



Added Value of Networking

Success Story

Success Story title	<i>Young, Gifted & Rural!</i>		
Theme	<i>Network communications, Knowledge exchange, Training & Cooperation – all focused on youth activity in rural communities in Scotland.</i>		
NRN	<i>Scotland</i>	Coordinator	<i>Anna Murray (Scottish Government) – Bev Maclean (SCVO)</i>
Partners	<i>The initiative has been driven by SCVO through the Scottish National Rural Network in partnership with the Carnegie UK Trust. Strategic partners such as Highlands & Islands Enterprise and Young Scot are being added on an ongoing basis. Several youth forums have become regular attenders/contributors.</i>		
Period	<i>August 2011 - ongoing</i>		
Geo-location	<i>First event in Comrie (Perthshire). Project visits to Cumnock (Ayrshire) and North Harris. Main conference planned for June 2012 in Aviemore (Highlands).</i>		
Beneficiaries	<i>Mix of young people, Youth Development Workers, funders and support agencies.</i>		

Background

The decision to get involved in this issue came about because of the concerns expressed by many rural community groups relating to the lack of involvement of young people in their activities and what this means for the future of their communities. It was also clear that there are many places in rural Scotland where significant numbers of young people are involved in activities that benefit their communities, and many rural community groups who have achieved high levels of engagement with young people.

The Young, Gifted & Rural! initiative therefore sought to increase the involvement of young people in their rural communities by assessing what is already being done well across Scotland and where there are geographic or thematic areas of need. Together SCVO and Carnegie are working to deliver knowledge exchange, peer support and networking between groups of both young people and key support agencies & funders to ensure this process is interactive, informative and accessible to all.

Main activities

The first Young, Gifted and Rural! event took place in Comrie, Perthshire on 6 October 2011 and brought together around 40 young people and people who support them to discuss why and how they have got involved in community activity, what motivates them, what further support is required and what they would like to see happen next – both locally and nationally.

This event was followed by a ‘practitioner’ project visit organised by the SNRN to yipworld.com, an award winning Youth Group & Community Hub in Cumnock, Ayrshire in February 2012. Here a group of 12 Youth Development Workers were able to learn from the project host, network and share experiences and ideas. This was later complemented by a Youth Exchange trip, organised by Carnegie, to North Harris Youth Trust during April 2012. This trip included team building activities, networking and also a conference planning session to prepare for the June 2012 conference.

The 2 day Conference will be a mix of activities for the young people followed by a wider one day conference for further networking, information sharing and informal workshops. We hope to have video case studies from the areas represented on the Harris exchange and are working hard to ensure young people have ownership of the day and the Agenda.

Main results/benefits

A number of lasting connections have been made between the youth groups, Youth Development Workers and support agencies resulting in peer support and knowledge exchange. The YGR initiative works hard to keep the young people at the heart of the process and is responsive to their needs, ideas and situations. By getting a mixed group of people in the same room – all of whom are working to a common goal – YGR is successfully providing a networking platform to promote and support positive change in Scotland’s rural communities. Full monitoring will take place following the June conference.





Contribution of the NSU

SCVO who deliver the Scottish National Rural Network and the Carnegie UK Trust are the founding partners of the YGR initiative and co-ordinate the steering group to look at future activity. Through its delivery and co-ordination of the Scottish National Rural Network on behalf of the Scottish Government, SCVO identified 'youth development in rural communities' as a key priority topic for the 2010 – 2011 Programme. Subsequent conversations with representatives from Carnegie identified several common aims and the potential to build a rolling programme of activity which has spanned the last two years of the SNRN.

Contribution of the partners

SCVO have dealt with the organisation and administration of the October 2011, February 2012 and (currently under development) June 2012 events. Carnegie has planned and will deliver the April 2012 youth exchange to Harris. Networking with other key partners is done by both organisations, and the support and ongoing contact with the youth groups involved has been mostly dealt with by Carnegie through Alan Caldwell Associates the appointed Carnegie Associate looking into youth activity in rural development.

Highlands & Islands Enterprise joined the steering group early in 2012 and to date have acted as a sounding board for ideas, however they are keen to be involved in the June conference. Similarly, Young Scot and Youthlink Scotland have been involved since the October event in a support capacity but will be asked to help with the shaping of sessions at the June conference. Other partners will be sought in due course, once the key planning aspects of the June conference are finalised.

Since the first event in October 2011 a number of youth groups have come on-board including North Harris Youth Trust, Comrie Extreme Sports Group and North Argyll Youth Forum. Representatives from these groups and others have attended many of the events held to date which has helped to ensure continuity of the information exchange process and buy in from rural communities across Scotland. In particular, North Argyll Youth Forum has attended in either an individual or group capacity all YGR events to date. It is expected that all youth groups who have participated in the Harris trip – and therefore taken part in the conference planning sessions there – will take ownership of difference aspect of the 26th/27th June agenda. They will also prepare case studies from their area to highlight to all attending the Conference what life is like in their rural communities.

Success factors

One of the biggest successes of the YGR initiative is the effectiveness of the partnership between the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations and the Carnegie UK Trust in bringing the key people to the table and helping them to keep their discussions and networking going. Involvement in the initiative has also proved to be a fun but influential work experience/personal development opportunity for the young people. The lessons learnt throughout the process, once written up, will become a useful tool for rural communities to consult with when considering the opportunities available to young people in their own areas.

Additional information

Reports from the October 2011 event and the February 2012 Project Visit can be viewed on the Scottish National Rural Network website at http://www.ruralgateway.org.uk/en/events/regional_events

