

**SMALL GRANTS PROGRAMME
2016-2017
EVALUATION REPORT**



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1.0 Introduction

The Small Grants Programme is a key action in the Department of Education's policy document, "Priorities for Youth". This is the first year in which the Programme has been delivered. It is also the first time young people have been given the autonomy to assess; grant and moderate funding to programmes developed and delivered by other young people.

The programme was set-up to allow young people to administer grants to other young people, and aims to strengthening the participation of young people as decision-makers within the local and wider community. The Programme also carries great value in creating a voice for children and young people within the delivery of Youth Services at a local and regional level.

The Small Grants Programme funding has provided opportunities for young people to develop and manage programmes based on their identified needs within their own youth organisations. It provides a platform for young people to advocate for other young people which is fully participatory and far from tokenism. The Small Grants Programme engaged Panel members on a higher level due to a transparent process in which their efforts could be seen.

The Small Grants programme was launched and the application process began in October 2016. A total of 197 applications were received from voluntary and statutory youth organisations from across the region. The applications were completed by young people who had worked together in small groups to advocate for others within their organisations.

The assessment process for the applications was facilitated by a Small Grants Panel who had undertaken a programme of training to enable them to assess; distribute and monitor the Small Grants budget. The training included; understanding the purpose of the Small Grants Programme; the application process; assessing applications using an agreed scoring matrix and moderation of projects. All Panel members participated fully in the training working hard as individuals and as a team.

A total of 14 Small Grants Panel members were recruited from a number of youth organisations across all regions. All Panel members were or had been previously involved in some form of youth fora e.g. local youth councils; YIP's and senior members committees. The success of the Programme should be accredited to the Panel members for their outstanding commitment to all aspects of the programme, giving up their free time, mainly weekends, to carry out their roles. Recognition must also be given to the EA Youth Section staff for the support; training and guidance given to the Panel members which aided them in facilitating all processes effectively.

2.0 Criteria

2.1 Successful projects had to demonstrate that they met the following criteria;

- Applicant groups must be registered with the Education Authority
- Programmes will be delivered between November 2016 and March 2017
- A group applying for funding should be made up of no less than 3 young people and develop a project to work only with young people aged 4 to 25 years old not adult groups
- Young people applying for funding may seek support / assistance from a youth worker or adult volunteer to develop ideas and complete the application form. All ideas for the projects must however come from the children and young people who will have control over any funding award
- Projects can be a one off activity / event; last for a number of weeks or residential. Applications must however clearly demonstrate the role of young people in the planning and delivery of projects
- Projects must demonstrate value for money
- A group can apply for a grant of between £300 and £1,500
- Projects must identify clear outcomes which contribute to the achievement of one of the set outcomes for the Small Grants Programme (3.0)

3.0 Assessment Process

3.1 The Small Grants Panel members had undertaken a number of training elements to assist them in the assessment of the applications.

3.2 The Small Grants Panel were convened to engage in the assessment process. The panel used an agreed assessment scoring matrix with a minimum threshold for groups to meet, in order for them to be considered for funding.

3.3 The assessment process was carried out over a residential weekend in Lorne GG Centre. Panel members worked from Friday evening until Sunday afternoon to complete all applications.

3.4 All applications were discussed and scoring agreed by the panel members.

3.5 A list of successful and applications were forwarded to EA Youth Section Dundonald office and Letters of Offer were issued.

4.0 Programme Outcomes

4.1 The programme aimed to fund projects which helped make a difference in the lives of those applying and of others in their peer group, family, youth group, school, community or area. The projects illustrated outcomes to demonstrate what differences can be made.

As well as strengthening the participation of young people as decision-makers, all projects were expected to contribute to positive change in **one** of the six outcome areas illustrated in the table below.

The Small Grants Panel members as part of their training explored each of the outcome areas to ensure they had an awareness of how projects could achieve their chosen outcome. This proved very beneficial in the application assessment and moderation processes.

