

## City Bridge Trust – Monitoring Visit Report

<b>Organisation:</b> Somali Youth Development Resource Centre (SYDRC)	<b>Grant ref:</b> 9933 (Tim Wilson)	<b>Programme area:</b> 02. Bridging Communities\ a Leadership initiatives
<b>Amount, date and purpose of grant:</b> 08/07/2010: £73,500 over three years (£24,000; £24,500; £25,000) towards the salary and associated running costs of a programme to develop the leadership skills of young Somali people and other young people in the LB Camden.		
<b>Visiting Grants Officer:</b> John Merivale	<b>Date of meeting:</b> 21 <sup>st</sup> February 2012	
<b>Met with:</b> Ibrahim Isse, Director; Abdiwahab Ali, Youth Development Worker		
<b>1. Introduction to the organisation:</b> <p>The Somali Youth Development Resource Centre (SYDRC) was established in 2000 to support Somali young people through the provision of advice and information, and to encourage their personal development and realise their potential.</p> <p>Its main activities include an on-going advice service which is enhanced by: occasional specialist sessions and workshops on relevant issues; a programme of social and leisure activities targeting both young men and young women; outreach work with young people at risk of offending or involved in the criminal justice system; work with schools to raise educational attainment, coupled with an annual educational achievement awards event; and awareness raising and partnership working through agencies such as the Metropolitan Police, the Home office and the Greater London Assembly.</p>		
<b>2. The project funded:</b> <p>This is a three year project to build on and extend SYDRC’s existing work with a leadership programme bringing together young Somalis with other young people in Camden, to provide them with the skills to become future leaders and ambassadors.</p> <p>The project was sparked particularly by a high-level conference organised by SYDRC in 2008. Attendees included the then Minister of State for Security, Counter-Terrorism, Crime and Policing; the Assistant Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police and the Deputy Mayor of London. It was also attended by over 150 young Somali people and was an opportunity to identify their needs. The conference confirmed that the young Somali community feels isolated from mainstream society, many have experienced racial discrimination, and many disaffected youth are vulnerable to gang culture, drugs and radicalism. At the same time, however, most of them want to be active citizens and help to make their neighbourhoods safer.</p> <p>To enable this to happen, the young people felt it was important to build dialogue between themselves and statutory authorities to represent their views. It was also felt they needed role models, and a structure of alternative options to gang culture.</p> <p>The project works with a cohort of 20 young people each year - approximately two-third of these being Somali, and the remainder from the wider community. SYDRC already had close links with youth projects based at Kentish town Community Centre,</p>		

for example, as well as a local Bangladeshi youth group. The cohort takes part in a comprehensive programme that aims to develop leadership skills and increase understanding of each other's communities. It encourages them to get involved in youth-led, local community action initiatives and to take up volunteering opportunities. As an extra incentive, there is also an award at the end of the year.

The project is being clearly accounted for, and pay details for the Youth Development Worker were seen. Payroll is operated by Voluntary Action Camden.

### **3. Work delivered to date:**

From an overall target of 60 over the three years, 19 young people have been recruited in Year 1 onto the leadership programme – 12 males and 7 females. To date, they have had:

- Six sessions of peer to peer support
- One leadership workshop
- One career jobs fair
- One CV and interview techniques workshop

Further, awareness workshops have been held for parents, teachers and siblings on: Crime – signs and symptoms of gang or criminal behaviour; Exclusion – how criminal behaviour may be linked to low level educational attainment; and Self-esteem and Empowerment – dealing with role models, higher education and career advice.

The organisation is also particularly proud of having held an event to discuss the health implications of fasting for Ramadan, and an educational achievement awards event; and of having attended a Youth Meeting at 10 Downing Street.

### **4. Difference made:**

The first year's report noted positive changes, but would have benefitted from more explanation of how the particular activities may have helped to generate these. On the other hand, the feedback from participants is more revealing: some participants have clearly articulated the changes in their views of horizons, personal possibilities and self-belief: *"I am an ex-offender, and ..... I now feel brave enough to seek employment....."* *Without this project I would have been prepared to stay in my comfort zone, but.."* Critical to these responses have been the process of learning from peers, and meeting people from other cultures. Football too has proven to be a vital way to draw in the harder-to-reach males.

SYDRC has now been working with Nick Price from City University, specifically on marketing the organisation and on how to report better – together they have designed a new monitoring and evaluation system.

### **5. Concluding comments:**

SYDRC is a well-run project which prides itself in involving young people in its management and development. Three participants have become trustees – the oldest Board member is currently 26, and the policy is to step down at age 30. Indeed, it claims to be the only fully youth-led organisation in Camden.

The organisation has continuing support from Camden Council, BBC Children in Need, and Metropolitan Police.

It will be interesting to watch whether the support from City University will result in clearer demonstration of results, and thus further success with funding.