

**SOCIAL IMPACT STUDY OF  
MILLENNIUM AWARDS**

**TO THE MILLENNIUM COMMISSION**

**JULY 2000**

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**PREFACE**

## SUMMARY

On March 24<sup>th</sup> 2000, the Millennium Commission appointed Annabel Jackson Associates to carry out a social impact study of Millennium Awards. Our work consisted of 982 telephone interviews of Millennium Award recipients from 39 of the 76 award partners. The award partners selected were those with awards approved before July 1<sup>st</sup> 1999. The interviewees were chosen randomly so as to give a representative picture. Interviews were carried out over the telephone and asked in detail about the character of the project and different areas of personal or community benefit. Respondents were asked to give examples to justify their answers.

Our survey found an enormous breadth of impact. Millennium Awards have increased recipients' confidence, motivation, team working, leadership, communication skills, negotiation skills and basic skills. They have helped recipients develop knowledge of the environment, health, social and community issues. Recipients have gained practical experience of community development, research, the arts, training, caring, computing, project management, business planning, fund raising, media and publicity. Communities have gained new services, awareness of social issues, higher quality of life, environmental improvements, a reduction in isolation, local pride, greater links between groups, and greater understanding of local history.

Of those interviewed, 90% say that their project has been a success in terms of its effect on them; 81% say it has been a success in terms of its effect on their community (the gap on the latter being partly accounted for by unfinished projects); 62% say that the effects on them would not have happened without the Millennium Award projects, showing high additionality. Sustainability is also high. 85% produced a public record of their project; 70% are planning to continue or extend their project in the future. The average time spent on a Millennium Award project is 144 days, roughly 1,000 working hours. This means that the 40,000 grants planned could add up to some 40 million hours of work.

Social impact is a complex subject and data need to be interpreted with care. Our unpacking of impact gives the reader a picture of the range of experiences from Millennium Awards. The scale of impact is more difficult to judge. More is not necessarily better: a grant that reaches more people is not necessarily better than one that has a transforming effect on one person; a grant that improves ten elements of personal impact is not necessarily better than one with a major effect on one element.

The strength of Millennium Awards lies in the programme's diversity and its ability to combine many different types of impact within its portfolio. Millennium Awards are not a factory system for mass-producing impact. They are a sensitive and customised way of responding to individual need, of reaching the places other funding systems do not reach. The success of Millennium Awards, in particular the energy that the programme has released, indicates fault lines in British society: gaps in social services, education and the health service; lack of time for professional development and innovation across the public and voluntary sectors; and alienation and isolation within communities. Above all, the programme shows the desire of individuals to tackle these major problems.

## QUOTATIONS FROM INTERVIEWEES

Statistics cannot give the full story. Comments from interviewees show how recipients feel about Millennium Awards. These are typical comments, not extremes:

“It changed my entire life.”

“This is something I have wanted to do for a long time.”

“I never thought I would be an advisor to 27 social workers.”

“It has given me a wider perspective on life and the shortcomings of our own society.”

“An unforgettable experience. A big impact on me. It has to be seen to be believed.”

“A letter from a participant said that our work had done more good than all the tablets she has taken over the years.”

“It is worth doing, it is something that can be sustained for years.”

“Now that the project is over it has left a void in the community.”

“It brought back our community spirit.”

“Our project has been picked up by the Home Office.”

“The community is crying out for projects like this.”

“If someone gives you money, rather than you using your own money, they are showing they trust and value you. They are saying ‘you deserve this’.”

“I am now looking for a job. Before I didn’t think I could work because of my back.”

“I have more to offer the community, which is for the good of everyone. I hope to pass the benefits, including self confidence, onto others.”

“It is an inspiration.”

“The project made me more optimistic and feel that I now have recognition for my voluntary work over the last 15 years. The future looks bright.”

“The award changed me myself, my whole life, my outlook on life, my way of going about things.”

“Before the award I was terrified of public speaking and would do anything to avoid it. I recently spoke to a group of 50 people.”

“The award was about finding my feet. The end of the award was like a beginning.”

“It has helped all aspects of my life.”

“I have been housebound for years. This has given me back my life.”

“It is a unique opportunity to engage in something of global importance.”

“Brilliant. Time out with a purpose. Able to re-evaluate.”

“I feel more empowered to do what I want with my life.”

“Ordinary people have a lot of untapped resources sadly left unused.”

“It was a totally positive experience to have the recognition of the Millennium Commission.”

“I didn’t think I could do it.”

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study would not have been possible without the co-operation and support of a large number of organisations and individuals. Firstly we would like to thank the 982 award recipients who gave freely of their time in answering our interview questionnaire. Contact with the award recipients was made easier by the advice and support provided by the award partners, 39 of whom took part in our survey. At the heart of our project lies the Millennium Commission team, who provided essential guidance and steering. We would like to express our gratitude to Erica Roberts, Andrew Farrow, to our project officer Lizzie Pearce, and to the other Millennium Awards officers who gave feedback on our questionnaire. Our team consisted of Annabel Jackson (project manager and analyst), our interviewers Gloria Jardine, Les Weatheritt, Susie Moss, Debbie Williams and Duncan MacLeod, and our statistician Louise Bayfield.

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## MAIN REPORT

### Introduction

On March 24<sup>th</sup> 2000, the Millennium Commission appointed Annabel Jackson Associates to carry out a social impact study of Millennium Awards.

Millennium Awards have an average value of £2,000 each with an aim of enabling individuals to develop themselves personally while also making a tangible contribution to communities in the UK. The Millennium Awards scheme held its first annual application round for potential partners in 1996. Now in its fourth application round, the Commission is working in partnership with 76 grant-giving organisations across the UK, running 81 Millennium Award schemes. £79 million has been committed in grants to these award schemes. About 12,000 awards have been made, totalling approximately £32.3 million. Nearly 2,000 award winners have completed their activities and have been nominated as Millennium Award Fellows. In 2000, the Commission is running the fifth and final £20 million application round. An anticipated 20-25 more partners will join the programme, bringing the number of award schemes to more than 100, and the total number of awards to 40,000. In addition to the £100 million to be allocated by the end of 2001, the Commission has made a further commitment of £100 million towards an endowment to continue the Millennium Awards programme into the future.

The programme is unique in its contact with social entrepreneurs. No other programme or research project has knowledge of such a large number and wide range of social entrepreneurs. This breadth of experience gives real advantages in understanding the processes and impacts of social entrepreneurship, and therefore in supporting and developing their activities.

### The Brief

The aim of the study is to provide feedback on the social impact of the Millennium Awards programme so as to show what the funding has achieved, to synthesise lessons for good practice, as well as to increase knowledge and understanding of the programme. Our brief was to “devise and deliver a cost effective evaluation method which would enable the Commission to:

- Quantify and analyse the trends and effectiveness of the Commission’s funding of the Millennium Awards scheme.
- Highlight the models of individual award recipients’ good practice to guide and promote the role of future individual award recipients and other “social entrepreneurs” and active members of the community throughout the UK.
- Disseminate credible research on the Millennium Awards scheme to the Government, the voluntary sector and business, illustrating the advantages and disadvantages of this approach to supporting community development at a grass roots level through individual activity and involvement.”

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## Methodology

Details of the methodology are given in Appendix One, and the questionnaire is reproduced in Appendix Two. The study consisted of 982 interviews with award recipients. Interviews were carried out over the telephone using a questionnaire that asked in detail about:

- The character of the project.
- The background of the award recipient.
- Support given from the award partner.
- The reason for involvement in the project.
- Previous community involvement of the award recipient.
- Personal impact: personal skills, knowledge, practical experience, and specific outcomes.
- Community impact: specific effects, scale of participation and profile of beneficiaries.
- Perceived success of the project and its additionality (whether benefits would have been achieved otherwise).
- Sustainability (whether the project will continue) and any funding obtained.
- Whether the project could act as a role model for other people or communities.
- What advice the interviewee would give to other award recipients.

Our interviews used a semi-structured questionnaire with two types of question:

- Open questions asked award recipients for their opinions on issues. These provide information in the way most relevant to the interviewee on issues that concerned them most.
- Closed questions asked for hard data on standard questions. These allowed us to aggregate analysis and make comparisons across individuals and projects.

Combining open and closed questions provides precise data as well as personal insight from interviewees. The interviews lasted between twenty and forty five minutes.

Award recipients were invariably happy to help in the survey. Many went to great pains to return messages. There were no outright refusals. Award winners were keen to talk about their experiences and seemed to view the interview as another form of recognition of their achievements.

Interviewees were selected randomly from the Millennium Commission database or project lists from award partners. Each award partner was consulted before their award recipients were contacted in order to discuss any possible interviewing

problems. Details of the survey were amended to meet the character of some of the award partners.

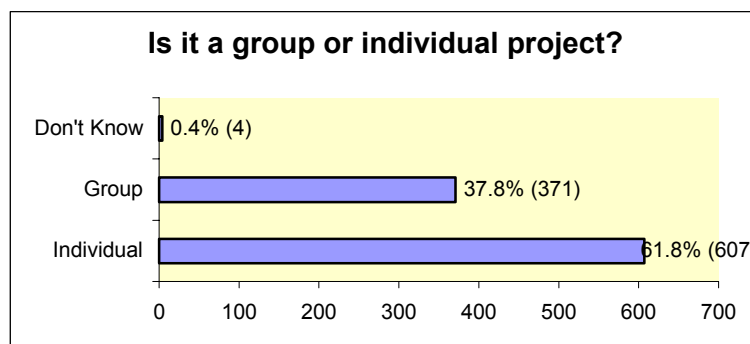
### Character of the Sample

The survey covered 39 award partners, with the number of interviews to each ranging from two to 150. Two thirds of partners received between ten and a hundred interviews. Over a third (37.8%) of the projects are group rather than individual, which means that the interviews cover projects involving some 3,000 individuals.

There are four broad structures for Millennium Award schemes:

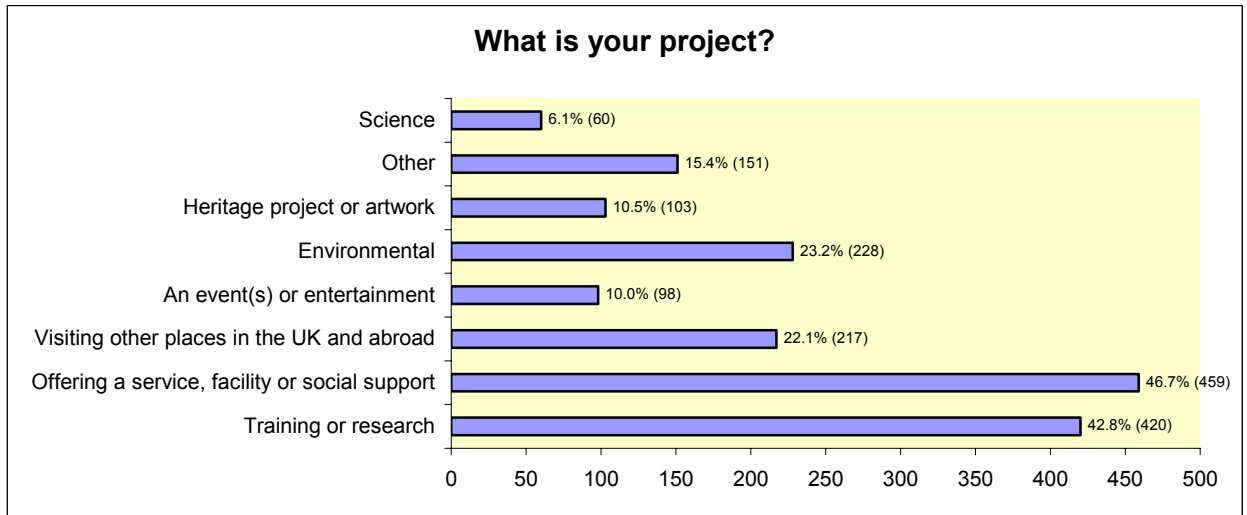
- Individuals working on their own.
- An employed individual working with his or her organisation.
- A group organising their own project.
- A group with arrangements overseen by the award partner.

