

Pro Forma for Participation Works Network for England regional case studies

Region: East Midlands	
Submitted by: Lindsay Allen Date of submission: 30 April 2009	
Please indicate which sector this case study is an example of:	
Voluntary sector activity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Statutory sector activity	<input type="checkbox"/>
Corporate sector activity	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (<i>please specify</i>)	
Please indicate which themes this case study can be used to support (<i>tick all that apply</i>):	
Arts & creativity	<input type="checkbox"/>
Commissioning	<input type="checkbox"/>
Early Years	<input type="checkbox"/>
Faith	<input type="checkbox"/>
Funding	<input type="checkbox"/>
Governance	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hard to reach groups	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health	<input type="checkbox"/>
Inclusive practice	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Learning & research	<input type="checkbox"/>
Measuring change	<input type="checkbox"/>
Online tools	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rights/citizenship	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Safeguarding	<input type="checkbox"/>
Standards	<input type="checkbox"/>
Workforce development	<input type="checkbox"/>
Youth-led project	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other (<i>please specify</i>)	
Name of project: Voices Forum – a Young Women’s Project in Northampton	
Name of lead person on project: Kathryn White	
Contact information for further details (<i>email, telephone number, website</i>): Kathryn White Centre Manager YWCA Northampton 2 Castilian Terrace Northampton NN11LD 01604 601515 07718964404 www.ywca.org.uk	
Aims of the project: The project began in January 2008 for disadvantaged young women. The group meet once a week and approximately 8-10 young women attend. There is a crèche provided – most of the young women are young mothers. The forum meets every month, is minuted by the young women and invites	

<p>speakers to attend to give presentations. They have had some meetings exploring democracy and a mock election.</p>
<p>Timeline for the project (expected start and finish date, if known): January 2008 – ongoing. The Forum has a natural turnover of young women every six months or so, therefore new issues are always generated.</p>
<p>Please name any other organisations involved if this was a project developed as a partnership: No formal partnerships, but agencies are invited to talk and give advice, e.g. Community support officer about personal safety.</p>
<p>Who funded this project? It was originally funded by CEEMAC, although it receives funding from various funds. YWCA have built it into their core work and Northants County Council have also supported the project.</p>
<p>How many young people were involved? Approximately 8-10 young women attend.</p>
<p>How were children & young people involved in decision-making? Per year there are around 30 women. A steering group meets weekly, to plan the monthly programme and the monthly event is run by the young women. A current e.g. is the healthy start vouchers - which are available to use in all super markets but not a local markets and less expensive shops, so the women are working out ideas to see if more local shops and markets would be interested to be part of the scheme.</p>
<p>What changes has children & young people's involvement led to? Organisational changes within YWCA Northants, the Forum is the first formal way and a chance for the young women to have a say in how the Centre is run. This has led to a steering group for Centre being established, which involves the young women.</p>
<p>What did children and young people involved in this work achieve from this experience? Specific skills in minute taking and setting agendas, organising the guest speakers and the information they learn helps them better understand how the world works. It has brought more confidence to ask questions and increase their knowledge and become more empowered, strong & able to challenge things in their lives. There is a common progression for young women, they are measured through individual learning plans, supported by workers.</p>

What next for the project?

To continue to develop, with the turn over of young women every 6 months, one particular area that proved very successful was the work around democracy and the mock election. The project will develop as the women involved want it to. The Voices Forum structure is to develop young women so that they can move on.

What next for the participants?

Forum - Part of journey ready to move on, Tara continues to support the Centre, Nikki has begun her uni course. Gemma, has just won Local Northants volunteer of the year, and has been speaking at a national volunteering event in Westminster .

Quotes from staff, management, children, parents/ carers:

Kathryn White: “ the Voices Forum has been very successful. It helps young women become more confident and find out more about & become interested in the wider world around them”.

Nikki Ravenscroft – Nikki has attended the YWCA for 18 months – she has a 2 yr old daughter. She loves attending the group and has chaired and minuted meetings, learnt lots about UNICEF and inspirational women. She has worked on the national steering group and has spoken to MPs at Westminster. Nikki has begun course at the Open University.

Tara Wilkinson – Tara is 18 years old and has a 1 yr old son. She has attended the group for about a year and now feels more confident in everyday life. The sessions on democracy made Tara realise how important it is to use your vote. Tara ran a session at the group on dream analysis and also on ending child poverty. As part of the ‘Ending Child Poverty’ campaign, Tara visited London and took part in a dvd at Trafalgar Square.

Participation Works wants to share your good practice to a wider audience to enable others to learn from your experience and develop their own participation practice.