

**South Yorkshire Funding Advice Bureau**

**Impact Assessment 2005  
South Yorkshire Coalfields**

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**funded by**



Renewing Communities, Touching Lives

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for South Yorkshire Funding Advice Bureau

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- the Coalfields Regeneration Trust for providing funding for the project.

Thanks to all of the above, the research has made a valuable step towards understanding the impact of SYFAB's work in the South Yorkshire Coalfields.

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## Members of the project's Steering Group

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## Executive Summary

### The project

1. The aim of the project was to provide an assessment of the impact of the work of the South Yorkshire Funding Advice Bureau (SYFAB) in the coalfields areas of South Yorkshire (the three local authority areas of Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham). The project was funded by the Coalfields Regeneration Trust, and independent researchers Dr Steve Webster and Teresa Tinklin were commissioned by SYFAB to carry out the research.
2. The impact assessment was designed to provide a number of different strands of evidence. These comprised two different categories of material:
  - (a) First, an analysis of existing evidence concerning SYFAB's work, including feedback from users about specific services.
  - (b) Secondly, a survey of two groups of people well placed to provide feedback on the impact of SYFAB's work. These comprised: (i) voluntary and community groups that use SYFAB's services, and (ii) other key stakeholders with a knowledge of SYFAB's work and the difference that it makes.

### Impact

3. The research found a wealth of evidence to show that the work of SYFAB has a considerable impact on the voluntary and community sector in the coalfields areas of Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham. This impact operates in a variety of ways across the different services that SYFAB provides.
4. SYFAB provides a wide range of services which provide funding information, advice and training to voluntary and community groups in the coalfields areas. These comprise: the information service; development support; training courses, workshops and events; the newsletter (Funding News); information sheets; and the SYFAB website.
5. Large numbers of groups use these services. For example, between January 2003 and December 2004, 1173 different groups / organisations used one of the following SYFAB services: information service; contact with development worker; attendance at a training course, meeting or event. Overall, more groups in Barnsley and Rotherham use these services than in Doncaster.
6. In the survey of SYFAB users, a high proportion of groups reported some success with funding applications. 78% of groups had made successful funding bids since contacting SYFAB, while 22% had either made no bids or had no success with bids.
7. Overall, groups reported that substantial sums had been raised from successful funding bids since contacting SYFAB. For example, those participating in the survey reported that a total sum of over £4.03 million had been raised between January 2003 and March 2005 (and this is by no means a comprehensive figure). (N.B. it is **not** claimed that this sum has been raised as a direct result of SYFAB's services.)
8. A high proportion of groups reported that they found SYFAB's services helpful in assisting them to make funding applications. For example, 65% of groups regarded its services as either 'essential' (21%) or 'very helpful' (44%) in this respect. (This figure was significantly higher in Barnsley than in either Doncaster or Rotherham.)
9. When asked about the impact of SYFAB's work, most groups said that the Bureau's services had made a difference to them. 47% of groups reported either a 'major difference' or a 'significant difference', while a further 37% reported some difference. Those who had made successful funding

bids since contacting SYFAB were more likely to report that SYFAB's services had made a difference to them – 57% of these reported either a major or significant difference. Indeed, many described in detail how the support of SYFAB had impacted on their group and its activities.

## Future needs

10. The survey also explored the future needs of voluntary and community groups for funding information, advice and training. The responses from both service users and other key stakeholders indicate a continuing need for SYFAB's work in the future. For example, when asked about the key needs for their group in the future, a very significant (sometimes overwhelming) majority of SYFAB users saw each of the following as important:

- Access to information about funding
- Regular newsletters on funding
- Practical help with form filling or advice about funders
- Training courses / events on funding
- Easy to access online resources

11. Overall, people would like SYFAB to both continue and expand its current range of services. People like the services that are currently provided by the Bureau, and would like to see additional staff resources for a more comprehensive service.

12. The feedback from both users and other stakeholders on future needs suggests that there is no need for any fundamental reorientation of SYFAB's current strategy of supporting voluntary and community groups on three fronts simultaneously:

- (a) providing information about funding in various forms (e.g. the information service, Funding News and the website);
- (b) providing groups with practical support and advice (via locally-based development workers);
- (c) providing training courses, workshops and other events concerned with funding.

## The SYFAB model and the future

13. There is substantial evidence that the model of service delivery currently adopted by SYFAB is very effective in supporting the fundraising efforts of voluntary and community groups in the South Yorkshire Coalfields. Key features of this model include:

- Working effectively both sub-regionally and locally. SYFAB successfully delivers services throughout South Yorkshire – in the Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham areas, as well as in Sheffield.
- Providing an interconnected package of services – which users can tailor to their needs.
- Meeting the needs of smaller community groups, particularly those facing disadvantage.

14. The positive feedback in the survey from many service users is no cause for complacency. It is clear that while many users strongly value the support which they receive from SYFAB, that is by no means the end of the story. Many groups want SYFAB to provide even more – such as more access to local development workers, faster access to information about potential funders and more tailored information relevant to their own needs. For example, the present lack of a development worker post in Doncaster – due to a lack of funding – is a significant gap in SYFAB's services.

15. SYFAB's capacity to meet the needs of voluntary and community groups is constrained by its present level (and security) of funding. It is clear that increased financial resources are needed to enable the Bureau to meet the very real needs of groups, particularly those with modest resources. To meet this challenge SYFAB needs to enter into discussions with key strategic funders, including the local authorities, to ensure that its funding is secure.

## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1 The project**

The aim of the project was to provide an assessment of the impact of the work of the South Yorkshire Funding Advice Bureau (SYFAB) in the coalfields areas of South Yorkshire. This encompassed the three local authority areas of Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham. In particular the research explored: what difference has SYFAB made to the voluntary and community groups that use its services?

Independent researchers Dr Steve Webster and Teresa Tinklin were commissioned by SYFAB to carry out the research. The work was overseen by a small steering group comprising: Jane Leathley (Director of SYFAB), Rob Macmillan (Chair of the SYFAB Management Committee), Caroline Burns (Barnsley Funding Development Worker), Ian Paisley (Rotherham Funding Development Worker) and Louise Mycroft (Management Committee member). The project was funded by the Coalfields Regeneration Trust.

This report examines the impact of SYFAB's work as a whole – across the range of different services which it provides.

### **Background to the need for an impact assessment**

SYFAB has been delivering funding information, advice and training services to local community and voluntary groups across South Yorkshire since 1990. In recent years it has had one full time Funding Development worker dedicated to each of the coalfield areas of South Yorkshire – Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham.<sup>1</sup> SYFAB has also delivered accredited training across the coalfields areas since 1999.

A lot of change and development has taken place in these communities in the last five years or so, especially in relation to the community and voluntary sector. These areas have had several years of regeneration funding through SRB and Objective One which the sector has exploited, with varying levels of success. As these major regeneration schemes come to the end of their life, it seemed sensible for the Bureau to carry out an assessment of the impact of its services within these communities, and their likely need for funding advice and information services in the future.

### **Assessing impact – the approach**

In designing this impact assessment project we sought to provide a number of different strands of evidence. These comprised two different categories of material:

- (c) First, we drew on existing evidence about SYFAB's work, including feedback from users about specific services.
- (d) Secondly, we undertook a survey of two groups of people well placed to provide feedback on the impact of SYFAB's work: (i) voluntary and community groups that use SYFAB's services, and (ii) other key stakeholders with knowledge of SYFAB's work and the difference that it makes.

The survey work in particular was designed to collect both quantitative and qualitative evidence of the impact of SYFAB's work. At the core of this we were keen to investigate the experiences of the groups that use SYFAB's services.

This report presents these different strands of evidence in the following way:

- In Section 2 we look at the numbers of groups that use SYFAB's services – presenting information from SYFAB's user database and other sources.
- Section 3 provides an analysis of existing data and of previous evaluations which have looked at specific aspects of SYFAB's work.
- Section 4 presents the detailed findings of the 2005 survey of SYFAB users which was undertaken specifically for this impact assessment. At the core of this is feedback from people on how useful SYFAB's services have been and what differences they have made to their group.
- Section 5 presents the findings of the 2005 survey of key stakeholders which was undertaken in tandem with the user survey. This includes their views on the impact of SYFAB's work and the future needs for funding information, advice and training.
- Finally, in Section 6, we draw together a summary of the key findings of the impact assessment.

## 1.2 An overview of SYFAB

The South Yorkshire Funding Advice Bureau (SYFAB) is a voluntary sector support agency set up to help local community and voluntary groups to get the funding they need. It is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity, with a voluntary management committee. Any community or voluntary group in South Yorkshire can become a member, which means they can vote at general meetings and stand for election to the Bureau's management committee.

SYFAB provides free information, advice and training on funding and fundraising for local community and voluntary groups. The Bureau tries to influence funders and decision makers to improve the funding environment for local groups.

SYFAB is committed to improving access to resources for smaller community and voluntary groups, especially those facing disadvantage. Its' services are primarily focused on groups who:

- work in disadvantaged communities, both geographical and community of interest
- are new to fundraising
- are run by volunteers, including self help groups
- do not have access to paid, professional fundraisers.

### Services

The services which SYFAB offers are free and include:

- Information Service – groups can be supplied with details of appropriate funders and information sheets to help with their funding applications.
- Funding News – this monthly newsletter keeps groups in touch with funding schemes and approaching deadlines.
- Development Workers – SYFAB has Development Workers in Barnsley and Rotherham, and a Funding Advisory Service in Sheffield. Advice is given to assist with planning, costing and making applications. There is currently no funding to provide a similar service in Doncaster (previously there was such a service), but SYFAB hopes to relaunch this in the future.
- Training - SYFAB offers a training course in Funding and Fundraising for Community & Voluntary Groups, which is accredited by the Open College Network (OCN). In tandem with this, SYFAB provides a range of informal workshops and events about funding.
- Website – this provides a range of electronic resources, including regular information updates. Visit: [www.syfab.org.uk](http://www.syfab.org.uk)

N.B. A more detailed description of what each these services provides is available on the SYFAB website at: [www.syfab.org.uk](http://www.syfab.org.uk)

There are some things that SYFAB does not do. In particular, the Bureau does not give grants – its role is very clearly that of a funding advice service rather than being a direct funder. Other limits to its work include:

- SYFAB does not write funding applications for groups; it does, however, offer advice and help.
- SYFAB does not approach a funder for a group, or recommend a group to a funder.
- SYFAB does not work with statutory organisations like hospitals or schools.
- SYFAB does not help individuals.

### **Staffing and funding**

SYFAB currently has a staff complement of 10 posts, a number of which are part-time. At the time of writing these comprise: Director, Information Service (3 posts, two of which are part-time), Development Workers (3 posts – one each for Barnsley, Rotherham and Sheffield), Training Co-ordinator (1 part-time post), and Administration (2 part-time posts). Eight of these are based in its main office in Sheffield, while the Barnsley and Rotherham Development Workers are based within the communities which they serve.

The Bureau's work is funded by Sheffield City Council, Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council, Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council, Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council, SRB6 Barnsley, Community Fund, Coalfields Regeneration Trust, and Esmée Fairbairn Foundation.

SYFAB's latest annual report (2003 – 2004) provides further details of its funding, expenditure and committee membership.

### **Note**

Throughout this report 'groups' is used as shorthand for the wide range of voluntary organisations and community groups that use SYFAB's services.

