



Child Poverty and Community Development

A response to the draft B&H Child Poverty Needs Assessment

October 2011

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Who we are

The Trust for Developing Communities, the Hangleton and Knoll Project and Serendipity are community development organisations, delivering work at neighbourhood level in Brighton and Hove. This report has been put together in response to the Brighton and Hove Child Poverty Needs Assessment 2010-2011 (Draft V. 2.0.), which has been put together by Brighton and Hove City Council. The document is currently going through public consultation.

Neighbourhood based community development work supports local community groups to develop and flourish, and represent their own neighbourhoods in local governance bodies and city wide strategic partnerships.

During 2010/11 we supported approximately 2,130 residents, 189 community groups, 303 community events and 148 funding applications, which have brought in an additional £346,148 into neighbourhoods across the city.

Currently The Trust for Developing Communities delivers in ten neighbourhoods: Bevendean, Coldean, Hollingbury, Hollingdean, Moulsecomb, Peacehaven, Portland Road and Clarendon, Portslade, Queens Park and Craven Vale, and Woodingdean, the Hangleton and Knoll Project deliver in Hangleton and Knoll and Serendipity in Bristol Estate, Brunswick and Regency and Whitehawk.

These areas include the five wards in the City that have the highest percentages of child and young people in poverty – East Brighton, Moulsecomb and Bevendean, Hollingdean and Stanmer, Hangleton and Knoll and Queen's Park. (Brighton & Hove Child Poverty Needs Assessment, 2010-2011, Draft V.1.0)

Community Development and Child Poverty

The draft Child Poverty Needs Assessment focuses on a prevention approach through a combination of short, medium and long term support. Long term support is identified as:

“support that gives children and young people the best chance to prosper as adults, such as education, health, targeted family support and support to communities”

This is what we do. Our community development approach encourages communities to identify issues of concern and to find their own solutions. Because communities have developed these solutions, they are likely to be sustainable and directly meet the needs of local people.

Through community development we help build capacity within a community. This might be by developing support mechanisms, fostering a sense of belonging and building

empowerment generally. All this enables a community to support vulnerable families and children in a resilient and positive way.

Community development work builds the capacity of communities to bring about positive change for its residents. We have found that engaging in community activities brings wellbeing and resilience advantages for individuals, families and communities. In general, as the level of engagement increases, so does the level of positive strategies individuals, families and communities are able to put in place to improve their lives and environment.

The Case Studies

We have selected eight case studies which highlight and reflect how community development helps reduce child poverty. While the case studies have been chosen to depict a variety of ways in which community development helps reduce child poverty, this report compiles only a few examples. It is not a comprehensive account of how community development responds to child poverty. All the areas that are represented in the case studies have a higher percentage of children living in poverty than the city average of 22%.

Ward	Percentage of children & young people in poverty in ward¹	Number of children and young people in poverty	Community Group and Neighbourhood
Moulsecoomb and Bevendean	44.5%	1,650	Bangladeshi Women's Group Moulsecoomb
Patcham	13.8%	450	H.A.P.P.I. Hollingbury
Queen's Park	26.2%	445	Food bank / coffee morning Queens Park and Craven Vale
North Portslade	23.7%	595	Community events North Portslade
Hollingdean and Stanmer	28.7%	800	Movers and Shakers Hollingdean
Moulsecoomb and Bevendean	44.5%	1,650	Bevendean Activities group Bevendean
Hangleton and Knoll	26.3%	935	HaKIT Hangleton and Knoll
East Brighton	46.9%	1,435	Hawk's Community Cafe Whitehawk and Manor Farm

¹ Expressed as a percentage of the total number of children and young people living in the ward
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Moulsecoomb Bangladeshi Women's Group

Tackling exclusion, raising aspirations and adult skills

Moulsecoomb Estate is an area of recognised deprivation demonstrated on the multiple indices of deprivation and is also recognised as an area with one of the highest levels of child poverty in the city. There is a small but significant Bangladeshi community in this vastly majority white British community and they had experienced significant isolation through issues such as language, literacy, culture and income. The women were particularly affected by these issues as they were often prohibited from activities involving men and frequently expressed language and literacy issues.