These four structures differ in the support needs and resources available to the award recipient.

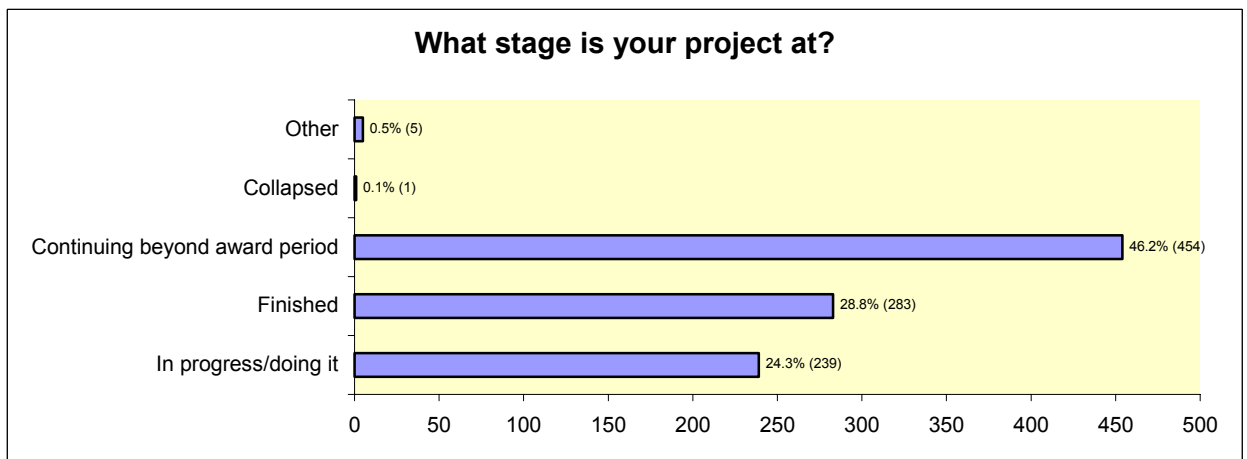


### Character of the Projects

The character of the projects varies widely. The case studies summarised in Appendix Four give an impression of the range of activities funded.

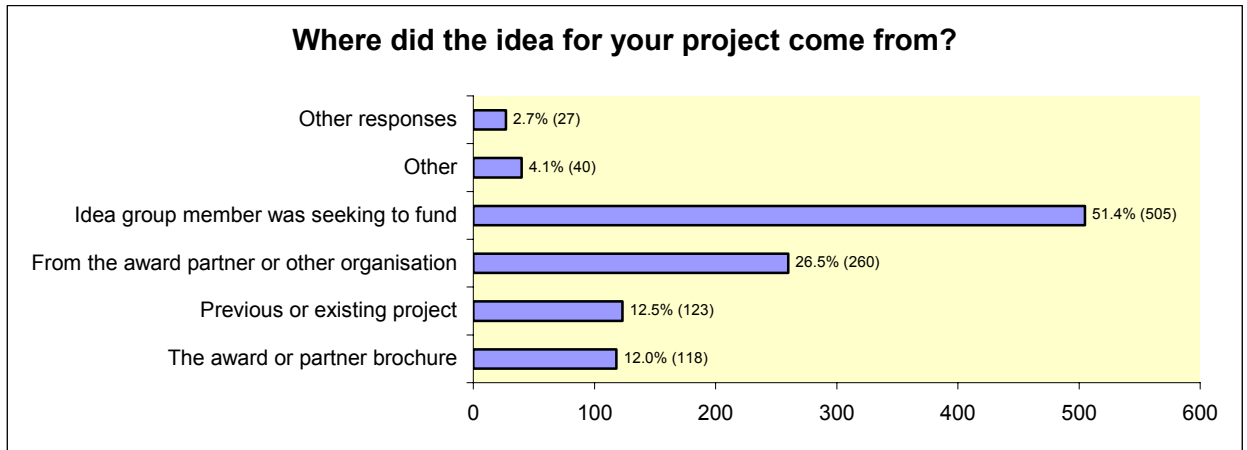


The most common categories of project are a service, facility or social support; or training or research. Many projects span several categories.



Nearly half of the projects are continuing beyond the Millennium Award period. Just over a quarter (28.8%) are completed, with a further quarter (24.3%) in progress. Only one project told us it had stopped because its plans had failed.

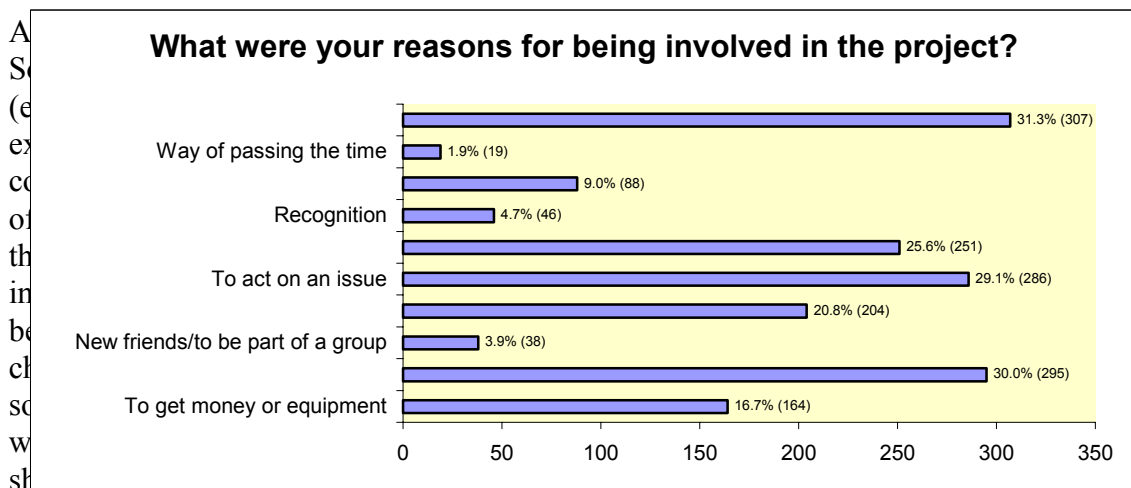
Many of the projects are taking place over a long time, for instance, a couple of years.



Throughout the survey, the category “Other responses” refers to questionnaires for which the question is blank, or the response is “do not know,” “do not remember,” or “not applicable.”

More than half the projects originated with the award winner. Just over a quarter (26.5%) came from the award partner and a further 12% from the award or partner brochure. The origin of projects differs between partners. Some of the partners have a strong theme to the process or content of their schemes. Examples would be Earthwatch, Operation Raleigh, Help the Hospices, and Arthritis Care. A couple of the partners have a larger than average number of projects that arose from earlier projects, for example, Help the Aged.

These figures show the large demand for Millennium Awards. Interviewees often emphasise that their project is something they have wanted to do for many years.



The different reasons given for participation suggest three deeper themes, each of which highlights a gap in society:

### **Professional development**

This is where people employed in the public or charitable sectors take time out for travelling, exchanges, research, training, or initiation of new projects. Examples would be the work of Sharing Museum Skills, and CAFOD. In some cases staff of these organisations are over-stretched and do not have time for reflection or

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professional development. In other cases volunteers such as those on management committees have found themselves entrusted with serious responsibilities and wish to have access to appropriate training whether in law, finance or computing. This class of project raises the question of how to roll out innovation and how to increase the opportunities for personal and professional growth within the working environment. It speaks of the need to improve the status of employees and volunteers within the public and charitable sectors.

### **Self help**

Projects are often started by individuals with particular illnesses or problems wanting to help others with similar problems through self-help, research, advocacy, training, information, fund raising or service delivery. Examples would include individuals funded through the Community Foundation and Mencap. These projects raise two broader issues: how to ensure the quality of what is done (e.g. research), and how to ensure these individuals' credibility with institutional services. At their heart, self help type projects illustrate the stresses of modern society and the willingness of individuals to reach out and help those in their community.

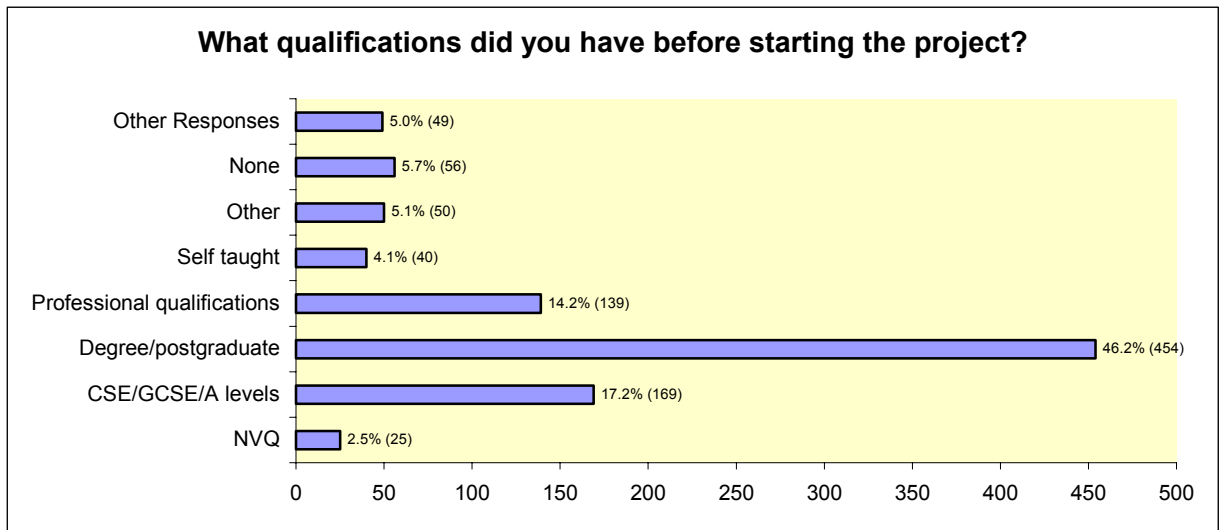
### **Filling a gap**

A large number of projects are about delivering a service that is currently lacking in social services, the health service, or education. Examples include some of the projects of Peabody, the Royal Society, MIND, Family Learning and Help the Aged. Behind these projects lie a number of structural problems in institutional services: narrow definition of need (e.g. neglecting leisure activities for mental health users, neglecting artistic subjects on the National Curriculum), inflexible or uninspiring delivery (insensitivity to ethnicity, a negative medical model of mental health, obscure rules around claiming benefits), and rigid boundaries of activity (defined around ages, symptoms or subjects). Millennium Award recipients often invest vast amounts of time into innovative, cross-cutting, customised services.