Outcome area	Outcome area
1 Enhancing Personal Capabilities , which is about building self-awareness, confidence and esteem, and helping to manage your feelings better, etc.	4 Developing positive relationships with others can be about teamwork or engaging with or increasing respect for others from diverse backgrounds, etc.
2 Improving Health and Well-being can be about improving awareness of health issues, making healthy choices and reducing risky behaviours, etc.	5 Participation can be about influencing or advocating on behalf of others or increasing communication between young people and adults, etc.
3 Developing thinking skills, life and work skills is about adding to your communication, planning, problem solving skills and leadership skills, etc.	6 Active citizenship includes volunteering, increasing awareness of local or global issues, social action, or identifying own education, training or employment needs.

5.0 Outcomes achieved

5.1 The successful projects had selected a variety of the set outcomes illustrated above. The end of project evaluations highlighted high levels of achievement in relation to all elements including their chosen outcome areas e.g.

1. Active Citizenship

An EA youth group planned and delivered a social action project around road safety which included the dangers of drink driving and use of mobile phones. The group engaged the PSNI; NIFRS; Order of Malta and a local undertaker in recreating a full scale road traffic accident. This project was planned over a period of weeks and was delivered to 70 young people. The project highlighted a real issue and the impact on families and communities.

2. Enhanced Personal Capabilities

A Girls Brigade group developed drama based workshops to help participants increase their self-awareness and confidence. The participants were encouraged to engage at levels they were comfortable with and had the option to change roles if necessary. The programme was successful in achieving the Outcome and recorded an increase in communication and team work skills.

5.2 The variety of projects delivered included health and wellbeing; self-awareness; drugs and alcohol awareness; road safety; IT & media; positive relationships; residential experiences and a variety of other activities. These projects offered the participants opportunities to engage in activities and events which aided in their personal development and growth. The evaluations of the projects illustrated an increase in self-confidence and the abilities of individuals to plan and prepare better.

5.3 The youth workers supporting the applicant groups commented during discussion how the Small Grants Programme had benefited both the young people completing the application and those participating in the projects. It was felt that this was a great opportunity for the young people to become involved in the decision making process within their own youth organisations and see their ideas for programmes come to fruition.

5.4 A sample section of participating groups were engaged in an evaluation of the Small Grants Programme. The feedback from the young people was very positive with over 80% illustrating they had gained a range of learning and new skills. The young people also

indicated that they had enjoyed participating in the projects and had their say in the development and delivery.

The overall experience of the young people was positive and they liked the concept of young people planning and making decisions for other young people. The full results of the evaluation can be seen in appendix 1.

5.5 The Small Grants Programme has aided in the development of many young people involved in the planning of projects and has widened their horizons in relation to the positive impact they can make within their youth organisation and the wider communities in which they live. This was evidenced within the project evaluations and in the moderation visits carried out.

5.6 The young people participating in the variety of programmes delivered achieved a number of other important benefits. These achievements were illustrated within the programme evaluations and include:-

- Increased communication between young people and youth leaders
- Development of team work skills
- Learning about themselves and others
- Good interaction among group members
- Learning about different cultures
- Mutual respect and understanding for others
- Development of thinking skills and work skills
- Learning about the benefits of healthy diet and exercise
- Learning and development of coping skills
- Recognising the signs of mental health issues
- Development of positive relationships

5.7 A number of moderation visits were carried out by the Small Grants Panel members supported by an EA officer. This was a new experience for the panel members who managed the visits well. In the main the moderations were positive with the project participants willingly engaging and providing feedback in relation to a number of areas. There were some very good programmes observed throughout this process.

5.8 The Small Grants Programme with a cost of £32.55 per participant was excellent value for money when the impact of the projects and the benefits to all those who engaged is taken into consideration.

