



SAVAGE

Southern Association of Voluntary Action Groups for Europe

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ANNUAL REPORT 2004-05

Period Covered by Report: April 2004 – March 2005

Introduction The 2004-05 work programme, in support of urban regeneration initiatives under the Special Grants Strategic Programme and as outlined in Section B of the original and subsequent renewal project application, has been carried out by SAVAGE to target and on time. The support programme comprised a range of services to inform, advise and represent the interests of urban groups, whatever their size or scale of operation, which are committed to community regeneration initiatives that will improve the quality of life in their respective areas.

Performance SAVAGE's core expertise, knowledge and experience in accessing European Social Fund grants have been extended to include a variety of EU Community Initiatives including Global Grants, administered through Intermediary Bodies in the UK. During the course of the year, it was necessary to effect modifications to original targets reflecting changes in policy and direction of the various statutory bodies with which SAVAGE works closely. In addition, replacement staff in the SAVAGE Regional Development Teams have required the inclusion of training as an integral element in maintaining quality of service delivery, upon which urban groups depend.

SAVAGE is the only voluntary and community sector [VCS] European office in the UK to cover two regions: the South East, except London, and the South West of England. 15 Activity Targets were agreed for each quarter in each region broadly covering [a] local group/project assistance through meetings and events [Target: 3], [b] project visits [Target: 7] and [c] Workshops/Seminars [Target: 5].

The aggregated totals of activities and performance details for each region during the year are set out in table form below and overleaf [targets are in brackets]:

No. of Activities 2004-05	South East Region	Target	South West Region	Target	Other Events
332	165	60	158	60	9

Activities By Quarter Serial	Total	S. East	Target	S. West	Target	Other Events
5	75	34	15	41	15	0
6	79	42	15	37	15	0
7	83	43	15	36	15	4
8	95	46	15	44	15	5
	332	165	60	158	60	9

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Each Quarter By Activities	South East Region				South West Region				Representation Both Regions			
	5	6	7	8	5	6	7	8	5	6	7	8
Quarter:												
Project Visits including 'one-to-one' meetings	7	10	9	15 [7]	17	8	4	15 [7]				
Workshops/Seminars	5	1	8	0 [5]	5	0	3	0 [5]				
Local Group Assistance:				[3]				[3]				
• Support + Information, Advice & Guidance [IAG]	3				3							
	7	8	5	4	6	1	9	7				
• Meetings		2	6	0		8	5	0				
• Networking Meetings		9	7	11		5	4	11				
• Local Representation	9	0	4	9	8	0	0	1				
Sector Representation Including Both Regions		5	0			5	4				4	5
Information/Publicity	3	4	0	2	2	5		5				
Staff Training		3	4	5		5	7	5				
Other Activities: Regional/Transnational												
Totals:	34	42	43	46	41	37	36	44			4	5

Activities Each quarterly report has included a brief profile featuring a particular aspect of project activity in an urban area, which has been supported by SAVAGE during the year. 'Urban Focus' has aimed to illustrate the variety and quality of voluntary and community work funded through the European Social Fund [ESF] either as a result of direct grant, co-financing or Global Grants. The creation of Development Partnerships in 2004-05 under the EQUAL Programme, funded through ESF, has been a significant method of encouraging organisations to become members of consortia. EQUAL has tested new methods of combatting all forms of discrimination and inequality in the labour market for those in work and those seeking work in transnational co-operation. As an illustration of this, SAVAGE has worked closely with Government Office for the South West [GOSW] to organise, facilitate and chair workshops in the cities of Plymouth and Exeter in the South West Region to establish Development Partnerships and, as a result, 8 sub-regional and 5 regional Development Partnerships have been formed. Significantly, the South West EQUAL Support Network has been developed from this inaugural event with support from SAVAGE.

New Priorities All urban community groups are now fully aware of the need to drive up standards if they wish to secure future funding. Capacity building, training and the achievement of quality assured standards of management and performance feature at the top of the list of their priorities. In addition, they are equally concerned to provide broader based programmes, which have resonance with local and national government plans. SAVAGE has responded to this situation by ensuring that urban community organisations and their projects are fully informed as to the available options as well as how to approach working with statutory agencies and government offices. A growing number of projects see their continuation/exit strategies being realised through some form of mainstreaming involving statutory agencies such as LSCs and Jobcentre Plus.