This type of project leads into issues about how to disseminate the lessons of these trail blazers into mainstream services, how to support the organisers and prevent exhaustion, and how to smooth the interface with institutions (which has sometimes been quite acrimonious).

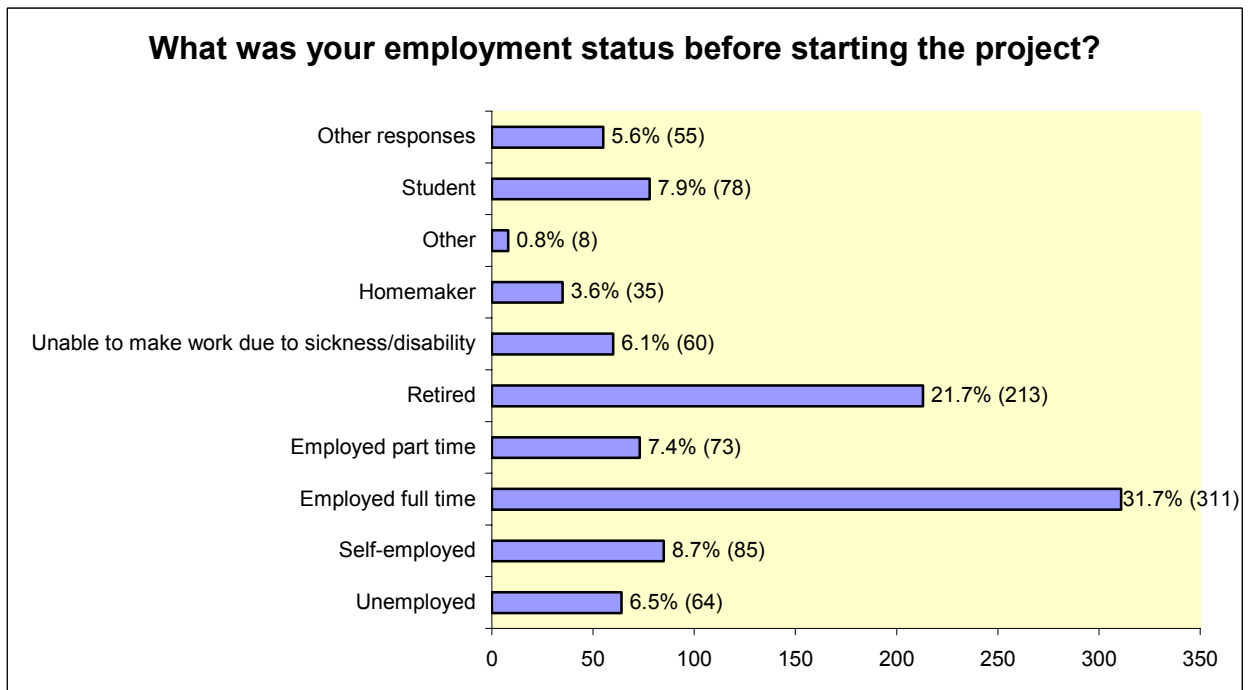
One of the themes which lies at the heart of the Millennium Awards is that of isolation: rural isolation, isolation within organisations, isolation across organisations serving similar functions, isolation within communities, and isolation between those suffering the same illnesses or problems. The Millennium Awards programme brings people together to learn and develop. This raises issues about continuity – how to sustain and foster the networks formed.

## Background on Award Recipient



The background of award recipients varies widely, although the relatively high level of qualifications is noteworthy. More than 40% of interviewees have degrees. The figures show the reservoir of skills available to community activities.

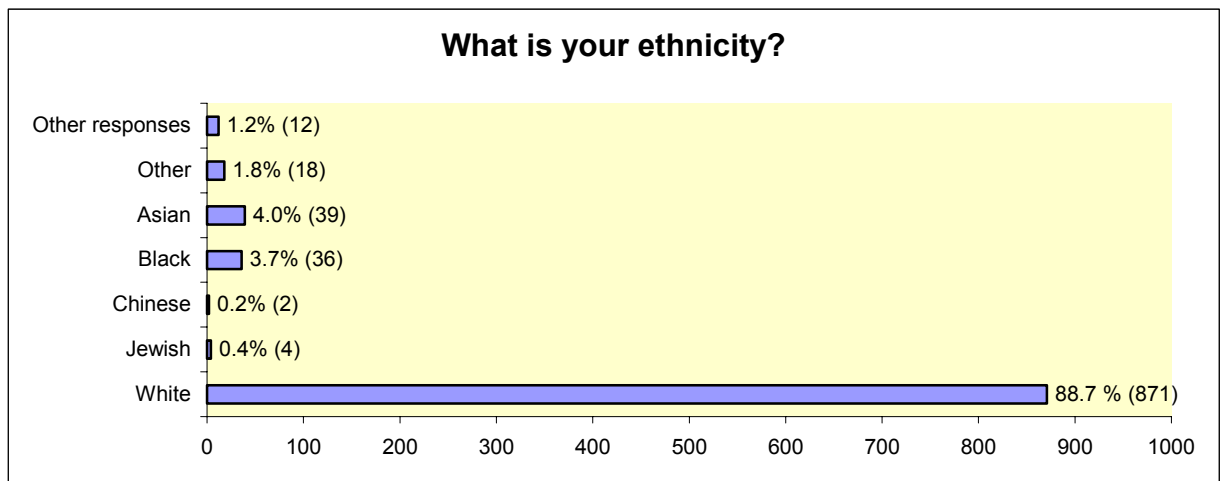
The high level of qualification is partly because some of the earlier or larger schemes in the Millennium Awards are working with employees like teachers, scientists, or museum curators. Examples include Earthwatch, Royal Society, Mind, Sharing Museum Skills, and the Farmington Trust. The figure for the percentage of award winners with degrees can be expected to come down later into the Millennium Awards programme as other programmes come through.



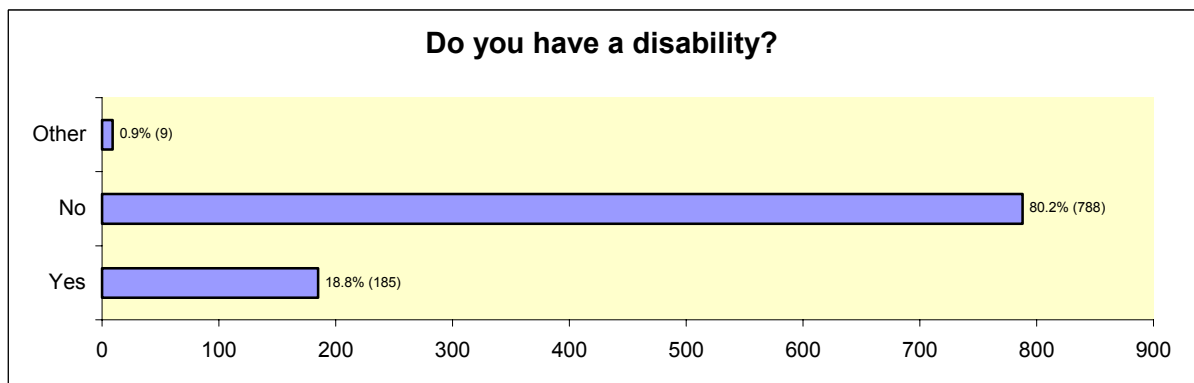
The employment status of interviewees is wider than the level of qualifications, although again correlated with the partner. Almost one third of award recipients are working full time, with above average percentages in employment for Earthwatch, Farmington, Royal Society, and Sharing Museum Skills. More than 20% (21.7%) of interviewees are retired, predictably concentrated in Help the Aged, Age Concern and Help the Hospices.

The “other” category in the chart refers mainly to people who describe their employment status as volunteers. It is interesting that interviewees see this as an employment category.

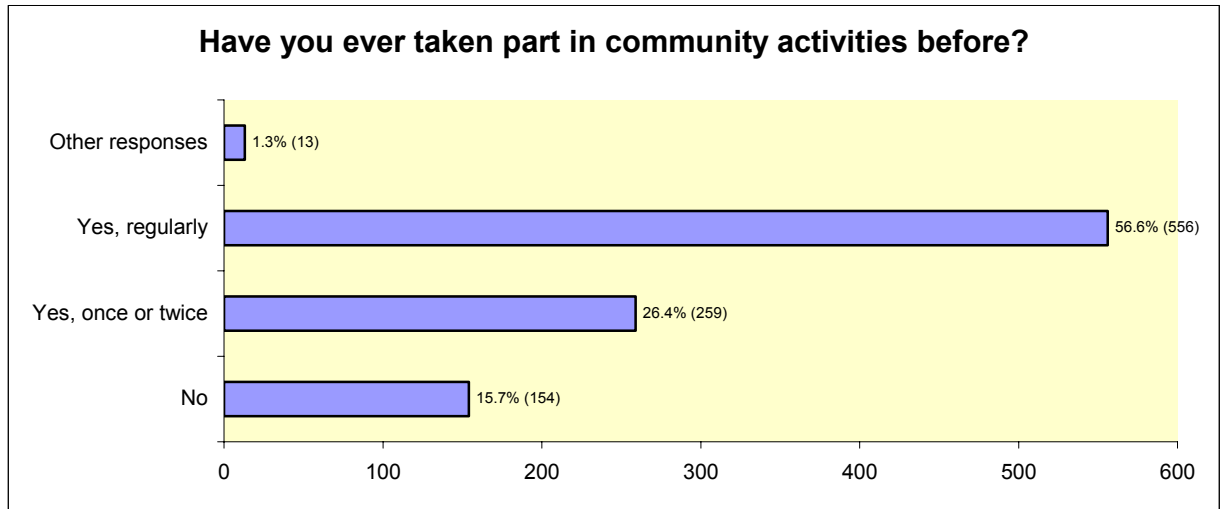
The figures show the range of circumstances under which people feel willing and able to give time to developing themselves and their communities. The sample includes employed people looking to extend or deepen personal interests, self employed people wishing to include community work in their portfolio of activities (and also perhaps market themselves), retired or unwell people wanting to use their skills and energies, unemployed people wanting to build their confidence and reduce isolation, and students seeking to travel and learn.



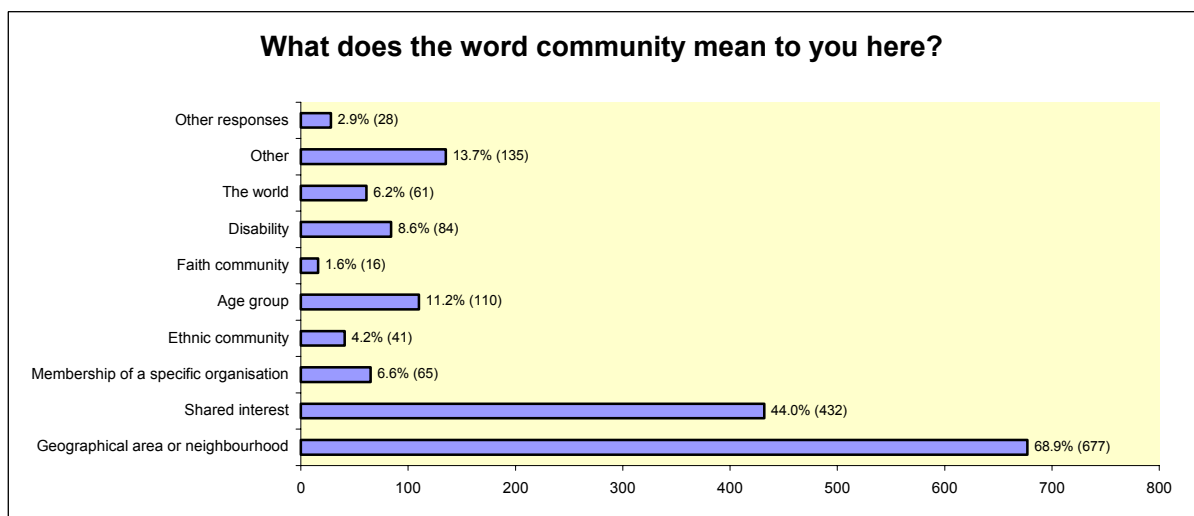
About 10% of interviewees come from ethnic minority groups. Again, figures vary between partners, reflecting the character of the schemes and the localities in which they are based.



