An evaluation of the societal and economic impacts of the Business in the Community ProHelp Programme in Yorkshire & The Humber

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LEEDS SOCIAL SCIENCE INSTITUTE PROJECT REFLECTIONS

Overall the project was managed by Business in the Community (BITC) very well, there were no problems with communication, office space, equipment needs or anything of the sort. Upon reflection, the only problems were with the differences in how the project was perceived by BITC compared to the project outline as advertised by the University. This wasn’t a major problem, but it did create some confusion at the beginning of the project. First, the original project specification outlined measuring sustained societal and economic community impact(s) by comparison to expected impacts. These expected impacts were to be identified by the researcher. However, it became clear that identifying expected societal and economic community impact was going to be nearly impossible because the project leads at BITC did not have any suggestions as to what these might be or exactly what types of impact within ‘societal’ and ‘economic’ might be focused on. Further, it was concluded that all of the community groups and their local communities would have different perspectives on exactly what ‘impact’ was. As a result, this meant that the next project aim, to construct and undertake a survey of impact, needed to be fundamentally changed. In addition, upon discussion, it was found that if only community groups in the Leeds area were included in the study then the sample would be too small to generate any useful, generalisable outcomes. Therefore, the project sample base was expanded to Yorkshire & The Humber.

Instead of the construction of a survey, the study was changed to a more explorative study using semi-structured interviews in order to elucidate what the societal and economic impacts across the communities were. This was very successful and enabled the research team to identify community-specific societal and economic impacts that had resulted from the help provided to community groups through the ProHelp BITC Programme. Ultimately, this new project method provided data that can now be used by BITC to create the survey they originally wanted. However, because this survey would be informed by in-depth, qualitative data that has been collected from a representative sample, the survey could be deployed to multiple regions of the UK in which the BITC ProHelp programme is run. Therefore, the study has been of a much wider use for BITC than previously planned for (originally it was just to assess societal and economic impact in communities in Leeds).

Conclusively, the only real problems with the placement were that the project needed more consideration in the planning phases in order to make the most of the research time available. However, the solutions to the project design problems actually increased the impact and potential of the outcomes of the study, so overall the project was a success.
PROJECT SUMMARY

Why?
Business In The Community needed to understand what kind of sustained societal and economic impacts the ProHelp Programme was having on local communities in Yorkshire and The Humber.

What was done?
A total of eight community groups who had received help through the ProHelp Programme and that were representative of all the groups who had received help through ProHelp were chosen to be case studies. Semi-structured interviews were then undertaken with the selected community groups in order to gain an insight into, and deeper understanding of, how the ProHelp programme had helped them in making societal and economic impacts in their local community.

What was found?
Through the help it provides to community groups the ProHelp Programme in Yorkshire and The Humber has been crucial to the sustained, positive societal and economic impacts upon the local communities in the region. More specifically, the ProHelp programme has helped facilitate sustained community impact in the over-arching areas of social regeneration, community social capital and intra-community individual-level factors. For example, impact across these areas is helping to promote and increase: community cohesion, connectedness and social inclusion; employability of community members; creation of social enterprises; trust and social interaction in the communities; respect for the community environment; and supporting the efforts of educational institutions in the communities.
1.1 ORIGINAL TASKS

1. Identify scope and sample
2. Identify *expected* social and economic impacts to measure results against
3. Develop a survey and interview questions
4. Conduct survey
5. Arrange and conduct interviews

1.2 AMENDED TASKS

2. After initial meetings it was concluded that very little was known about what the help that the ProHelp programme had provided had led to in the community groups, especially in regards to sustained societal and economic impact. Because of this lack of knowledge, it was very difficult to gain an insight into what any expected impacts might be prior to undertaking the project work. Additionally, all of the community groups differ in what they provide for the community and therefore all of the groups will have different perspectives on what social and economic impacts are in the context of their group and community. In light of this it was concluded that the study should be changed to be exploratory rather than measure impact against baseline variables that were very difficult to identify with the information we had to begin with.