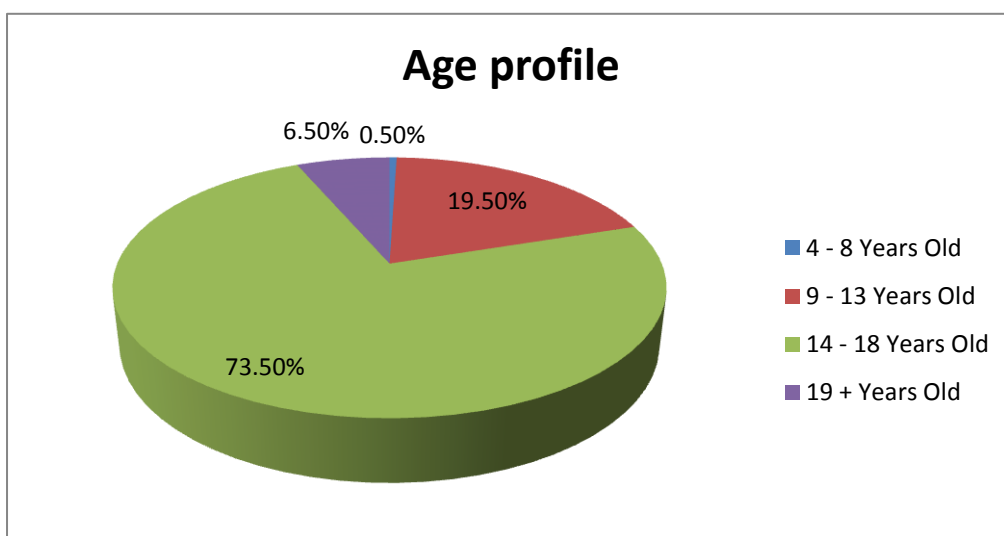
5.9 The spread of funded projects across all regions ensured that no areas were excluded from the Programme. This was a naturally occurring geographical spread determined only by the assessment process using an agreed scoring matrix.

6.0 Summary Outputs

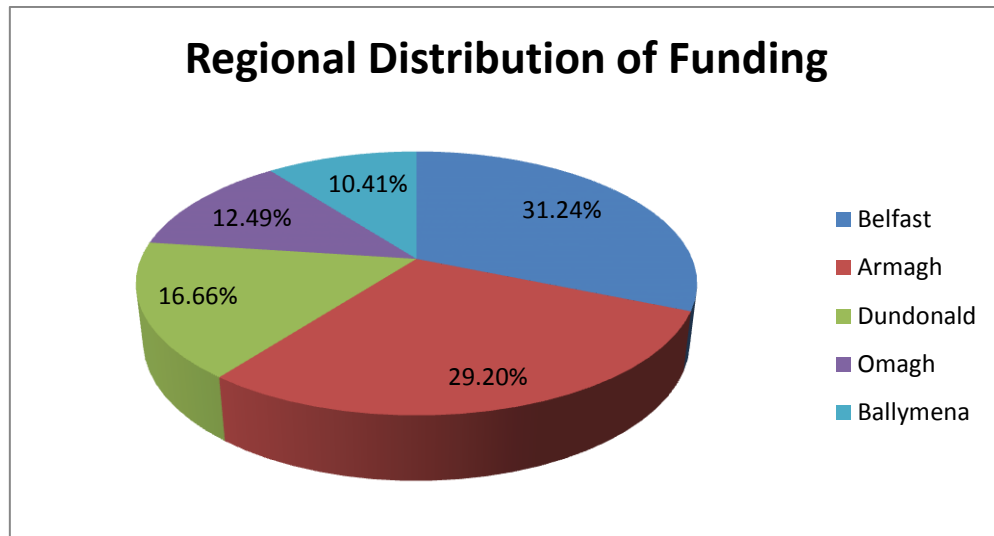
The outputs of the programme are significant in terms of the number of funded projects and young people engaged and the distribution across the region. Below is a summary of some of the key outputs achieved in the delivery of the Small Grants Programme across the Region;

6.1 In total the Small Grants fund supported 48 individual projects with 1981 beneficiaries. The chart illustrated in 6.2 provides an analysis of age of all participants engaged across the projects.

6.2 The project age bands of participants correlate to those highlighted within the Priorities for Youth Policy document. Of the 1981 project participants, 10 beneficiaries were aged 4 to 8; 391 beneficiaries were between the age of 9 to 13; 1445 beneficiaries were aged 14 to 18 and 134 were 19 years and above.

