in its form at time of research will make a significant contribution to supporting individuals and communities in the long-term (3-5 years). Although most of the Round 1 recipients interviewed were still involved in their projects after the grant had been spent and when on-going funding was problematic, it is likely that this will fall off over time if support, financial or otherwise, is not continued.

4.6.4 The role of outreach workers, who have an on-going presence in their communities and can develop longer-term links with projects, may help to sustain some of the projects, particularly those which were being supported by the Community Development Learning Fund, but this depends on these individuals continuing to be resourced. Managers of both funds, intermediaries and outreach workers all expressed concerns about sustainability, although none were able to offer any clear solutions.

Did the funds encourage personal development as well as wider community benefit?

4.6.5 Personal development benefits were high for both funds, but noticeably higher for the Community Champions Fund as would be expected given the focus on individuals. Just over three quarters of the Community Development Learning Fund and all of the Community Champions Fund recipients we interviewed felt that the grant had resulted in personal development, through increasing confidence and self-esteem, raising aspirations, enhancing skills and knowledge, meeting new people and developing networks. The case studies in Appendix 4 show some particularly striking examples from the Community Champions Fund.

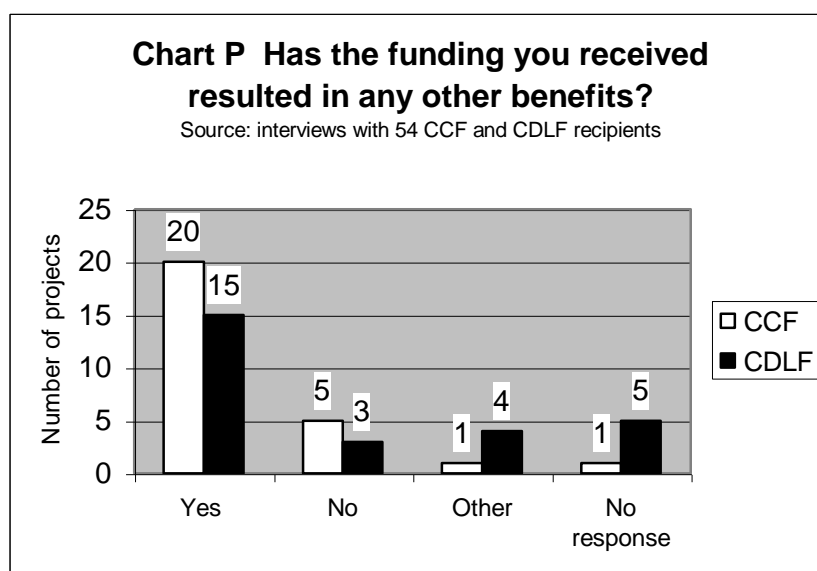
4.6.6 Secondary benefits for individuals reflected the overall aims of the funds. Individual training was the second greatest benefit to Community Champions Fund recipients; for the Community Development Learning Fund it was community support and development, reflecting the emphasis of this fund on groups.

Was there a clear relationship between funding individuals and the wider benefits to their communities?

4.6.7 The relationship between funding individuals and wider community benefit was of particular relevance to the Community Champions Fund. From the recipient interviews, it was apparent that there was a clear link in a large minority of cases. Sharing information took place amongst two fifths of recipients, one fifth mentioned creating and/or strengthening linkages, and around one sixth mentioned increasing the amount and distribution of publicity and broadening opportunities for the community generally.

4.6.8 Community Champions Fund recipients also pointed to additional benefits to the wider community of the grant beyond those anticipated. Nearly half of these mentioned raising the profile and status of the project and thus attracting new people and increasing community acceptance. A fifth of those interviewed mentioned developing linkages with the wider community as a key benefit.

4.6.9 Both Funds appear to have achieved reasonable outcomes on wider benefits from the use of the grant (see Chart P).



Were the funds complementing each other or did they overlap?

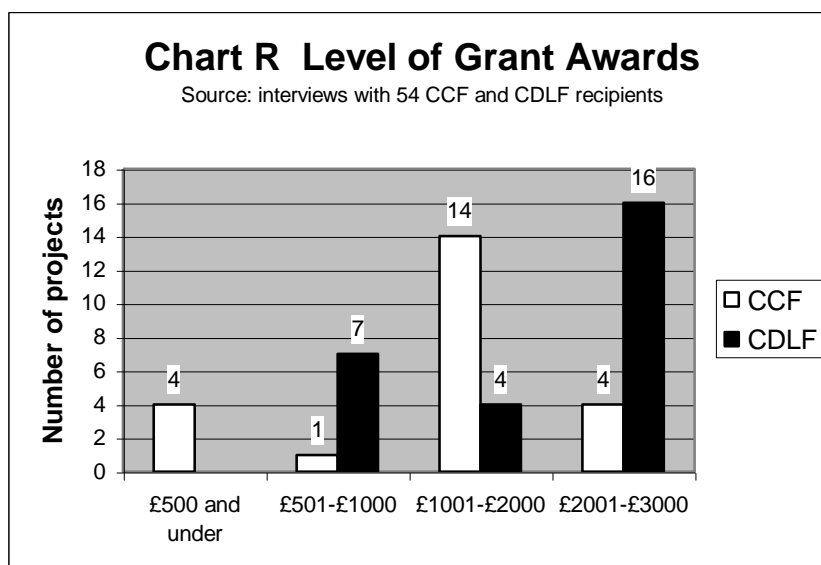
4.6.10 There was a distinct separation between applications to the funds. Only one Community Champions Fund recipient we interviewed also applied to the Community Development Learning Fund and no Community Development Learning Fund recipients applied to the Community Champions Fund. This can largely be explained by the different fund criteria and delivery mechanisms and applicants applying to the one fund they had heard of, rather than making a choice. In practice there was substantial duplication between the Funds, across a range of indicators.

