

City Bridge Trust – Monitoring Visit Report

Organisation: Fight for Change	Grant ref: 11458	Programme area: Bridging Communities\ a) Leadership initiatives
Amount, date and purpose of grant: 09/05/2013: £85,000 over two years (£44,000; £41,000) towards the salary and running costs of expansion of the boxing and educational programme across Lambeth and Southwark.		
Visiting Grants Officer: Jemma Grieve Combes	Date of meeting: 24 th February 2014	
Met with: Rebecca Donnelly, Head of Operations		
1. Introduction to the organisation: Fight for Change was established in 2009 by Richie Woodhall, former WBC Super Middleweight Champion and GB coach. The charity uses boxing in inner cities and socially excluded communities as a tool for positive change. Their work particularly focused on young people not in employment, education or training or who are at risk of offending. They deliver four main activities: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Non-contact Boxing and fitness activities. 2) Educational support and personal development opportunities. 3) Accredited training and coaching qualifications. 4) Community engagement and leadership. 		
2. The project funded: City Bridge Trust has funded Fight for Change for two years to expand its work across Lambeth and Southwark. Focusing on 14-19 year olds the project aims to work with 200 young people to prevent them from entering/re-entering the youth justice system. The project will deliver a vocational training programme for 50 young people enabling them to gain employment in the sports, fitness, youth work and/or wider community sector; create 50 new volunteers who will deliver new activities to the community; provide work placements for 50 young people; and provide sustainable exit routes into sports clubs and community associations for 100 young people.		
3. Work delivered to date: Boxing is the ‘hook’ which attracts young people to get involved with Fight for Change. The charity operates out of Lillian Baylis Old School where it is able to use a Boxing Hall equipped with boxing ring and equipment. There is also an onsite gym and classroom space. Your Officer was able to see the facilities in action as part of the visit. The Boxing Gym was branded under the Fight for Change name and busy with a class just finishing. Participants for the evening class were just beginning to arrive and were clearly well-disciplined, quietly getting on with their own warm up before the formal class began. The Head of Operations Rebecca Donnelly is a former world Thai boxing champion and clearly passionate about the sport. She knew each of the young people taking part and was able to offer advice and guidance. <p>Boxing is however only part of the story. This year so far 263 young people have benefited from Fight for Change work through the vocational training programme. The charity use Substance Views – purpose built monitoring software - to track each young person and allowing them to access ‘real-time’ data. A full beneficiary breakdown will be provided in the organisation’s end of year 1 monitoring report due in May.</p>		

4. Difference made:

Successes to date include 23 young people achieving the accredited VRQ level 1 – Sport Tackling Youth Crime; 27 who have started volunteering by helping in Fight for Change sessions and schools; and 20 who have moved into employment. In addition one participant will be representing Jamaica in boxing at the Commonwealth Games. The project has benefited from successful partnerships with other local providers including NACRO, the Youth Offending Team, Probation Services and Kids Company. It has also enjoyed good publicity, including a Sky Sports video of the programme in action with Johnny Nelson and Adam Smith. The charity is also organising a high profile fundraising event in May with boxing legends and celebrities.

The project has encountered some challenges, for example, in completing DBS checks for volunteers and securing job opportunities for those with convictions. They feel it is essential that they can offer young people who have become engaged opportunities and so have explored other avenues such as employment outside of the youth and fitness sector.

5. Grants Administration:

It is too soon in the grant for City Bridge Trust funding to be represented in the organisation's accounts. This should first be shown in the organisation's 2013/14 accounts. Cashflow budgets for 2013/14 and 2014/15 however showed City Bridge Trust income acknowledged correctly. The organisation reported that it expects a small surplus in 2013/14 and that levels of free unrestricted reserves have been built up. The Deductions Working Sheet was seen showing tax payments made for the year.

6. Concluding comments:

A strong project that combines a passion for boxing with wider positive outcomes for young people. The young people your Officer met were clearly engaged and keen to take part in vocational training as well as boxing. The community setting of the project works well and helps create a friendly and supportive atmosphere for those taking part. It will be interesting to see how the organisation develops and grows over the next year and how they are able to deal with the challenges of ensuring there are positive opportunities for all young people.