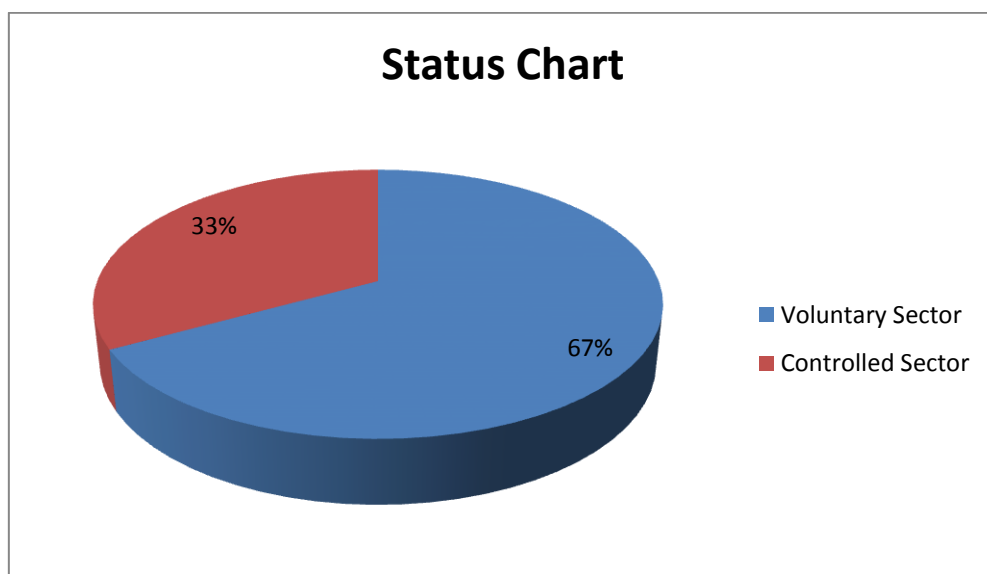


6.3 Regional distribution of Small Grants Programme funding. There were a total of 197 applications for the Small Grants Programme funding of which 48 received funding. There was a good spread of groups receiving funding across the region. Most of the successful applications were from Belfast with 15 followed by Armagh with 14. The other regional areas were evenly spread with Dundonald having 8; Omagh 6 and Ballymena 5.



6.4 The Small Grants Programme budget was £65,000 with the average cost per individual beneficiary of £32.55. This includes members of the Small Grants Panel and associated training costs.

6.5 The funding was distributed across Youth Sector groups of which 67% were from the voluntary sector and 33% from the controlled sector.



7.0 Panel Members Programme Evaluation

The Small Grants Programme offers all participating young people real opportunities to self-agenda; advocate for others; develop personally and socially whilst also aiding greatly in improving the EA's process of including young people.

The Small Grants Panel members were asked to evaluate the programme in terms of the Small Grants concept; the benefits to applicant groups and what they had gained from the experience.

- 7.1 The Panel felt that the concept of the Small Grants Programme was excellent. Having young people planning programmes based on what they felt were the needs of other young people within their organisations is very beneficial.
- 7.2 The Panel members indicated that they felt valued and that they had been given real responsibility in making decisions regarding which projects received funding.
- 7.3 The Panel members felt that overall the Programme was a very worthwhile experience and that they had gained many new skills from participating on the Panel.
- 7.4 Getting to meet other people and make new friends from outside of their local area was very beneficial.
- 7.5 Being able to debate with others and have their points of view heard helped them to develop their confidence in communication with others outside of the Panel. This proved beneficial when engaging in the moderation sessions.
- 7.6 Some of the Panel members highlighted the development of critical thinking skills which aided in their assessment of the applications and helped them when debating with others and listening to others points of view.
- 7.7 It was suggested that the Panel should have more members and that the application and assessment process be longer. It was also suggested that the programme could be open more than once a year.
- 7.8 The support of the youth workers made it easier to understand the application process as it was a bit confusing at first. The application forms and outcomes were good and simplified the application process.
- 7.9 The grant available to groups of between £300 and £1500 was good. It was enough money to develop and deliver a good programme. Panel members carrying out moderation visits need to bring the original project application with them as it illustrated exactly what the group are meant to be doing.