4.6.11 The Community Champions Fund was clearly being used to fund individuals as part of local groups. Amongst the nine Government Offices, Yorkshire and Humber funded groups only, West Midlands and East funded groups and individuals, and most Government Offices funded groups if the project 'looked good'.

4.6.12 Four out of five of the Community Champions Fund awards in our sample were given to individuals working with local groups and only a fifth to individuals who had no apparent connection with a group. All but one of the Community Development Learning Fund awards went to groups.

4.6.13 There was no evidence that the targeting of specific geographic areas by the Community Development Learning Fund and the wider spread of the Community Champions Fund targeting had any practical impact, other than to differentiate between applications. The awards made were broadly of a comparable scale, ranging from less than £500 to £3000 for Community

Champions Fund and £501 to £2000 plus for Community Development Learning Fund (see Chart R).



4.6.14 Given these substantial similarities and overlaps, it was difficult to justify the two separate managerial and bureaucratic structures established for the two funds, which included administrative fees, publicity, and uncosted officer time and overheads.

Were the funds complementing or overlapping other funding programmes?

4.6.15 The small scale of the grants, the flexibility of the criteria and the ease of application meant that the funds did not duplicate other national funding programmes, although there were examples of local and regional funding regimes which were similar.

4.6.16 Our research suggested that these two funds taken together were making a new and valuable impact on people, groups, communities and neighbourhoods, many of which often find it very difficult to get funding for worthwhile projects and activities.

4.6.17 However, the fact that the funds did not duplicate or overlap, does not by implication mean that they were complementing other funding regimes. Complementarity suggests a two-way process which was not evident from our research.

4.6.18 The majority of intermediaries and outreach workers said they signposted unsuccessful or inappropriate applicants to other funding sources. There was a wide range of views on which other government funding programmes the funds might link to (including Department for the Environment, Transport and the Regions funding, Sure Start, and New Deal

for Communities), but around two thirds of delivery agents for both funds could not identify a specific link.

4.6.19 In general, responses given by intermediaries, outreach workers and fund managers, acknowledged that they needed more and better information about other funding programmes (see also Part 1 of the research, in RR279).

4.6.20 The link between the Community Development Learning Fund and New Deal for Communities Round 2 areas appeared to be nothing more than a mechanism to divide the money across two areas within all 9 regions. There was no evidence of any relationship between Community Development Learning Fund grants in these areas and New Deal for Communities programmes themselves.

Were the funds leveraging in any additional resources?

4.6.21 For the individual recipients we interviewed, leverage was not significant. Only one of the Community Champions Fund and two of the Community Development Learning Fund projects said that their grant had helped them achieve additional funding. However, given the short timespan over which the research was conducted, additional funding may well be a longer term gain for some projects.

4.6.22 At a regional level, there was only limited evidence that the Community Champions Fund grant pools within Government Offices had been used to lever in additional resources. Scarman Trust in the West Midlands and the North East had been proactive in this respect and with some success, but these were the exceptions rather than the rule. There was no evidence that the Federation of Community Work Training Groups had attracted or sought additional resources on the back of the Community Development Learning Fund.

How was the success of the funds being measured – using outputs and value for money indicators, or through qualitative outcome measures?

4.6.23 Aside from the present evaluation, the overall success of the funds was not being measured to any significant extent or with any centrally agreed indicators – the picture is patchy and confused. For the Community Champions Fund, some Government Offices relied on intermediaries measuring impact; others used basic statistics to measure quantitative impact, such as the number of individuals/areas of interest supported. For others, however, there was an apparent lack of awareness about, or understanding of, the value of measuring impact.

4.6.24 None of the Community Development Learning Fund outreach workers we interviewed were aware of any output/outcome measures having been agreed or implemented. Five of the nine Government Offices and five

Community Champions Fund intermediaries said that outcome measures had not been agreed, either locally or through central direction.

4.6.25 Considerable work is needed on how to measure the impact of these type of funds. Once again, this does not imply detailed and onerous systems, but developing ways and means of measuring impact appropriate to the type and scale of the projects funded.

Did the funds make an impact on the relationships within and between government departments, particularly in terms of informing strategic approaches and policy development?

4.6.26 There was only limited evidence of the lessons learned in the operation of the funds informing strategic approaches and policy development within Government during the pilot rounds. However, the early outcomes of funds did subsequently contribute to discussions within the Government's Inter-Departmental Working Group on Community Capacity Building during 2000. Experience with both grant regimes has also more recently contributed to the development of a framework for a learning and development strategy, currently being developed by the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit. Relevant lessons for small grant programmes drawn from the operation of both funds were incorporated in a consultation paper on Funding for Community Groups, published by the Active Community Unit of the Home Office in May 2001.