Almost a fifth of our sample describe themselves as having a disability. On top of this, many interviewees have long term physical or mental illnesses.

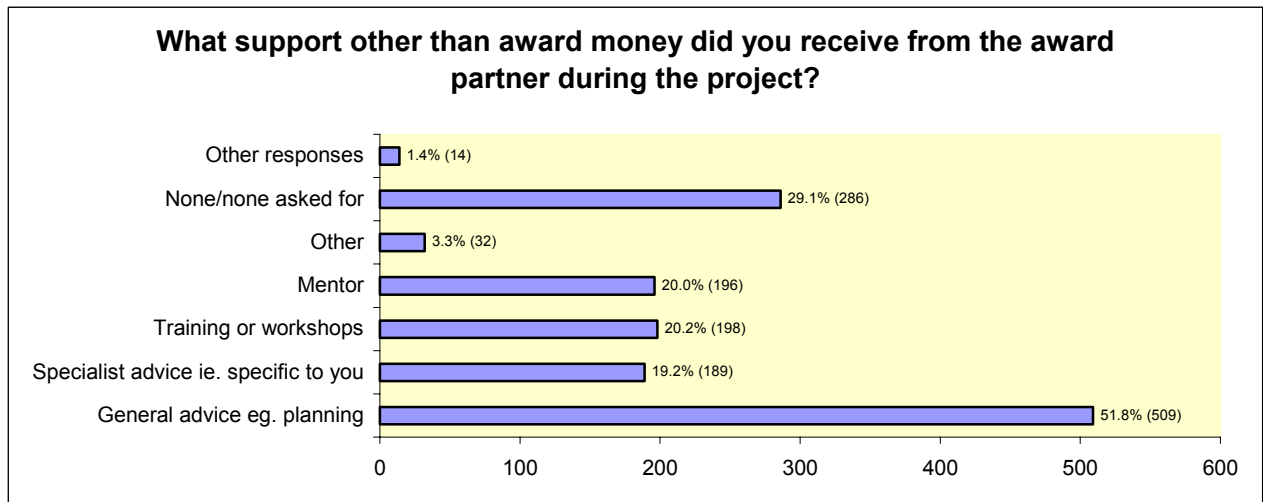


Only one seventh (15.7%) of interviewees have never taken part in community activities before. Many of these are young, for instance participants in Operation Raleigh. More than half of award recipients say they are already active in the community. Millennium Awards are therefore tapping into a large reserve of interest and energy that has been sustained over time.



The most common interpretations of the term community are as a geographical area or neighbourhood; or as a shared interest. There is a tendency for interviewees to prefer inclusive rather than exclusive definitions. The “other” category refers in the main to two additional definitions: community as “people” or “everyone”; and community as sharing, working together, belonging, having common beliefs or taking responsibility. Another vivid “other” response was from one of the Mencap interviewees, who described community as “being treated like everyone else”.

## Support Given for the Project

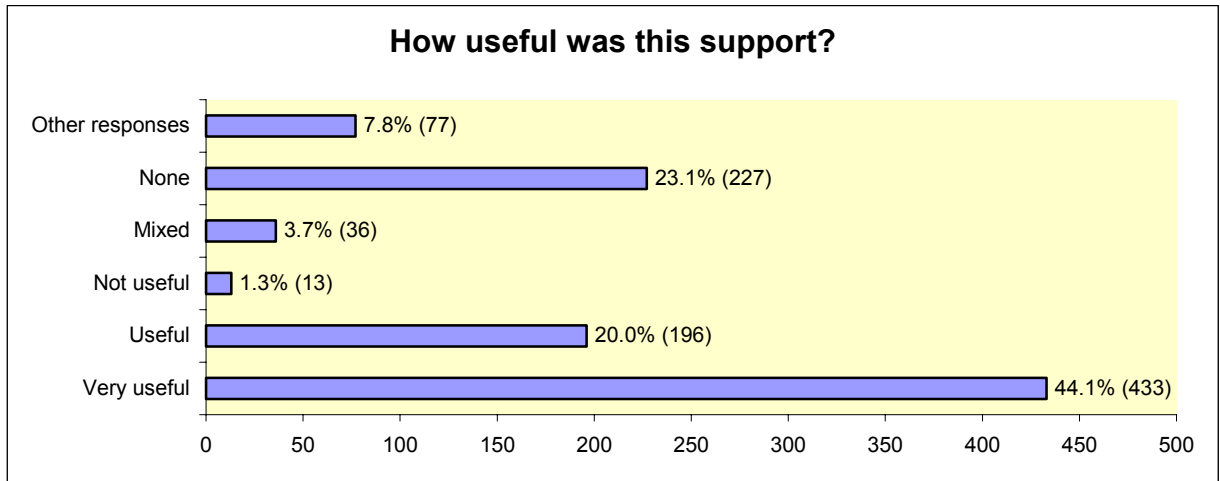


Almost one third of respondents received no support, often because they did not need or request it. About a half of respondents say they received general advice, which is more than twice the percentage of those receiving specific advice.

Organising support to a large number of small and in some cases highly specialist projects is a demanding task. Award partners have responded with different delivery models to standardise advice, for instance:

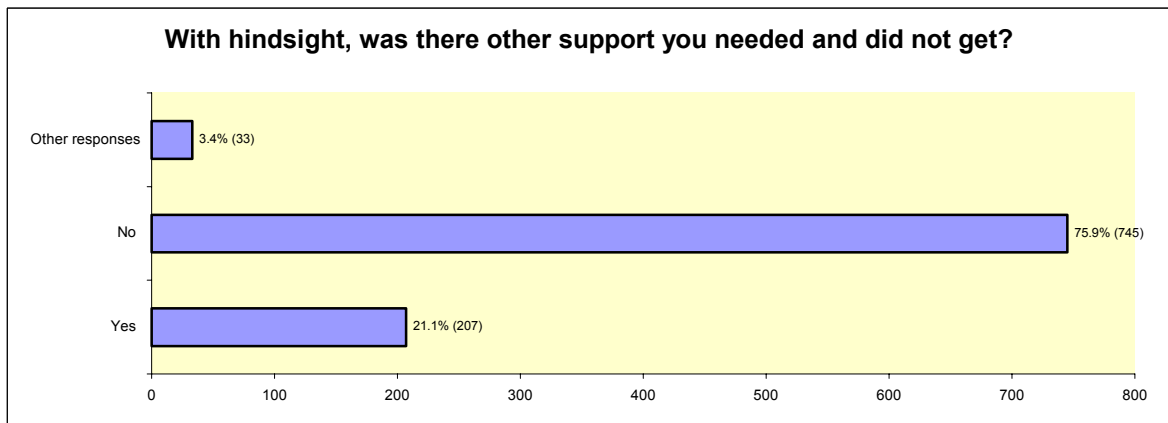
- Group training workshops e.g. CAFOD.
- A website addressing common queries e.g. Help the Aged.
- Written information e.g. Family Learning.
- Taking responsibility for aspects of project organisation, for instance travel arrangements e.g. Earthwatch, CAFOD.
- Mentoring e.g. Saying Power, MENCAP.

There is some diversity within these categories. For example, mentoring ranges from telephone counselling at one extreme all the way to detailed help with paperwork, motivation when recipients become dispirited (an example being where an interviewee suffered a family bereavement) and doing the market research for the project.



Award recipients tend to be highly satisfied with whatever help they receive. Less than 2% describe the support as not useful. More than 60% describe it as useful or very useful. This seems to be in part because there is no clear framework for expectations. Some award partners were very active and individuals expected more. Other partners did very little and individuals expected nothing. In some cases award recipients seem to have decided that award partners are too busy or remote (e.g. London-based) to be expected to provide detailed guidance. Where partners are not regionally based, they might not be the natural agency to provide support.

Notwithstanding this, we believe that the support element of Millennium Awards could be strengthened to build on good practice. The greatest satisfaction (ratings of “very useful” rather than “useful”) tends to apply to specialist rather than general advice.



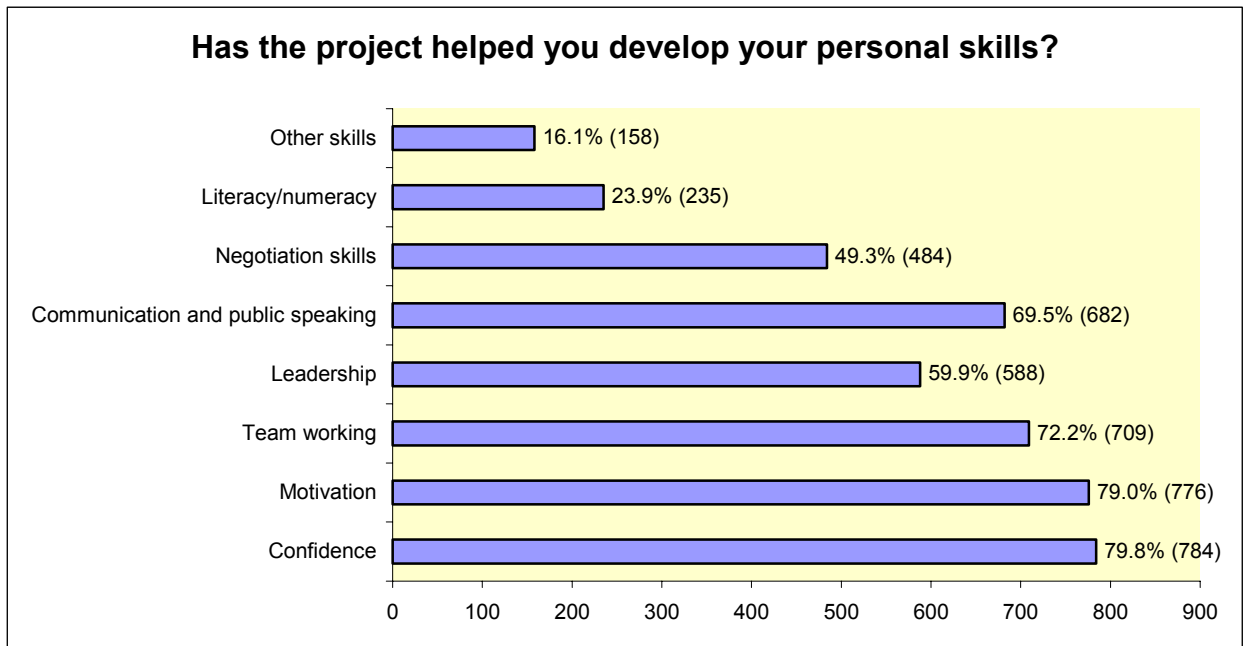
Three-quarters of respondents say that there was no additional support that they needed and did not receive. Again, this seems to reflect in part award recipients’ initiative and independence. Award recipients do not always see the need for support, even when their project hits problems. Their main feeling is gratitude for the Millennium Award funding, coupled with determination to succeed.