3. & 4. For reasons described above, a survey could not be undertaken and therefore no survey questions were developed. It was concluded that it was more beneficial to undertake an exploratory study, the results of which a survey could then be based upon. In regards to interview questions, specific questions were not constructed due to the use of a semi-structured interview technique as discussed next.
2. METHODS

2.1 Semi-structured Interview & Critical Incident Technique

Data was generated through the use of semi-structured interviews, which also involved the use of the Critical Incident Technique (CIT). The semi-structured interview is an interviewing technique that enables an interviewer to gain more in-depth insight into dynamic, context-dependant and subjective phenomena that are difficult to define such as societal and economic impact. This technique differs from a structured interview because, rather than direct questions, interview themes are used. Themes facilitate the inquiry into a specific area of focus but do not restrict the respondent’s response, specific questions are then asked based on the response of a respondent. The CIT was used in order to compensate for the subjectivity of respondent perceptions of ‘impact’ upon the community group and local community and in order to understand how the respondent perceived the help they had received. The richness of responses gained through combining semi-structured interviews with the CIT generated insights that could not have been gained any other way. The themes employed in each of the interviews undertaken in this study were:

- Did the help received through the ProHelp Programme impact the community group?  
  o How / in what way?
- Did the help received through the ProHelp Programme impact the local community?  
  o How / in what way?
- Can you think of a specific example of impact that has resulted from the programme?  
  o Expanded to many examples
- Has the help you received impacted upon any activities or services the group provides?  
  o How / in what way?
- How would you describe the help given by the ProHelp programme?
- Have you had any feedback from the local community and group members after receiving help from ProHelp even if they were unaware of the help you had received?  
  o What was the feedback / does it relate to the help you received?
2.2 Sample
The initial project proposal specified that ProHelp community group case studies be selected from the Leeds area only, however, after further discussion this was expanded to community groups that had received help through the programme across Yorkshire & The Humber. The selection criteria for case studies was based on a range of criteria, specifically: groups the ProHelp team still had access to; those willing to be a case study; the number of hours of help received by the group; and the type of help received. After applying these criteria and contacting the community groups, eight case studies were selected which were representative of the ProHelp database. These groups were then visited for face to face interviews using the techniques described; telephone interviews were conducted when the community group could not meet, although in the majority of cases this wasn’t necessary.

2.3 Analysis
Both within-case and cross-case analysis were undertaken. Within-case analysis was necessary for each case study in order to assess what the outcomes of the help received via the ProHelp programme were for each community group. Once outcomes from each case study had been identified these were then compared across the cases in order to generate an insight into the overarching societal and economic impacts. In taking a cross-case approach to identifying the overarching impacts, the impacts are more reliably generalisable and attributable to the efforts of the ProHelp programme.
3. Case Studies

3.1 APPL ETREE CHILDCARE

Background

Appletree childcare is a nursery in Sheffield that caters for children in the local community from 7:30am to 5pm daily. The nursery also has activities and links beyond nursery level in several local schools, such as after school clubs. The main nursery is the headquarters of the operations and has received the help described below. They have been trying to progress past their current situation for the past ten to fifteen years however, problems with Sheffield City Council have been preventing this from happening. Since being given various forms of help through the ProHelp programme the nursery has “progressed more in two years of working with ProHelp than it has in the last ten to fifteen years”.

What was done?

Legal & Architectural

ProHelp provided the nursery with contacts to a solicitor, surveyor and structural engineer. Taken together the help provided by these professionals enabled the nursery to rectify issues that they were having with leasing the property from Sheffield City Council and ensured that the nursery was running legally. Without this help, the nursery would more than likely have had to shut down. In addition, a longer term partnership was established with the same surveyor who drew plans for disabled access at the front of the nursery; the surveyor was also instrumental in helping the nursery to apply for the disabled access funding and in helping to communicate with a contractor.

Marketing

ProHelp brokered a collaboration with a marketing company who gave advice on how to raise the profile of the nursery. In addition, they also helped to design, develop, price and deliver a professional ‘baby book’ which is essentially a diary for very young children that attend the nursery. This is an essential document in nursery care, it is a daily dairy for each child and helps to inform the parents of many different elements of care and support that the child has received during the day.