## 2. Numbers using the services

SYFAB provides services to a substantial number of groups/organisations. This section gives some detailed figures which give a clear indication of the scale of SYFAB's work in the coalfields areas of Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham.

### 2.1 Overall figures

This section provides figures for the total number of voluntary and community groups accessing one or more of the following SYFAB services:<sup>2</sup>

- Used the Information Service (initial or full enquiry)
- Contacted a Development Worker
- At least one person attended a training course, meeting or event

The figures give a good indication of 'proactive' contact with SYFAB. However, they do not cover all SYFAB services: they do not include groups who only received a copy of the newsletter 'Funding News', nor do they include use of SYFAB's website. These other elements of SYFAB's services are examined in Section 2.2.

#### 2.1.1 Coalfields areas

The following figures show the number of groups who made a 'proactive' contact with SYFAB during the two year period covering January 2003 – December 2004. This particular time period was chosen as comprehensive figures were available from the SYFAB user database for 2003 and 2004. The figures cover the 3 coalfields areas, as well as those working across South Yorkshire as a whole, or with a wider regional remit. (Groups working only in Sheffield are not included.)

During this period 1173 different groups / organisations used at least one of these services (i.e. information service; development worker; training course, meeting or event).<sup>3</sup> A comparison of the three Coalfields areas shows that more groups have been using these services in Barnsley and Rotherham, compared with Doncaster. The table below gives the figures.

Area	Number of groups in 2003 and 2004	Percentage %
Barnsley	456	39%
Doncaster	247	21%
Rotherham	392	33%
South Yorkshire	78	7%
All Coalfields	1173	100%

The figure of 1173 represents the total number of different groups using these services. The total number of individual contacts<sup>4</sup> by groups with SYFAB was much higher than this - a total of 2668. This is because many groups had a number of contacts with SYFAB during this time. In particular :

- many organisations used more than one service during this period; and
- many organisations had more than one contact for a particular service, e.g. multiple contacts with a development worker, or more than one person attending a training course or training event.

## 2.1.2 All areas

Of course, SYFAB's work is not confined to the coalfields area and covers the whole of South Yorkshire.

1837 different groups / organisations (in the two year period covering January 2003 – December 2004) used one of these services (i.e. information service; development worker; training course, meeting or event) across the whole of South Yorkshire, including Sheffield. So for this time period around 64% of groups using these SYFAB services were working in the Coalfields area.

## 2.2 Specific services

The core services provided by SYFAB are as follows:

- Information Service – providing groups with details of appropriate funders and information sheets
- Funding News – monthly newsletter
- Development Workers – SYFAB has Development Workers in Barnsley and Rotherham (also in Sheffield).
- Training – accredited training course, and informal workshops and events.
- Website – this provides a range of electronic resources, including regular information updates

N.B. A more detailed description of what each these services provides is available on the SYFAB website at: [www.syfab.org.uk](http://www.syfab.org.uk)

### 2.2.1 From the user database – Information, development work and training

#### Coalfields areas

The table in Section 2.1.1 shows a total of 1173 groups using SYFAB services during 2003 and 2004 (in the coalfields areas). The following table gives the breakdown for specific services – for each of the Coalfields areas. Each line in the table shows the number of different groups/organisations which used a particular service between January 2003 and December 2004.

Service used	Number of groups in 2003 and 2004				
	Barnsley	Doncaster	Rotherham	SYorks	All areas
Development work contact	229	48	130	14	421
Information service – initial enquiry	40	49	19	54	162
Information service – full enquiry	94	79	120	47	340
Training course	38	31	48	10	127
Training event / meeting	266	132	220	27	645
At least one of the above services	456	247	392	78	1173

Notes on the table:

- Many organisations used more than one service during this period; and
- many organisations had more than one contact for a particular service, e.g. multiple contacts with a development worker, or more than one person attending a training course or training event (in these cases they are only counted once in this table for that service).

### 2.2.2 Newsletter – Funding News

The SYFAB newsletter 'Funding News' is published 10 times a year. It is distributed primarily in printed form via the post, and is also circulated via email.

For 2004/2005, the average circulation figures for each of the 3 coalfields areas were as follows:

	Post	email	Total
Barnsley	273	40	313
Doncaster	118	26	144
Rotherham	227	43	270

Note: These figures are for direct circulation of the newsletter to groups via post / email.

The table shows that not all of the groups using SYFAB's services between January 2003 and December 2004 were receiving a newsletter directly (via post/email) in 2004-2005. This indicates that there is potential scope to increase direct circulation of the newsletter.

### 2.2.3 Information sheets

While the precise distribution of information sheets is not recorded, overall figures are available for the number of paper copies printed for SYFAB. Typically around 16000 information sheets are printed annually. This total includes all of the areas covered by SYFAB in South Yorkshire, including Sheffield, as well as Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham. In addition to the printed copies, information sheets are also available to be downloaded from the SYFAB website.

Information sheets cover the following topics:

- Budgets for small groups & small projects
- Charitable Trusts
- Getting support from companies
- Don't panic – what to do in a fundraising crisis
- Monitoring & evaluation for small groups
- Fundraising events
- Financial planning for larger groups
- Making a good application
- Raising money from individuals
- Organising your fundraising information
- Fundraising for projects
- The main sources of funding
- Fundraising – getting started
- Developing a fundraising strategy

## 2.2.4 Website

The following figures provide a summary of the number of people visiting SYFAB's website in 2004:

Total pageviews:	31,911
Total visits:	13,449
Yearly Unique Visitors:	9,174
First time visitors:	8,706
Average page views per month:	2,659
Page views per visit:	2.37

### 3. Existing evaluation material

This section includes an analysis of existing data and of previous evaluations. In particular, it includes an overview of previous feedback from those using the following SYFAB services – the information service, development work, training courses and the newsletter 'Funding News'.

#### 3.1 Information service

##### 3.1.1 Feedback from users in 2004

When groups request a funding search, they are sent a list of potential funders which meet their criteria. At the same time, they are sent a questionnaire which asks for their feedback on the service which they have received. To review this feedback, completed questionnaires which were returned for the period January 2004 – December 2004 were analysed (64 questionnaires in total). These responses included groups in Sheffield as well as those in Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham.

Those responding reported a very positive experience of using the service:

- People reported a good experience of communication with SYFAB. In particular, an overwhelming majority reported:
  - that they were clear about what the Information Service does;
  - that SYFAB explained what it could (and couldn't) do to help;
  - that it was easy to get in touch with the service;
  - that they had the chance to ask all that they wanted to;
  - they felt that their request was fully understood; and
  - that the process and timescale involved in carrying out a funding search was explained to them.
- The quantity of information provided was generally 'about right', with a small number of people saying that it was 'too much'.
- A very large majority felt that all of the information provided would be helpful in their fundraising for the specified project/activity. A small number said that some of the information was not relevant to their circumstances.
- Similarly, almost everyone found the information provided about each individual funder to be useful.
- When asked if they'd received the information as quickly as they would have liked, most people said 'Yes'. However, a significant minority (about a quarter) would like an even quicker response.
- An overwhelming majority reported that they'd received the information within the timescale given.
- When asked to rate the service on a scale of 1 to 10, when 10 is 'excellent' and 1 is 'very poor', people consistently gave a very positive rating, with an average score of 9 out of 10.

The overall picture is clearly one of very positive feedback from users of the information service. The one area in which there might be scope for improvement would be in enhancing SYFAB's capacity to provide information more quickly. However, the feedback shows that staff had a high success rate in providing information within timescales given to enquirers.

Note: This analysis represents feedback on the service provided by SYFAB at the time of the search - and therefore does not give a guide to how successful any subsequent funding applications may

have been. (For evidence on the success of funding applications, refer to the findings of the 2005 survey of SYFAB users in Section 4.4.)

### 3.1.2 Earlier review in 2000/2001

SYFAB commissioned Paul Ticher to undertake a review of the information service in 2000/01. This covered SYFAB's work across South Yorkshire, including Sheffield. The review resulted in two reports:

- the first analysed the results of a survey of voluntary organisations conducted in July 2000;
- the second presented the final report of the review of the information service.

To quote from the final report: 'The general conclusion of the survey of users and potential users was that SYFAB is providing a good information service, and particularly:

- Funding News is very visible, popular and highly thought of.
- Very few of those that use the service were dissatisfied with any aspect of it.' (Ticher 2001: 1)

The survey was designed to cover both users and non-users of SYFAB's services. It does, however, provide some limited evidence of the impact of SYFAB's services on groups actively using its services. Two questions in particular, showed that contact with SYFAB had made a difference to the fundraising efforts of a substantial proportion of SYFAB users (at least those responding to the survey):

(a) When asked about what they did in response to information sent to them by SYFAB, the responses were as follows (64 groups responded to this question):

Apply to all the trusts SYFAB suggested	13%
Choose a few to apply to from the information SYFAB provided	72%
Change your mind about applying at all	13%
Apply to trusts that SYFAB had not suggested*	23%

\* Note: most of these applied to trusts suggested by SYFAB as well.

(b) When SYFAB users were asked: 'Do you think you made better applications because of your contact with SYFAB?', the responses were as follows (65 groups responded to this question):

Definitely	51%
Probably	34%
No	12%
Don't know	3%

### 3.1.3 Feedback from 2003 development work survey

The 2003 evaluation survey of those groups meeting with development workers also provides some limited feedback from users about the information service. (See the following Section 3.2 for further details.)

### 3.2 Development work

For some years evaluation questionnaires have been sent out to groups on an annual basis to one or more of the three coalfields areas. The most recent exercise was undertaken in 2003. Survey questionnaires were sent to those groups/organisations in Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham who had met with a development worker during the previous year, i.e. the 12 month period of April 2002 – March 2003.

A further analysis of the 124 returned questionnaires from groups in Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham was undertaken. These returns show a positive response to the service provided by SYFAB's development workers. In particular 90% described the service provided by the development worker as either very good (64%) or good (26%). Here's a summary of the responses:

1. Did the development worker explain what they could and couldn't do to help your group?	100% said yes *
2. How did your group contact the development worker?	67% phoned the local office 17% by personal contact 14% phoned SYFAB (Sheffield office) 2% via email
3. Was it easy to arrange a meeting with the development worker?	99% said yes
4. Was the meeting useful?	98% said yes
5. Does your group feel, where applicable, that the development worker:	
a) helped your group know who to approach for funding	91% yes, 5% no, 4% not applicable
b) helped your group to understand how to approach funders	90% yes, 4% no, 7% not applicable
c) helped your group with where to get hold of information	91% yes, 4% no, 5% not applicable
d) made your group feel more confident	79% yes, 10% no, 11% not applicable
e) helped your group to organise/prioritise funding needs	64% yes, 15% no, 21% not applicable
f) referred your group to any other appropriate agency	69% yes, 14% no, 17% not applicable
6. Since talking to the worker have you made any funding bids?	71% yes, 29% no
7. How would you describe the service the worker provides?	64% very good 26% good 9% OK 0% poor 2% very poor

\* Note: 'missing values' have been excluded from the above table – the figures are for all of those who answered a particular question. Some totals add up to more than 100% due to rounding.

The evaluation questionnaires also asked about other SYFAB services. The following table shows the rating which people gave for each of the services. It is important to note the number of people who answered each question.