4.6.27 At a regional level, while the Department for Education and Employment initiated quarterly meetings of the Government Offices to review progress on the Community Champions Fund and highlight issues, there was no early evidence that the discussions had changed practice or informed strategic and policy development within the regions.

4.6.28 Two Government Offices we interviewed said that they were talking to each other; North West expressed a specific wish to have more inter-Government Office meetings to share information and lessons, and most Government Offices admitted that they should know more about what happens in other Government Offices and government departments. There was at that time no evidence of any co-ordinated approach by any region to share or pool information either within or across regions for the Community Champions Fund. However, Department for Education and Skills has now provided a database containing information on all Community Champions, which is accessible by all Government Offices.

5. Towards a new evaluation methodology for the Community Champions Fund

5.1 Evaluation means different things to different people. For many grant recipients it is simply an inexplicable expectation imposed on them by funders; for fund managers it is often a time consuming process imposed on them by those who control the purse-strings. At the same time, there is a broad consensus on the need for evaluation of funding for communities for two primary purposes. The first is to ensure accountability, for grant recipients to demonstrate what they are achieving. The second is to learn from the use of the grant and apply learning to future development. Both have benefits for funders and recipients, in ensuring financial accountability, developing policy and improving practice.

5.2 This section considers the importance of evaluation, looks at the component parts, and suggests an evaluation methodology appropriate to the aims, scale and general approach of the Community Champions Fund. While evaluation may be applied to a wide range of projects and programmes, here we consider it in relationship to small-scale funding programmes.

What is evaluation?

5.3 An essential first step in appreciating the value of evaluation and its component parts is an understanding of the terminology (see **Appendix 7**).

5.4 In simple terms, effective evaluation requires:

- * **baseline information** on the local conditions/situations which the fund is aiming to change,
- * clear **objectives** setting out the changes the fund is aiming to change,
- * clear **definition of intended beneficiaries** (both of which should be taken from the fund criteria), and
- * appropriate **indicators** to measure change.

5.5 These key elements demonstrate the necessity of considering and planning for evaluation before the fund is operational. In addition, the relationship between the fund criteria and evaluation is clearly critical – overall effectiveness and impact can only be measured if there is clarity about what the fund is aiming to achieve, according to the criteria, and targets that will indicate achievement.

Evaluating the Community Champions Fund

5.6 It is clear from the research for this study that there is little consistent understanding of evaluation, either what it is or how it can be used to the benefit of all those involved in the funds. This applies to managers, delivery agents and recipients. This picture is not so different from that found in our research of other similar funds earlier in this report. While most of the funds were evaluated, this was usually done internally by the fund managers, carried out at the end of a funding period or programme and rarely involving recipients.

5.7 Here, we suggest a general approach to evaluation for Community Champions, which will require further refinement prior to implementation. We have focused particularly on the participatory elements of the process, where recipients can feed their views directly into the process.

5.8 First, there are a number of general principles that should guide the development of an evaluation methodology for Community Champions:

- * The **unifying concept** for the evaluation should be 'social capital' (that is, the often intangible web of relationships and widespread participation in communities and community organisations that holds a community together)
- * **Proportionality** – scale of evaluation should accord with the scale of the grants
- * Evaluation should be **easily accessible**, relevant to the personal and social circumstances of the recipients, quick to do, and as unbureaucratic as possible
- * Indicators should be **simple and easy** to administer
- * Recipients should fully **participate** in the evaluation process, so their perspective is reflected
- * There should also be an 'objective' element provided by an **external process**
- * The process should aim to identify **failures as well as successes**
- * The results should be **widely disseminated** across funding programmes, Government Departments, the voluntary sector and local communities

An evaluation methodology

5.9 We recommend a 3-layered process. Layer 1 is the self-evaluation element. Recipients should complete simple forms composed of attitude and behaviour statements at the point the grant is awarded and the end of the period of its use. The statement should be based on and emphasise peoples' day to day experience. They measure changes over time in recipients' lives as a result of the grant they were awarded.

5.10 Such statements could include:

- * *I can trust most of my neighbours*
- * *I feel confident about my (family's) future here*
- * *This area/neighbourhood has a lot of community spirit*
- * *I am aware of (a number) community groups/projects*
- * *I feel that I can approach the community groups/projects – they feel welcoming*
- * *I am aware of(a number) agencies/organisations which provide services in the area/neighbourhood*
- * *I care about the future of this area/neighbourhood*
- * *I have spoken to(a number) new people within the last 6 months*
- * *I feel safe going out in this area/neighbourhood*

5.11 There should be a maximum of 30 statements. They should be capable of being answered using tick boxes, either yes/no or a range between, say, 'much better' and 'much worse'. While the statements will predominantly be qualitative indicators, a factor analysis can be applied using statistical techniques. If this is to be done, there are accepted processes of validation and reliability checks which would be necessary to develop a scale which is meaningful and works.