Outcomes

- The nursery has saved many thousands of pounds in legal fees which enabled them to continue to employ more staff and run and improve existing services at the nursery and
surrounding areas. They have been able to widen services to local schools and now provide the following in the local area:

- **Parsons Cross Site**: After school club, supports 4 – 14 years olds including special needs support and covers three schools in the local area.
- **Chapel Town Site**: After school club, supports local school and includes special needs support.
- **Windmill Hill School**: Breakfast and afterschool club in local school.
- **Local area**: Breakfast, holiday and after-school club in local area; includes trips during holidays to swimming and woodland walks, etc.

- The nursery has been able to fund (£42,000) and build disabled access to the front of the nursery which has widened the usage of the nursery to disabled parents and children.

- Now able to provide an outreach service in so far as family’s of the children are also supported, for example where parents also have special needs (i.e. can’t read / write) then they are helped too along with the child.

- **Staff development now possible**:
  - Educational courses to help with subjects such as Mathematics and teaching skills
  - Basic skills training & requirements: first aid, CRB, etc.
  - Vocational ‘apprentice’ opportunities
3.2 ARTWORKS CREATIVE COMMUNITIES

Background
Artworks creative communities are a charity group and social enterprise that essentially use creativity and art to help ‘inspire, connect and engage’.

What was done?
Legal help
Artworks Creative received legal help which helped them to acquire new premises and ensure that the lease was correct. The new premises is a church connected to a community centre both of which were already being used by religious and other community groups.

Outcomes
- The money saved on legal fees was combined with further money saved due to the group no longer having to rent their previous premises. This money was then spent on helping to increase the group’s capacity to sustain both their services and the services of the community groups that were already using the premises.
- A mutually beneficial, long term relationship with the law firm who originally provided the group with free help has been established. This partnership works on the basis that the law firm provide legal help in exchange for artwork / designs.
  - The extra legal help through this extended partnership has enabled the group to become more self-supporting in regards to funding because they have been able to create a social enterprise. This enterprise is based upon renting out spare rooms to private sector organisations.
- The community programmes that have been established are base on four themes:
  - Health programmes: this involves outreach to the community
  - Training: provide training of essential skills to the community
  - School collaborations to help excluded children
  - Family learning: parents and children taught skills together
New building ownership means that they have provided security for the groups already using the facilities because they can now operate without the fear that the buildings will have to be closed.

- In addition, due to acquiring the new premises, the public can now walk-in off the street and receive help through the group’s services; this has improved community accessibility considerably.

3.3 CLAYTON COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Background
Clayton Community Association is a group of individuals within the community that oversee the safe keeping and maintenance of the village hall which is used for a whole variety of purposes such as Pilates & Yoga classes, craft classes and knitting classes to name a few.

What was done?

Legal
The association received legal help in re-writing their constitution which meant that the association became sustainable and could operate within the law and therefore run all of their events, activities and operations. Further, the legal work enabled the association to continue leasing out their hall space to clients within the community such as Yorkshire Water, the Council and Police.

Outcomes
- The legal framework has enabled the village hall and facilities to become a hub for the local community as well as local and regional organisations; this would not have been possible if it wasn’t for the legal help provided through ProHelp.

- The village is hall is now used for both day to day and less regular events:
  - Regular:
    - After school club each day, Toddler Club once a week.
    - Coffee shop in the mornings: this is hosted for the residents of a disabled care home just up the road and also other isolated individuals in homes and care in the local area
Irregular Events:

- Meeting place for educational societies:
  - Example: the local college uses the space to host their ‘I.T. for Beginners’ course.
- Bingo & quizzes for locals and lonely people
- Fund raising events

- The hall is now able to provide employment: part-time bar staff and cleaner

  - In addition, because it is now a legal operation, they are planning to apply for much more substantial funding which will enable them to employ staff full time and progress the charity to the next stage.

  - They advertise in the local newspaper and in the village

  - It also provides health, well-being and happiness by providing an opportunity for retired volunteers to get out of the house and help to further the charity.
3.5 LEEDS MUSIC TRUST

Background
Leeds Music Trust is a charity that also has a business arm. It is based in the south of Leeds between one wealthy and one very poor community. The Trust provides young bands and musicians with the facilities such as rehearsal studios and support so that they can progress their career along with a range of other support for members of both communities.