Do you use any other service from SYFAB? If so, how would you rate them?	Rating
a) Funding News 97 of 124 answered this question	60% very good 37% good 2% OK 0% poor 1% very poor
b) Information Service 40 of 124 answered this question	43% very good 53% good 3% OK 0% poor 3% very poor
c) Funding Training Course 37 of 124 answered this question	49% very good 43% good 5% OK 0% poor 3% very poor
d) Website 16 of 124 answered this question	31% very good 44% good 25 % OK 0% poor 0% very poor

These show that those using the development work service also tend to rate the other SYFAB services which they used as either 'very good' or 'good'. (Note that very few people responded to the question about the website at the time. Contrast this with the responses to the User Survey in 2005 – see Section 4.9 for details.)

### Background note

In 2000, SYFAB undertook an evaluation of its development work in Barnsley and Doncaster, with the help of an external consultant, Nick Waterfield. This covered the period April 1998 – December 1999. A final report was produced in April 2000: *Evaluation of the Bureau's Development Work in Barnsley and Doncaster 1998-2000*. As the time period covered by this evaluation was more than five years ago, it lies outside the scope of this report.

## 3.3 Training

### 3.3.1 2003 training evaluation

In 2003, SYFAB commissioned Annie Rosewarne to undertake an evaluation of the Bureau's SRB5 funded training programme. The final report (December 2003) looked at training delivered by SYFAB to voluntary and community groups in the South Yorkshire Coalfields areas between Sept 2000 and Sept 2003. The report provides a variety of evidence on the success and impact of this training programme. Here are some of the key points from the report.

#### **a) Open College Network (OCN) accredited training programme**

Over the 3 year period SYFAB delivered 21 courses (each eight sessions long) across the Coalfields area. 208 participants completed the course; these represented 127 community groups and 64 voluntary organisations.

Course participants were sent an evaluation questionnaire a little while after the completion of their course. Key findings set out in the report (with a 47% response) include:

- 100% felt that the course had enabled them to develop their fundraising skills to the benefit of their group/organisation..
- 87% had shared their learning with others in their group.
- 87% (70 respondents) had been involved in making funding applications since attending the course, of which 67 bids had been successful, raising a total of £1,437,720. (This is likely to be an understatement - at the time of responding some groups were still awaiting the outcome of bids and others failed to specify amounts awarded.)
- 100% said that they would recommend SYFAB training to others.
- 80% said 'no' when asked if they felt the course needed to be changed in any way.
- Some groups highlighted further funding issues that they and their groups need to consider such as developing a funding strategy, income generation and sustainability. (Annie Rosewarne 2003: 4)

In terms of the link between attendance at the OCN courses and successful funding bids, the report provided the following:

'The figures that follow are based on a) feedback from OCN accredited course participants and b) information from four key funders in the region (The Community Fund, Awards for All, Coalfields Regeneration Trust and the Local Network Fund for Children and Young People). They do not provide a complete picture of all grants awarded to all groups who have accessed SYFAB's training courses nor can it be directly claimed that the grants awarded are solely attributable to attendance at the training. They merely give a flavour of the size of grants coming into the area, for which SYFAB's training must rightly take some credit.

'Of the 83 course participants who returned questionnaires 70 had been involved in making over 80 funding applications since attending the course. At the time of responding 67 applications had been approved, raising a total of £1,437,720. The actual amounts raised would be significantly higher as the numbers returning questionnaires only represent 40% of those completing the training, nor does it take account of any subsequent fundraising by these groups. Nor for this exercise have we analysed grants awarded to groups accessing SYFAB's one-off training sessions or funding conferences.

'A detailed search of grants awarded by the four key funders listed above shows that 81 groups who had participated in the accredited training course had between them successfully raised £3,213,667. Some groups have received grants from more than one funder.' (Annie Rosewarne 2003: 6-7)

### ***b) One-off training sessions***

The original target was to deliver 90 one-off sessions (18 full day and 72 half days) over the three year period. In practice, this target was exceeded with 115 sessions delivered. The total number of participants in these sessions was 1,619 – representing 968 community groups and 317 voluntary organisations. (Annie Rosewarne 2003: 5)

### ***c) Overall figures for groups and organisations***

Overall, more than 1180 community groups and 414 voluntary organisations received support across the three training strands funded by SRB. The three strands were: OCN training courses, one-off training sessions, and the annual 'Tapping into Funds' conference. (Annie Rosewarne 2003: 6)

N.B. Please see the final full report for further details of this training evaluation (available on SYFAB's website).<sup>5</sup>

### 3.3.2 Further statistics for OCN courses

SYFAB has continued to collect OCN course evaluation statistics subsequent to the 2003 training evaluation. The generally positive feedback from participants has been similar to that found in the 2003 evaluation. In particular, when asked: 'Has the course helped you to develop your funding skills in a way that you will be able to use with your organisation?' 100% of participants said 'yes'.

Retention and achievement figures for the OCN courses delivered in Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham show very positive results:

2002	87% retention, 78% achievement
2003	91% retention, 75% achievement
2004	88% retention, 88% achievement

Retention: the proportion of those who started a course who went on to complete the course.  
Achievement: the proportion of those completing the course who successfully completed the required coursework.

### 3.4 Funding News

There's some fairly recent evidence of feedback from readers of SYFAB's regular newsletter, Funding News:

- a) Anecdotal evidence (via SYFAB staff) indicates positive feedback on the SYFAB newsletter from some readers of Funding News.
- b) The 2003 evaluation of development work (more details in Section 3.2), revealed that amongst those who had met with a development worker:
  - The majority (at least 78%) were readers of Funding News (this was the percentage who felt able to give the newsletter a rating).
  - Overall these readers gave Funding News a 'good' to 'very good' rating:  
60% - very good, 37% - good, 2% - OK, 0 - % poor, 1% - very poor

This is consistent with the earlier review of the information service back in 2000/2001 which concluded that 'Funding News is very visible, popular and highly thought of' (see Section 3.1.2).

## 4. Survey of SYFAB users

This section presents the detailed findings of the 2005 survey of SYFAB users which was undertaken specifically for this impact assessment. At the core of this is feedback from people on how useful SYFAB's services have been and what impact they have made to their group.

### 4.1 Approach to the survey

At an early stage it was decided that a central element of the impact assessment would comprise a survey of voluntary organisations and community groups who were users of SYFAB's services. The aim was to seek direct feedback from these organisations of their experience of using SYFAB's services. We were particularly concerned to ask how helpful they had found the services and what difference the services had made to their group.

In order to reach a substantial number of groups, a postal survey was chosen. The use of email was rejected for this survey given that many of those involved were community groups with modest resources, many of whom have either limited or no access to email. The questionnaire for the survey was devised in partnership with members of the project's advisory group (see Appendix A1 for a copy of the questionnaire),

A postal survey of 550 groups was undertaken during February / March 2005. The survey focused on groups who had been actively in touch with SYFAB since January 2003. The sample was constructed as follows:

1. First, we selected all of those groups / organisations known to have used at least one of the following SYFAB services since the beginning of 2003:

- Used the Information Service (initial or full enquiry)
- Contacted a Development Worker
- At least one person attended a training course, meeting or event

We were able to construct the sample in this way because SYFAB maintains a user database in which such contacts with SYFAB are recorded. (These are the same criteria as those used earlier in Section 2.1 when providing overall figures for service use.)

2. The sample was limited to organisations known to be working in the coalfields areas. Included in the sample were groups working in the Barnsley, Doncaster or Rotherham areas – together with those working across South Yorkshire as a whole (or with a wider regional remit). (Groups without a postal address recorded on the user database were excluded from the postal survey.)

3. A random 50% sample was then taken, i.e. selecting one in two of these groups and organisations. This size of sample was chosen to ensure the return of a reasonable number of questionnaires – to enable a more comprehensive analysis. This sample comprised 550 groups and organisations, with the following geographical split:

208 - Barnsley, 118 - Doncaster, 187 - Rotherham, 37 - South Yorkshire / Regional.

Of the 550 groups mailed, questionnaires were unable to be delivered to five of them (due to groups either closing down or moving without a forwarding address). From the remaining 545 groups, a total of 190 completed questionnaires were received. Three of the questionnaires arrived after the cut-off date for analysis (14 March 2005) – providing a total of 187 questionnaires which were used for the survey analysis. These 187 questionnaires represent a response rate of 34%.

Note: Section 2.1.1 identified a total of 1173 groups who were actively<sup>6</sup> in contact with SYFAB during 2003 and 2004. The 187 questionnaires used for the survey analysis represent 16% of this total.

The following sections present the findings of the survey. There are two things to note in the tables that are presented:

- N = number of people responding to this question.
- Some percentages (%) may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

## 4.2 Geographical areas

The survey recorded the local authority area in which a group works. On this basis, groups were allocated to one of four areas:

- Barnsley
- Doncaster
- Rotherham
- South Yorkshire, i.e. those working across the sub-region rather than in a single local authority area.

N.B. Sheffield does not appear in this list, as groups which work only in the Sheffield area were not included in the survey.

The geographical split was as follows:

<i>(N = 187 )</i>	%
Barnsley	38
Doncaster	23
Rotherham	32
South Yorkshire	8

These figures are very close indeed to the geographical split for the initial population of 1173 groups from which the survey sample was taken (see Section 2.1.1). Hence the survey responses represent the geographical balance of SYFAB users generally.

If we exclude those groups working in more than one local authority area the figures are:

<i>(N=172 )</i>	%
Barnsley	41
Doncaster	24
Rotherham	34

### 4.3 Using SYFAB services

The table below shows the level of take-up of SYFAB services. It shows that five of SYFAB's core services are **each** used by more than half of SYFAB users. The most commonly used services were Funding News (used by 90% of groups) and contact with SYFAB development workers (86%), followed by information sheets (61%), training courses/events (60%) and information searches (58%). The core service which was used least was the SYFAB website (37%). This is perhaps not surprising given that a very substantial proportion of SYFAB's users are smaller community groups with modest resources.

<i>Has anyone from your group / organisation:</i>	<i>N*</i>	<i>Yes %</i>	<i>No %</i>	<i>Don't know %</i>
(a) had the results of a SYFAB information search sent to them, i.e. a list of potential funders (from the SYFAB Information Service)	181	58	29	13
(b) spoken to one of the SYFAB development workers (Caroline Burns, Peter Foyle, Ian Paisley or Lesley Wilkinson)	185	86	10	4
(c) attended a training course / event concerned with funding organised by SYFAB	182	60	35	4
(d) read 'Funding News' (the monthly SYFAB newsletter)	184	90	9	1
(e) used a SYFAB information sheet	174	61	28	11
(f) used the SYFAB website	178	37	53	11
(g) had other contact with SYFAB	173	35	42	23

\* This is the number responding to this element of the question.

A comparison of the three different coalfields areas shows that Doncaster groups were less likely than those in Barnsley or Rotherham to have spoken to one of the SYFAB development workers. Doncaster groups were also less likely than those in Barnsley or Rotherham to have attended a training course / event concerned with funding organised by SYFAB. These differences are consistent with the loss of the development worker post in Doncaster (due to lack of funding).

#### ***When did your group / organisation first contact SYFAB?***

The answers to this showed a wide range of responses: 49% of groups had first contacted SYFAB within the last 2 years, 36% between two and five years ago, and 10% more than 5 years ago. This shows that a substantial number of groups are relatively new users of SYFAB's services, and also that many groups choose to use SYFAB on a long term basis.