5.12 There could be conditions to complete and return the form, such as payment of grant instalments, or, if this were felt to be too coercive, incentives such as a small additional amount of funding which could be used, for example, to buy a camera to record the use of the grant or fund the cost of a social event to celebrate the start or end of the project.

5.13 The second layer would involve internal evaluation of the fund at regional level on an annual basis, supported by an independent external evaluator. Again, the basic approach that would determine the nature of the evaluation methodology would echo the key principles outlined in paragraph 6.8 above.

5.14 The key features of internal evaluation which are particularly appropriate to the fund and the role of the Government Offices, (especially in terms of building their capacity) are that it contributes to organisational development, encourages reflection on ways of working and impact and is, therefore, more likely to lead to change, enables staff to learn new skills, and can be integrated with other internal processes concerned with the delivery of

the fund. However, it is important that the process is not overly time-consuming, has a degree of 'objectivity' and implements the framework appropriately and rigorously. Support from an independent external evaluator can achieve this.

5.15 Clearly, the evaluation framework to be implemented at regional level needs to be consistent across the regions, and incorporate the attitude and behaviour statements completed by recipients. This stage could also incorporate an optional fourth layer to the process, involving discussion groups which bring recipients together to talk about the fund based on their personal experience – why they applied for the funding, what they expected, what it has meant for them and how they see their life situation, capabilities and opportunities changing over time. This also incorporates some of the elements of the awards days organised by the Scarman Trust as part of their delivery of Community Champions - bringing recipients together, valuing their experiences and ideas and creating network opportunities - as well as making an important contribution to the evaluative process.

5.16 The final layer involves a totally external evaluation of the entire fund at a national level every three years. This would take into account the behaviour and attitude statements completed by recipients, the internal evaluations carried out annually at regional level and use these, along with additional information, to build a broad picture of the efficacy and impact of the fund nationally.

5.17 The evaluation framework adopted for this level would necessarily focus on the broad impact of the specific fund. It would cover supporting individuals, engendering wider community benefit, encouraging community participation in regeneration and renewal, enabling community influence on service delivery and regeneration programmes. In addition, it would include the overall management of the fund, delivery, targeting, addressing social exclusion, the relationship to other sources of funding, and overall government policy on support for communities, both within the neighbourhood renewal agenda and outside it.

5.18 Finally, a comprehensive dissemination strategy should be developed to ensure that the lessons learned from all stages of the evaluation reach managers, administrators, delivery agents and recipients of other funds, as well as policy makers and budget holders.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 Our conclusions point to the need for important changes in the operation of these type of funds. These can be summarised as follows:

- * There is an important on-going role for national small grants funds of this type.
- * It is important to retain funds of this type which are not directly linked to the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal Action Plan and which build individual and community group capacity.
- * It is not clear that the original separation of the Community Development Learning Fund and the Community Champions Fund added value.
- * The distinction between individuals and groups was arbitrary and unnecessary.
- * There are likely to be substantial benefits in combining both funds beyond the pilot stage.

6.2 The recommendations flowing from these conclusions are as follows:

- 1. The Community Champions Fund should continue beyond the pilot stage for at least a further three years with an increased budget of £2 million a year.**
- 2. The Community Development Learning Fund should not continue beyond the pilot stage, but the good practice learnt from the Fund should be incorporated in revised guidance on the management and delivery of the Community Champions Fund.**
- 3. The Department for Education and Skills (formerly DfEE) should retain its lead role in the Community Champions Fund, but should review the administrative and reporting arrangements required of delivery agents. (This review has taken place.)**
- 4. Revised guidance on the delivery of the Community Champions Fund should aim to strengthen the criteria, to ensure that funds reach their intended targets more effectively, and emphasise the importance of the relationship between individuals and community groups.**

(DfES has now provided a 'Code of Good Practice' for Government Offices, containing this material.)

- 5. Regional flexibility should be retained, but Government Offices should be required to delegate fund delivery to a range of appropriate voluntary and community sector intermediaries, operating at regional and preferably sub-regional levels. Where such intermediaries are absent or weak, Government Offices should be proactive in helping to support new vehicles, rather than delivering Community Champions in house. (All GOs are using intermediaries to deliver Community Champions in 2001/2.)**
- 6. All intermediaries involved in future fund delivery should use paid and fully trained outreach workers.**
- 7. The Home Office has a key role to play in supporting and expanding the national network of voluntary and community sector intermediaries. The Department for Education and Employment and Government Offices should work closely with the Home Office to ensure that the Community Champions Fund makes full use of this expanding network.**
- 8. The Federation of Community Work Training Groups is an important training and networking resource which should play a new role in supporting the Community Champions Fund, funded by the Department for Education and Employment. (For example, FCWTG could provide training and support for Community Champions recipients, and support and develop a network of community development workers.)**
- 9. The administration budget for the Community Champions Fund should be increased to 15%, with a separate additional budget made available to delivery agents to cover the cost of paid and fully trained outreach support. (This recommendation has been implemented.)**
- 10. New evaluation arrangements, based on the recommendations in this report, should be developed for the Community Champions Fund and implemented during 2001.**

