



in the mix
project

In The Mix Project Garfield Weston Report - Year 2 - 2023

*Enabling brighter futures for young people
and communities through informal education
and youth work activity*

Charity number 1161486

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1. Overview

We received a multi-year grant from the Garfield Weston Foundation in 2021 to support the work our charity delivers in communities, with young people, and for families. This second report highlights the impact this grant has made during 2022/23, the second period and details regarding our participants, the outcomes of our work, case studies and what we are proud of achieving during this period.

This funding has supported us to cover some of our core operating costs such as utilities, core salaries, insurances, and other overheads, particularly as we continue to combat the cost of living crisis and the impact this is having on charitable organisations. We have also invested funding in other areas of our work including developing our strategy, and our development plan providing vital hours of time and investment.

Our anticipated income for our next financial year (2024) is estimated to be at around £160k with expenditure of around £149k. A copy of our annual accounts for 2022 which also includes our impact statement for that year end is available [here](#).

2. Charitable Delivery and Programme

During the past 12-month period we have continued to work towards the goals outlined in our grant application, and worked to focus developing the core areas of our work in line with the business and development plan for In The Mix Youth Project. This has covered further developing our; outdoor education work, youth club provision, and holiday club offer, as well as providing our core youth work offer in local communities and wider offer across Somerset supporting smaller and voluntary run clubs and groups.

During this tranche of funding we have managed to recruit a part time grants fundraiser to support with our charity's sustainability, we also recruited a freelance community fundraiser to support deliver and co-ordinate some local fundraising events. We have been fortunate enough to work with the National Youth Agency on the NatWest Thrive programme locally providing access to financial literacy and future and aspirations activities for young people in Somerset.

Further training has been offered to staff around detached youth work, food hygiene and community food education, and wellbeing management. Part of this was attending Young Somersets Achieving Wellbeing for You and Your Staff Conference. One of our staff members has increased their role managing some of our volunteers. Others attended a community food training programme, aims to instil confidence and skills in teach food preparation in community settings as well as healthy living skills. We also hosted a team wide re-induction for all team members in January 2023, focussing on our values, youth work planning, reflective practice, and improving standards in some of our practices and how the organisation does things.

We have been working hard to secure extra local support especially via parents to help with some additional volunteering responsibilities and local community fund raising. This has been partly successful, and it has enabled us to increase our presence at local community functions and events supporting to raise our profile and increase our own income generation streams which have supported funding bids we have applied to this year.

We have continued to develop our partnerships, we have seen an increase in the support of our work via food donations, corporate social responsibility hours and fundraising efforts. We have been working with local community organisations including Wivey Walkers, 10 Radio, Wellington and Wiveliscombe Rotary, Wivey Cares, as well as larger organisation such as Neighbourly, B&Q, Lidl's, The Works and the Co-op. We have partnered with other youth work providers; once again alongside YMCA Taunton as well as other groups including YMCA Brunel, Cotford Youth Project and Exford Youth Club to provide activities from our Digi-plus project and undertake youth consultations. We have strengthened our relationships with schools in the area including Kingsmead School, Pyrlands School, Courtfields School and Castle School. As a core member of the Somerset Youth Work Alliance, we have been working collaborative with other providers to sign off the membership agreement and constitution, and support to recruit both the director of the alliance, and the youth development worker. This also involved some of our young people undertaking an interview panel for the development worker post.

We've also reviewed and signed off some of our core policies from our policy framework around safeguarding, health and safety and updated our staff handbook. We continue to be a member of Somerset Big Tent, the National Council of Voluntary Organisations and the Somerset Youth Work Alliance.

During the year our outcomes have included;

- Further developing our digital infrastructure, use of Office 365 and digital process
- Created feedback monitoring systems for participants to increase measurement of our outcomes and outputs.
- Supported our continued professional development with staff attending external and internal training relevant to their role.
- 56x safe spaces offered during school holidays for young people on means tested benefits, from low-income families, and who are affected by rurality, providing food and access to 1:2:1 support and enriching activities.
- Successfully completed commissioned work including youth voice projects for Somerset Council and NatWest Thrive for the National Youth Agency.
- We have offered the DofE award as a model for meeting the alternative provision needs of 24x young people in Taunton.
- Offered a variety of youth work at different times (after school, evenings, holidays, weekends, overnights) to meet the needs of young people.
- Supported 34x young people at risk in schools through extra-curricular activities.
- Worked on the next iteration of our business and development plan.

