



...Evaluation of the Regional Networks Fund

Final report
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Janice Needham

Jean Ellis

Charities Evaluation Services



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Glossary

OEM (generic)	One East Midlands: East Midlands generic regional network
OEM (BME)	One East Midlands: East Midlands BME network
COVER	Community and Voluntary Forum Eastern Region: East of England generic network
MENTER	Minority Ethnic Network East of England: East of England Black and Minority Ethnic Network
LVSC/ 3SA	London Voluntary Service Council: Third Sector Alliance – London generic regional network
ROTA/MiNET	Race on the Agenda – Minority Ethnic Network: London BME network
VONNE	Voluntary Organisations' Network North East: North East generic network
BECON	Black Minority Ethnic Community Organisations Network - North East BME network
VSNW	Voluntary Sector North West: North West generic network
1 NW	North West BME network
RAISE	Regional Action and Involvement South East: South East generic network
UNI	South East BME network
SWF	South West Forum: South West generic network
BSWN	Black South West Network: South West BME network
RAWM	Regional Action West Midlands: West Midlands generic network (
brap	West Midlands BME network
YHRF	Yorkshire and Humberside Regional Forum: Yorks/Humber generic network

Abbreviations

ANEC	Association of North East Councils
Bassac	British Association of Settlements and Social Action Centres
BLF	Big Lottery Fund
BME	Black and minority ethnic
CES	Charities Evaluation Services
DH	Department of Health
DWP	Department of Work and Pensions
EEDA	East of England Development Agency
EERA	East of England Regional Assembly
EHRC	Equalities and Human Rights Commission
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESF	European Social Fund
FERI	Frontline Engagement through Regional Infrastructure Project
GLA	Greater London Authority
GOWM	Government Office for the West Midlands
ICT	Information and computer technology
LAA	Local Area Agreement
LDA	London Development Agency
LEP	Local Enterprise Partnership
LGBT	Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender
LGYH	Local Government Yorkshire and Humber
LRC	London Regional Consortium
LSC	Learning and Skills Council
NAVCA	National Association for Voluntary and Community Action
NCVO	National Council for Voluntary Organisations
NEEP	North East Enterprise Partnership
NHS	National Health Service
NI	National Indicator
NOMS	National Offender Management Service
NWDA	North West Development Agency
NWIEP	North West Improvement and Efficiency Partnership

OCS	Office for Civil Society
PSA	Public Service Agreement
PCT	Primary Care Trust
RDA	Regional Development Agency
RF	Regional Forum
RIEP	Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership
RIP	Regional Infrastructure Programme
RNF	Regional Network Fund
SEEPB	South East England Partnership Board
SEEDA	South East England Development Agency
SHA	Strategic Health Authority
SNR	Sub-National Review
SWAN	South West ACRE Network
SWS	South West Stakeholders
YH	Yorkshire and Humber
WMSIP	West Midlands Specialist Infrastructure Partnership
VCO	Voluntary and community organisation
VCS	Voluntary and community sector

Executive summary

1 The Regional Network Fund

1.1 This Executive Summary of the evaluation of Capacitybuilders' Regional Network Fund (RNF) is one of a series of documents, which also includes:

- Evaluation of the Regional Networks Fund, January 2011
- Learning Papers, January 2011

1.2 Capacitybuilders' RNF invested £1,166,000 in 17 generic and BME voluntary and community sector regional networks across the nine English regions between April 2009 and March 2011, as a succession programme to the Regional Infrastructure Programme. The programme's aims were to develop regional and policy influence - demonstrated in relation to specified policy areas and targeted organisations - and to improve the capacity of regional networks by developing leadership, income diversity and efficiency.