What was done?
The trust began as a business and thus required legal help in order to function as both a charity and business.

ProHelp provided contact with a solicitor who volunteered to give advice on how the business (as it was then) might also become a registered charity and then function as both. This combination enables the charity to operate as a social enterprise; young bands and musicians that can pay do pay and this enables the charity to provide free facilities and support to those who can’t pay.

This work led to the solicitor to become a trustee of the Music Trust and thus a long-term relationship has been built.

Outcomes
- Established a long-term, mutually beneficial partnership with the junior solicitor provided to them through ProHelp. The solicitor has now become a trustee which provides extra security for the charity.

- The legal framework has enabled the Trust to function as a social enterprise, which is important given the location between communities with differing needs and wealth status. This essentially means that those who can afford to pay for the facilities such as recording and rehearsal studios do so; in turn, these same facilities can then be offered free of charge to those in the local communities who desperately need them but cannot afford them.
• In addition to providing standard services free of charge, the Trusts’ new position as a social enterprise has enabled them to develop and provide (free of charge) a music therapy programme which is offered as a form of therapy to adults with learning difficulties.

• As a registered charity and the capacity to provide partial funding, the Trust has been able to apply for more substantial funding to sustain their operations.

3.6 ONE IN A MILLION

Background
One in a million is a charity group that provides community opportunities for disadvantaged children across all five districts of Bradford. It began around football but now has many different schemes on-going. They received ProHelp in several ways, all of which were fundamental for the initial development and sustainability of the charity.

What was done?

Architectural
The main community centre is based within Bradford FC grounds but needed significant re-design and input. With this help new classrooms were built and other areas were designed.

Helped to build classrooms and design other areas of the main community centre (based as Bradford FC), they are now an official partner of the charity.

Legal
Legal help enabled the charity to secure long-term leases and provided the legal foundations for projects and partnerships.

Insurance
Help was provided that brokered an insurance deal that saved thousands of pounds and enabled the facilities to be used by the wider community. The company that offered this help is now their permanent insurer.
Outcomes

• Architects and insurers are now long-term partners of the charity

• The charity has been able to heavily re-develop their premises into what is now going to be a full-time community centre hub from September 2011.

  o The hub will be both an activity and networking area not just for disadvantaged children but also for the elderly (and others part of the community when necessary); transformation from youth centre to community centre. It is open during the day rather than focusing on after school or special nights and is legally permitted to host community events.

  o Activities have now been expanded to supporting children in regards to education rather than just support around education (i.e. after school clubs). There is a particular emphasis on supporting those excluded from mainstream education or those which need extra help; work in this area has led to:

    ▪ Collaborations with *Education Bradford* and *Challenge College*
    ▪ Daily schooling for excluded pupils
    ▪ Partnership with local museum to offer further educational support
3.7 RICHMOND HILL ELDERLY ACTION

Background
Richmond Hill Elderly Action is an independent charity for local people of retirement age; they provide a range of activities, advice, support and social / outreach opportunities.

What was done?
Business Planning
Yorkshire Bank provided a management mentor who helped develop the business plan for the charity and gave much needed business advice.

Legal – HR
ProHelp provided links to a solicitor who then helped RHEA draw up proper contracts of employment, grievance procedures and policy structures which were fundamental to sustaining the operations of the charity.

Legal
The same solicitors are currently helping the charity in tendering for a bid, this is required because there are some anomalies in the bid that need to be remedied through a solicitor. If they are successful in the bid then the funding will enable them to sustain their operations for the long term and improve their outreach to elderly people in the community who cannot come to them.

Outcomes
- New contracts of employment, policy documents and instrumental help with a tender for a bid.

- Business mentor played a significant role in furthering the charity; at the end of the mentoring contract the mentor remained in collaboration with the charity for at least two years.
  - During the extra time that the mentor (and bank) remained in contact with RHEA considerable money was raised with the help of fundraisers over a period of about two years which included:
• £4000 – £5000 for a gardening scheme, regular newsletter and whole range of activities and schemes that helped to raise the profile of RHEA in the community.