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Only one fifth of respondents describe additional support that they needed. This is a relatively small percentage but the answers are insightful. Potential support falls into nine categories:

- More information on Millennium Awards. Several interviewees wanted to know more about the eligibility criteria and amounts available. Partners were not always clear on these matters.
- Help with paperwork such as how to claim the money, keeping receipts, budgets and returns. Award recipients wanted more information on what they were allowed to do with the grant, how to claim the money etc. A number of interviewees had difficulty opening a bank account and wanted additional guidance.
- More money. Some interviewees under-estimated the costs of their projects and would have liked help with budgeting.
- Greater flexibility. Some interviewees had problems with the timetables set for their projects, the staging of payments and the categories of eligibility. Linked to these, a couple mentioned the need for faster processing of payment.
- More direction. A small number of grant recipients wanted award partners to help them structure their projects, in particular to help them with project planning and time keeping. This is linked to a more general problem, that of award recipients taking on too much or exhausting themselves.
- More time from the award partner. Some interviewees felt that their mentors were too busy, inexperienced, distant (relying on telephone calls or not local) or lacking in continuity (through staff changes).
- More specialist or practical information. Two particular categories of advice were mentioned: fund raising and promotion/marketing. In addition, individuals had specific needs, for instance, what to do in a crisis, how to organise childcare for participants.
- Mediation. Several of the projects were filling gaps left by councils or other agencies and inadvertently found themselves in direct conflict with local officials. They would have benefited greatly from an external body, especially one with the credibility and weight of the Millennium Commission, helping to resolve these differences.
- Networking. Several interviewees describe themselves as struggling alone. They would like more recognition. There is a widespread desire to have contact with other award winners during the project. The evaluators could see many common interests between projects that could produce synergy or mutual support.

## Personal Impact



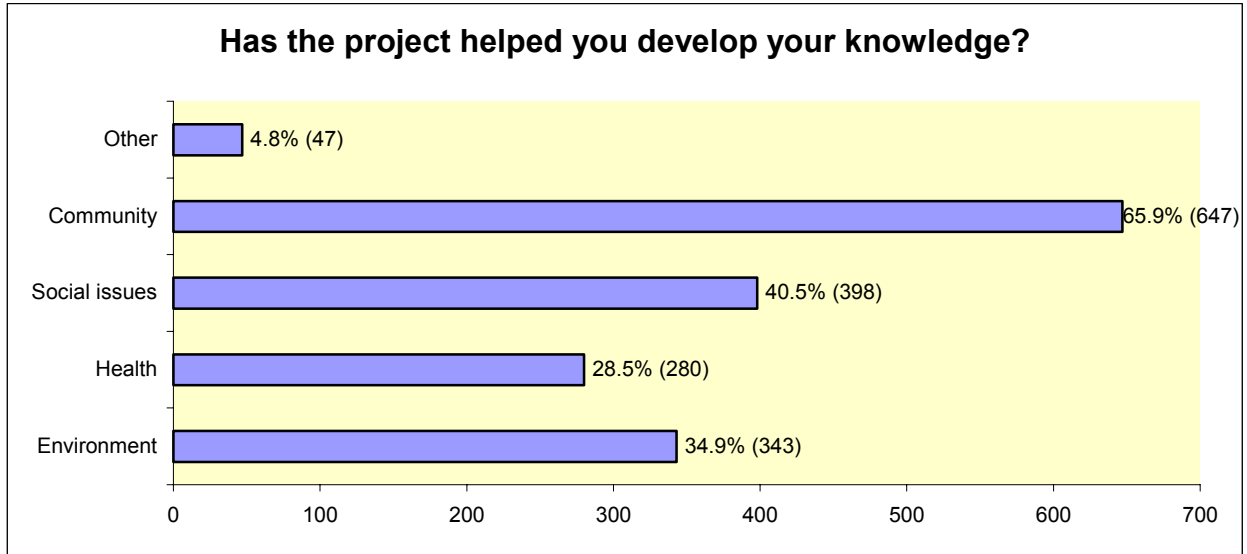
Millennium Awards are particularly successful in developing recipients' personal skills. Almost 80% of respondents say that their project improved their confidence or motivation. Team working skills, communication skills and leadership are also developed by the majority of participants. One fifth of respondents say that their literacy or numeracy skills were enhanced. This figure is surprisingly high and reflects cases where respondents feel that their writing and arithmetic are rusty through lack of use. The results are an endorsement of the policy of encouraging lifelong learning and demonstrate that early skills need to be reinforced and developed throughout life.

The "other" category attracted responses relating to patience, tolerance, self awareness, and assertiveness. Interviewees also mentioned problem solving and time keeping, which are implied under communication and planning headings.

The chart only refers to "yes" responses. There are a number of different reasons for interviewees to say that the project did not develop their personal skills:

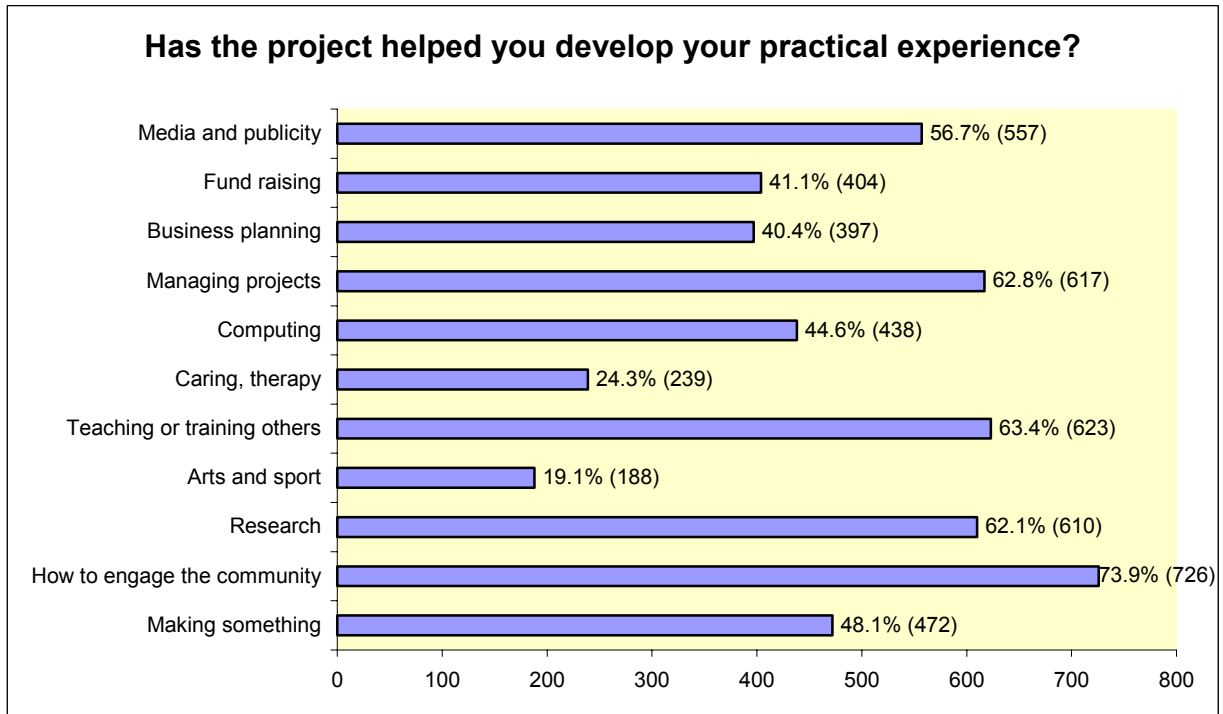
- They already had these skills.
- The project is not finished and it is too early to say.
- The project was not of the kind where these skills could be developed.

That so many respondents gave positive answers – when there were good reasons why the question might not be applicable - is an endorsement of the value of Millennium Awards.



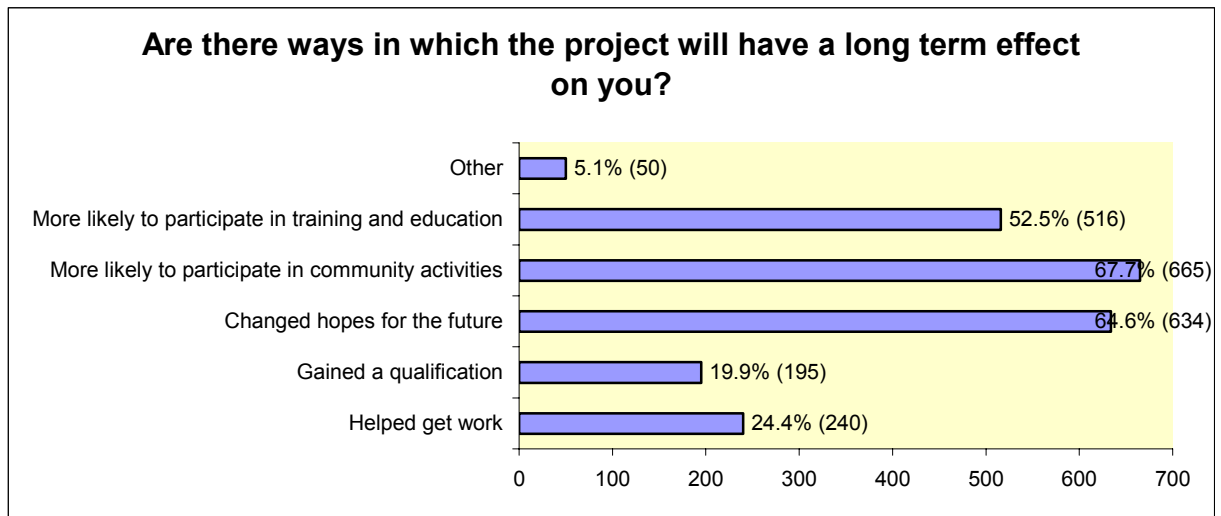
Millennium Awards have a more focused role in developing award recipients’ knowledge. Over 60% increase knowledge of the community, with a smaller percentage learning about social issues, the environment, and health. These figures reflect the specialist nature of individual projects and award schemes.

The “other” category mainly refers to institutional areas like benefits systems, law and how different agencies work. As mentioned above, Millennium Awards are often filling in gaps from public sector services.