With support they formed a group with the intention of providing a safe space for the women to get together and socialise and offer support to each other.

Over the last couple of years this has developed into a public meeting that has guest speakers from organisations, such as the local authority, the primary care trust, the partnership community safety team, black & minority ethnic community partnership and other Bangladeshi groups. This enables the women to access all sorts of information that can address issues affecting their health & well being.

Alongside this the group has established a constituted committee which, with worker support, has fundraised and put on activities that the women wanted to access. These have included English lessons, food & hygiene training, self development courses, committee skills training, swimming and gentle exercise sessions and complimentary therapy sessions.

The group has also organised fundraising events. These events have been used to celebrate religious festivals and encourage their own children and others to learn more about Bangladeshi history & culture. Through these events they have fundraised for family outings to places like Tilgate Park, which they could not otherwise afford to go to. They have been encouraged to participate in wider community activity, the most recent examples being their participation 'healthy curry' food stall during healthy curry week at the local family fun day. This helped the group raise funds but also enabled them to share knowledge about cooking healthily.



"We like having a Community Development Worker because she works very hard for the group, it has been a good experience for us and the group is happy".

(Shiria, Moulsecoomb Bangladeshi Women's Group)

H.A.P.P.I.

Building a sense of belonging while improving health and wellbeing

TDC's work supports the building of social relationships and networks, between friends, families, neighbours and the wider community, which are key to promoting community identity and wellbeing. One example of this is the work our to support the HAPPI (Hollingbury Active Parents for Park Improvements) group. This group has brought parents together to improve Carden Park. This work supports a better play environment, so that children have improved opportunities for physical and mental wellbeing.

The women in the HAPPI group are from a diverse mix of backgrounds. The group has worked with the Council and the contractor to identify new play equipment and design the park, based on what children and families' wanted.

The group contributes to parents' and children's health and wellbeing. It has brought parents together around the goal of an improved park. As one parent, Carmen said,

"I joined this project to have a better place to live in for my children."

With the support of the worker, parents have worked hard, volunteering their time, to consult with other parents and children around the park and to organise community events such as the park opening and tree planting event. The group provides a space for mutual support and social contact between parents.

With the successful installation of new play equipment, the improvements have meant better opportunities for play and regular physical activity for children.

"We've had a really good time doing this. The park is looking fabulous. We've got loads of new equipment. My kids have a whale of a time down there". Gina, HAPPI group

Getting involved in community groups such as the HAPPI group has positive health benefits, contributing to social and mental wellbeing:

"The TDC have done a lot for the people of Hollingbury, like getting various groups set up including Hollingbury Hello Newsletter, HAPPI Group and lots more. I am really pleased to be in contact with Linda because if I hadn't, I'd probably suffer with depression, but luckily I'm involved in a few groups in Hollingbury which can actually make a difference to the area we live in and get people out of their four walls and into the community to help make improvements. I think the TDC do a great job to get things in the local community changed for the better."

Jo Cressweller (local resident, mum and member of the newsletter group)

TDC continues to support building the sustainability of the group, working with HAPPI to successfully raise funds for their zip wire project and to support the purchasing and installation of the zip wire. HAPPI continues to be active, being represented on local groups and meeting regularly with Parks to organise planting, negotiate remedial works and continue to improve their park for the enjoyment and wellbeing of children, families and the wider Hollingbury community.

Food Bank / Community Café

Financial support in a safe space

The Queens Park and Craven Vale Ward is the second most deprived ward in Brighton. This however covers substantial variations – two pockets in particular are in the most deprived 5% in the country, which is attributed to health and disability, living environment, employment, income and crime. Child Poverty statistics are not available at sub-ward level, but it is broadly accepted that there is a clear link between deprivation and child poverty.

With support from The Trust for Developing Communities, the FareShare Community Café was set up in 2010 by a group of residents. The FareShare Project Food Bank redistributes food from supermarkets which is close to the sell by date, or for other reasons is taken off the shelves, to local community outlets. In 2010, The Trust for Developing Communities supported residents to set up a local Community Café at The Haven and arrange training to enable residents to run the café.