• Business planning and legal advice have collectively helped to secure various funding, expertise and advice which have led to the development and/or improvement of the following:
  o Neighbourhood Network
  o Drop-in help service for the elderly community
  o Provided a ‘gateway’ for elderly people to access other services and necessary people

3.8 LEEDS VOICE / VOLUNTARY ACTION LEEDS

Background
Leeds Voice helps to facilitate the representation of the third sector in Leeds and also aim to empower communities, helping them to have a voice on the decisions that affect them on a daily basis. Recently, Leeds Voice along and another similar charity, Voluntary Action Leeds, have necessarily made a move towards working from the same database given their very similar roles and client base. However, in order for this partnership to be successful a legal framework needed to be developed that dictated how the database would be shared and used in a joint manner.

What was done?
Legal
Legal help was provided to Leeds Voice through the ProHelp programme which enabled a legal agreement to be constructed for the sharing of the Leeds Voice and Voluntary Action Leeds Databases. This effectively means that the two are now operating from a single database which has numerous benefits.

Outcomes
• Legal agreement written and implemented successfully which now means that operations are now more efficient.
• The sharing of the database was one factor which enabled the two charities to come to a decision that they could be consolidated into a single, more efficient and effective charity. Therefore, due to how successful the ProHelp programme was, they are now seeking further help to re-brand the two charities into one.

3.9 ELDWICK MEMORIAL HALL

Background
Eldwick Memorial Hall used to be a private members club but the club began to struggle with funding which forced the club into a situation where the village hall may have to be sold on the open market. Help received through the ProHelp programme greatly helped to prevent this from happening and thus was pivotal in prolonging the life of the club.

What was done?

Legal
Although EMH operates as a charity, the group needed to create a Limited company in order to secure a loan and KeyFund funding. This funding could then be used to buy the premises they operate in which was necessary in order to prevent the premises being sold on the open market.

Outcomes
• With the help received, EMH created a Ltd company and were successful in obtaining £10,000 in KeyFund funding and a £20,000 loan using the Ltd status. If this didn’t happen the group would have required a £30,000 loan which may well have made it impossible for the group to be sustained.
• EMH also acquired a pub next to the village hall which helps generate some money and can be jointly rented out for functions occurring in the village hall; having a pub helped increase interest in the community group as people didn’t feel the group was as inaccessible as when it was known as a ‘club’.
• Because of the added functionality of the attached pub, the village hall is now used for an even wider variety of events such as weddings and is thus a real focal point of the community; locals enjoy being able to relax in the pub as well as having the village hall.
4. Societal and Economic Impacts

A degree of caution is exercised in suggesting any direct links between the help provided through ProHelp and any societal or economic impacts upon the communities that the interviewed groups operate in. This is because all of the groups were operating before receiving help from ProHelp and thus it is very difficult to identify what kind of impact(s) the groups were already having upon the community. In addition, because of the dynamic nature of what are generally referred to as ‘societal’ and ‘economic’ impacts, it is difficult to attribute these types of impact directly to the community groups. Despite these difficulties, it is important to note that all of the groups interviewed in this study rated the help they had received through the ProHelp programme as fundamental to their continuing operational and developmental success. Consequently, the help each group received has, without doubt, been instrumental in the sustained societal and economic impacts that the groups are having upon the communities they operate in. The following discussion is based on a cross-case analysis. It was felt that given the overall aim of the study, and that case-specific reports have been included, a cross-case discussion would produce more generalisable outputs which could be used more effectively in policy formulation and in assessing the societal and economic impact of the ProHelp programme. To this end, the following overarching societal and economic impacts were found to be directly and indirectly related to the help provided through the ProHelp programme: social regeneration, social capital and intra-community (individual level) impact.

