

Example of a Young Roots project



Project title: City Cemetery (Belfast)
Applicant: Corpus Christi Youth Centre
Grant awarded: £24,700 (79%)
Project length: 9 months



Young people clearing Belfast City Cemetery

1. Summary

This project was delivered through a partnership between Corpus Christi Youth Centre, Belfast City Council Parks and Cemeteries Department and Belfast Central Library. The Youth Centre is in the Upper Springfield area of Belfast and works with over 300 young people on a range of projects. With support from Centre staff, a group of young people came up with the idea of exploring the history of the nearby Belfast City Cemetery. The Cemetery is of historical importance but there had been concerns from local residents about antisocial behaviour at the site. The Youth Centre was keen to support young people to feel that they had a role to play in their community, encouraging their sense of civic responsibility. The young people involved in the project took full ownership from the beginning. They helped develop the HLF application and set targets and objectives for the project, ensuring a close fit with the aims of the Young Roots programme.

2. The aims of the project

The project had three aims:

- to give young people the tools to research the history and value the cemetery and develop a publication;
- to train young people as tour guides in the cemetery; and
- to reduce vandalism and abuse of the grave yard and to develop a positive image of the cemetery with local youths.

3. Benefits for heritage

- The overgrown, rubbish-strewn cemetery was transformed on an environmental clean-up day attended by 1,000 students from local schools. 'The cleaning of the

cemetery was an add-on to the project. Because we were learning about it we wanted to clean it up.' (Young participant)

- More people now understand the heritage of the cemetery and it is less subject to vandalism because the young people have documented it with a web-site, leaflets and guided tours.

4. Benefits for people

- The young people led the project. They formed a management group to run the project, with young people holding key roles such as Chair and Secretary, and used the financial and administration systems of the youth centre, in the same way as Centre staff would.
- The young people learned key skills such as research, web-design, using digital cameras, desk-top publishing, communication and team work. 'I wouldn't have been this confident as I am now if I hadn't been involved' (Young participant).
- 12 young people received the ASDAN Level 2 Active Citizenship Award through their participation in the project.
- The project brought together individuals from four churches where sectarian divisions still persist. Through their research, the young people and the wider local community have become more aware of the heritage of the City Cemetery of the shared history of the communities in Northern Ireland.

5. Long term benefits

Significant new partnerships were made with the City Council, a local historian, and community groups, which have led to the development of further heritage projects, including:

- West Belfast and the Spanish Civil War, another Young Roots project, exploring the roles that Belfast residents played in the Spanish Civil War. The project was inspired by a grave of a Spanish Civil War volunteer buried in Belfast City Cemetery; and
- East meets West, a project across County Down bringing together four youth centres and four community groups.

6. The budget

Main project costs		Funding	
Equipment/materials	11,777	From organisation	1,000
Training	3,340	Non cash contributions and volunteer labour	5,616
		HLF grant (81%)	24,700
		Total costs	31,316