Appendix 1

Community Champions Fund

Regional office delivery arrangements and budgets

Regional Office	Delivery arrangements	2000/01 budget
London	Scarman Trust	£157,889
West Midlands	Scarman Trust Black Regeneration Network Heart of England Trust Disability Group	£105,736
North West	In house	£114,214
North East	Scarman Trust	£86,417
Yorkshire and Humberside	South Yorkshire Community Forum	£102,538
East Midlands	In house	£81,518
South East	Groundwork Trust Sure Start Trailblazers Southampton City Council	£89,777
South West	Salisbury District Council for Voluntary Service	£79,618
East	Community and Voluntary Forum Eastern Region	£82,292

Appendix 2

Regional criteria and procedures for the Community Champions pilot round

The following criteria and procedures were adopted by each Government Region:

Government Office North West did not use delivery agents, mainly because regional voluntary and community sector organisations were not well placed to deliver at the crucial time. It did, however, assess applications in conjunction with a local Council for Voluntary Service officer. Recipients were required to report on the outcomes of their project, but there were problems in obtaining this information from individual recipients.

North West's primary aim was to make individuals more effective in their communities; individuals or their groups were required to show specific community benefits from their project and targeting was specifically on unemployed people. A community consultant was used to 'spread the word' and 'sell the Fund', mainly stimulating applications after the pilot round.

Government Office South East used two delivery agents, one based in Dartford, Kent and another in Oxford. Those selected had a specific focus on black and minority ethnic communities which was a strong priority within the Government Office programme. These intermediaries assessed the applications and provided training courses for applicants. Translations were offered and signers were used at events.

This region's main aim was to encourage grass roots community involvement in the regeneration of their neighbourhoods, with a particular emphasis on capacity building.

Government Office Yorkshire and Humberside used one delivery agent, based in South Yorkshire. They were chosen because they already had a small grants programme in operation when Community Champions was launched. The emphasis was on groups, rather than individuals, with a particular emphasis on community benefit and training.

The fund was administered very flexibly. Each project was visited by an independent assessor who scored the project, prepared a report to the Foundation board, and then to the trustees. Visits were made to the groups and awards ceremonies were held.

Government Office South West used one delivery agent selected through connections with the voluntary sector. Roger Davies Associates was responsible for delivery, with reporting to Salisbury and District Council for Voluntary Service. A large project management board oversaw the work and met regularly to assess applications.

Regional priorities include a focus on rural issues, black and minority ethnic projects, coastal, former coalfield, ex offenders, ex drug users and disadvantaged, disaffected people.

Government Office London took a very hands off approach to Community Champions, delegating full delivery initially to the London Regeneration Network and subsequently to the Scarman Trust. Although flexibly administered, there was a specific requirement in the region to target deprived areas linked to current regeneration programmes.

Scarman Trust used their Millennium Awards programme as a template for Community Champions delivery, with a decision-making panel which included a previous 'Can Do' recipient.

Government Office East Midlands did not appoint a delivery agent, preferring to work on Community Champions direct to build their own capacity and because they felt the voluntary sector capacity to run small grants programmes in the region was low. There was a specific focus on small socially excluded groups. Round 1 applicants were inhibited by the lack of an application form and no grant administration process, subsequently put in place for Round 2.

Government Office West Midlands adopted, like London, a hands-off approach to fund delivery. It appointed two delivery agents (Scarman Trust and Heart of England Community Foundation). Heart of England delegated delivery to the Black Regeneration Network. Scarman Trust was used because of its previous experience, but an opportunity to build the capacity of the black and minority ethnic infrastructure in the region was an important element of the regional programme. Delivery agents were responsible for all aspects of programme, the main aims of which were to invest in individuals and their communities and build local capacity.

The delivery agents approached Community Champions in distinctly different ways, but both used Panels to decide on applications and held a variety of events to attract and give recognition to successful applicants.

Government Office East selected one regional intermediary (COVER) with extensive coverage across the region and access to local outreach workers. This agent was given full responsibility for the whole programme. The Government Office held regular review meetings with COVER and looked at every award made, which were assessed by an outreach worker initially, then by COVER board.

The main aim of the programme in this region was to get people involved in community activity linked to regeneration, targeting fragile, emerging groups and social exclusion

Government Office North East launched its Community Champions programme in January 2000. An early decision was made to use the Scarman

Trust as delivery agents, who were appointed for an initial three month period by direct negotiation. There was some concern that the Trust's Millennium Awards programme might be confused with the new Fund, so a regional newspaper was brought on board to spearhead the publicity campaign and establish a specific identity.

Posters and leaflets produced centrally by DfEE were not available for the launch and the Government Office had to devise its own application form, based on the Scarman Trust's Can Do fund, in the absence of central guidance. There was no consultation with the community or voluntary sector prior to the launch and most initial applications were generated by the newspaper's telephone hotline.

Applications were assessed against agreed criteria jointly by the Government Office lead officer and the regional director of the Scarman Trust. The majority of applicants were interviewed face to face by the Trust and a shortlist prepared for the Awards Panel. This Panel, comprising two Government Office representatives, two independent consultants and a charitable foundation representative met when required to formally approve applications. Approved recipients then received their grants, although these were always paid to agreed local agencies, rather than direct to the individuals themselves.