1.3 The table below provides funding details.

Distribution of the Regional Network Fund

Phase 1 decisions

Region	Regional Network/ Organisation	Type of network	2009/10	2010/2011	TOTAL
East Midlands	One East Midlands (OEM – generic sector influence)	Single platform	40,000	27,500	67,500
East of England	Community and Voluntary Forum Eastern Region (COVER)	Generic	42,500	25,000	67,500

Region	Regional Network/ Organisation	Type of network	2009/10	2010/2011	TOTAL
East of England	Minority Ethnic Network East of England (MENTER)	BME	42,500	25,000	67,500
London	London Voluntary Service Council (Third Sector Alliance)	Generic	42,500	25,000	67,500
London	Race on the Agenda (MiNET)	BME	42,500	25,000	67,500
North East	Voluntary Organisations' Network (VONNE)	Generic	42,500	25,000	67,500
North East	Black Minority Ethnic Community Organisations Network (BECON)	BME	42,500	25,000	67,500
North West	Voluntary Sector North West (VSNW)	Generic	42,500	25,000	67,500
South East	Regional Action and Involvement South East (RAISE)	Generic	42,500	25,000	67,500
South West	South West Forum (SWF)	Generic	42,500	25,000	67,500
South West	Black South West Network (BSWN)	BME	42,500	25,000	67,500
West Midlands	Regional Action West Midlands (RAWM)	Generic	42,500	25,000	67,500
Yorkshire & Humber	Yorkshire Humber Regional Forum (YHRF)	Generic	42,500	25,000	67,500

Phase 2 decisions

Region	Regional Network/ Organisation	Type of network	2009/10	2010/2011	TOTAL
East Midlands	One East Midlands (BME)	Single platform	17,500	50,000	67,500
North West	1 North West*	BME	42,500	25,000	67,500
West Midlands	brap*	BME	15,000	40,000	55,000
National (focus on SE and Y/H)**	Voice4ChangeEngland for development support with YH Panel and SE UNI in year 1, development support to all BME networks in Year 2	BME	16,000	40,000	56,000

Phase 3 decisions

South East	UNI	BME		42,500	42,500
Total awards recommended			641,000	525,000	1,166,000

*BRAP funding awarded at the end of a tender process

** outside the scope of the evaluation.

1.4 Differences in networks' overall resources, arrangements and mix of funding, all affected how the RNF was used; whether as core funding, to add value to existing work areas, or as a sole contribution to policy influence.

2. Targeting policy influence

2.1 The main areas of planned policy influence were the economy, regeneration and employment, and also the third sector, service delivery and civic renewal. Other themes included: regional structures and planning; health and social care; regional policy and equalities issues; the European Regional Development Fund. Eight networks specified developing influence itself as a focus of activity.

2.2 Much of the policy work was targeted on Regional Development Agencies, Government Offices and Strategic Health Authorities, Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships, Regional Association of Councils and Strategic Leaders Boards, Regional Equalities bodies and associated task groups and panels.

3. Main achievements

3.1 The evaluation found significant evidence of outcomes, ranging from developing sector structures and communication, through intermediate outcomes of providing evidence, developing relationships and influencing processes, to policy level outcomes. This higher level of change was seen, for example, as third sector perspectives and priorities were reflected in strategies and policy documents. Partnership working was a key tool for developing influence.

3.2 Network activity around an economic agenda (developing work around economic inclusion, skills development and the recession) included providing consultation and survey evidence, placing skills development and worklessness issues within an equalities context, and promoting the role of social businesses. For example, MENTER (Minority Ethnic Network East of England) set up and provided the strategic lead for a task force with representatives of five major regional agencies aimed at breaking down the barriers to black and minority ethnic (BME) access to business and employment services.

3.3 Most of the eleven networks specifying outcomes around third sector, civil society and service delivery focused on the commissioning agenda; an area of relatively undeveloped influence before the funding period. Other work related to the Compact and Local Area Agreement National Indicator 7 (N17), and increasing BME engagement in civic engagement and renewal.

- 3.4 Compact work was included in the equalities focus specified by the eight BME networks. Equalities work often drew on the ability of networks to draw together two or more specialist areas, targeting deeper levels of multiple inequalities. For example, brap (the West Midlands BME network) and Regional Action West Midlands supported the development of a regional infrastructure equalities network. Equalities work was strengthened by collaboration and also included focused consultation, development of toolkits and training, mapping, and work related to the single equality legislation.
- 3.5 Seven networks prioritised developing influence in regional structures and planning. Several networks built on earlier work linked to the Sub-National Review and regional plans and made good progress during 2009-10. For example, in the North East, VONNE developed relationships at the highest level in its regional strategy work. Elsewhere in the UK, South West Forum was successful in lobbying for a governance structure for South West stakeholders, which included the social 'sector' as one of four electoral colleges. However, the changes to policy and regional structure after the May 2010 general election made it difficult to build on these achievements in 2010-11.