First in regards to social regeneration there were notable improvements to the local areas of the community; it was hard to distinguish whether or not the help provided to the community groups actually attracted more people to the local area but there was certainly feedback from several groups that the local community now feel more positive about areas within the community. For example, in the case of One in a Million, this positivity is likely due to several factors such as the fact that, in part due to ProHelp, One in a Million now has the capacity to cater for excluded school children and therefore these children are not hanging around on the streets as much or bringing feelings of negativity to areas of the community through misbehaviour. Another emergent impact related to social regeneration was that the help some groups have received greatly aided them in providing more consistent and systematic services and opportunities for the local community; this is opposed to providing events every so often or clubs once per week. Consistency in practice had a direct link to the physical and psychological well-being of individuals engaged with the groups because they knew they had “regular events to look forward to” and community members, particularly the
elderly knew “it wouldn’t be long before we all come together for a chat again, it’s the only time we get to do it”. Further, consistency and systematic practice enabled the community groups to achieve more and raise their awareness in the communities which was important not only on a group level but also for the motivation and moral of the individuals helping to sustain and run the community groups. Motivation and moral were important given that many staff in the community groups studied here worked on an entirely voluntary basis.

Again in regards to social regeneration, help provided through ProHelp has enabled some groups to either acquire new premises or make significant improvements to the group’s current premises. The acquirement of premises relates to either the group being able to buy the premises they are in and stop paying rent, or buy an entirely new building. When money was available through saving on rent, this could then be spent on improving facilities at the premises which inevitably had a positive impact on the surrounding area. On the other hand, a new building purchase had an impact in two ways; first, some purchased buildings were in a state of disrepair or had been abandoned and so renewed use of such buildings made for a nicer physical environment for the local community. Second, in some instances operations moved to sites which were more accessible to the local community and therefore this helped increase community participation and inclusion. In addition to this, with help from ProHelp, some groups were able to develop and/or sustain community ‘outreach’ projects which facilitated community engagement on a wider scale and therefore also positively influenced social inclusion and increased community participation.

Helping to increase the social capital of the community groups studied is another way in which the ProHelp programme is having a sustained societal and economic impact upon communities. Social capital in the context of the communities studied primarily relates to the extent to which the community groups and communities as a whole have become more connected (i.e. social network) whilst also referring to the many benefits, such as better access to resources, that the increased connectivity has brought. First, at the level of the community groups, increases to a group’s social network have enabled some groups to form mutually beneficial, long-term partnerships with individuals and organisations initially brokered to the group through the ProHelp programme. In some cases these partnerships have resulted in the creation of social enterprises which have the capacity to make even greater societal and economic impacts within the community, and perhaps even beyond at regional level. Aside from continuing their relationships with ProHelp brokered partners, some groups were able to expand their social network further in regards to local businesses as and community members with specialist skills (such as retired solicitors, plumbers, surveyors,
etc). Such relationships are having a direct impact upon the economy of the region because the community groups are providing local businesses with increased business and income.

On the other hand, on a community level, it was often reported during interviews that community members were benefitting from increased community social capital through opportunities for increased social interaction and the development of their own social network. Taken together, increased interaction and connectedness is helping the communities as a whole become more cohesive; in some cases this has empowered the community to speak out jointly at different levels, including at council level, on issues that directly affect them economically as community. Moreover, in discussing the future of the community groups with interviewees it was evident that the enhancement of a group’s social network and the development of long-term partnerships with local businesses and organisations was having a positive impact upon the planning of future services, projects and preparation of funding proposals. The key to this positive impact was that future services and projects were better informed because of the benefits of increased community social capital. For example, due to increased social capital the social network of some community groups was dramatically expanded which, in turn, facilitated a higher rate of participation and community inclusion in regards to the community groups. More community participation and interest in the community groups meant that these groups were able to tailor their operations in light of feedback from community members; thus services and projects became more community-specific. In many cases, ProHelp played a large role in enhancing a group’s social capital and therefore increasing the societal impact of community group operations; thus this is another way in which the ProHelp programme is having a sustained societal impact.