If there are co-financing or direct funds, which can be re-allocated in the time that remains for the current programme, many community groups would be flexible enough to take advantage of comparatively limited funds at little notice to deliver short haul programmes, always depending on their ability [capacity] to be able to respond constructively when the opportunity arises. Therefore, organisational development, both individually and as members of partnerships, has figured prominently as one of the new priorities urban projects are pursuing.

For neighbourhood action groups on a smaller scale, Global Grants have continued to increase in significance as the initial catalyst or primer to turn ideas into effective action, often with grants of a few hundred pounds or less. To make an impact on their neighbourhoods, project organisations have sought to work much more closely in partnership with a variety of local authority social services, for example health, education, housing and care through regenerative programmes delivered within the wider context of national and regional strategies. Some project programmes have been directed at providing facilities and services such as drop-in and play centres, child care and focal points for social enterprise returning the benefits to the community. Others have been aimed at refurbishment and improving the built and natural environment, whether that is all or part of a housing estate or large open areas accessible to the public. ICT has continued to have an important role in several ways: accessing information, training project staff, enabling volunteers to acquire new skills, developing services and building capacity from desk-top publishing to keeping accounts. Project staff have, by this means, been able to maximise the use of their time.

SAVAGE has encouraged urban initiatives throughout to take advantage of a range of direct support to local groups through meetings, project visits and networking, consisting of information, advice and guidance as well as participating in national events concerned, for example, with anti-poverty campaigns, skills development and business enterprise. It has promoted the advantages of exploring cross-sector collaboration in conjunction with other voluntary and community organisations [VCOs] having similar objectives, local authorities and statutory agencies in order to widen beneficiary participation as well as sustain the projects that deliver the programmes.

ESF Objective 3: 2005 – 2006/7 VCOs are understandably concerned about their future and precisely where the money will come from to sustain their work, much of which involves extended programmes to address individual endemic needs. Outcomes of these programmes are either problematic or difficult to meet in the short-term or can often be ineligible under UK statutory funding provision. Much of this work has, therefore, been supported through the European Structural Funds including Global Grants. Looking to the future, what is likely to happen, post 2006, has become a familiar item on local group meeting agenda.

While the current programme has been extended with regard to time although not budget, most VCOs are looking ahead to the new programme: 2007 – 13. The expectation is that the Cohesion Report proposals and allocation of the new Structural Funds are likely to be endorsed and ratified by June or July 2005. Major reductions in European funding are anticipated and make it essential that projects which have enjoyed several years of ESF funding move on to consortia, through which they may be incorporated into mainstream programmes. Throughout the year, informational events have been concerned with making best use of the funding that is, or is likely to be, available and how local groups can develop their networks as a precursor to membership of consortia or other forms of partnership able to take advantage of programmes such as EQUAL or its equivalent across a range of EU initiatives.

Future development SAVAGE intends that urban community groups should play a full part in the UK Presidency events with which it will be concerned between July and December 2005. There will be at least three major opportunities: one in each region and a combined event where the work of urban NGOs can be showcased and their achievements celebrated. In addition, there will be national events organised by the DWP and official partners, in which urban projects will be able to participate.

Raising the profile of SAVAGE helps to enhance the reputation of its membership organisations, Replicating models, where sub-regional networks can access funding, for example, for workforce development if undertaken in conjunction with similar organisations in the locality is a realistic possibility and emphasises not only the premium placed on co-operative action within the civil society but also the strategic value of these initiatives. To that end, SAVAGE will be exploring, by means of an electronic 'workshop' and hard copy version of 'toolkits', how VCOs can pursue organisational development through capacity building and training tools as well as training of trainers programmes. Some toolkits have already been produced through co-operation between CABs and Regional Development Agencies. For example, in the South West Region an excellent toolkit on debt and how to handle it has been published in this way. Despite the likelihood that almost 80% of the Structural Funds will be allocated to the new member states, SAVAGE will be working with urban community groups to explore access to a variety of EU funding initiatives, including transnational activities, which will be available through the coming programme period, while continuing to represent their interests, as well as the beneficiaries they serve, at all levels.

23rd May 2005