Appendix 3

Round 1

Community Champions Awards by Region

REGION	Number of Awards	Average Award	Range of Awards	Top 3 activities funded
NORTH WEST	6	*	*	BME
SOUTH EAST	3	*	*	*
YORKS & H	17	£2348	£300 - £20690	BME 24% Voluntary groups 18% Women 18%
SOUTH WEST	32	£1111	£100 -£5750	Voluntary groups 34% Community groups 50% Young people 13%
LONDON	49	£1802	£618 - £2000	Youth 29% BME 20% Elderly 10%
EAST MIDS	6	£2369	£500 - £3970	BME 27% Community/voluntary 27% Leisure/cultural 18%
WEST MIDS	61	£1472	£300 - £3000	BME 75% Youth 6% Women 6%
NORTH EAST	26	£1994	£1800 - £2000	Social enterprise 32% Environment 13% Youth 11%

* No information available.

Appendix 4

Community Champions case studies

Developing Ideas Through the Medium of the Arts

Community Champions granted £2000 to Marlon Nunes for this project, mainly for the purchase of musical and computer equipment.

The main aim of the project was to offer school children the opportunity to develop their musical talents. Students were introduced to the computer based music programme 'cubase', learning how to create sounds and record them into the computer. As they became more familiar with the computer programme, pupils began to compose their own songs and later mix in live instruments such as drums, flutes and trombones. A mixing desk was used to put the last touches to a song, which was then recorded onto a CD or tape. The school was so impressed with the project that they would like it to run throughout the year with the scope to expand the project to other schools in the West Midlands.

Supplementary Education Project

This pilot project, set up by Marlene Kneller, was awarded £1968 to provide additional education and support in computing and language skills for young people living on and around New Park Village Estate, Wolverhampton. It runs one evening every week.

Education is provided through computer packages and support from the project leaders and four parent mentors (who have also benefited from the scheme through training programmes and increasing self esteem) to help with the children. The overall aim of the project is to give out the computers to the older children so they can work independently, but with support if needed, in the hope that they will in turn educate the rest of the family. They are working with the local school, but are also reaching out to those children who have been excluded from school. Every child on the estate is involved in some way.

There is a popular cheerleading group amongst other things on the estate, which has a large proportion of children and young people living on the estate.

Trevor Hodges

This is an example of how the Community Champions Fund has been successfully targeted at individuals who can and do make a real difference in their communities.

Trevor has been an addict and an alcoholic for 30 years. He had no self-esteem and has been in prison. He was looking for a way out and feels that the Community Champions grant really helped him to turn his life around.

Trevor received a grant of £1735; with this money he purchased books on drug and alcohol abuse to educate himself so that he can now provide information and support to people in similar situations. In addition he visits schools to run workshops on drug and alcohol misuse and is often invited to speak at seminars. Email was installed on his computer at home for communication purposes.

On a more personal note, Trevor feels that the money has helped him to stay clean and sober for the last year, deal with his anger and develop new talents such as communication and presentation skills.

Trevor is widely known and well respected in his community through the network that he has now established.

Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Rural Support Group

Anne-Marie Hamilton lives in a rural part of Cambridgeshire, which, like many other rural communities, are struggling to meet the many demands of changing lifestyles and circumstances. Anne-Marie recognised the need for a support and counselling service as well as a point of contact for people facing specific difficulties with, for example; business problems, isolation, career change and ill health. Cambridgeshire ACRE told her of the availability the Community Champions Fund. Anne Marie decided to apply for funding for administration and volunteering costs for the project. This was the first funding the group had applied for and a COVER outreach worker supported Ann-Marie in her application.

The result has been the setting up of a successful support service that has enabled important networking between related agencies that had previously been working in isolation. The project considers themselves as a listening ear with lots of contacts. The project is reaching not only the farming community, but also other parts of the community.

The Red Shop Project

The Red Shop Project in the West Midlands received a grant of £3000 from the Community Champions Fund to develop a community facility for people to enhance their well-being and mental health.

A disused retail premise will be transformed into a warm and welcoming place; inside the Red Shop will offer easily accessible information and arts-linked activities.

The Red Shop aims are:

- ❖ To create an environment that is both comfortable, stimulating and welcoming.
- ❖ To provide a location that will serve as the hub of linked arts, health and educational activities within the community.
- ❖ To establish a Credit Union that will provide the first point of contact with the community.
- ❖ To develop a counselling centre to provide easily accessible information and advice related to health and well-being.
- ❖ To provide an environment where art is used to improve health and well-being.

John Lane, who developed the project with his GP after a long spell of depression, feels the Community Champions money has really helped him as a person. The grant developed his talent and created feelings of empowerment and self worth, thus reducing the feeling of isolation that depressives can suffer from.

Appendix 5

Community Development Learning Fund case studies

Amara-Chi Youth

The Amara-Chi youth group received £3000 from the Community Development Learning Fund, they found out about the fund through a local grants officer from Derbyshire County Council.

The money was used to hold workshops and events that were organised by Afro Caribbean youths for the whole community. The events included poetry, dance, and jazz. Hip-hop, gospel and arts. The culmination was an evening event called Legacies – Ancestral Beats and Urban Rhymes held in October.