4. Responding to change

- 4.1 The change after May 2010 from regional to more local structures resulted in substantial loss of effort put into Integrated Regional Strategy work. Equalities work needed refocusing as communities of geography became more dominant than communities of interest. It was also unclear how work around the recession, skills and worklessness would be carried forward. However, networks with an economic policy focus concentrated activities on new Local enterprise Partnerships expected to play a central role in determining local economic priorities. Health and social care was another area affected by the changed regional landscape in 2010. RAISE, for example, began work on the GP commissioning agenda, working with Strategic Health Authorities to identify skills gaps in GP Consortia, as well as addressing the lack of sector understanding of the implications of GP commissioning.

5. Increased capacity

- 5.1 All networks had planned outcomes related to enhanced leadership and accountability, income diversity and sustainability, and greater efficiency. Regional networks strengthened their organisations, investing in staff and trustee training, developing stronger team working and more proactive communications approaches. The focus was also increased quality of participation in networks and greater sustainability for network members.
- 5.2 In meeting change, many of the networks showed political awareness and provided leadership, adjusting activity, looking for new contacts and keeping members well informed. Despite external, and consequent internal, pressures, the higher profile, good personal relationships and strong network connections assisted by the RNF enabled some resilience, and in some cases, an opportunity to maintain influence in the changed landscape. For example, Third Sector Alliance's early engagement in the new Health Inequalities Strategy groups ensured that London's voluntary and community sector was engaged in the priority setting process and in deciding and contributing to the work plan.
- 5.3 More entrepreneurial approaches developed by regional networks have provided some protection as they have been affected by reductions in public expenditure and loss of funding streams. Many networks attempted to strengthen their position financially by exploring different income generation options, carrying out strategic review and business planning.

6. The RNF legacy

- 6.1 The Regional Network Fund provided relatively small funding amounts which could be used strategically and flexibly to add value to other funding to regional networks. It also helped leverage national and local funds and in some instances, it kick-started an area of activity. The RNF provided core capacity which helped regional networks to build external contacts, create linkages and develop internal skills, knowledge and reach into the sector; all of which supported an emerging response to a significantly different policy context.

For example, One East Midlands used the research that was informing the Sub-National Review to articulate the role of the sector in wider economic development and sustainability. Most networks put effort into briefing the sector about how its environment might change, and how to prepare for the new commissioning and decision-making landscape, and encouraging responses to consultation on the Big Society.

- 6.2 As well as increasing their policy influence in the funding period, regional networks found their strengthened position, communication channels and links to the sector put them in a good position in relation to emerging structures. The RNF had enabled networks on occasion to engage with the formation of national policy and, within a changing context, supported them to reposition themselves and to be alert to both local and national opportunities. The networks' continuing relevance and developed entrepreneurial skills should also sustain them to find new business models in a challenging funding climate, to strengthen existing relationships and develop new collaboration.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 In December 2009, Capacitybuilders commissioned Charities Evaluation Services (CES) to conduct an evaluation of the Regional Networks Fund.
- 1.2 The primary stated objective of the evaluation is to assess the achievements of the programme against two specific outcomes. These relate to:
- regional and policy influence (demonstrated in relation to specified policy areas and targeted organisations)
 - improved capacity of regional networks (leadership, income diversity and efficiency).
- 1.3 Although there has been extensive funding to regional networks over many years, there is little documented evidence on its impact on policy. The evaluation aims to:
- provide information, including a baseline, on the performance and impact of the funded networks
 - assess progress that has been made towards achievement of the overall programme outcomes
 - apply key findings to the likely future development and funding of the networks.
- 1.4 The evaluation also aims to shed light on the links of the programme with broader Capacitybuilders' investment and on how policy influence can be measured. It considers the lessons to be learnt about the common or different experiences of generic and Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) networks.
- 1.5 The purpose of this report is to present an overview of the achievements of the programme. Some of the specific learning from the programme is developed in the learning papers, available as separate documents.

1.6 The report draws on:

- Capacitybuilders' monitoring returns and Regional Manager monitoring visits for the period April 2009 – November 2010
- notes from peer exchanges between networks carried out June – August 2010
- a BME networks' workshop May 2010
- a workshop for all regional networks in September 2010
- contributions by the networks to the learning materials
- review of secondary data, for example, evaluations and reviews carried out by the networks on aspects of their work.