- Increased relationships with parents and guardians employing a new correspondence system for welcoming via an introductory letter and updates via email correspondence system.
- Ran our first ever DofE bronze expedition.
- Ran 5 successful holidays schemes for local young people.
- Provided support and opportunity to young people from SEND backgrounds via targeted independent activity programmes.
- We have provided opportunities for around 35+ families to access free food from our centre in Wiveliscombe as part of our community pantry scheme.
- Delivered more outreach and community sessions, particularly in the Taunton area, working with the Town Council and PSCO teams.
- Increased our reach to young people through outreach sessions in local schools and colleges.
- We have ensured our venues are maintained and welcoming, repainting our office spaces and café toilets, increasing our food prep areas for HHH sessions, and made changes to our Log Cabin facility and outdoor garden – reorganising our stores and developing a kitchen on site.

Young People and Children during the course of the funded period have undertaken the following;

- Accessed a basic first aid training course
- Learnt traditional skills such as fire lighting, wood craft, and natural art, learnt about wildlife and habitats.
- Developed their teamwork and leadership skills through activities and membership of The Core Network as well as through volunteering, youth participation and social action. 2x young leaders attended the Somerset Youth Work Alliance celebration event in January 2023.
- Accessed enriching activities around music, arts, drama and film, cooking, and STEM.
- Took part in 4x social action projects.
- Celebrated holidays and seasons during Halloween, Easter and Christmas
- Undertaken several external visits including trips to a theme park, Haddon Hill, a 4D cinema, Exeter Cathedral, and a swimming centre.
- Improved their health and wellbeing through activities on self-care, mindfulness, emotional regulation, yoga, sports activities, gym visit and more.
- Learnt about map reading and orienteering, risk assessment and staying safe in the outdoors.
- Held a visit from our local PCSO team to our youth centre for young people to build relationships with local police officers.
- Development of soft skills such as communication, problem solving, developing relationships, and decision making.
- Learnt about safe relationships, genders, sexual orientation and sexuality working with Somerset 2BU.
- Developed their food hygiene skills, learnt to cook new recipes and honed their cooking skills through our holiday clubs and ready steady food project.

- Spent time socially with peers, connecting, making friendships, and working with other community groups.
- Learnt how to use coffee machine and serve at the tuck shop.

3. Attendance Figures and Statistical Data

During the year we have run several projects and programme providing a variety different activity for participants to engage with. We renewed our annual consents in late August, and this has seen a number of repeat participants sign up to re-engage in our services for another year.

During the second 12 month period we have worked with and supported 216 young people, these young people some were mainly from rurally isolated communities and disadvantaged and/or low income families. Young people could also be identified as; young carers, those with SEND or neurodiverse needs, some were refugees from Ukraine, a lot of them had social, emotional, or mental health needs, and some had poor education attainment or were NEET at the point of engagement.

We have run a total of 15x fundraising events and provided activities at 5x family based community events and interacted with 3x local schools. During the year 2 funded term we have provided a total of 484+ of youth work hours and delivered 149x individual youth work sessions across 12x communities. We have worked with a total of 16x partner organisations.

Overall grant outcomes:

Outcome/area of development	Pre grant or grant number	Post grant
Approx. how many young people will benefit	500	535 across 2 years: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 1 = 319 • Year 2 = 216
Communities our organisation helps/supports	Specific Community	18 communities supported throughout grant period
Team size	5 members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total team members recruited during grant = 4 • Number of staff and volunteers post grant = 11
Hours of youth work offered	300 approx. per annum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 1 = 415.5 • Year 2 = 484+
Annual investment in growth / development	Approx. 20%	Approx. 55% (accounting for both trustee and leadership investment)
Traded activity / commissioned activity	Approx. 12.5% of annual income	Approx. 30% of annual income

Having better data analysis and measurement is something we are particularly proud of this year; we have worked hard to better measure our impact and record changes and development so we can better showcase the work our charity does. This has included the use of new monitoring systems and the development of a yearly impact statement.