The Café, which has been open every week for 8 months now, has been a big success. A large proportion of the residents who have come to the café have never used the community centre before. Some residents stay for the free coffee and chat at The Haven, others just come to collect a bag of free food and then leave again. The feedback from visitors is that the project has made a real difference to their ability to cope with the daily struggle of putting food on the table for their children. All the food provided is healthy and fresh.

An added benefit is that the café has become a hub for socialising in an environment free from the stigma of poverty. Residents who return again and again are beginning to access other services, activities and training.

In the 8 months the Community Café has been running, more than 50 families have been supported in this way.

Community events

Building aspirations and a sense of belonging

Exclusion from social or cultural life is linked with financial poverty, but also the stigma attached to poverty. The work of community organisations around events and festivals are of high importance in enabling marginalised children and young people to have a greater sense of belonging.

The Trust for Developing Communities works with local community groups in Portslade to organise community events and festivals. These events contribute to the strong sense of community and pride in the local area, enabling children and young people to have a greater sense of belonging.

These events are well attended and capture the true local talent and creativity that exists in the area. Events supported by the worker in partnership with local council services, including Active for Life and Parks, include Picnic and Play in the Park that attracted about 700 residents in June and Portslade Marafun in Vale Park that attracted around 600 in April. Portslade Youth Forum was recently supported to stage 'Bridging the Gap', an intergenerational celebration of talent in Portslade. The worker supported the Brighton Muslim Women's Group to organise an Eid celebration event in September.

The events also encourage a focus on health and wellbeing, encouraging children to get Active and have fun outdoors, enjoying their local environment. An example is the annual Picnic and Play event. The Community Development Worker supports Easthill Park Group to organise the annual Picnic and Play event to celebrate their local park and put on a range of activities and performances which demonstrates the range of local talent, for example children from Mile Oak Street Dance. Other activities include the climbing wall, circus workshops and a clown show by Zaz the clown, which encourages wide participation from diverse groups of children from the Portslade community.

Movers & Shakers, Hand in Hand

Building aspirations and offering low cost activities locally

Hollingdean is an area of recognised deprivation demonstrated on the multiple indices of deprivation and is also recognised as an area with higher than city average levels of child poverty. The area is quite a distance from the city centre and is not on a high frequency bus route. This means either due to cost or other access issues many families are dependent on what is available locally.

Hollingdean Community Centre is run by Hollingdean Development Trust and with community development support it helps local activities and projects to start up and become sustainable.

Movers & Shakers is a movement and dance group for parents and under 5's. It had to move out of the Children's Centre and the development worker supported them to get funding through the Hollingdean Development Trust and to re-start the group in the community centre. The development worker has helped them recruit more members and develop themselves into an independent group that will enable them to raise their own funds and be more sustainable. They offer subsidised activities to local families that are accessible and affordable and through this activity they have branched out into organising local events. They set up a Christmas fair with others last year and are planning to repeat this in 2011. This enables other community members and families to participate in something that brings them together for something positive and celebrates what is going on locally.

Hand in Hand, a Chinese parent and child group has also established through the Development Trust and worker supporting them to constitute and fundraise. They run a weekly club also, but have also started to offer activities during school holidays. They had a very successful event of Chinese lantern making and Chinese cookery workshops to celebrate Chinese New Year, open to all the community. They are planning more half term activities and a Chinese New Year celebration next year. This again provides affordable and accessible activity for local families and encourages shared learning and integration.



Bevendean Activities Group

Building aspirations and a sense of belonging with cut-cost activities

The Trust for Developing Communities has worked with young people in Bevendean since 2007, supporting young people from the age of 11 to define their own needs and set up activities locally. One of the groups we have supported is the Bevendean Activities Group. This group of 8 local young people plan, fundraise for and deliver summer holiday activities for children and young people in the area during the school holidays.

Bevendean is a deprived estate where many families do not have the means to send their children on holiday - even sending them on a bus to the City centre to access activities there can prove a challenge. As there are few facilities in Bevendean, this leaves many children and young people excluded and marginalised.