Many regional networks attract funding from a range of sources and undertake a wide complement of work in different areas. However, the focus of these evaluation reports is the delivery and outcomes which are funded by Capacitybuilders' Regional Network Fund.

It should be noted that the funding period for the programme runs until March 2011 and so, at the time of publication, some activity remains. However, given the closure of Capacitybuilders on 31 March and the changes facing Regional Networks, it was felt helpful to bring the evaluation timetable forward and produce the evaluation report before the end of the funding period. Because of this, at the time of publication, not all evidence and monitoring data had been submitted by the networks at the time of reporting.

2 Background

2.1 Background to the programme

2.1.1 The Regional Network Fund is a succession programme to the Regional Infrastructure Programme (RIP). Over the previous ten years, the Office for Civil Society (OCS) and its predecessors had provided strategic funding for up to 18 sector networks. For the last four years, the Regional Infrastructure Programme funding was agreed and awarded through government offices in the nine English regions. In most cases, both a generic network and a BME network have previously received strategic funding. However, there have been regional variations in network configurations and funding. In some regions networks have merged, or the funding has moved to commissioning specific pieces of work.

2.1.2 The management of previous funding also differed across the country. For example, some networks were subject to detailed monitoring and reports, while for others there was a more 'hands off' approach. The RIP funded arrangements in place to increase BME voice in influencing policy and decision making were also very different. They included the following:

- BME-led networks (with a representation function and aiming to represent views of communities).
- BME strand as part of a generic network.
- BME network as part of a wider equalities network.
- BME Panel (predominantly a group of individuals providing expertise to statutory bodies).

2.1.3 The Regional Infrastructure Programme funding finished in March 2009. Prior to this Capacitybuilders was approached by the Office of the Third sector to administer a two year legacy fund (2009-11). The Regional Networks programme aimed to fund a generic network and BME network (or other mechanism for BME sector representation) in each of the English regions.

2.1.4 The Regional Networks Fund programme was developed in consultation with the funded regional networks. A well attended stakeholder meeting in January 2009 helped to shape the final programme.

2.1.5 Capacitybuilders acknowledged that networks were well-established and already operating in most regions and that different arrangements were in place in different regions. They aimed to implement a targeted approach to investments under this programme as opposed to a traditional application and assessment process. They adopted a 'dialogue' or negotiation process to offer the opportunity to:

- test ways to maximise the outcomes and change that the funding could achieve
- ensure the full engagement of existing grant-holders
- involve and engage other funders in the process.

2.1.6 Capacitybuilders negotiated individual funding contracts with each of the eligible networks based on:

- the needs of and demands on the third sector within each region
- the agreements in place with other funders in the region
- the existing arrangements for regional working
- clearly agreed outcomes.

2.1.7 Further details on the programme are given in Section 3.

2.2 Other sources of funding for infrastructure

2.2.1 The Regional Infrastructure Programme funding aimed to support strategic engagement and the coordination of a voluntary and community sector (VCS) 'voice' at a regional level. In addition, further funding for regional infrastructure has been made available through the Big Lottery Fund (BLF) BASIS programme and through Capacitybuilders.

2.2.2 There are a mixture of funding streams and amounts from Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) to regional infrastructure regional networks. At one extreme, in 2008-9 the London Development Agency provided funding of £620,000 to London Voluntary Service Council (LVSC), who host the regional network Third Sector Alliance (3SA). Several other networks (or their hosts) received significantly lower amounts (including for specifically commissioned projects such as running consultations) or no RDA funding.

2.2.3 Other funding from regional agencies included Regional Assemblies (for RAWM and others), Strategic Health Authorities (for Community and Voluntary Forum Eastern Region (COVER) and others) and Regional Learning and Skills Councils (for Regional Action West Midlands (RAWM) and others).

3. Regional Network Programme

3.1 Capacitybuilders' Regional Networks Programme aimed to fund a generic network and BME network (or other mechanism for BME sector representation) in each of the English regions. The funds totalling £1,166,000 aim to support strategic engagement and the coordination of a voluntary and community sector (VCS) 'voice' at a regional level.

3.2 The Fund has two specific outcomes:

Outcome 1: By 2011, regional third sector networks are able to demonstrate influence over regional and national policy affecting the third sector.