4. Case Studies

Please see a selection of case studies from participants below;

OS, aged 14 – Duke of Edinburgh Programme

OS had not previously engaged with us and DofE was our initial contact. He was attending school with concerns raised over attainment and behaviour. He didn't participate in any other extra curriculum activities in and outside of school. At first OS struggled to engage and listen in sessions, not fully understanding what he may gain from taking part. He could also be quite rude at times to members of staff and portrayed quite a sarcastic attitude. Youth workers supported OS to engage and take part and challenged when he pushed boundaries and showed a lack of respect.

Overtime by building up a positive relationship and mutual respect he fully engaged throughout remaining sessions and began to grow in confidence and challenge other participants behaviour. He began to enjoy the sessions and is open to chat to staff about what he enjoyed, gained from taking part and has learnt. His behaviour and attitude have improved becoming more polite, respectful and engaged. He even has started to engage with activities which he may struggle with or not his things but gives everything a go and puts all his effort into it. He's also gained confidence, by contributing to the sessions, asking and answering questions, leading and presenting which he had no confidence or enthusiasm to do at the beginning.

OS fully enjoys taking part in DofE and is looking forward to doing the expedition. OS has come along way, he's increased his awareness and ability to reflect on how his behaviour can impact others. OS has grown in confidence massively since starting the programme. Because of this, he's now getting a lot out of the programme as this has piqued his interest in skill development and the outdoors. He's more self-aware when it comes to knowing what he wants, how he feels and be able to reflect on this, which has had an impact on his behaviour. OS is learning new skills every session, which you can see, he is taking everything on board, questions and participating well in group activity as he feels safe and confident and is not afraid to get his voice heard. He is also now developing leadership skills within the group, which will be useful for the expedition.

FC aged 8 – Summer Happy Healthy Holidays

Upon arrival F was visibly anxious and displayed very low confidence in being left independently of her guardian. Florence demonstrated being very shy at first and was using toys as comforters. She was not so good at speaking up and sharing her thoughts and ideas and found it more difficult to engage with others.

During her initial visit to In The Mix Project she was engage by youth workers to take part in activities and team games and soon warmed up. She specifically built relationships with female youth workers and up on her next visit which was a trip to Crealy where her guardian had some concerns (which were resolved by staff) she was much more open and talkative. During their involvement they got to try new foods and take part in activities outside of their comfort zone which were provided through the happy healthy holidays programme.

F particularly enjoyed the visit to Crealy the opportunity to pair off into smaller groups with people not in her friendship circle. This built her confidence and demonstrated her own abilities to herself. Although F and her brother were only booked on a few of our sessions they were very keen to come back and engage in further activity. Unfortunately, the majority of our sessions were already fully booked but they would be keen to revisit us at another opportunity. We are seeking the opportunity for new participants to sign up to our annual consent form system to enable them to engage in other youth work activity we run throughout the year.

HR, aged 11 – DigiPlus Project

HR joined ITMP when he was 11. He comes from a home educated background and lived in a rural area, so didn't spend much time with young people. He spends a lot of his own time with adults, where he learnt a lot of adult mannerisms and humour above his age. This made him lack social skills with his peers and struggled to make friends. He could be challenging at times where he struggled to see where the boundaries were, when youth workers set them. He could be quite sarcastic and describe it as 'banter' as he saw youth workers at first as more as 'friends' then trusted adults.

Before HR joined Digi, he didn't know how to use a computer. He was engaged and always willing to learn. By the end of Digi plus he was able to use a computer, and access apps/games. He also learnt how to use a 3D printer, which enabled him to further his passion with train models and create elements for his train collection.

Throughout the programme he developed his confidence, self-esteem and his ability to connect with peers. This led him to be able to share the skills he has developed to other young people. He supported youth workers at an external event at Dulverton youth club, where he taught young people how to play scale electrics.

Henry filled out a leadership form before and after he led something. This process enables young people to be able to reflect on their own personal development, before and after the event. This can help with self-reflecting, allowing them to think about what they are good at and what they need to work towards. It's a learning tool, and if used correctly can boost confidence and self-esteem.

BT, aged 13 – NatWest Thrive

B had recently joined us on a life skills project. B has attended 1 month of delivery so far and in that time has participated in all activities including our life skills programme focused on developing skills, resilience, and a financial mindset.