<i>First contact with SYFAB (N = 185)</i>	<i>%</i>
within the last 12 months	22
1 - 2 years ago	27
2 - 5 years ago	36
more than 5 years ago	10
don't know	5

#### 4.4 Funding applications and successful bids

Groups were asked about the funding bids which they had made since contacting SYFAB. A very high proportion (85%) said that they had made funding bids. Of these, 86% reported at least one successful funding application.

Overall, 78% of all groups had made successful funding bids since contacting SYFAB, while 22% had either made no bids or had not had any success with bids. (These figures do not include those who didn't know if any of their group's funding bids had been successful.) Note: When the responses for Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham were compared in this respect, any differences between these areas were not statistically significant.

<i>Funding applications</i>	<i>N*</i>	<i>Yes</i> %	<i>No</i> %	<i>Don't know</i> %
(a) Since contacting SYFAB has your group made any funding bids?	182	85	15	1
(b) For those who answered 'Yes' to (a): Have any of these funding bids been successful?	151	86	8	6

\* Note: N is the number of responses.

#### Sums raised

A total of 131 groups reported successful funding bids. Of these, 108 groups provided specific details of the amounts raised from successful funding applications – since first contacting SYFAB. Some groups gave more limited information about their successful funding bids, e.g. listing the funders without providing specific amounts. Others were awaiting the outcome of recent applications.

The total sum reported by these 108 groups was: £4,616,946

Note: even for these 108 organisations, the amounts reported were not fully comprehensive – some reported various successful bids, but only gave financial details for one of them.

Restricting the analysis to the time period since the start of 2003 (i.e. from January 2003 to March 2005): 89 groups reported a total sum of: £4,037,012

A small number of organisations account for a very significant proportion of these sums. For example, between January 2003 and March 2005, eight organisations each raised sums in excess of £200,000 (one in excess of £600,000). These eight organisations alone accounted for a total of £2,552,879.

Notes:

- We cannot claim that these sums have been raised as a direct result of SYFAB's contribution. However, the next section (4.5) provides evidence of how helpful these groups found SYFAB's services in making funding applications.
- The total sums raised by **all** groups that use SYFAB's services will obviously be greater than the subset which took part in the survey. For example, the 187 questionnaires analysed for the survey represent 16% of the 1173 groups who were actively in contact with SYFAB during 2003 and 2004.

## 4.5 SYFAB's contribution

The majority of groups report that SYFAB's contribution had been helpful in their fundraising efforts. The following question allowed us to undertake some more detailed analysis of this.

**(a) In your view, how helpful have SYFAB's services been in assisting your group to make funding applications?**

65% of respondents regarded SYFAB's services as either 'essential' (21%) or 'very helpful' (44%).

<i>How helpful (N= 171)</i>	<i>All groups %</i>
essential	21
very helpful	44
quite helpful	15
some help	14
no help <sup>7</sup>	7

A comparison of the responses for Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham (and excluding the 'South Yorkshire-wide' groups) shows some interesting differences between these areas.<sup>8</sup>

- 33% of Barnsley groups saw SYFAB's services as 'essential' in assisting them to make funding applications, with lower figures for Rotherham (15%) and Doncaster (8%).
- 78% of Barnsley groups saw SYFAB's services as either 'essential' or 'very helpful' in this respect, compared with lower figures for Doncaster (55%) and Rotherham (53%).

The table below provides the detailed figures.

<i>How helpful have SYFAB's services been?</i>	<i>AREA</i>			<i>Total (N=157) %</i>
	<i>Barnsley (N=67) %</i>	<i>Doncaster (N=37) %</i>	<i>Rotherham (N=53) %</i>	
essential	33	8	15	21
very helpful	45	49	38	43
quite helpful	12	16	21	16
some / no help	10	27	26	20

It is important to note, however, that in all three areas over half of the groups regarded SYFAB's services as either 'essential' or 'very helpful'.

### Success is a factor

Those with successful funding bids are much more likely to regard SYFAB's services as essential or very helpful: 72% of those who have made successful funding bids since contacting SYFAB see their services as either 'essential' or 'very helpful'. This compares with a much lower figure of 21% for

those who have had no success with funding bids or who have made no funding bids since contacting SYFAB.<sup>9</sup> The following table summarises the responses.

<i>How helpful have SYFAB's services been? (N=158)</i>	<i>Successful bids since contacting SYFAB (N=129) %</i>	<i>No success or no bids made (N=29) %</i>
essential	24	7
very helpful	48	14
quite helpful	13	28
some help / no help	15	52

Note: Those who didn't know about the success of funding bids were excluded from this table.

**(b) If you found SYFAB's services helpful, what in particular did you find useful?**  
(Respondents could tick more than one option.)

Groups were also able to tell us which services in particular they found helpful. The most common responses were: information about potential funders (86%) and the newsletter 'Funding News' (80%). People tended to indicate that a number of services were useful – the average number of services identified in this way was 3.3. This finding suggests that most SYFAB users tend to access an interconnected package of SYFAB services – which, of course, they are able to tailor to their own needs. Given this, it is appropriate to look at the overall impact of these interconnected services rather than separating out individual elements in isolation.

<i>Particularly useful services (N=170)<sup>10</sup></i>	<i>%</i>
information about potential funders	86
newsletter - 'Funding News'	80
help with completing an application form or writing a letter	40
training course(s) / event(s)	39
information sheet	37
help with how to talk to a funder	19
SYFAB website	18
other help	12

Those identifying 'other help' were asked to give brief details. The most frequently mentioned was personal contact with SYFAB development workers - one-to-one advice and support, meetings and phone calls. Other help highlighted included: talking to staff over the phone, positive encouragement and support, discussing ideas and targeting project funding, signposting others to SYFAB's services, funding fairs.

***(c) If you did not find SYFAB's services particularly helpful, please tell us more.***

A small minority of respondents provided some critical feedback (although some of the feedback comprised positive comments on the services received). In particular, the following were mentioned by more than one person:

- There was disappointment that there is no longer a Doncaster development worker (due to the lack of funding).
- Information received about potential funders is not always perfect : some information about funders was either not relevant or out of date, e.g. some of the potential funders quoted did not meet a group's requirements. One respondent wanted to see a more bespoke information service to individual groups.
- Some mentioned their disappointment on making unsuccessful funding bids.

Other more individual comments included:

- a lack of comprehension of the issues faced by faith organisations;
- incorrect advice on a particular funding application;
- the timing of training sessions is not ideal for volunteers who are at work during the daytime;
- a lack of follow-up from one of the development workers;
- a dislike of using the Internet (the SYFAB website was not seen as helpful).

## 4.6 Making a difference / impact

We asked groups to tell us about the differences that SYFAB's services had made to them. It is clear that overall SYFAB's services have indeed made a significant difference.

First we asked people to provide a rating: '*In your view, what difference have SYFAB's services made to your group?*' In response, 47% reported either a major difference (19%) or a significant difference (28%); a further 37% reported some difference.

<i>What difference?</i>	<i>All groups (N = 170) %</i>
major difference	19
significant difference	28
some difference	37
little difference	11
none	6

When the responses to this question for Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham were compared, the differences between these areas were not statistically significant.

Comparing the responses of those who had made successful funding bids since contacting SYFAB, with those who had not made any bids or who had no success with bids revealed significant differences.<sup>11</sup> 57% of those with successful bids said that SYFAB's services had made either a major or significant difference to their group. The comparable figure for those making no bids or with no successful bids was just 17%.

<i>What difference?</i>	<i>Groups making successful funding bids since contacting SYFAB (N = 125) %</i>	<i>Groups with no success or no bids made (N=31) %</i>
major difference	22	10
significant difference	34	7
some difference	36	32
little / no difference	7	52

(Note: Those who didn't know about the success of funding bids were excluded from this table.)

Next, we asked people to tell us more. In their responses groups provided a great deal of feedback about the differences that SYFAB's services have made to them. Many reported that SYFAB had made a substantial difference to their group and its activities. To illustrate the wide range of experiences reported, we've focused particularly on a subset of groups surveyed – those who said that SYFAB's services had made a major difference to them.

## 4.7 Examples of impact

In this section we provide some examples of the specific impacts that groups reported. Specifically, they were asked: *'Please tell us more about the differences that SYFAB's services have made to your group. (For example, what would you say have been the chief impacts on your group?)'*

In view of the large number of responses to this question, we present here examples from the 33 groups that said that SYFAB's services had made a major difference to their group. The other groups which responded to this question reported similar impacts on their work.

The following is a summary of the feedback from these 33 groups arranged into a number of interconnected themes.

### Overall

This particular set of groups see a strong link between their successes with funding applications and the support which they have received from SYFAB.

### Funding advice and support

Many of the groups highlighted the positive impact of the advice and support received from local SYFAB development workers, including one-to-one support. Here are some examples:

- *'Knowing that when in doubt we could always go to SYFAB for advice.'*
- *'Without the advice and guidance from SYFAB's worker we would not be in the position that we are in now.'*
- *'SYFAB has contributed greatly, with us completing a funding bid.'*
- *'The help and professional advice and information has been excellent. SYFAB has been guiding our group applications to fit our funders and we are having success.'*
- *'if it wasn't for SYFAB we wouldn't know where to start to go for help.'*

### Funding and new activities

Many of the groups reported how funding had enabled them to undertake new activities or initiatives. One group reported how it had been able to stage a conference for sufferers of a particular health condition – bringing together people with similar experiences and needs; 120 people attended. Other examples:

- *'SYFAB helped us to fully equip and furnish a carer and toddler group. We have also equipped a training room and run first aid, food hygiene, IT and beauty courses for parents and carers.'*
- *'The funding received with their help has allowed us to achieve major projects that our own funds would not have supported.'*
- *'Have assisted with starting our office set up for the charity which was vital.'*
- *'The first grant we received was for IT equipment - this has opened up a whole new world. It has resulted in 8 people obtaining community learning qualification in IT and has enabled us to use Microsoft Excel for our accounts.'*

### Funding and information

Many of the groups gave very positive feedback on the provision of information by SYFAB – and its impact on their fundraising activities. For example, one group reported that out of a total expenditure since 1998 of £80k on a variety of projects, £30k has arisen directly from SYFAB recommended funders. Here are some further examples:

- *'We are more aware of what is out there, and how to access potential funders.'*

- *'Finding information enabled the project to work; it created volunteer opportunities and employment.'*
- *'Providing funding information, which would otherwise have taken the group some considerable time to acquire. Helping the group to realise it can play a significant role in the community.'*
- *'Very helpful with initial information.'*
- *'They have been excellent with information, email addresses, hands on help to individuals in funding searches, and plenty of hand outs.'*

### **Funding and sustainability**

A number of groups highlighted that successful funding bids had enabled them to continue with their activities. For example:

- *'Information received on funders and advice on letter writing and funding applications has helped us maintain funding for the group for 4 years.'*
- *'Our group would not have survived without funding assistance.'*
- *'We have been able to access funding to keep going.'*
- *'If we hadn't received a grant, we would not be able to carry on with our keep fit class much longer.'*
- *'Without the grants we would not have opened our lunch club for schoolchildren. The grants have enabled the club to continue for another year. The children have been impacted by having somewhere to go. One child admitted he would have been 'doing drugs' without the lunch club.'*

### **Training**

One group reported that it has had a tremendous success rate with funding applications after their Secretary took the funding course. Since then another member of the committee has taken the course. Another group said:

- *'The course I went on was excellent, it has given me confidence to approach funders and to pass on the information I was given to the rest of our group.'*

### **Planning**

- *'Helped us to focus our ideas, made us aware that planning (forward) is essential.'*

## 4.8 Funding needs in the future – information, advice and training

We asked people to look ahead to the future (over the next 5 years) and to consider the key needs for their group in relation to funding information, advice and training.

