



SAVAGE

Southern Association of Voluntary Action Groups for Europe

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ANNUAL REPORT

Period Covered by Report: April 2003 – March 2004

Introduction The work programme, undertaken by SAVAGE, supporting urban initiatives, as outlined in Section 2B of the original ODPM Special Grants Programme Strategic Project application, started on time in April 2003 and has been completed on schedule at the end of the fourth quarter [31st March 2004] of the first year: 2003 - 2004.

Performance SAVAGE is the only voluntary and community organisation [VCO] sector European office in the UK to cover two regions: the South East, except London, and the South West. 15 Activity Targets were identified for each quarter in each region as follows:

- Local Group or Project Support: 3
- Project Visits: 7
- Workshops: 5.

In due course, as the project developed and in response to the demands of a variety of changes within an evolving European Social Fund [ESF] Objective 3 Programme, other activities were added, which consisted mainly of publicity opportunities and informational networking events. The aggregated totals of activities for each region are set out in table form as follows:

No. of Activities For Year 2003 – 2004	Region South East	Target	Region South West	Target
268	147	60	121	60

3	51	15	39	15
4	43	15	38	15

Each Quarter By Activities	South East				South West						
	1	T	2	3	4	1	T	2	3	4	
Quarter:											
Local Group/Project Support	5	[3]	16	30	21	4	[3]	12	14	17	
Project Visits	3	[7]	8	8	12	3	[7]	7	7	13	
Workshops	5	[5]	9	5	7	4	[5]	9	7	5	
Other Events: Publicity Information etc.	5	[-]	2	8	3	5	[-]	-	11	3	



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Activities Each quarterly report was supplemented by information in the form of a brief feature: 'Urban Focus', highlighting a particular project or initiative of strategic significance. The aim of this feature was to illustrate the quality of the activities undertaken by SAVAGE in delivering technical advice and support to emergent groups or ESF projects and the relevance of their programmes in addressing specific community and individual needs. It was also felt to be important in the future that administrators and practitioners should meet to understand the circumstances surrounding the work each is responsible for, in order to improve cohesion and effectiveness in sustaining initiatives such as the Special Grants Programme.

At the year end, it was possible to report outcomes following the support and guidance provided by SAVAGE. For example, the Salvation Army application [Urban Focus: Quarterly Report 1], which had not been considered appropriate for co-financed selected priorities earlier in 2003, was eventually successful in receiving approval through the direct [alternative] bidding route to Government Office [South West] because of the GO's comprehensive coverage of ESF Objective 3 Policy Fields and the quality of the bid itself. The impact of this project will ensure that time, money and effort will be used effectively in providing beneficiaries with opportunities for re-settlement, training and integration in the labour market in support of the European Employment Strategy and Social Inclusion objectives endorsed at the Lisbon IGC and elsewhere.

New Priorities During the year, priorities changed to reflect the increasing significance of local group needs in urban areas. More pockets of urban deprivation, disguised by surveys including more affluent neighbourhoods, continued to be identified where, for example, the locality concerned might be no larger than part of a housing estate, a block of flats or one side of a street.

Initial material requirements of emergent groups, formed out of a desperate need to resolve endemic, complex problems in their communities, are often relatively limited. It is at this incipient stage that much of SAVAGE's local group support work has been done and the performance tables testify to that effect. It also accounts for the increasing importance of Global Grants, as the most appropriate and accessible form of start-up funding, located under Policy Field 2, Measure 2. In many respects, the Global Grants facility offers the best way forward in restoring Capacity Building for Community Regeneration. Throughout the year, SAVAGE contributed to the Capacity Building Scoping Study, under consideration by the DWP. Capacity Building constitutes the next step for local urban action groups on the way towards delivering complete, well managed integrated projects that are sustainable.

ESF Objective 3: 2004 - 2007 Both regions have benefitted as a result of the release of the Performance Reserve following the Mid-Term Evaluation and Review. This will allow local action groups a little more time to develop to a point where they can submit effective bids - or tenders to co-financing organisations [CFOs] - and a small increase in regional budgets. However, SAVAGE is well aware of the urgency to apply for ESF funding in order to run projects before the end of 2007. In this respect, time is as important as money. Therefore, wherever possible, it has become a priority during the past year to link networks and local action groups with each other [Urban Focus: Quarterly Report 4]. Developing partnerships helps to maximise existing resources and accelerates the progress of local groups to project viability.

Future Development In view of the uncertainty, post 2006/7, of external [European] funding, an increasingly significant element in the urban initiative work programme involves encouraging all projects and groups to look ahead and draw up exit strategies, examine alternative funding methods and explore local links across the sectors. In this, SAVAGE has fulfilled its role of being an independent and impartial source of information and advocacy. However, initial contacts SAVAGE has made with potential transnational partners in other EU member states indicate that in the coming year, and no later, it is imperative that preparations are put in hand for two purposes; [1] to enable urban initiatives in the UK to take advantage of transnational operations in the EU in order to sustain their work in this country and [2] to develop a multi-disciplinary approach to urban deprivation.