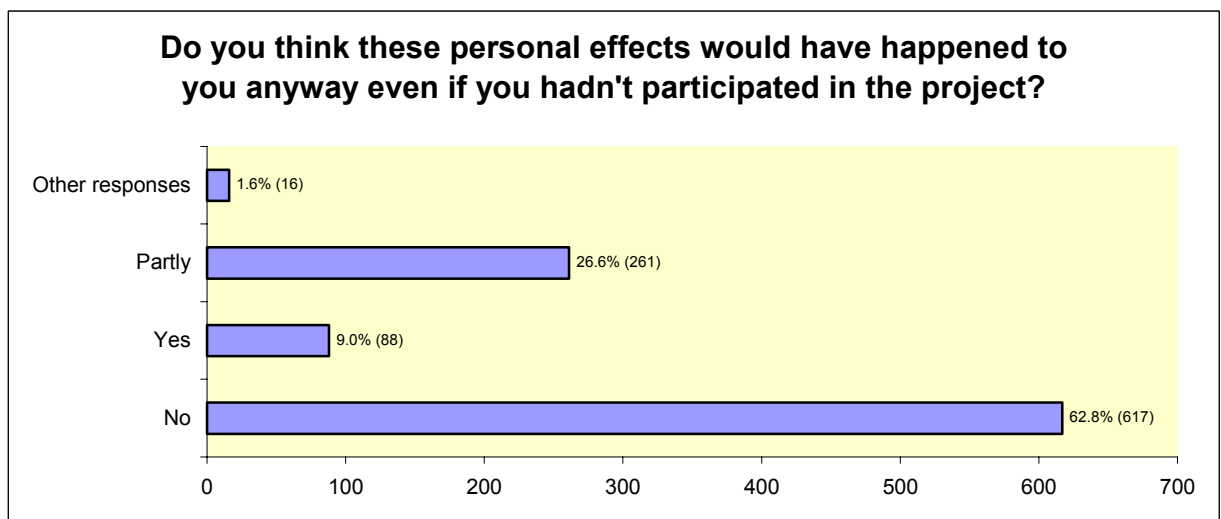


Millennium Awards enable recipients to engage in a practical way with their local community and chosen issues. The experiences most commonly gained through a Millennium Award are all outward looking: engaging the community, teaching or

training others, managing projects, media and publicity. More particular experiences involve making something, computing, business planning, fund raising, caring or therapy, art or sport.



The long-term effect of a Millennium Award is manifest. The majority of interviewees say that they are more likely to take part in community activities, have higher hopes for the future, and are more likely to participate in training or education. Between one fifth and a quarter gained a qualification or work from the project, figures which reflect the number of interviewees who were already in employment, retired, or not looking for jobs because of ill health.



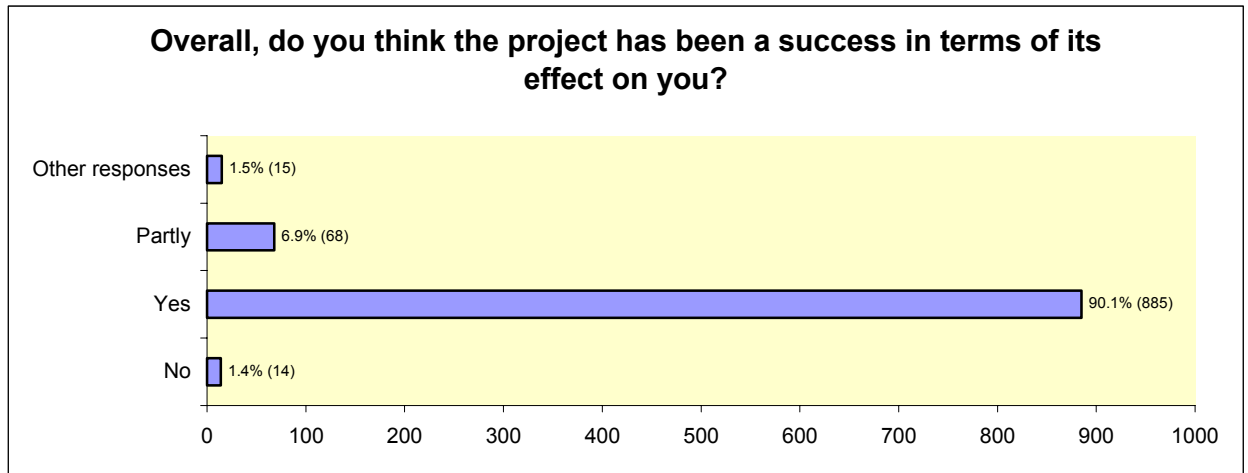
More than 60% of interviewees say that they do not believe these personal effects would have happened without the Millennium Award project, illustrating high additionality.

One quarter think that the effects would have been partly achieved without the project because:

- Their determination would have ensured they found a route.

- They are in jobs and could have found other ways of developing the skills, knowledge or experience.

In most cases, interviewees emphasise that the effects would have been weaker or would have taken much longer to achieve without the Millennium Award.



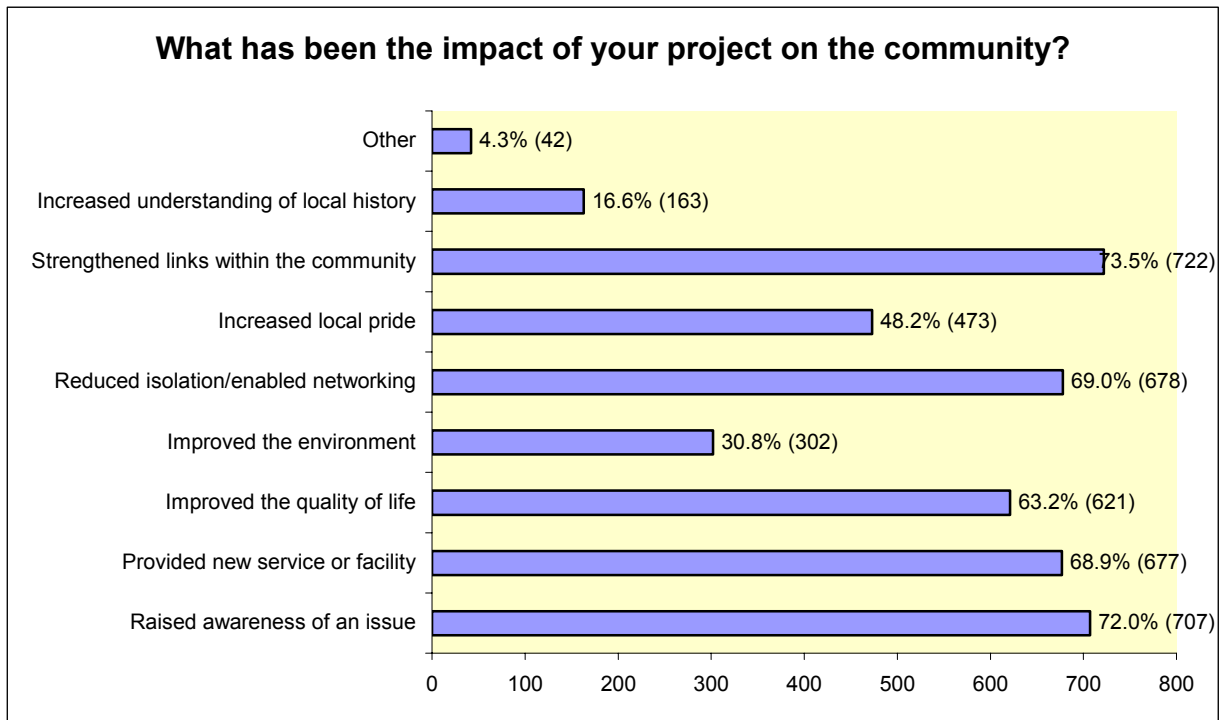
More than 90% of interviewees feel that their project is a success in terms of its effect on them. Only 1.5% say that it has not been a success. The main reasons for negative responses are because of problems experienced with the project or because of the amount of work involved. Seven per cent say that the success has been partial, mainly because the project has not yet finished.

There are several different mechanisms whereby Millennium Awards achieve their personal effects:

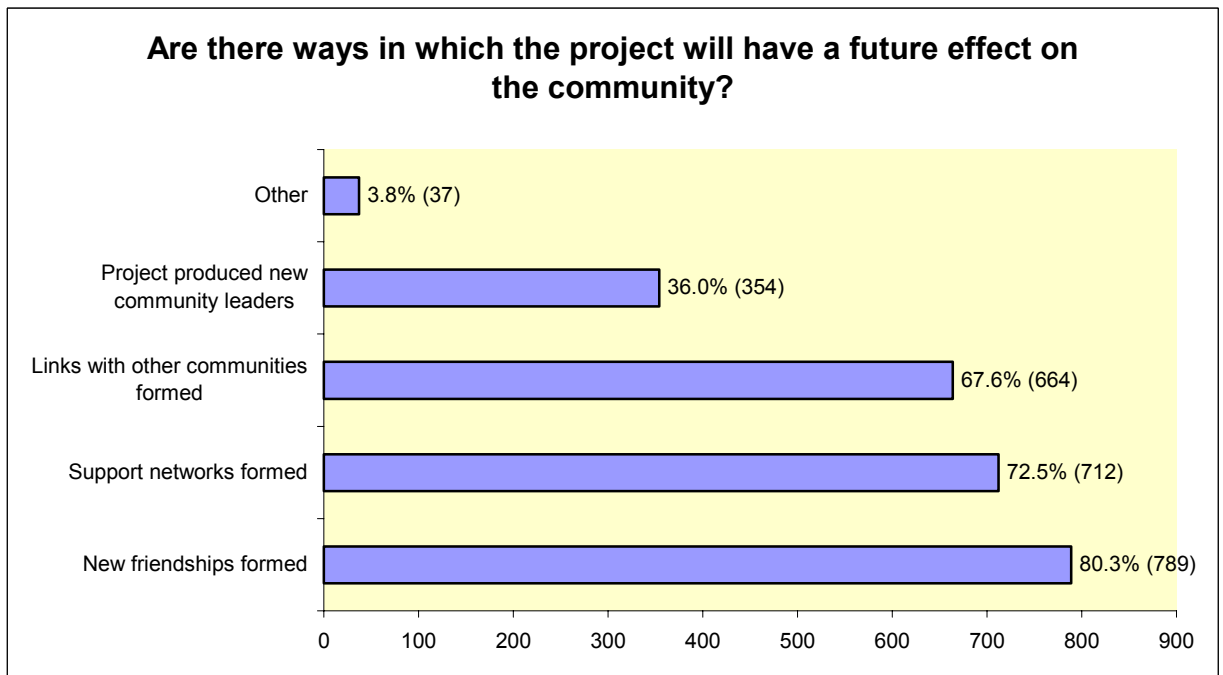
- Presenting challenges - whether physical, educational, organisational, or practical.
- Providing learning experiences - whether through international travel or local networking.
- Confirming beliefs - for instance about the need for a particular service.
- Giving recognition - including media appearances or presentations to official bodies.
- Providing equipment or materials to allow projects to go ahead.

These are sufficiently powerful to produce major personal transformations within a relatively short time and budget.