Outcome 2: By 2011, regional third sector networks are able to demonstrate improvements in their leadership, income diversity, and efficiency.

3.3.1 Following a negotiation process, funding was agreed for 13 networks until March 2011 (Phase 1 decisions in June 2009). A further three networks were funded following Phase 2 decisions in December 2009, together with development support for two networks (through Voice4Change England). Following this support, one further network was funded in Phase 3 in March 2010. All regions, therefore, had funding agreed for regional generic and BME networks, with the exception of Yorkshire and Humberside.

Phase 1 decisions

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Phase 2 decisions

Region	Regional Network/ Organisation	Type of network	2009/10	2010/2011	TOTAL
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West Midlands	brap*	BME	15,000	40,000	55,000
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Phase 3 decisions

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Total awards recommended			641,000	525,000	1,166,000

*brap funding awarded at the end of a tender process

** outside the scope of this evaluation.

- 3.4 The monitoring requirements varied across the awards and were based principally on the degree of risk identified during the negotiation process.
- 3.5 On outcome 1, networks were asked to identify three policy areas where they wanted to bring about change (project outcomes) and three organisations that they wished to influence.¹ Work plans documented the outcomes (or changes) they wished to bring about, indicators that would enable them to tell whether the change has happened and milestones that would indicate progress towards the project outcome.
- 3.6 On outcome 2, networks were asked to identify the change that they wished to bring about in relation to leadership, income diversity and efficiency, together with indicators and milestones for each.
- 3.7 As many networks have other sources of funding (see 2.2 above), some of which complement the Regional Network Fund, it is often difficult for networks to specify the exact changes that result solely from the Regional Network Fund.

4. Changing context

4.1.1 There has been a significant change in context following the election of the Coalition Government in May 2010, including a change in focus away from regional to more local structures. Specifically:

- Government Offices have been dismantled
- Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) are being abolished and Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) created, to be in place by March 2012 at the latest. Some of the RDAs' current functions will continue at a national, rather than local level
- Strategic Health Authorities (SHAs) are being phased out as part of the Government's National Health Service (NHS) reforms.

¹ UNI was asked to identify two policy areas and two organisations to influence as its funding started in 2010/11.

In networks' experience many structures are winding down more quickly than the announced timetable.

- 4.2 Given that these agencies were often those that regional networks were aiming to influence, this policy change has significant implications for the work of the networks until March 2011, as well as for their future role. In general networks felt that the policy outcomes agreed were still valid, but as a result of these changes in regional structures, the organisations that they were aiming to influence were changing in many cases. The shifts in focus for various policy areas are discussed in more detail in sections 7-10 below.
- 4.3 As well as regional structures being dismantled, there has also been a collapse of key relationships. An increasing focus on local structures has affected the number of organisations to influence and in some regions there is strong local voluntary sector representation so a less clear local role for the regional network in influencing.
- 4.4 The policy of the Coalition government is still developing in some areas and many agencies waited for the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) before announcing programmes and priorities, resulting in significant uncertainty about the future. The continuing reduction in public spending is affecting resources available for both regional networks as well as their members.

5 Approach and evaluation framework

- 5.1 An evaluation framework was developed, presenting the outcomes, outcome indicators, activities and milestones derived from work plans by funded networks for both Outcome 1 and Outcome 2. However, given the significant change in circumstances, it is felt that it is not appropriate to continue to use this framework in a 'classical' sense to track progress to outcomes, rather to use it as a starting point for identifying achievements and presenting evidence over the period of funding.

- 5.2 Individual network outcomes related to Outcome 1 (influencing policy) were grouped in the following themes:
- Theme 1: Economy, regeneration and employment.
 - Theme 2: Health and social care.
 - Theme 3: Third sector, service delivery and civic renewal.
 - Theme 4: Regional policy and equalities issues.
 - Theme 5: Regional structures and planning.
 - Theme 6: Development of influence, focusing on developing relationships, voice and influence with regional agencies, including developing structures and collaboration within the sector.
 - Theme 7: Other issues.
- 5.3 The majority of networks focused on Theme 1 (economy, regeneration and employment) and Theme 3 (third sector policy). These themes and Theme 4 (equalities) are presented in detail in the following sections 7-9, with other themes presented in section 10.
- 5.4 A summary of policy themes and agencies to influence chosen is presented in Tables 1 and 2, Appendix 1.
- 5.5 As well as the policy area, outcomes for networks can be classified as follows:
- a. Influencing policy outcomes, resulting specifically in:
 - third sector perspective/priorities reflected in strategies/policy documents
 - greater recognition of third sector/understanding of the sector role demonstrated (including Compact activities)
 - increased opportunities for the sector, such as in commissioning.
 - b. Intermediary outcomes, for example.
 - influencing processes, such as increased representation in structures, increased level of engagement with statutory bodies
 - influencing people, such as establishing/developing relationships
 - improved evidence.