### (a) How important do you expect each of the following will be for your group in the future?

Groups were asked to provide a rating for each of these services:

- Access to information about sources of funding
- Regular newsletters on funding
- Practical help with form filling or advice about funders
- Training courses / events on funding
- Easy to access online resources e.g. on the Web or via email

Each of the five areas were regarded as either essential, very important or quite important by a very significant (sometimes overwhelming) majority of respondents. Access to information about sources of funding received the highest rating : 94% regarded this service as either essential (70%) or very important (24%). Next, 82% saw regular newsletters on funding as either essential (48%) or very important (34%).

It is important to note that each of the categories are regarded as either essential or very important by a significant proportion of groups. Overall it is clear that groups generally see all five categories as important in the future. Those who answered these questions overwhelmingly rated each element as either essential, very important or quite important. The following table provides a more detailed summary.

<i>Future services</i>	<i>N*</i>	<i>Essential</i> %	<i>Very important</i> %	<i>Quite important</i> %	<i>Little importance</i> %	<i>Not important</i> %
Access to information about sources of funding	174	70	24	6	1	1
Regular newsletters on funding	171	48	34	15	1	2
Practical help with form filling or advice about funders	166	29	29	30	10	2
Training courses / events on funding	157	22	27	38	12	1
Easy to access online resources e.g. on the Web or via email <sup>12</sup>	144	30	29	30	9	3

\* Note: This column indicates the number of people who answered each element of the question. This shows, for example, that fewer people answered the online resources question.

The questionnaire also asked people about other future needs. Just a few were mentioned by respondents - these comments included: a focus on sustainability, assistance with action planning, personal contact with a development worker, and provision of a development worker in the Doncaster area.

***(b) What do you think the key funding information, advice and training needs will be for your group in the future?***

The responses to this open question tie in strongly with the core services which SYFAB currently provides i.e. funding information, advice, support and training. Indeed they confirm that the services set out in the above table correspond very closely with groups' anticipated needs in the future.

A number of common themes arose from the needs which people identified - here is a summary of the responses:

- Funding information – access to information about funding opportunities and funders (e.g. with up to date details of funding criteria and application deadlines).
- Funding bids - people emphasised the need to put together funding bids - either to sustain current work, or to develop their activities further, e.g. funding staff posts, upgrading facilities, or purchasing new equipment.
- Advice and support - on funding opportunities and applications – including one-to-one support, help with applications, advice on funders, advice on business plans and strategy.
- Training / workshops – to cover a variety of funding needs – including current trends in funding, updates on funding opportunities, sustainability, wider opportunities for generating income, negotiations with statutory funders and service level agreements.
- Exchanging ideas – opportunities for sharing ideas and good practice between groups, e.g. via meetings / events.

Overall it is clear that SYFAB's current model of service provision is highly appropriate to the future needs expressed by the groups that currently use its services.

## 4.9 Using the Internet

### **(a) Does your group currently use the Internet to look for information about funding?**

In answer to this question we found that 41% of groups use the SYFAB website either often (9%) or sometimes (32%). This compares with the 58% of groups that use other websites to look for information about funding either often (20%) or sometimes (38%).

The responses to this question do show that a very significant proportion of groups (at least 58%) are using the Internet either sometimes or often to look for information about funding.

<i>Using the Internet</i>	<i>SYFAB website (N = 171) %</i>	<i>Other websites (N = 164) %</i>
often	9	20
sometimes	32	38
rarely	17	17
never	33	19
don't know	9	6

### **(b) Does your group plan to use the Internet in the future to look for information about funding?**

The responses show a very clear majority (72%) planning to use the Internet in this way. However, they also reveal a significant number of groups who are unsure about their potential use of the Internet. This relatively high level of interest in the potential use of the Internet contrasts with the much lower level of interest found in the development work evaluation in 2003 (see section 3.2 for the details).

<i>(N = 176)</i>	<i>%</i>
yes	72
no	10
don't know	18

These findings indicate not only that there is considerable scope for SYFAB to develop this aspect of its work further, but that any new developments are likely to be relevant to the majority of groups that use SYFAB's services. The high level of 'don't knows' suggests that there is scope to encourage more groups to use the Internet – with the right kind of support. This is confirmed by the responses of this group of people to the next question that we posed.

### **(c) What would help your group to make use (or better use) of the Internet for finding information about funding?**

What follows is a summary of the responses. These have been divided into three groups – depending on their plans to use the Internet in the (foreseeable) future.

### **Those planning to use the Internet in the future**

Five themes arose from the issues cited by this group of people:

- Help with where to look on the Internet
  - information about useful websites for funding information, i.e. where to look
  - online directory of funders / grants with links to their websites (on the SYFAB website)
  - more information about access to funding
  - directories to be easily searchable (e.g. via specific issues) and regularly updated
- Other enhancements to the SYFAB website
  - signposting online application forms
  - useful tips, e.g. first hand tips from previously successful applicants
  - frequently asked questions
  - glossary of terminology
  - quick referencing – a search facility would help with this
- email updates, e.g. news updates, highlighting new information available on the SYFAB website
- Training
  - training days/workshops aimed at improving people's skills & confidence in using the Internet for funding information
  - a short course on internet use
  - guidelines on using the Internet for finding information about funding, e.g. search tips
- Access
  - some groups do not currently have access to the Internet, or have inadequate access
  - appropriate computer equipment, more members with computers
  - easier and cheaper access e.g. broadband
  - more time (staff/volunteers)

Note: Some of the above facilities are already provided by SYFAB. For example, Funding News, which is distributed ten times a year, is available both via email and via the SYFAB website. Funding News already includes the email and website addresses of funding bodies alongside their other contact details.

### **Don't know**

Three issues were important to this group:

- Access - gaining access to a computer with an internet connection
- Help with where to look on the Internet, including a directory of useful sites
- Training - to improve skills in using the Internet for finding information about funding

### **Do not plan to use the Internet in the future**

Although not planning to use the Internet in the foreseeable future, some respondents in this group of organisations did express an interest in using the technology. For these people, access issues are their main concern, primarily one of gaining access to a computer with an internet connection.

## 4.10 Other information

### 4.10.1 Other sources

***Does your group obtain funding information, advice or training from other sources, i.e. other than from SYFAB?***

The responses show that for the majority of groups (64%) SYFAB is not their only source of funding information, advice or training.

<i>Other sources (N = 176)</i>	<i>%</i>
yes	64
no	31
don't know	5

Those who said 'yes' were asked to provide further details. This elicited a wide range of responses, with many organisations citing a number of other sources, including other key voluntary and community sector infrastructure organisations.

### 4.10.2 Additional comments

At the end of the questionnaire people were invited to contribute any other comments which they'd like to make about the impact of SYFAB's work. It was notable that a significant proportion of people (44%) took this opportunity to provide further feedback. There was a striking response - overwhelmingly people provided very positive feedback and warm appreciation to SYFAB for the services provided.<sup>13</sup> Here are some examples:

- *'It is good to know that we have SYFAB to call upon when necessary.'*
- *'SYFAB's work and information service is invaluable to groups like ours. When we formed the group we had no idea where to start looking for funding, SYFAB got us on the right track.'*
- *'SYFAB is an essential part of the fabric of South Yorkshire's community and voluntary sector.'*
- *'All members of staff have been very helpful, which makes things much easier.'*

## 5. Survey of key stakeholders

In this section we present the findings of the 2005 survey of key stakeholders which was undertaken in tandem with the user survey. This includes their views on the impact of SYFAB's work and the future needs for funding information, advice and training.

### 5.1 Overview

Alongside the survey of SYFAB service users, we also sought the views of other key stakeholders in the work of SYFAB. This group of people comprised:

- SYFAB staff
- Freelance trainers
- Management Committee members
- Advisory Group members (there are Advisory Groups covering Barnsley, Rotherham and Sheffield – these are the 3 areas for which SYFAB currently has local development workers).
- Other stakeholders – from the voluntary and community sector (primarily infrastructure organisations), local authorities and key funders.

In all 58 people were asked to take part in this survey.

The questionnaire used was different to that for the survey of service users (see Appendix A2). The key difference was that the questions were focussed on the wider voluntary and community sector, rather than the experiences and needs of a specific group.

Most of the questionnaires were circulated via email, the remainder by post. Reminders were sent to people after the initial deadline, which brought further responses.

36 people responded, and 33 of these returned completed questionnaires. Those returning questionnaires comprised:

- 4 members of staff and 3 freelance trainers
- 14 members of either SYFAB's management committee or one of its advisory groups (many of these people are from other agencies who work closely with SYFAB)
- 12 other key stakeholders

## 5.2 Making a difference / impact

### 5.2.1 Main impacts

This section provides a summary of the detailed responses to the question: *'In your view, what have been the main impacts of SYFAB's work in the South Yorkshire Coalfields? (For example, what difference has SYFAB made to voluntary and community groups?)'*

The overall picture is one of very positive feedback on the impacts of SYFAB's work. People report that SYFAB's provision of information, advice, support and training has had a significant impact on the voluntary and community sector's ability to seek funds. SYFAB is seen as a well respected support organisation that groups are willing to turn to. People frequently report receiving good feedback from groups who have used SYFAB's services – and emphasise the quality of services provided.

Here is a summary of the key points that people made. We've included a number of quotes from people (these are in italics).

#### ***Income and activity***

SYFAB has helped groups to generate income – which in turn has allowed groups to provide a host of activities and services within the community. The Bureau has opened up opportunities to access funding to groups who otherwise lack support in acquiring funds. It has, for example, enabled new and emerging groups to gain access to small grants.

- *'SYFAB provides an invaluable service to local voluntary and community groups, without which many would struggle to survive.'*
- *'This organisation has been a great help to all the smaller groups of people who have had need of funds to support their activities. If such a body was not available many smaller groups would not have been able to tap into much of the monies which have gone into the South Yorkshire Coalfields.'*

#### ***Building capacity***

The Bureau's approach enables groups to develop the skills to become fundraisers themselves – whether this is through the training programme, the Information Service, Funding News, or the Development Workers. Such support enables people to gain confidence in their ability to get funding for their activities – and has helped many groups to feel that their work is worthwhile and that they can make a difference.

- *'They have equipped our sector with the knowledge and tools to gain funding. Without them many groups would not have been able to develop as they have.'*
- *'Some people and some groups have developed knowledge, skills and confidence that they wouldn't have without accessing the Bureau.'*
- *'The key impact has been in giving voluntary and community groups the skills needed to allow them to gain access to funding and so allow them to create, or develop, projects which benefit the local community.'*
- *'Through the training and outreach work that SYFAB does, local voluntary and community groups have developed confidence and increased their capacity, becoming empowered to manage their own organisations more successfully.'*

#### ***Access to information and advice***

SYFAB has had a major impact on facilitating access to funding information and advice, particularly signposting groups to potential and appropriate funders. It has, for example, enabled groups to access funding expertise and advice at a local level.

