

City Bridge Trust – Monitoring Visit Report

Organisation: Step by Step	Grant ref: 11246	Programme area: Accessible London\Accessible Arts
Amount, date and purpose of grant: 27/09/2012: £120,000 over 3 years (£40,000; £40,000; £40,000) towards a part-time (18 hours/week) Sports and Leisure Coordinator and transport and venue costs.		
Visiting Grants Officer: Julia Mirkin	Date of meeting: 06 January 2014	
Met with: Rachel Gottesman, Development Manager, Judith Schaechter, Director and Hindy Rand, Sports and Leisure Coordinator (office based).		
1. Introduction to the organisation: Step by Step (SBS) is a parent-led charity set up in 1998 in response to a lack of activities for disabled children in the Orthodox Jewish community. The community experiences significant levels of disadvantage and parents can struggle to find appropriate and affordable activities for disabled children and young people. SBS meets this need by providing a programme of holiday play schemes, Sunday activities, residential holidays and an after school sports programme to over 100 children with moderate to severe disabilities every week. This not only gives children and young people access to sports, arts and leisure activities but provides respite for parents, families and carers.		
2. The project funded: The CBT funded Sports and Leisure Co-ordinators (job-share) are supporting the delivery and development of the sports and arts programme for disabled children/young people in the Orthodox Jewish community in Hackney and Haringey. Programmed activities include: swimming, horse-riding, ice skating, kayaking, hydrotherapy, cycling and soft play. Children are assessed when they join SBS and are allocated a place in the most appropriate activity for their ability and interest. They receive one-to-one support at all times, offered by SBS' 100 volunteers, many of whom are working towards an NVQ in childcare. Free transport is provided using SBS' accessible minibus. Children are able to progress to more challenging activities as their physical abilities develop and as they become stronger and more confident.		
3. Work delivered to date: Programme developments since the commencement of CBT funding include an increase in after-school activities and a corresponding increase in the number of SBS regular attendees from 100 to 120. This has been accomplished by establishing two new after-school groups for adolescent boys, allowing SBS to cater for the needs of this specific group, but also releasing spaces in its after-school activities for new children. SBS has also introduced, in the last year, soft play as an entry-level activity for children with severe disabilities, and termly gala events to celebrate participants' achievements with their parents. With funding from BBC Children in Need, SBS commissioned an external evaluation of its work in October 2012, which was carried out by A5cend. The report recommended that as SBS continues to expand and develop, it should invest more in its growing pool of volunteers. Following this, SBS successfully secured funding from the lottery		

(Reaching Communities fund) for a Volunteer Coordinator post to lead on all aspects of volunteer recruitment, training, supervision and support. SBS has produced a new induction pack for its Volunteers; it aims to liaise with other agencies that also use volunteers to work with families benefitting from SBS's services, to ensure that, where possible, there is consistency for children. Although this creates more work for SBS, it is considered pivotal in maximising the development of children with disabilities and helps to network SBS with other local service providers.

The move towards Personalisation has presented a significant challenge to SBS over the last year. It has necessitated the purchase of a new ITC system; it has required considerable staff time to support parents in completing the required paperwork and comprehending the new system. It has also changed the relationship that SBS has with the parents: SBS now invoices parents for services, for which it previously received funding directly. Staff believe that the challenges presented by this transition have been the greatest test that SBS has faced in the last year.

4. Difference made:

The SBS team speak passionately about the impact of the work and cite the progress made by individual children. The CBT grant has allowed SBS to increase the amount of activity it offers, introduce new activities to its programme and specific activities like the adolescent boys group. Having specific programme-related staff has also allowed SBS to develop its internal monitoring and evaluation questionnaire, called 'Your Say', which allows SBS to capture feedback from beneficiaries and improve its service.

5. Grants Administration:

The Trust received SBS's first monitoring report in November 2013 and rated it as 'good'. SBS have successfully filled the Sports and Leisure Coordinator post and is progressing well with programme developments and expansion. SBS provided a financial report against the activity programme budget; it provided all coded invoices in relation to the budget and copies of P11 forms for all programme-related staff, including the CBT-funded Sports and Leisure Coordinator post, which is a job share. City Bridge Trust's funding has been acknowledged as required in the audited accounts for 2013, the first year of grant funding.

6. Concluding comments:

CBT's support for SBS's activity complements its lottery funding, which is supporting capacity building. Despite SBS forecasting a deficit in 13/14, which is directly linked to reduced local authority funding and the transition to Personalisation, two significant multi-year grants, significant reserves and new plans to fundraise by direct mail, leave it secure and in a position to push forward with its plans for the future. As well as being able to accommodate more children, SBS is also starting to think about a potential capital project that would see it develop sporting facilities of its own. This sort of development, although expensive initially, would allow SBS to be more in control of its activity; it would allow it to be able to schedule activity when it suited participants, rather than when facilities are available and it would remove the need to transport participants to facilities, which is an added expense.