The Amari-Chi youth group consists of around 10 core members with a further 20 casual members. The workshops were very useful in terms of building self-esteem and taking pride in their Afro Caribbean culture. With each performance the group are becoming more and more confident and have received much local support and praise for their work. This has had a 'ripple' effect – encouraging other new groups to establish within Derby.

Pride in our Block

This project on a housing estate in Southampton is aimed at improving the appearance of their block of flats and also to develop the sense of community. An application pack and assistance in completing the form was provided by the Woodlands Community School Outreach worker and a worker for the Shannon project.

The project was organised by Lesley Connery who by knocking on all doors introduced herself and her ideas. Other residents met this with support but also scepticism. Meetings were held in a local church to discuss everyone's views and opinions on what needed to be done; a crèche was provided.

This consultation has resulted in money being obtained through Britain in Bloom to provide flower planters. Southampton City Council, after negotiations, painted the communal areas in the block.

There has been a noticeable change in the area, vandalism has been reduced, everyone now knows others names, there are more communal activities involving the local children, such as cricket and football games, and previously excluded members of the estate are now involved through providing an interpreter. Lesley has also developed skills that are helping with her studies.

Members of the block have arranged to visit a similar project in Poole to share and swap ideas.

Change Over group

The Change Over group heard about the CDLF through the Voluntary Service Bureau in Birmingham. Through the list of possible funders the CDLF looked the most likely to sponsor this project because of its flexible criteria.

The project was to provide an explanation of the 'change over' concept of social inclusion of disabled people within their communities. This involved a group of ten members visiting Denmark to have a look at how their experiences. The Ministry of Social Affairs provided a weeklong programme; visiting a range of groups, projects and communities. It was most useful in terms of evaluating their own services and highlighting the changes that need to be made. It has provided the group with inspiration to carry on, and to develop their group.

A reciprocal visit has been arranged in June this year. The group has now been successful in applying for funding to hold a conference later in the year and to produce a video of their experiences to share with others.

Fincham Sports and Activities Association

This project stemmed from a desire to engage the local youths in sporting activities. The organisers set up a steering committee, which organised two mini community events. Questionnaires were completed to determine the type of provision wanted by the community.

The steering committee have undertaken training in report writing, minute taking and book keeping. Training has also been undertaken by local young people to become sports leaders including football, lifeguard and gymnastic coaches.

The programme has proved extremely popular and has gone on to receive funding from the Neighbourhood Support Fund to continue and expand.

This project is an example of how a small amount of money can get a project started and gives confidence to communities to go on to develop their ideas.

High Hills Community Association

There are a lot of things happening on the High Hills Estate such as the many different support groups and the programme of stock transfer. Many complained about the lack of information on what was happening around the estate. So Angela came up with the idea of producing a community newsletter.

Angela received £676 from the Community Development Learning Fund to set up the project. She has a team of 12 people involved in the production of the newsletters including writers, layout team and editors. The group attended a training day concerning desktop publishing and media publicity training. They received additional money from the Local Authority Community Chest for the purchase of a computer needed in order to produce the newsletter. The aim is to publish the newsletter quarterly to around 562 dwellings.

Appendix 6

Community Champions Fund Intermediaries - Case Studies

Black Regeneration Network, Birmingham

The Black Regeneration Network (BRN) began in April 1996 when a two-day seminar facilitated by the Black Training and Enterprise Group brought together organisations from the West Midlands to discuss the way forward.

This was followed by further consultations in Birmingham and Coventry, resulting in the production of a blue print of BRN's aims and objectives.

The group's key aim was to make regeneration work for black communities in the West Midlands. This was achieved by creating a network to make an impact on decisions relating to strategic policy and provide training and technical support.

With the backing of local TEC's and educational bodies they successfully applied to the SRB 3 challenge fund and received £2 million over seven years up to 2004.

In 1998 a team of five staff were put in place and a board was set up with local, regional and national representatives and advisors. An accountable body was also established. Key partners consisted of community and voluntary sectors from around the West Midlands, the BTEG and Sia: The National Development Agency for the Black Voluntary Sector as the initial body responsible for the SRB scheme.

BRN successfully applied for £20,000 of Community Champions money, to provide between 5 and 20 grants ranging from £500 to £2000 to Black groups around the West Midlands.

BRN submitted a proposal because there were no Black led or managed grant giving organisations in the West Midlands, many Black groups had difficulty in accessing funds, it was an opportunity to give grants to hard to fund projects, it provided opportunity to build capacity and expertise in small grant giving and created a simple non bureaucratic access to funds.

BRN applied to DfEE's Community Champions Fund to achieve the following:

- ❖ To create a small grants fund for distribution to Black communities in the West Midlands.
- ❖ To develop partnership with other experienced grant-making organisations.
- ❖ Develop a grant making system in the West Midlands.
- ❖ To provide technical support to groups who wished to access the 'Community Champions Fund'
- ❖ The funds would be used in accordance with Department for Education and Employment intensions – to support those who have shown leadership and to support small-scale community projects.

BRN now has a system in place that it can use in the future and will be applying for further rounds of the Community Champions Fund. The fund has proved a success for groups, allowing a few to undertake projects that would not have happened without grants being available.