- *'SYFAB have been seen to make a tremendous impact on how groups have access to funding information.'*
- *'By providing good quality information and advice members of local groups spend less time wondering what funding is out there and chasing up blind alleys / approaching inappropriate sources.'*
- SYFAB will, for example, help groups to avoid wasted time by (i) telling them if an idea is unworkable or (ii) linking them into project management advice and support first if the idea needs developing, before it is ready for funding.
- SYFAB is able to offer 'impartial' advice on available funding for groups. The Bureau is not seen as a possible competitor for funds, nor as a possible 'hijacker' of people's ideas. This means that people can and do trust SYFAB.
- *'SYFAB is a well-respected support organisation that voluntary groups turn to for funding advice. As they have had a presence in each of the sub-regions (local authority areas), they have been very accessible, organising many workshops and sessions for groups to seek specific advice.'*

### **Development work**

By employing Funding Development Workers, SYFAB has provided advice and support to a wide range of local groups. Development workers give practical support to groups by identifying funding, assisting with project development and advising on the completion of application forms. This has helped to build the capacity of the sector and increase the amount of funding accessed. By offering such local support and advice, development workers help groups to turn ideas into action and enhance their confidence in seeking funds.

- SYFAB has helped groups to think more about what they want to do, how to achieve it, and how it fits in with their own strategies. Such assistance has enabled people to manage their own organisations more successfully.
- *'We don't fill the forms in for groups – as other development workers do. This makes the process very slow but ensures the group have full control and 'ownership' of their projects.'*

### **Training**

The training courses, events and workshops provided by SYFAB make a difference to many of the groups that access them. For example, the 8 week OCN training course develops a plethora of skills within groups. This enables them to be more effective fundraisers which in turn strengthens the sector and develops sustainability, and also helps them start to look more strategically at how their group operates, good practice and quality assurance.

### **Funders**

SYFAB's services have had an impact on funders as well as groups seeking funding.

- *'It has to be one of the best support agencies not only for voluntary and community groups but for funders. If groups do not meet with our criteria, I can refer them to SYFAB knowing full well that they will get quality advice and quite often this leads to the groups securing some funding.'*
- SYFAB have involved funders in many funding events – providing a helpful way for funders to communicate directly with local voluntary and community groups.
- *'Some impact on good practice amongst funders in the area. Improved level of awareness of issues for local groups among some funders and other agencies. For example, more local authority officers have a better knowledge base of what is relevant for local groups, what the barriers are, and what support and referrals are most useful.'*
- Some funders have accessed some communities that they would have struggled to without SYFAB's support, e.g. by a development worker encouraging a particular group to apply to a particular funder.

### **Other impacts**

As well as directly supporting 'frontline' groups, SYFAB also acts as a focal point of funding expertise for other voluntary and community sector infrastructure organisations or 'umbrella' groups (such as local Councils for Voluntary Service and their counterparts). This has a 'knock on effect' by helping these organisations to become more effective in the support and advice which they provide to local groups on funding.

- *'Working across South Yorkshire gives SYFAB a good perspective from which to influence and contribute to change.'*

### **5.2.2 Limiting factors**

The survey also asked stakeholders about limiting factors: *'In your view, are there any factors which limit the usefulness of SYFAB's services to voluntary and community groups?'*

Almost all respondents identified one or more factors. A very common response was that it is SYFAB's capacity to support the large number of groups that use their services which is a major limiting factor. A great deal of emphasis was put on the need for more funding to increase the staff resources available to meet the demand.

Here is a summary of the key points that people made (we've also included a number of quotes - these are in italics).

#### **Funding and capacity**

A key issue was SYFAB's own funding. There is a need for increased funding to enable SYFAB to deliver a more comprehensive service - there is currently a lack of staff capacity to meet the demand from local groups. Further, the issue of sustainable longer term funding for SYFAB needs to be addressed – improved continuity of funding would provide a more stable base for the service. The following quote is typical of the feedback which people provided:

- *'The main limit to the usefulness of SYFAB is their own capacity to support the vast amount of groups that require and demand the service that they provide. With limited funding, there is only so much one-to-one advice that can be provided to groups. I suspect that the demand for outreach support could sustain many more workers than are currently in post.'*

The following issues highlight the impact of SYFAB's present capacity:

- SYFAB provides limited intensive development support. If people can't use the information or advice because of other barriers, they are mostly left to resolve things for themselves. While SYFAB does signpost and encourage groups to get the help they need, it doesn't intervene or follow up – or very rarely.
- Most services are very 'arms length' – this is fine for those who just need the information and a few pointers, but there is very limited capacity to provide much more.
- People often can't get what they want from SYFAB quickly. Some want the information or advice as soon as they've identified that they need it and may give up or perceive having to wait as a barrier.

#### **Development work**

Development work is a key area where more staff capacity is required to meet the needs. One worker per area is not sufficient. Further staff resources could provide more time for one-to-one support and advice, including practical help with completing application forms.

- *'Not enough Development Worker hours.'*

- *'More workers on the ground may give added support to groups with more time available for one-to-one working.'*
- *'On the ground, development workers tend to support grassroots community groups rather than the medium to large voluntary sector organisations who may need more specialist advice.'*

The loss of the development worker post in Doncaster (due to lack of funding at present) is a significant blow to the services which SYFAB provides to groups in the area. If the post is reinstated in future, it is important that the worker be based in Doncaster as local groups may be reluctant to travel outside the area for advice and support.

### **Publicity**

SYFAB does not promote itself enough to the sector. The Bureau needs to be more visible and to promote further the specialised services which it offers. Also, there are other agencies which give funding advice – which can cause confusion for groups.

### **Information**

- There is scope for SYFAB to speed up the length of time it takes for groups to receive funding information once it has been requested.
- Lack of access to the Internet can be a limiting factor for some groups. For example, staff may be unable to refer them to the latest information on a funders website.

### **Other external factors**

There are a range of other external factors - outside of SYFAB's control – which impact on the Bureau's work. Here are some of the issues which were highlighted:

- SYFAB's work is affected by its links with the support services provided by other organisations (for example around constitutions, capacity building, organisational and project development). Sometimes these other services are fragmented, or less effective in the support which they provide to groups. However, when these links work well they add to the usefulness of SYFAB's work.
- There are barriers such as the need for a level of English literacy and numeracy within a group to deal with any funding bids.
- Often funders and government agencies (local, regional and national) provide poor information about funding opportunities, or have poor processes for providing information – such as a lack of clarity, and very short timescales. The result can be confusion amongst groups seeking clear information about funding opportunities.
- The complexity of funding streams is one factor. SYFAB's time could be used more effectively if funding streams were simplified.
- The experience or culture of some local groups can be a factor. Some people are not used to taking control of things and so may experience the different stages in the funding process as barriers, e.g. forward planning, project planning, and long winded timescales. Consequently some people may self-exclude before making an application.
- A further factor is the lack of access (or easy access) to good quality organisational development support and technical support in some areas.

### 5.3 Funding needs in the future

We asked people to look ahead to the future (over the next 5 years) and to consider the key needs for voluntary and community groups in relation to funding information, advice and training.

#### 5.3.1 Future needs

The survey asked: *'How important do you expect each of the following will be for voluntary and community groups in the future?'*

People were asked to provide a rating for each of the following five key services:

- Access to information about sources of funding
- Practical help with form filling or advice about funders
- Training courses / events on funding
- Regular newsletters on funding
- Easy to access online resources e.g. on the Web or via email

These were chosen as they largely cover the core services which SYFAB currently provides.

The outcome was that each of the five services were regarded as either essential or very important by an overwhelming majority of respondents. The implication of this is that these key stakeholders see a continuing need for SYFAB's current services in the future. Their responses suggest that there is no need for any fundamental reorientation of SYFAB's current strategy of supporting voluntary and community groups on three fronts simultaneously:

- (a) providing information about funding in various forms;
- (b) providing groups with practical support and advice;
- (c) providing training courses, workshops and other events concerned with funding.

The following table summarises the detailed responses to this question.

<i>Future services</i> (N= 31)	<i>Essential</i> %	<i>Very important</i> %	<i>Quite important</i> %	<i>Little importance</i> %	<i>Not important</i> %
Access to information about sources of funding	90	10	0	0	0
Practical help with form filling or advice about funders	71	19	10	0	0
Training courses / events on funding	58	29	13	0	0
Regular newsletters on funding	39	58	3	0	0
Easy to access online resources e.g. on the Web or via email	39	45	16	0	0

Note: Separating the responses of staff and freelance trainers from the analysis makes relatively little difference to the above figures.

A number of other future needs were also highlighted by individual respondents. These included:

- A helpline to answer queries.
- Workshops in the community, 'Meet the funder' surgeries.

- Information about available national funding, diversification of income, procurement, service level agreements, and income generation.
- Advice on handling the monitoring requirements and cash-flow implications of multiple funding sources.
- Advice, support and training to help groups to demonstrate the wider outcomes and impact of grants, projects and services.

### Comparison with the user survey

The above question (*'How important do you expect each of the following will be for voluntary and community groups in the future?'*) is virtually the same as one posed in the user survey (see Section 4.8). The only difference being that the key stakeholders were asked to reflect on the needs of voluntary and community groups as a whole, while the user survey asked people to reflect on their own group's needs. So how do the responses compare?

Overall, the key stakeholders give the five areas of service an even higher importance rating than groups using SYFAB services. The table below provides a detailed comparison.

U - user

S - stakeholder

<i>Future services</i>	<i>Essential</i>		<i>Very important</i>		<i>Quite important</i>		<i>Little importance</i>		<i>Not important</i>	
	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>
	U	S	U	S	U	S	U	S	U	S
Access to information about sources of funding	70	90	24	10	6	0	1	0	1	0
Regular newsletters on funding	48	39	34	58	15	3	1	0	2	0
Practical help with form filling or advice about funders	29	71	29	19	30	10	10	0	2	0
Training courses / events on funding	22	58	27	29	38	13	12	0	1	0
Easy to access online resources e.g. on the Web or via email	30	39	29	45	30	16	9	0	3	0

### 5.3.2 Future work

We asked people for their thoughts on the direction of SYFAB's work in the future – in the light of the future needs of voluntary and community groups: *'How would you like to see SYFAB developing or targeting its work in the future? What do you feel are the key priorities?'*

Not surprisingly the responses to this question show that these stakeholders want SYFAB to continue and develop its work. Overall people would like SYFAB to both continue and expand its current range of services. In particular, it is expected that the demand for its services will be greater when Objective One funding comes to an end. To meet this challenge SYFAB needs to find ways to ensure that its own funding is secure.

Here's a summary of the other issues which people highlighted:

**SYFAB services**

- Maintain the Bureau's existing services.
- Seek funding to employ additional specialist workers.
- Continue to support small groups with modest resources, and those groups who work in disadvantaged communities. Target 'hard to reach' groups.
- Continue to monitor the impact of SYFAB's work, e.g. within different communities within the coalfields areas.

**Information**

- Provide information about emerging new grants and how to access them.