He was offered access to the project due to their performance at school and lack of ability to focus on their education. B can take part and lead in group work but struggles to excel consistently. Although at times he struggles to concentrate and can be led astray by others he has shown determination to succeed. He is more than happy to write and answer questions, showing confidence.

B has been provided with some youth work intervention and 1:2:1 support on the programme, and during this time he has shown signs of leadership and focused on the

activities putting in 100%. Each time he has responded positively and shown signs of positive engagement, this has been acknowledged, reaffirming the work he has undertaken and the impact he has had on him.

B said he during the NatWest Thrive programme, he as “learned new skills and it was essential”. Brandon continues to take part in the programme and has shown great interest in all the activities offered. His session ratings have been consistently high, and he has provided positive feedback after each event. He has enjoyed taking part in the DoFE programme and has been engaging better in school since.

DJ, aged 15 – EmpowHer

DJ was involved with ITMP before getting involved in EmpowHER Project through our HAF holiday activities, DJ is a Young Carer and has additional responsibilities at home supporting her siblings and mum, DJ struggles with access to transport and this can affect her ability to engage in activities and social opportunities. DJ comes from a low-income family and lives with her mum and her mum’s partner. DJ was very shy and found it difficult to express herself at the start of the intervention.

DJ got involved in EmpowHER to support develop confidence and self-esteem. During one of the sessions, she was able to dance by herself, which usually she wouldn’t have the confidence to do. Also, during one of the sessions we visited a YMCA Young Carers group to have a joint session on self-awareness and personal defense. She had never met these young people before but was able to engage with a few and played ping pong with someone she didn’t know / had conversations etc. Also, during the self-defense session she was able to demonstrate what she had learnt in front of the whole wider group, she did this gradually by starting from the side of the room and as she became more confident, she was able to get closer to the middle, she demonstrated a few times and improved each time.

DJ has become more self-aware and confident, showing more of her personality, and building relationships with other members and adults. DJ has been able to speak out more and gradually gained more confidence. She participated in everything, throwing herself into all activities and group discussions.

DJ wants to become more involved in ITMP in the future. DJ has had opportunities to be more involved in social activity and build friendships, she has had the opportunity to find time outside of her caring role to undertake some personal development. DJ would like to get involved more in what UK youth and ITMP has to offer. DJ wants to develop as a young leader within our organisation and we want to find opportunities for her to be involved in more social action and community work.

5. Challenges and Learning

This has been a very mixed year, several successes have been mired with operating in a challenging environment (cost of living crisis, fallout of Covid, difficulties within the sector, staffing and salary costs). That said we have had lots of successful events, activities, and outcomes for our service users.

Over the past year, we have revamped our outreach services, expanded our holiday clubs, and launched various new targeted youth projects. We also reintroduced our alternative provision services and enhanced our marketing efforts by creating a comprehensive strategy that combines both online and offline promotion for our charity. Additionally, we've taken steps to digitalise our organisation, which has further improved our data management systems. This progress has helped raise awareness of the important work we do and the positive impact it has on our community and service users and been able to create an impact statement at the end of each operating year.

Some funded targeted delivery wasn't well attended locally, and this took longer to deliver and therefore took time away from other areas the charity wanted to pursue during that period. This could be put down in part due to how we were marketing the services or how we were interacting in local communities and with parents etc.

We have made changes to our induction processes which hopefully will positively impact upon how we engage and train team members. We had a number of staff leave across 2023 which impacted this and put pressure on remaining team members. Ensuring that we have control of our finances and real time financial data to support with the overall management of the organisation and its development still requires some work. As our services have expanded and increased, we need to have a clear grip on the day to day and month to month finances. The next steps we need to take will include recruiting or utilising a bookkeeper to support with this role.

6. Future Recommendations and Final Outlook

Our next steps will be to look at securing some larger scale funding to continue to develop our work and support the work on our service plan for 2024-2026, this has been part of development sessions and board meetings during 2023 where the board has come together to work on our strategy and future.