## Community Impact

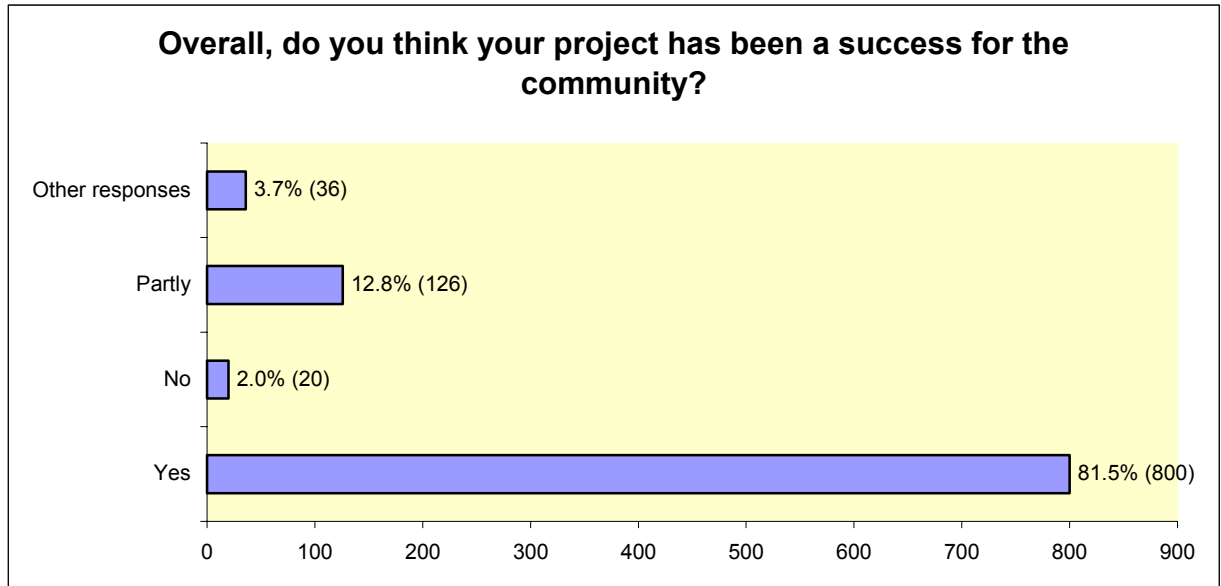


Millennium Awards are particularly successful at strengthening links within the community, raising awareness of issues and reducing isolation. A large number of award recipients have used their grant to provide a new service or facility, or to improve the quality of life for the community. More specialist effects are increasing local pride, improving the environment and increasing understanding of local history.



As evidence of these effects, the majority of interviewees feel that their project resulted in new friendships, new support networks and links with other communities.

The percentage of respondents who think that their project created new community leaders is smaller, partly because they did not want to nominate themselves, and partly because the concept of leadership is contrary to the spirit of sharing and participation that they wish to evoke.



More than 80% of award recipients feel that their project is a success for the community.

Those answering “no” or “partly” are saying that:

- There is always more to be done.
- It is too early to say. The project is not finished, or its effects have yet to filter down.
- The interviewee does not have the information to know whether the desired effect was achieved, for instance where the community element was abroad.
- The issue is too large to expect an immediate impact. Environmental projects are particularly likely to elicit this response. Sustained activity is necessary.
- Personal circumstances, such as moving out of the area, reduced the impact.

There were very few failed projects, but these could be used to suggest wider lessons:

- Some individuals started with a strong conviction that a service or project was needed and subsequently discovered that this was not the case. In one instance a comparable service had opened a few months earlier but the award recipient had not carried out market research that would have revealed this. The application process could provide more support and guidance for applicants in measuring the demand for their projects.

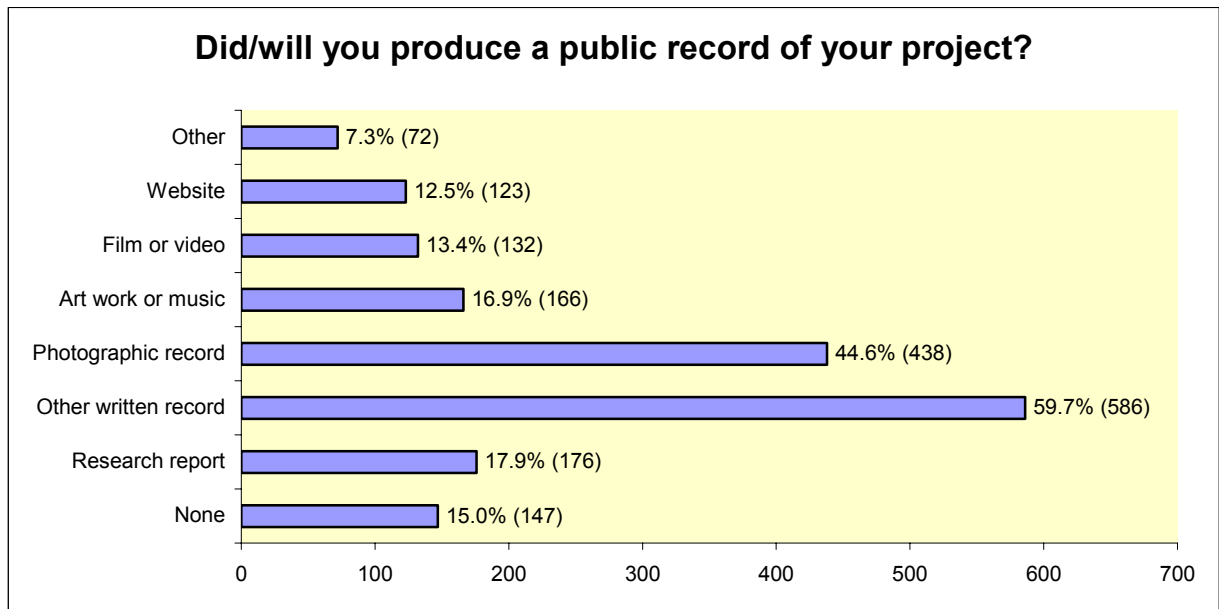
- Some individual projects (e.g. personal development) do not have an immediate community benefit. There is a risk of award recipients concentrating on the first half of their project rather than the community side.
- Some projects were too small or short to achieve an effect. Sustained activity is essential.
- A couple of respondents failed to engage the community. Disillusionment and alienation were too great for one individual to overcome.

That so few projects appear to have suffered from such problems reflects the energy and commitment of the individuals funded. A programme of small grants like Millennium Awards is in large measure dependent on the good will of the award recipients.

Evidence of the success of projects includes:

- High media coverage.
- Interest from Government agencies, councils or other organisations wanting to support the project after the Millennium Award has run out.
- Interest from other areas wanting to replicate the project.
- A strong local desire for continuation or extension of the project.

### Scale of Involvement in the Project



Most interviewees have or will produce a public record of their project. These include newsletters, information leaflets, resource packs, training handbooks, evaluation reports, exhibitions, posters, newsletters, plays, videos of art events, scientific papers, articles for the parish magazine, television documentaries, a wall planner, archives of photographic material, a paper lobbying government, time capsules, anthologies. The most common record is “other written”, which tends to refer to practical media such

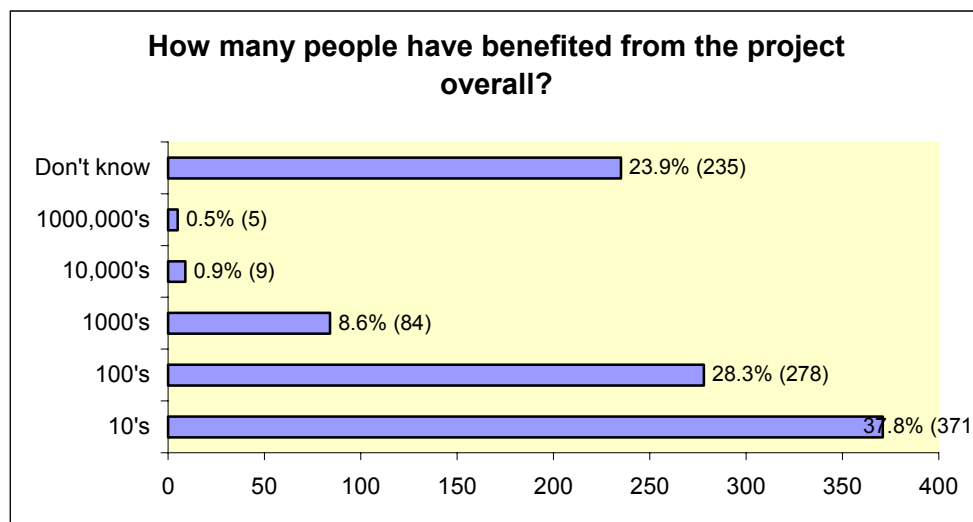
as information packs or leaflets. The public record is an intrinsic part of the community benefit.

The “other” category in the chart refers to gardens, physical regeneration, slide shows, CD roms, plays, poetry and diaries.

The exception to this generalisation that projects create a public record is those which are for personal training projects such as those of the Community Foundation.

Where individuals do not produce a public record, there are often strong reasons for this. Some say they “didn’t want to blow their own trumpet”. Others are dealing with sensitive issues that they do not want their own employers or the wider media to pick up (e.g. mental illness). In many cases, publicity is the last part of the project or something for which the award recipient is dependent on the award partner and so has not happened yet.

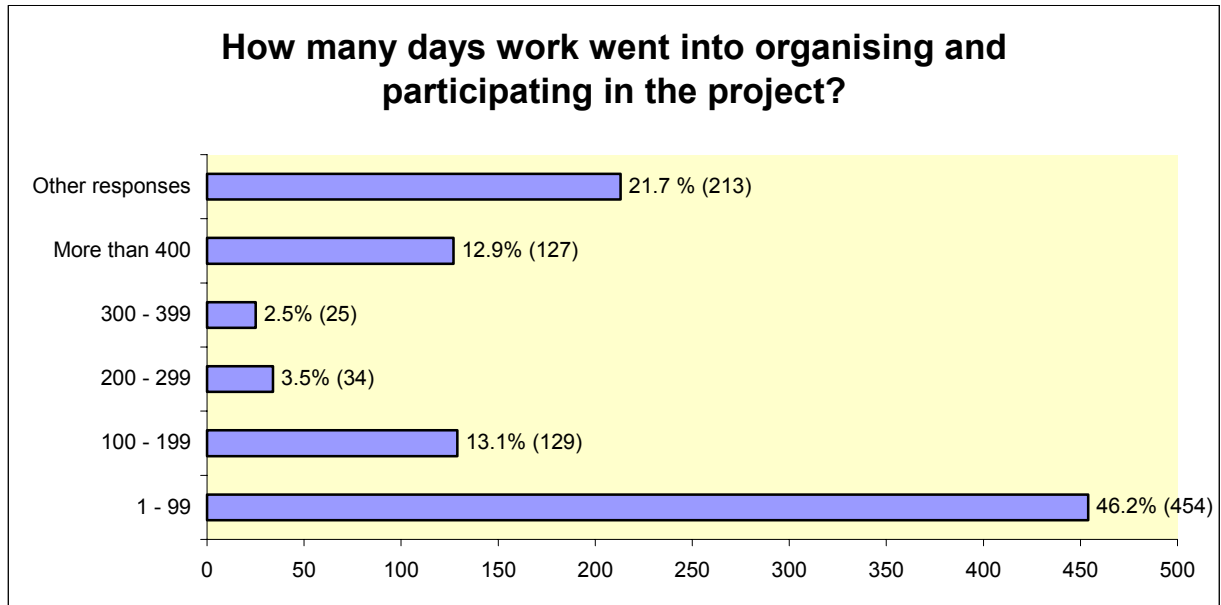
We asked for information on the number and character of people benefiting from the project. A high percentage of interviewees could not answer the question. Collection of statistics (e.g. distribution figures of media coverage) is not a high priority to award recipients. The Millennium Commission could improve the quality of data through providing guidance or instruction.



The figures that we do have suggest that participation varies widely between projects. Some award participants worked with under a hundred people and some with thousands. The average is that 2-3,000 people participated in each of the projects directly, some two million people across the 750 projects that gave a response. Media coverage is more difficult to judge because respondents did not know the readership of the local and national press. Some 300 respondents say they received some kind of media coverage, which adds up to an audience of roughly 33 million people.

Success cannot be judged on numbers alone. One interviewee emphasised that the project was “a small community but a great success.” In some cases numbers are small because projects are targeted at special groups such as disabled children. The

strength of Millennium Awards is its mix of very wide and very deep benefits across the project portfolio.