**Development work**

- Continue and increase provision of one-to-one support. Assist groups with application forms.
- Provide more resources for the development work service. In particular, secure funding to reinstate the funding development post in Doncaster.
- Assist with the development of new groups.
- Tailor support to the needs of groups, e.g. offer a dual service, one for experienced workers, and a more intensive service for those who are less experienced in fundraising.
- Help groups to meet the monitoring requirements of funders.
- Develop the service to provide legal advice (governing documents) and financial/accounts advice.

**Training**

- Provide more funding workshops and undertake further development of the training service, e.g. perhaps provide training for further trainers in fundraising.
- Offer different 'levels' of course for both experienced and inexperienced fundraisers.

**Sustainability**

- Help groups to become more sustainable.
- Assist groups to prepare for the consequences of the end of European funding, e.g. via training which looks at alternative sources of income.
- Provide support for groups around wider opportunities for generating income, social enterprise, full cost recovery and procurement.

**Promotion**

- Publicise SYFAB's work to a wider audience.

**Partnership**

- Continue to work in partnership with other infrastructure organisations and networks who support local voluntary and community groups – such as CVS and local partnerships. Develop these links further, including joint events and training initiatives.
- Continue to network with other services/agencies concerned with funding. Work to raise the profile of SYFAB amongst statutory agencies, e.g. local authorities and primary care trusts.

**SYFAB management**

- Expand the SYFAB management team to free up the Director to focus on strategic management.

### 5.3.3 Using the Internet

The survey of SYFAB users found considerable interest amongst groups in using the Internet in the future to look for information about funding. In view of this, one of the questions which we put to the key stakeholders is particularly relevant – we asked:

*‘One potential strategy for the future might be to promote greater access to SYFAB’s services via the Internet. In your view, what could SYFAB do to help local voluntary and community groups to make use (or better use) of the Internet for accessing funding information, advice and training?’*

People provided a number of ideas for addressing this. Two of the key themes were: (1) working in partnership with organisations to facilitate access to the Internet, and (2) the development of appropriate training courses / workshops. Here is a summary of the ideas:

#### **Partnership**

Work in partnership with others, for example:

- Work with organisations who are also concerned to increase the use and access to IT by voluntary and community groups, e.g. those who offer (or might be able offer) free Internet access to groups.
- Work in partnership with other infrastructure organisations to provide (free) computers with internet access to small community groups.
- Work with trainers to offer entry level IT training within coalfields communities.

#### **Training**

Develop specific training to encourage and enable groups to use the Internet for fundraising. This might combine the development of ICT skills with a specific focus on using the Internet to support funding bids, e.g. where to look for funding opportunities.

- Provide appropriate workshops in the community to introduce people to using the Internet for fundraising, e.g. in local libraries or other venues where internet access is available.
- Offer on-line training on the SYFAB website.
- Train advocates in the community to train community groups.
- Produce user-friendly guides to accessing and using on-line information on funding.

#### **Access**

- Signpost people to places where they can get access to the Internet.

#### **Promotion**

- Encourage SYFAB users to consider using the Internet for accessing information about funding – link this to the provision of appropriate training sessions and information about where to access the Internet (for those who do not have direct access).

#### **Website**

- Provide useful on-line resources on the SYFAB website, such as Funding News (which is already available on-line).
- Develop the website further as a user-friendly resource – and advertise it more widely (e.g. as part of a wider programme of publicity for SYFAB’s services).

#### **Concerns**

A number of people raised some concerns about promoting greater access to SYFAB’s services via the Internet:

- It is important to ensure that those who do not have access to the Internet are not disadvantaged by SYFAB's developing use of the medium.
- The Internet should be seen as a complementary service to the other ways in which SYFAB works, rather than a potential replacement. For example, there is no substitute for the face-to-face contact provided by SYFAB's development workers.

## 6. Conclusions

### 6.1 Key points about impact

This impact assessment has found a wealth of evidence to show that the work of the South Yorkshire Funding Advice Bureau (SYFAB) has a considerable impact on the voluntary and community sector in the coalfields areas of Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham. This impact operates in a variety of ways across the different services which SYFAB provides. The following key points provide a summary of this evidence.

- SYFAB provides a wide range of services which provide information, advice and training to voluntary and community groups in the Coalfields areas. These comprise:
  - Information service
  - Development support (this overlaps with information, training courses, workshops and events)
  - Training courses, workshops and events
  - Funding News (newsletter)
  - Information sheets
  - Website
- Large numbers of groups use these services. For example, between January 2003 and December 2004, 1173 different groups / organisations used one of the following services: information service; contact with development worker; attendance at a training course, meeting or event. Overall, more groups in Barnsley and Rotherham use these services than in Doncaster.
- These overall figures also show a healthy balance between SYFAB's work in Sheffield and its work in Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham. Between January 2003 and December 2004, 64% of groups using the following SYFAB services were working in the coalfields areas: information service; contact with development worker; attendance at a training course, meeting or event.
- Data from previous evaluations provides plenty of evidence of a high level of positive feedback or 'user satisfaction' from those using SYFAB's core services: information service and newsletter, development work, training courses and events.
- The 2005 survey of SYFAB users provides detailed quantitative and qualitative evidence of the impacts of SYFAB's work for those groups using its services. The analysis is based on a response rate of 34%.
- Amongst those taking part in the survey, the most commonly used services were the newsletter *Funding News* (used by 90% of groups) and contact with SYFAB development workers (86%), followed by information sheets (61%), training courses/events (60%) and information searches (58%). The least used service was the SYFAB website (37%).
- A substantial number of groups are relatively new users of SYFAB's services: 49% of groups had their first contact with SYFAB within the last 2 years.
- A high proportion of groups reported some success with funding applications. 78% of groups had made successful funding bids since contacting SYFAB, while 22% had either made no bids or had no success with bids.
- Overall groups reported that substantial sums had been raised from successful funding bids since contacting SYFAB.
  - For example, those participating in the survey reported that a total sum of over £4.03 million had been raised between January 2003 and March 2005 (and this is by no means a

- comprehensive figure). (N.B. it is **not** claimed that this sum has been raised as a direct result of SYFAB's services.)
- The total sums raised by **all** groups that use SYFAB's services will obviously be greater than the subset which took part in the survey. For example, the 187 questionnaires analysed for the survey represent 16% of the 1173 groups who were actively in contact with SYFAB during 2003 and 2004.
  - A high proportion of groups reported that they found SYFAB's services helpful in assisting them to make funding applications. For example, 65% of groups regarded its services as either 'essential' (21%) or 'very helpful' (44%) in this respect. (This figure was significantly higher in Barnsley than in either Doncaster or Rotherham.) Groups also reported which services in particular they found useful:
    - The most common responses were: information about potential funders (86%) and the newsletter 'Funding News' (80%).
    - People tended to indicate that a number of services were useful – the average number of services identified in this way was more than three. This suggests that most SYFAB users tend to access an interconnected package of SYFAB services – one which they are able to tailor to their own needs. Given this, it is appropriate to look at the overall impact of these interconnected services rather than separating out individual elements in isolation.
  - Feedback on impact: most groups said that SYFAB's services had made a difference to them. 47% of groups reported either a 'major difference' (19%) or a 'significant difference' (28%); a further 37% reported some difference. Those who had made successful funding bids since contacting SYFAB were more likely to report that SYFAB's services had made a difference to them – 57% of these reported either a major or significant difference.
  - Groups provided substantial feedback on the differences that SYFAB's services have made to them. Many described how the support of SYFAB had made a very significant difference to their group and its activities. Section 4.7 provides examples of the impacts reported.
  - The survey of key stakeholders found further positive feedback on the impact of SYFAB's services. People report that SYFAB's provision of information, advice, support and training has had a significant impact on the voluntary and community sector's ability to seek funds. SYFAB is seen as a well respected support organisation that groups are willing to turn to. People frequently mention receiving good feedback from groups who have used SYFAB's services.
  - Within this overall picture, the surveys also identified some limitations to SYFAB's work:
    - The key stakeholders identified a range of factors which limit the usefulness of SYFAB's services to voluntary and community groups. In particular, the responses highlight the need for increased funding and staff capacity to enable SYFAB to provide a more comprehensive service. The loss of the development worker post in Doncaster is seen as significant blow to the services which SYFAB provides.
    - In the user survey a small minority of respondents provided some critical feedback. These also highlighted the loss of the development worker post in Doncaster.

## 6.2 The future

### 6.2.1 Key points about future needs

As well as investigating the impact of SYFAB's work, we also explored the future needs of voluntary and community groups for funding information, advice and training. The responses from both service users and other key stakeholders indicate a continuing need for SYFAB's work in the future.

- When asked about the key needs for their group in the future, a very significant (sometimes overwhelming) majority of SYFAB users saw each of the following as important:
  - Access to information about funding
  - Regular newsletters on funding
  - Practical help with form filling or advice about funders
  - Training courses / events on funding
  - Easy to access online resources
- When the other key stakeholders were asked a comparable question about the key needs for voluntary and community groups, they gave each of the above services an even higher importance rating than the groups using SYFAB's services.
- The feedback from both users and other stakeholders on future needs suggests that there is no need for any fundamental reorientation of SYFAB's current strategy of supporting voluntary and community groups on three fronts simultaneously:
  - providing information about funding in various forms (e.g. the information service, Funding News and the website)
  - providing groups with practical support and advice (via locally-based development workers)
  - providing training courses, workshops and other events concerned with funding
- We asked key stakeholders for their thoughts on the direction of SYFAB's work in the future – in the light of the future needs of voluntary and community groups. Overall, people would like SYFAB to both continue and expand its current range of services. Indeed it is expected that the demand for its services will be greater when Objective One funding comes to an end. To meet this challenge SYFAB needs to enter into discussions with key strategic funders, including the local authorities, to ensure that its own funding is secure.

### Internet

The Internet provides a useful opportunity for the future development of SYFAB's work – particularly in view of the increasing use of the medium by groups that use SYFAB's services. The responses on future use of the Internet (from service users) demonstrate that there is considerable scope for SYFAB to develop this aspect of its work further.

- A clear majority of service users (72%) are planning to use the Internet in the future to look for information about funding. A further 18% are unsure about their potential use of the Internet.
- Groups identified a range of ideas for helping their group to use (or make better use) of the Internet. Five themes were identified from these ideas: help with where to look on the Internet, other enhancements to the SYFAB website, email updates, training and access.

In tandem with the user survey, key stakeholders were asked to consider what SYFAB could do to help local voluntary and community groups to make use (or better use) of the Internet for accessing funding information, advice and training. People provided a number of ideas for addressing this. Two of the key themes were: (1) working in partnership with organisations to facilitate greater access to the Internet, and (2) the development of appropriate training courses / workshops.

## Overall

The overall picture is that people want more from SYFAB - they like the services which are currently provided by SYFAB, and would like to see additional staff resources for a more comprehensive service. For example, people would like to see (a) more development workers, and (b) more support from the information service – with quicker response times for the provision of information.

### 6.2.2 The SYFAB model and the future

This impact assessment provides substantial evidence that the model of service delivery currently adopted by SYFAB is very effective in supporting the fundraising efforts of voluntary and community groups in the South Yorkshire Coalfields.