7.10 The applications should go out earlier in the year around May and be returned in September for assessment in October.

7.11 The Panel member enjoyed doing the moderation visits. All of the groups they moderated were prepared for the visit.

9.0 Conclusions

9.1 The programme was very successful in achieving the set outcomes and has made a positive impact on the lives of the young people submitting applications; project participants and SG Panel members.

9.2 The projects funded offered a variety of activities; events; residential which were developed from identified needs within each individual youth organisation. This aided in the delivery of age appropriate and relevant projects which positively engaged all participants.

9.3 A total of 48 projects were funded with 1981 beneficiaries and average of 41 participants per project.

9.4 All participants, including Panel members, have gained new learning and or transferable skills which will prove beneficial in the development of future projects and aid in their personal understanding in situations outside of their own organisations.

9.5 Some of the applicant groups required more support to complete the application than others. This was due to an initial lack of understanding of the process and the ability levels of individuals within the groups. Some of the groups were too young to complete the application themselves. Support should be offered to groups if possible regarding the process and the importance of developing the capacity of the young people making applications

Overall the project ideas were those of the young people and not the youth workers. This needs to be reinforced for future Programmes as it is the essence of the Small Grants Programme and a key element in the achievement of full active participation.

9.6 The project evaluation proforma submitted by groups provided a wealth of information regarding the projects achievements. This should however be reviewed as there were some things not included in the evaluation which may have been beneficial to the overall programme evaluation such as:-

- Comments from young people participating in projects
- Case studies of individuals engaging in the application process or participating in the projects
- Feedback from parents; communities and other stakeholders regarding project success; benefits and impact

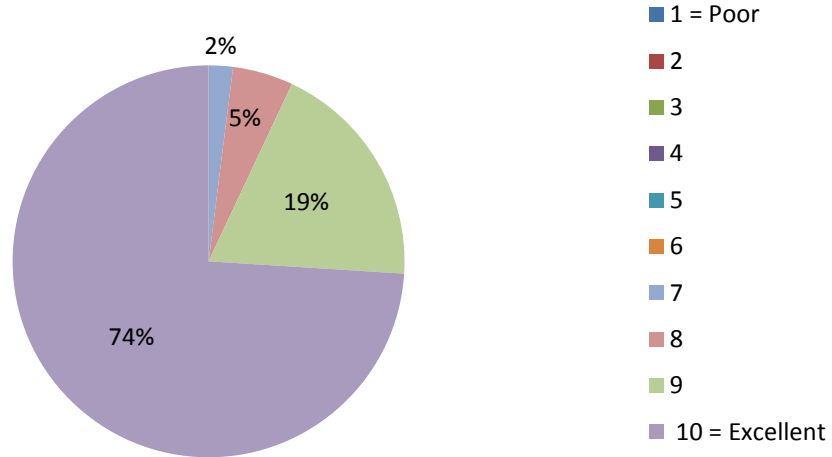
9.7 Projects were successful in achieving their chosen outcomes and provided a very positive experience for all of the young people participating. This was highlighted within the programme evaluations and the evaluation process facilitated by EA.

9.8 The programme has aided young people within many youth organisations to engage in a fully participatory process which has enabled them to develop new skills and learning. The impact of this process in the long term will prove beneficial in the development of leadership succession and build capacity within youth organisations which is organic; responsive and relevant to the needs of young people.

APPENDIX 1

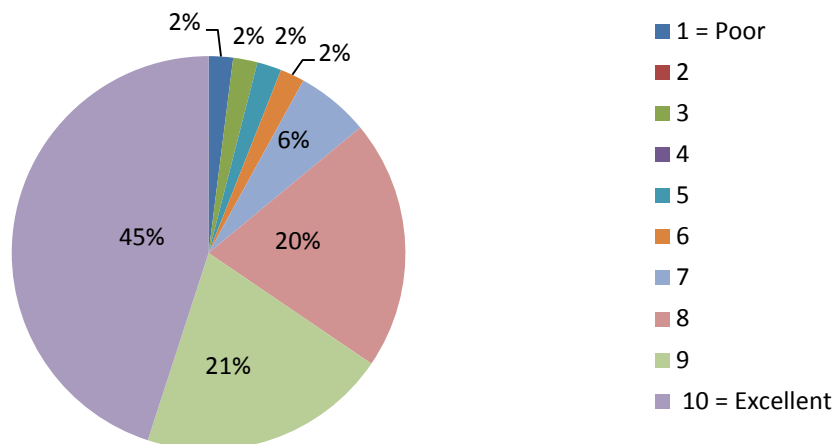
Small Grants Programme 2016/17 Evaluation Results