(Source: BRN Generating Change Together Booklet, BRN Final Report on the DfEE Community Champions Fund 1999/2000)

Community Champions Fund Intermediaries

Case Study – COVER (The Community and Voluntary Sector of the Eastern Region)

COVER is a relatively new organisation, it is a 'network of networks' that represents and co-ordinates, through its membership structure, a wide range of voluntary and community groups in the six counties of Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertford, Norfolk and Suffolk that make up the East of England area.

COVER has a mission to maximise, encourage and develop the impact of voluntary organisations and community groups on social, economic and environmental policies affecting the Eastern Region.

COVER has a number of aims including:

- ❖ To act as a recognised channel of communication between community and voluntary organisation networks across the Eastern Region.
- ❖ To develop strong and cogent regional identity for the community and voluntary sector.
- ❖ To promote the dynamic contribution that the voluntary sector can make to the community.
- ❖ To collaborate with other Regional Voluntary Sector Networks throughout England.
- ❖ To develop the capacity of new and existing local/regional Community and Voluntary networks to enable them to contribute to the sustainable development of the region.

Acting as an intermediary, COVER has provided an excellent delivery channel for the Community Champions Fund in this area. Building on its existing networks of small community groups and utilising three outreach workers to target new emerging groups through a programme of seminars across the region, has made the Community Champions Fund in this area a success.

In terms of support and advice, COVER publishes a bi-monthly newsletter that is distributed to community groups across the region, plus regional briefings. In addition they organise networking events for the community and voluntary sector. Most recently a web site has been established to provide a one-stop shop for regional information and advice along with a regional database as a source for information, statistics and research data about all parts of the region. This will be widely used by districts, counties, funders and other agencies in the area.

(Source: COVER web site, Members Bulletin: Autumn 2000)

Progress Trust, Manchester

Background

The emergence of a black voluntary sector is in response to a lack of investment and understanding in this area.

The rationale for this initiative centres on the realisation that BME communities have a unique and informed contribution to make to the social and economic aspects of their areas.

Lack of investment clearly presents resource implications, including finance and skills. BME groups often find themselves trapped in a vicious circle, if they are not involved in a partnership they cannot benefit from experience, influence or resources.

Preston

The aim was to complete a training needs analysis for African/Caribbean groups in Preston to provide training and mentoring to enable them to develop into effective Community Entrepreneurs.

Groups who benefited from this advice include: Senior Citizens Forum, Jamaican National Federation, Preston Carnival and Arts Association, Montserrat Association, Barbados Association, Jalgos Club and New Harmony

The training has increased the potential for them to develop further by strengthening their management structure, improving their financial management and increasing their chances of accessing funding.

The basis of this training organized by the Granby Toxteth Development Trust (GTDT) was to identify and address management skill development of volunteers and salaried staff employed by local community and voluntary organisations.

A number of groups in the Liverpool area gained from this valuable training. This includes The Green House Multi-cultural Project, Yemeni Association and the Somali Women's Group.

The programme has had wide ranging benefits including increasing technical expertise of groups, boosting confidence and identifying gaps that can be improved upon in the future.

Conclusion

The project has provided much needed support to community entrepreneurs from African and Caribbean organisations in Preston and Liverpool.

It is the ongoing advice and mentoring which supports the newly acquired skills and thereby providing the foundation for community champions to embed good practice.

The impact of 'Community Champion Funding' is becoming evident in the number of individuals who feel more confident in compiling funding bids for significant sums of grant aid and managing those funds.

(Source: Progress Trust Report, 1999/2000)

Appendix 7

Evaluation Terminology

- * **Evaluation** is a process of collecting information to assess impact on the basis of agreed criteria. It takes place at certain points in the life of a fund (usually at least half way through and at the end)
- * The collection of information is often the result of **monitoring**, an on-going process over the life of the fund, although an evaluation can also necessitate the collection of additional information.
- * The information upon which an evaluation is based usually consists of **outputs** (facts and figures, often called quantitative information) and **outcomes** (perceptions, views, attitudes, often called qualitative information) – an output may be a creche facility provided or an information leaflet produced; an outcome may be more people attending community group meetings or improved housing conditions; so, an output is a specific product of a grant, an outcome demonstrates the wider impact of the grant on a community and both are equally important in measuring impact, particularly in a fund such as CCF, which aims to support individuals for the wider benefit of the community
- * Outputs and outcomes are measured using **indicators** – a quantitative indicator being the number of community groups in an area, a qualitative indicator being the extent of influence they have on the regeneration of the area
- * Effective evaluation requires a **baseline**, being the situation before the fund was implemented, so that the degree of impact can be assessed
- * In order to assess the scale of impact the changes measured have achieved, **targets** are necessary – these can be quite simple, but without them there is nothing to gauge the overall effectiveness of the fund
- * Finally, for an evaluation to be of value the information collected should be **disseminated** - one of the main justifications for the time, effort and resources put into evaluation is the benefits that arise from sharing it, both with those involved directly in the fund and other funds and programmes which may benefit from the lessons learned; evaluation is not an end in itself – it is only useful if it achieves better results