Key features of SYFAB's model of service delivery include:

- Working effectively both sub-regionally and locally. SYFAB successfully delivers services throughout the sub-region – not just in Sheffield, but also in the Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham areas.
- Providing an interconnected package of services – which users can tailor to their needs. This package combines information, advice, support and training.
- Meeting the needs of smaller community groups, particularly those facing disadvantage. The potential for face to face contact with a SYFAB worker is a key feature in the support offered to many such groups.

The positive feedback in the survey from many service users is no cause for complacency. It is clear that while many users strongly value the support which they receive from SYFAB, that is by no means the end of the story. Many groups do want SYFAB to provide even more – such as more access to local development workers, faster access to information about potential funders and more tailored information relevant to their own needs. For example, the present lack of a development worker post in Doncaster – due to a lack of funding – is a significant gap in SYFAB's services.

While there is plenty of evidence to show that the model adopted by SYFAB is very appropriate to the needs expressed by groups, there is a cause for concern. Not with the services which SYFAB provides, or its model or the professionalism and commitment of its staff. It is with SYFAB's capacity to meet the needs of voluntary and community groups with its present level (and security) of funding. It is clear that increased financial resources are needed to enable SYFAB to meet the very real needs of groups, particularly those with modest resources. Given SYFAB's pivotal role in supporting groups to gain access to funding, it is vital to ensure the long-term financial stability of the Bureau. Indeed, it seems certain that the end of Objective One funding, in particular, will intensify the funding support needs of the voluntary and community sector in South Yorkshire.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> There is currently no Development Worker for the Doncaster area due to a lack of funding.

<sup>2</sup> These figures were extracted from SYFAB's user database. This holds integrated data for recorded contacts with SYFAB which cover the information service, development work, and training course and events. The figures therefore only cover contacts which have been recorded on the database.

<sup>3</sup> Many organisations used SYFAB in both 2003 and in 2004, in these cases they have only been counted once in this total.

<sup>4</sup> In this context a 'contact' means that a group used one of the following services: (i) used the Information Service (initial or full enquiry); (ii) contacted a Development Worker; or (iii) one person attended a training course, meeting or event.

<sup>5</sup> Annie Rosewarne's final report is available at: <http://www.shef.ac.uk/~oip/syfab/about.html>

<sup>6</sup> This figure does not include those groups who only received the newsletter or accessed the website.

<sup>7</sup> Interestingly two-thirds (8 groups) of those who chose 'no help' at this point, subsequently earmarked at least one service which they had found helpful – in their responses to the question which followed.

<sup>8</sup> These differences were statistically significantly different using a chi-squared test at the  $p < 0.05$  level. This means that the probability that this difference occurred by chance rather than because of a real difference between groups was less than 5%.

<sup>9</sup> This difference was statistically significantly different using a chi-squared test at the  $p < 0.001$  level. This means that the probability that this difference occurred by chance rather than because of a real difference between groups was less than 0.1%.

<sup>10</sup> The number of groups covered by this table (N=170) covers: (a) all those who indicated 'essential', 'very helpful', 'quite helpful', or 'some help' in their answer to Q5A; plus (b) those who indicated 'no help' or left Q5A blank, but then indicated a useful service in Q5B.

<sup>11</sup> These differences were statistically significantly different using a chi-squared test at the  $p < 0.001$  level. This means that the probability that this difference occurred by chance rather than because of a real difference between groups was less than 0.1%.

<sup>12</sup> The figure of N = 144 represents 77% of the total sample, i.e. 23% of people did not provide a response to this question about online resources in the future.

<sup>13</sup> People had also provided positive additional comments in answer to the earlier Question 5, which asked how helpful SYFAB's services had been (see also Section 4.5).

## Appendix A1 : Questionnaire for groups / organisations

The South Yorkshire Funding Advice Bureau (SYFAB) is carrying out an assessment of the impact of its work in the South Yorkshire coalfields areas of Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham.

We are contacting your group / organisation as a user of SYFAB's services to ask for your assistance in carrying out this assessment. We would like to hear your views. Please let us have your response by Friday 25 February if possible – this will be much appreciated. In general, we won't be naming any individuals or organisations in the final report. However, if we did want to mention your group by name, we would contact you to ask your permission first.

### Your contact details

1. Please provide your contact details:

Name of group / organisation:  
 Name of person completing questionnaire:  
 Position / role:  
 Contact address:  
  
 Telephone:  
 Email:

### Using SYFAB services

2. Has anyone from your group / organisation:
- |   | Yes | No | <i>Don't know</i> |
|---|-----|----|-------------------|
| (a) had the results of a SYFAB information search sent to them, i.e. a list of potential funders (from the SYFAB Information Service) |     |    |                   |
| (b) spoken to one of the SYFAB development workers (Caroline Burns, Peter Foyle, Ian Paisley or Lesley Wilkinson)                     |     |    |                   |
| (c) attended a training course / event concerned with funding organised by SYFAB  |     |    |                   |
| (d) read 'Funding News' (the monthly SYFAB newsletter)  |     |    |                   |
| (e) used a SYFAB information sheet  |     |    |                   |
| (f) used the SYFAB website  |     |    |                   |
| (g) had other contact with SYFAB  |     |    |                   |

3. When did your group / organisation **first** contact SYFAB? Please tick one box:

- within the last 12 months     
  1 - 2 years ago     
  2 - 5 years ago  
 more than 5 years ago     
  don't know

## Funding applications

4. (a) Since contacting SYFAB has your group made any funding bids?

Yes                       No                       Don't know

(b) Have any of these funding bids been successful?

Yes                       No                       Don't know

If 'Yes', how much did you get and from whom?

<u>Amount</u>	<u>Name of funder</u>	<u>Year</u>
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5. (a) In your view, how helpful have SYFAB's services been in assisting your group to make funding applications?

essential       very helpful       quite helpful       some help       no help

(b) If you found SYFAB's services helpful, what in particular did you find useful? Please tick each box which applies (this may be more than one box).

- information about potential funders
- help with completing an application form or writing a letter
- help with how to talk to a funder
- training course(s) / event(s)
- newsletter - 'Funding News'
- information sheet
- SYFAB website
- other help, please give brief details:

(c) If you did not find SYFAB's services particularly helpful, please tell us more:

## Making a difference / impact

6. (a) In your view, what difference have SYFAB's services made to your group? Please tick one box:

major difference    significant difference    some difference    little difference    none

(b) Please tell us more about the differences that SYFAB's services have made to your group.  
(For example, what would you say have been the chief impacts on your group?)

## Funding needs in the future – information, advice and training

7. In this section we'd like you to look ahead to the future (over the next 5 years) and consider the key needs for your group in relation to funding information, advice and training.

(a) How important do you expect each of the following will be for your group in the future?

*Essential      Very      Quite      Little      Not*  
*important   important   importance   important*

Access to information about sources of funding

Practical help with form filling or advice about funders

Training courses / events on funding

Regular newsletters on funding

Easy to access online resources e.g. on the Web or via email

Other needs, please give brief details:

(b) What do you think the key funding information, advice and training needs will be for your group in the future? Please comment :

## Using the Internet

8. (a) Does your group currently use the Internet to look for information about funding?

*SYFAB website:*  often  sometimes  rarely  never  don't know

*Other websites:*  often  sometimes  rarely  never  don't know

(b) Does your group plan to use the Internet in the future to look for information about funding?

Yes  No  Don't know

(c) What would help your group to make use (or better use) of the Internet for finding information about funding?

## Other sources

9. Does your group obtain funding information, advice or training from other sources, i.e. other than from SYFAB?

Yes  No  Don't know

If 'Yes', please give further details:

## Further information

10. Are you happy for us to contact you again if we need further information?

Yes  No  Not sure

11. Are there any other comments which you'd like to make about the impact of SYFAB's work?

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Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Please send your response to Dr Steve Webster at:

41 High Storrs Drive, Sheffield, S11 7LL

E: [stevewebster.research@bopenworld.com](mailto:stevewebster.research@bopenworld.com)

T: 0114 266 4116

Please contact Steve if you would like any help or advice with completing this questionnaire. An electronic version is available by email on request from: [stevewebster.research@bopenworld.com](mailto:stevewebster.research@bopenworld.com)

## Appendix A2 : Questionnaire for key stakeholders

The South Yorkshire Funding Advice Bureau (SYFAB) is carrying out an assessment of the impact of its work in the South Yorkshire coalfields areas of Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham.

We'd like your help in carrying out this assessment and are keen to hear your views. Please let us have your response by **Friday 25 February** – this will be much appreciated. In general, we won't be naming any individuals or organisations in the final report. However, if we did want to mention any organisations by name, we would contact them to ask their permission first.

### Your contact details

**1** Please provide your contact details:

Name:

Position / role:

Name of organisation:

Contact address:

Telephone:

Email:

### Making a difference / impact

**2** In your view, what have been the main impacts of SYFAB's work in the South Yorkshire Coalfields? (For example, what difference has SYFAB made to voluntary and community groups?)

**3** In your view, are there any factors which limit the usefulness of SYFAB's services to voluntary and community groups? Please comment:

## Funding needs in the future – information, advice and training

**4** In this section we'd like you to look ahead to the future (over the next 5 years) and consider the key needs for voluntary and community groups in relation to funding information, advice and training.

(a) How important do you expect each of the following will be for voluntary and community groups in the future?

	<i>Essential</i>	<i>Very important</i>	<i>Quite important</i>	<i>Little importance</i>	<i>Not important</i>
Access to information about sources of funding	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Practical help with form filling or advice about funders	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Training courses / events on funding	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Regular newsletters about funding	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Easy to access online resources e.g. on the Web or via email	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other needs, please give brief details:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

(b) How would you like to see SYFAB developing or targeting its work in the future? What do you feel are the key priorities?

(c) One potential strategy for the future might be to promote greater access to SYFAB's services via the Internet. In your view, what could SYFAB do to help local voluntary and community groups to make use (or better use) of the Internet for accessing funding information, advice and training?

### Other comments

**5** Is there anything else which you'd like to feed back about the impact of SYFAB's work? (For example, what works well, or what could be improved?)

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Thank you for taking the time to provide this feedback. Please send your response to Dr Steve Webster:

E: [stevewebster.research@btopenworld.com](mailto:stevewebster.research@btopenworld.com)

T: 0114 266 4116

41 High Storrs Drive, Sheffield, S11 7LL

Please call Steve on 0114 266 4116 if you would prefer to give your feedback by telephone.

## **Appendix A3 : SYFAB sources**

### **Evaluations/reviews commissioned by SYFAB**

Annie Rosewarne (2003), *Evaluation of the Bureau's SRB funding Training programme : September 2000 to September 2003*. Report commissioned by SYFAB (December 2003).

South Yorkshire Funding Advice Bureau (2000), *Evaluation of the Bureau's Development Work in Barnsley and Doncaster 1998-2000*. Report commissioned by SYFAB (April 2000).

Paul Ticher (2000), *Report to South Yorkshire Funding Advice Bureau on survey of user and non-user voluntary organisations*. Report commissioned by SYFAB (October 2000).

Paul Ticher (2001), *South Yorkshire Funding Advice Bureau, Review of information service: final report*. Report commissioned by SYFAB (July 2001).

### **Other SYFAB resources**

South Yorkshire Funding Advice Bureau (2004), *Annual Report 2003 – 2004*.

*Funding News* – SYFAB's regular newsletter.

Website: [www.syfab.org.uk](http://www.syfab.org.uk)