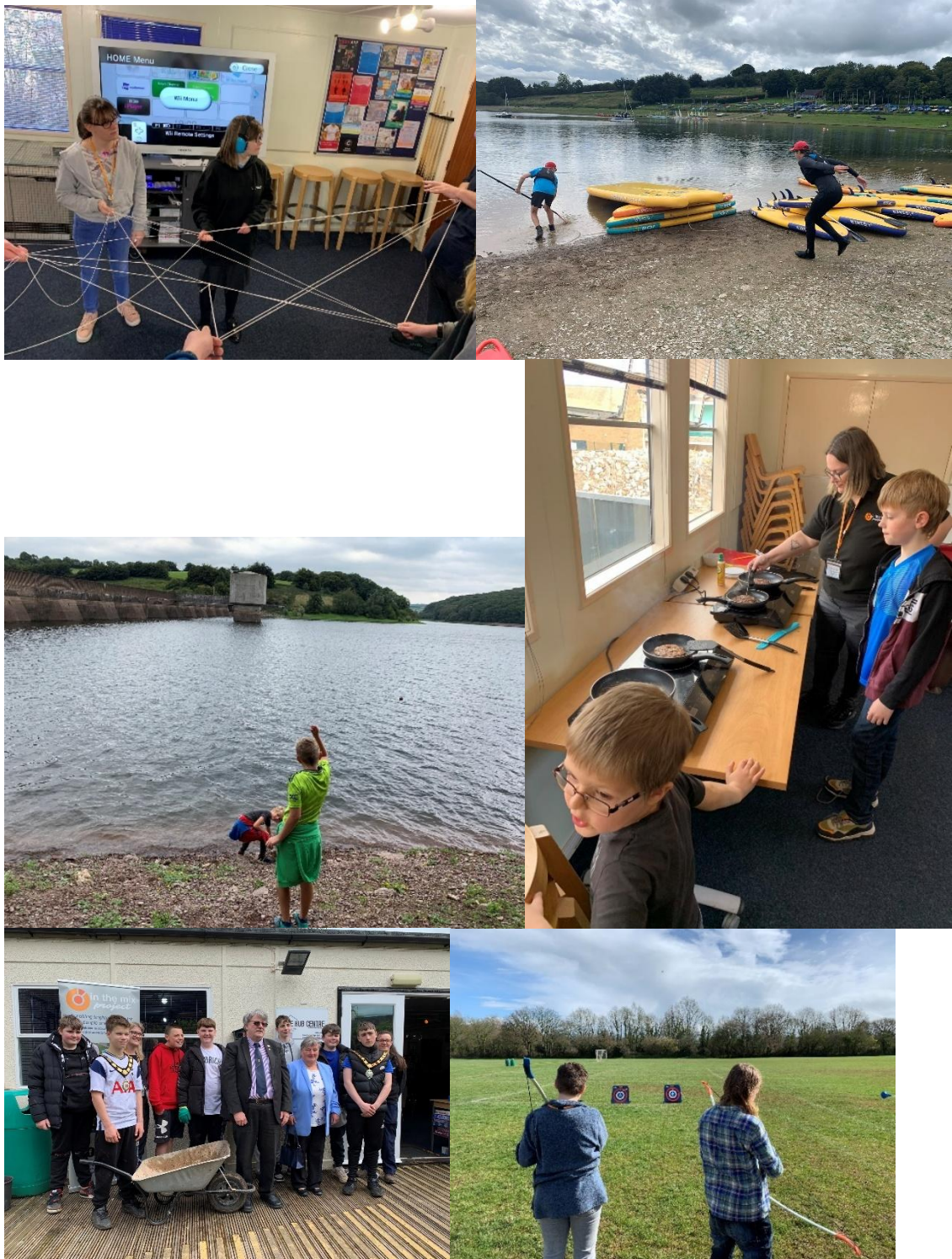
This will include developing several new pilot youth clubs for specific targeted groups such as SEND, wellbeing and electively home educated young people, as well as furthering how young people are referred into our services. We will also be continuing to develop our half term and holiday programmes working with our statutory partners which includes Somerset Council and Somerset Active Sports Partnership.

Our relaunched alternative provision services will continue to be marketed, and we will further develop our relationships with schools, colleges, PRUs, and other organisations and partners in the VCFSE sector.

With special thanks to the Garfield Weston Foundation, as well as our Board of Trustees, and our team of youth workers & all the agencies and partners we've linked with during the past year all of which has enabled the work above to take place.

7. Photos

Please see below photos of our work for the funded period of Oct 2022 to September 2023 which includes some of our external visits, holiday clubs, youth club sessions, outreach and community events, and targeted programmes like DofE and NatWest Thrive.



YOUTH WORK REPORT



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