The Summer Programmes set up by the Bevendean Activities Group offers a wide range of activities, responding to local needs. These include sports activities, rock climbing, DJ'ing, jewellery making, dance, bush craft and cooking to mention a few. Every year they also include a trip out of the area – this year they went to Thorpe Park. The range of activities help to improve health and well-being, increase social engagement and aspirations for children and young people in the area.

The Bevendean Activities Group has been supported by our worker to fundraise for the events, so that the activities can be offered to local children and young people at a significantly reduced price. Some of the activities are offered for free.

HaKIT

Improving adult skills to raise aspirations and improve employability

Both the Hangleton and Knoll estates encompass SOAs in the top 10% nationally, with high numbers of older people, black and minority ethnic families living in social housing and families headed by a single parent.

The HaKIT project supports residents to improve their skills, increase their qualifications and enables them to access the internet free. The Hangleton and Knoll project support two fully equipped Community IT rooms. One is located at St Richards Community Centre and the other at Hangleton Community Centre. The Hangleton and Knoll project delivers free IT and Adult education courses from these rooms. We work with our Community Development workers to identify local training needs, for example in Oct 11 we are delivering a blend of ESOL and basic IT to a group of 9 local Bangladeshi women and about to start courses in simple word processing for the wider community.

We also run three drop ins a week one at Hangleton Library and two at St Richards. These allow people to get the help they need to use technology. Residents often turn up with phones and laptops and the tutor and volunteers help them get started. The drop ins also allow for people to get tailored help sorting their CV or even selling bits on Ebay.

A local volunteer; Con describes his experience in this way:

"I have been learning at HaKIT's drop-in at the Hangleton Library since the end of 2009. I started on the MyGuide and have progressed to various IT courses. I started learning computers due to my work transferring data to computers and not even knowing "how to switch" things on. I found once I started that everyone there was learning at the same time, it was friendly and fun, although at times having to wait for help was stressful and computers not doing what I wanted. Learning how to negotiate around the different internet site and icons to get yourself out of trouble and solve your computer problems.

I learnt what other people were talking about when discussing computers, learnt to type and accessing the internet to find things out, emailing, looking at job sites and still feeling the "wow" when things work or I find the answers I need.

I have been helping volunteering this year, to show others the bits that I know and continue to learn through helping and by designing posters for the drop-in at HaKIT. I have also been a student of Deaf sign language and have used this to help Deaf people learn the first stages of computers at the drop in. Having dyslexia the computer has helped me with my spelling and to write clearer for others to understand.

My next steps are digital photography and transferring pictures from the phone onto the computer, learning skills to improve my volunteering and supporting others to learn.

Having Hakit there, free and on my doorstep has allowed me to be able to use computers and I now really enjoy my ongoing involvement with the project as a volunteer."

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Hawk's Community Cafe

Improving adult skills to raise aspirations and improve employability

Whitehawk and Manor Farm is the single largest social housing estate in the city. Historically recognised as a deprived area, its four Super Output Areas 3 are in the worst 5% nationally and the other in the worst 10% in relation to deprivation levels. The recently updated indices of multiple deprivation (2010) show that one of these is the worst in the city. These figures also show education attainment has again fallen, and the numbers of young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs) are the largest in the city.

A partnership formed and headed by Serendipity, along with the Crew Club- the Tuesday Lunch Club - and Varndean College, successfully bid to run the cafe facility in the newly built library building. Operating as a Social Enterprise, the Cafe benefits the community in two ways. Firstly the trading surplus is distributed to local groups and organisations in proportion to the volunteer hours they supply to assist its running. Secondly the cafe will be utilised as part of the training program for local young people in the NEET category to gain experience and qualifications in Customer Service. Further training can be offered in areas such as Food Hygiene and links are being made with other community catering projects across the city to offer additional and more varied placements. To capitalise on the fact that the Hospitality and Catering sector is the largest employer in the city and the South East, contacts are being made with employers to offer actual work placements and employment opportunities.

Created and implemented in a very short space of time this project has the potential of not only meeting the needs of local young people and the wider community, but also of being self sustaining through its trading activities. A clear example of helping communities to help themselves.