Help brokered through the ProHelp programme is also helping to increase social cohesion in communities through enabling community groups to provide and sustain a myriad of services and opportunities that cater for a variety of demographics in the communities. For example, as noted earlier many of the community groups have become more sustainable and can provide more consistent services and opportunities; they are regarded as more of a permanent feature of the communities. Therefore, groups are seeing more and more community members using the facilities and opportunities that are on offer. Increased use of facilities and services is helping to develop stronger bonds between the community members that attend the community groups. Furthermore, in recent years the cultural diversity of communities in the UK has greatly increased, which has led to social fragmentation and feelings of inequality throughout communities. Thus through helping to facilitate social cohesion in communities the ProHelp programme is inextricably linked to
helping reduce social fragmentation and inequality in the communities under study. In addition to reducing social fragmentation and inequality within communities, the help provided by ProHelp has gone some way to promoting cross-community cohesion; such as in the case of Leeds Music Trust (LMT). In this example, two communities have been united through the LMT social enterprise; on one side the wealthier community helps to sustain the LMT social enterprise element which, in turn, enables the use of LMT facilities by the less wealthy community on the other side of the LMT. Consequently, both communities are brought closer together through the central operations of LMT; the ProHelp programme contributed to the success of LMT operations. Social cohesion is also linked to social regeneration because individuals of the communities, through membership to the community groups, felt a greater sense of commitment, pride and responsibility to the community. Similarly, some interviewees alluded to the fact that increased interaction and communication between community members appeared to be reducing the pressures on community members of ‘social norms’; this impact is likely most observable in the children of the communities.

Lastly, some responses to interview questions also highlighted that communities need a sense of leadership and centrality; through helping to sustain and develop the community groups in this study the ProHelp programme indirectly helps to provide these for the communities.

As a final impact theme from the cross-case analysis, the ProHelp programme is facilitating societal and economic impact on an intra-community (individual) level. More specifically, some of the community groups, particularly those with a social enterprise arm or that employed members of staff, provided educational and skills training for staff and volunteers whilst working for the community group; ultimately this is helping to decrease unemployment in the communities. As an example, Appletree childcare clearly devoted time to developing staff as skilled and valued members of the community through enabling them to gain qualifications through their work which they otherwise might not have had access to. The acquisition of new knowledge and skills benefitted the wider community through group members being able to transfer newly acquired knowledge to other individuals they knew within the community which. Additionally, staff with new expertise could also apply this expertise to other opportunities within the community thus increasing the employability of some community members. Alongside education and skills, community members who worked or volunteered for the community groups also experienced heightened self-esteem and intrinsic motivation because they felt that the help provided to their community group through ProHelp empowered them to be able to achieve more whilst also feeling more valued.
Increasing motivation in community group staff is very important given that many of the roles within the community groups studied are voluntary.

Aside from the staff of the community groups, there were societal level impacts upon individuals who participated in the operations of the community group. For example, One in a Million is based around sport and thus provides opportunities for young children to keep them active; in this way, fundamental contributions from the ProHelp programme have indirectly helped in the fight against childhood obesity which is becoming a major problem in communities within the UK. Furthermore, through providing opportunities for children to expend their energy and spend their time constructively and off of the streets, some community groups are playing an active role in crime reduction and helping to make community areas more pleasant. Similarly, through receiving aid through ProHelp other groups have been able to provide opportunities for all members of the community to become more active and thus collectively across all the groups the ProHelp programme is making a real contribution to the overall health and well-being of communities. Moreover, the impact upon health and well-being wasn’t just in so far as physical health and well-being but also psychological. At their most basic level of provision, the majority of the groups studied provide a communal space and can now also provide regular events; especially for the elderly in the community having a coffee morning to look forward to every day and other people to talk to has a significant impact upon their psychological well-being.

5. Conclusion
This study has shown that the ProHelp programme has been fundamental in helping to develop and sustain community groups across Yorkshire & The Humber. As a result, the help provided through the ProHelp programme is directly and indirectly linked to the societal and economic impacts of community groups across the region. Results can be generalised to this extent because the case studies undertaken were representative of those contained on the ProHelp database at the time this study was undertaken. This exploratory study provides the foundations for future quantitative work, such as surveys and questionnaires. Quantitative work could not be undertaken as part of this project due to the time constraints of the project and because there was very little knowledge on what help the community groups had received and what this help had led to; this knowledge was necessary in order to construct a quantitative investigation. Therefore, based upon the results of this study, future work might
aim to quantify ProHelp contributions to the societal and economic impacts of the community groups it helps.