How much did you enjoy your programme? Response from Young People (%)



All responses to this question rated 7 or higher with 74% commenting they had an excellent experience

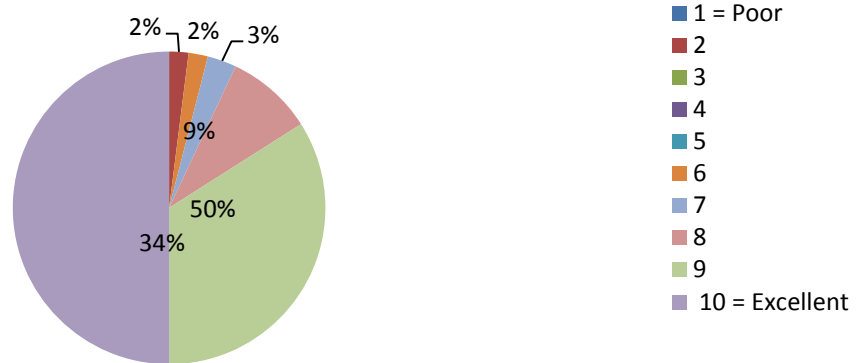
Did you gain any new skills? Response from Young People (%)



The participants had a mixed response to this question regarding the attainment of new skills. 98% of respondents indicated they had gained new skills to some level.

How would you rate your learning of new things from the programme?

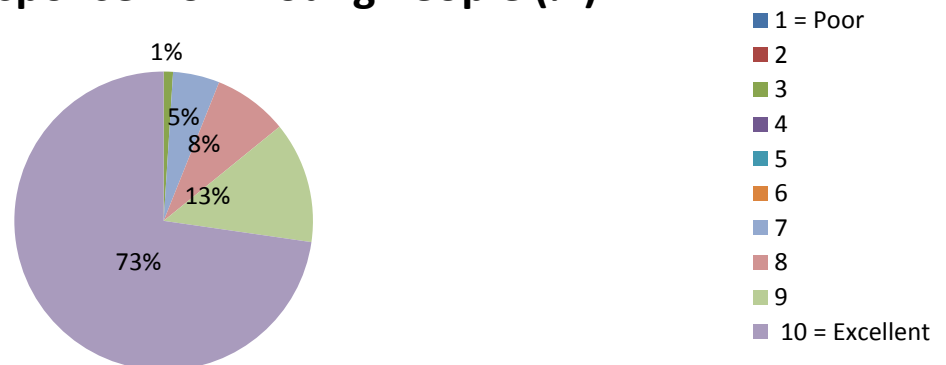
Response from Young People (%)



All respondents illustrated that they had gained new learning from participating in the Small Grants Programme. Over 80% of participants rated their learning from their projects as 8 or higher.

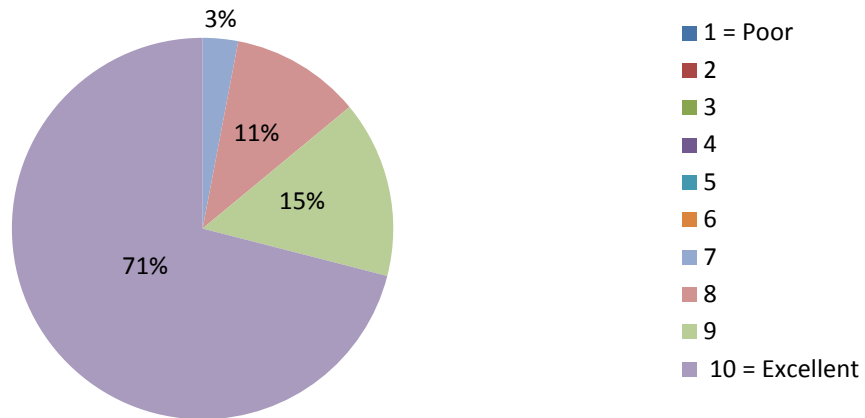
How would you rate the opportunity to have your say in the programme?