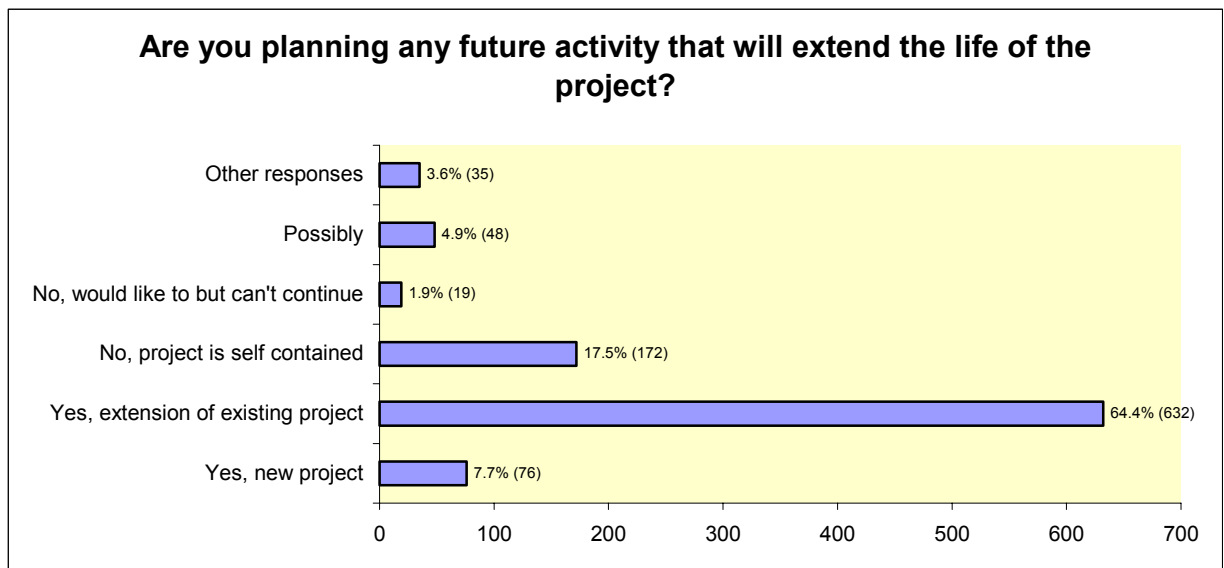
Figures for time spent on the project were easier to obtain but still incomplete. Interviewees often gave estimates rather than actual figures for this question because:

- Most have not kept records.
- Some projects are long and therefore figures rely on recall.
- In some cases project activity is not easily separable from other activities, whether work or leisure.
- A significant number of projects have not yet finished.

The rough average across the portfolio is that award recipients spent 144 days, equivalent to 1,000 working hours on their project. This would suggest that once the 40,000 projects are finished the total voluntary input across the Millennium Awards programme could equal some 40 million hours.

The time spent on projects is typically more for services, training, and visits abroad, and less for events.

## The Future of the Project



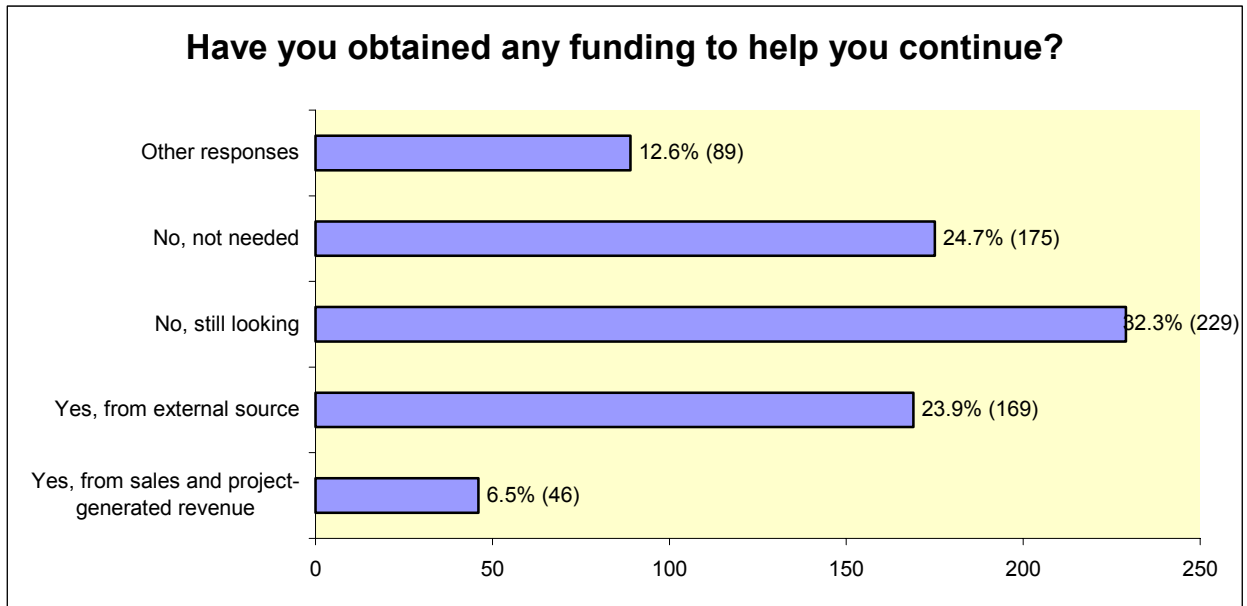
More than 70% of interviewees are planning to continue with their projects, usually through extending activity rather than establishing a new project. This is an enormous endorsement of the personal satisfaction gained from the project and the interest from the local community.

Most services are not self-contained. The activity, emotion, connections or knowledge generated by a project tend to demand follow on work. There are many reasons why award recipients feel they should continue:

- A service that has been successful in the short term is likely to have tapped into a continuing need. For instance, projects that are about reducing isolation invariably result in the need for a permanent group or organisation (a fathers' group, a science group, a youth club, a new charity or local history group).
- Community activity in itself sometimes results in a general desire for a permanent building or focal point (such as a club or village hall).
- Services naturally unfold. High demand calls for wider or deeper delivery. For instance, establishing a support group might lead to a desire for a database of services, a self-help video, information packs or fund raising events to support other groups etc.
- Award recipients feel inspired and therefore motivated towards further activity. For example, research or training often leads into a desire for more detailed research or more specialised training.
- The success of a play leads to a desire for publicity or marketing to extend the audience. An international exchange results in invitations to give presentations and talks.
- Many projects can be replicated in other areas or other circumstances. Award recipients are made aware of this either through media coverage or interest

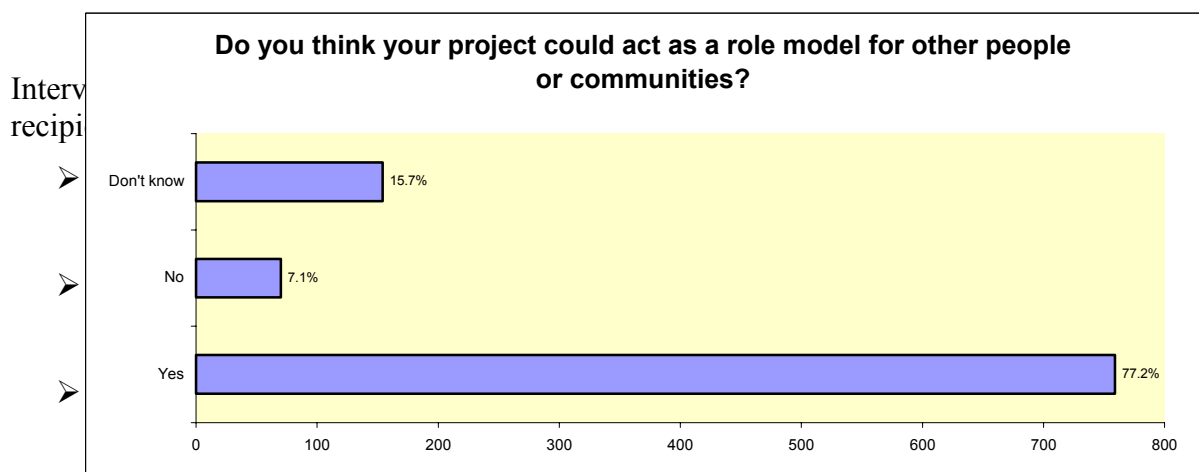
from other organisations and want to be involved in replicating or rolling out their projects.

- Environmental improvements have a continuing need for maintenance. Websites also have a need for updating and renewal.



A quarter of interviewees have already obtained external funding to extend their projects. A similar percentage does not need external funding typically because the work can be carried on voluntarily or as part of employment. One third are still looking for money.

**General Lessons**



- Clarifying expectations. Ensure everyone involved is as committed as you.
- Support. Share information and use the help out there. There will be more work than you think.

- 
- Participation. Involve the community target group from the very start of the project. Maintain interest through ensuring short-term results and a high quality product.
  - Planning. Leave time for organising the project. Think it through before starting. Make the best of the opportunities.
  - Demand. Do market research first. Do not assume a need. If you need help with research, seek outside support to help you with the research first.

## Conclusions

Our social impact study suggests that the Millennium Awards programme has been a notable success. The vast majority of award recipients can demonstrate that their projects have achieved their personal aspirations and those of the community. This success is in large measure due to the skills and dedication of the award recipients. It also speaks of the value and relevance of the objectives and flexibility of Millennium Awards. The programme has tapped a vast reserve of energy and commitment in local communities. In some cases, award recipients are tackling issues of national or even international significance.

As with any programme, there is scope for improvement. In the view of the evaluators, the following eight areas could be strengthened:

- Networking. The structure of Millennium Awards is fragmented. While this has its strengths in allowing projects to be customised there is now scope for the Millennium Commission to develop an overview of the programme. This could involve putting award recipients or partners in touch with those working in similar ways or areas. For instance, projects often share objectives (for instance campaigns to promote positive images of disability or mental health). Award recipients express a strong desire to meet others carrying out similar projects both during the process as well as afterwards.
- Information. The Millennium Commission could extend its information provision. The awards database would benefit from having fields for key words. These could relate to issues (e.g. bereavement, popularising science), approaches (e.g. community theatre, websites) objectives (e.g. campaigns) and character (e.g. cross generational projects). Information on participants in projects could be improved through issuing guidance to award recipients about how and why to keep records.
- Evaluation. Award partners are starting to carry out their own evaluations. The Millennium Commission could perform a valuable function in providing expert advice in this specialist area. This would save the award partners time, raise the standard of what is done, and ensure some level of consistency between analysis.
- Support to award recipients. The activities of award partners could be strengthened, building on best practice. Although award recipients do not have high expectations of support, many suffer from exhaustion during or after their projects. Additional help could improve the quality of the projects and of the

individuals' experience. Some areas of specialist advice (e.g. fund raising) could be organised across partners by the Millennium Commission or by one of the partners with existing expertise.

- **Publicity.** The Millennium Commission is missing opportunities to promote itself and its participants. Some of the projects are very newsworthy and award recipients would benefit from a relatively small input to help them ensure media coverage.
- **Appraisal.** The application process could be tightened in one area, that of checking demand for projects.
- **Continuity.** The majority of award recipients wish to extend their projects and many of these need additional funding. This issue needs to be raised and the options discussed.