Response from Young People (%)



This question provided a great insight into the processes facilitated by all funded projects in relation to participatory structures used to engage project beneficiaries. The responses illustrated demonstrate consultation and development of programmes based on the voice of participants.

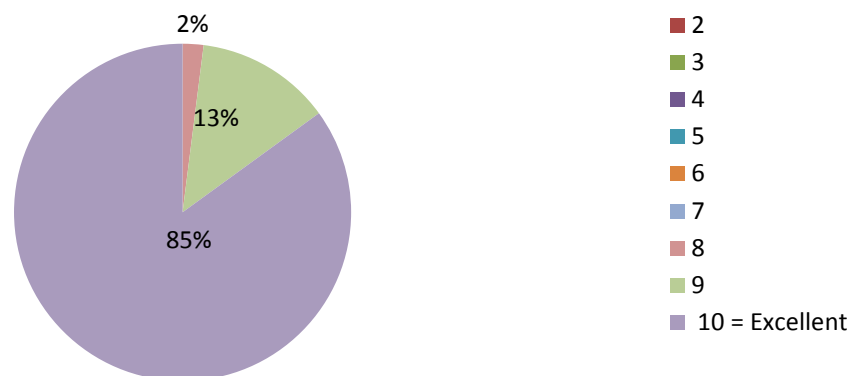
Do you think young people planning/making decisions for your programme is a good idea?



This question like the previous one strongly indicates the desire for peer led programming. The young people involved in all aspects of the programme seem to have enjoyed a very positive experience and have benefited greatly from their engagement.

How would you rate your overall programme experience?

Response from Young People (%)



The results for this question speak for themselves highlighting a very positive experience for all participants.

What would you change about your programme?



What ONE word would you use to describe your programme?



APPENDIX 2

List of Successful Applicants Small Grants Programme 2016/17

List of Successful Applicants

Number	Group
1	JIMS Youth Centre (Kilkeel Parish bridge Association Ltd)
2	Kingdom Youth Club
3	Archway Youth Club
4	Dungannon Youth Resource Centre
5	Willowbank Youth Club
6	Cloughmills Community Guides
7	Dundonald Sea Cadets
8	Waveney Youth Centre
9	230th Metropolitan Tabernacle
10	6th Larne Brownies
11	YMCA Lurgan
12	Kildress Youth Group
13	Drumaness Girl Guides
14	Dundonald Guide Unit
15	Ballycraighy Youth Club
16	Seaboard Sailing Association Youth Committee
17	Cheers Youth Centre
18	Youth Group
19	Feeny Youth Club
20	Strathfoyle Youth Centre
21	Divis Youth Project
22	Sarsfield Youth Club
23	Trinity Youth Club
24	Dunmurry Area Project
25	Artillery Youth Centre
26	Newhill Youth Club
27	Omagh Youth Centre
28	Omagh Youth Centre
29	Killeen Youth Group
30	North Belfast Area Project
31	Benburb Girls Friendly Society
32	Youth & Future Talent Awards (YAFTAS) EANI
33	Waringstown Presbyterian Community Ministry

34	St John Vianney
35	Rosario Youth Centre
36	Newcastle YMCA
37	Ardoyne Youth Providers Forum
38	Cara-Friend
39	Liberty Consortium (Playtrails)
40	Magnet Young Adult Centre
41	Ardglass Youth Club
42	St Colmcilles Guide Unit
43	Kingsmill Youth Challenge
44	EANI - Youth Voice 4 Dungannon & South Tyrone
45	Londonderry Crusaders
46	West Belfast Area Project
47	South Belfast Area Project
48	Star Neighbourhood Centre