- c. Developmental outcomes:
- Development of robust sector structures to support influence.
 - Improved communication with members.

Achievements are mapped against this framework in each of the policy area.

5.6 A 'level of influence' tool was adopted to allow a broad overview of the extent of influence by region, policy theme or target agency. This is drawn from *The Axis of Influence: a tool for community groups and networks who want to improve their influence*, published by Community Development Exchange (CDX) and Changes with support from the National Empowerment Partnership and now known as 'Voice'. The following levels were used:

- Below Level 5: Not yet fully organised to influence.
- Level 5: Organised to influence.
- Level 6: Knows the political landscape.
- Level 7: Knows who to influence.
- Level 8: Links with others to influence.
- Level 9: Knows how to influence.
- Level 10: Does influence.

5.7 Further details on the Axis of Influence are given at *Appendix 2*.

5.8 The Axis of Influence self-assessment relates to the level of standards around leadership, efficiency and financial sustainability, as well as the strategic relationships and networks' capacity to influence. Information on the baseline self-assessment levels is presented in Tables 3 and 4 in *Appendix 3*.

5.9 Given the significant changes in context during the period of funding, many of the networks felt that the tracking changes in the level of influence had limited value and chose not to re-assess. Three networks did re-assess in autumn 2010 and their information is presented as illustrative in the appropriate sections.

6. Policy themes and agencies to influence (Outcome 1)

6.1 The three policy areas and three regional agencies to influence chosen by each regional network are summarised below in tables A and B.

Table A: Policy areas to be influenced

Policy area	Number of networks
Economy, regeneration and employment*	12
Third sector, service delivery and civic renewal*	10
Regional structures and planning	7
Development of influence	8
Health and social care	4
Regional policy and equalities issues	4
Other issues	1

* Two agencies had two policy areas within this theme. In addition, once Local Enterprise Partnerships were announced, several networks made this their focus. UNI had two policy areas and organisations to influence as funding did not start until 2010/11.

Table B: Agencies to be influenced

Type of agency	Number of networks
Government Office (GO)	12
Regional Development Agency (RDA)	10
Strategic Health Agency (SHA)	6
Regional Improvement and Efficiency partnership (RIEP)	4
Regional Association of Councils/Greater London Authority/Mayor/Strategic Leaders Boards*	6
Other regional employment/skills bodies	4
Regional third sector, eg, infrastructure network*	4

Type of agency	Number of networks
Regional equalities bodies	2
Other	2

* One network had two agencies to be influenced in this category.

UNI had two policy areas and organisations to influence as funding did not start until 2010/11.

6.2 Every region apart from the East Midlands identified economy, regeneration and employment as a specific policy area to influence. In general, both generic and BME networks in each region identified this as a policy focus.

6.3 Only BME networks identified regional policy and equalities issues as a specific key policy area. While other networks did not specifically identify equalities policy as one of their three priorities for influence, there are a number of examples of them influencing practice and structures. In addition, there are several examples of generic networks ensuring that equalities issues are reflected in their policy influence activities. No BME network specifically identified health and social care as a key policy issue, although one identified the SHA as an agency to influence. However, again it must be emphasised that some of these issues were taken up by the networks, but funded through other streams and were, therefore, outside the scope of this evaluation.

7. Influencing policy – economy, regeneration and employment

Overview

7.1 Almost all the networks were involved in this policy area (13 of the 17 funded). There were three main areas of interest:

- economic strategy and planning
- economic inclusion and skills development
- impact of the recession.

7.2 Key changes following the election are as follows:

- The statutory basis for Regional Strategies was removed, with decision-making on planning and housing matters being placed solely in the hands of local authorities.
- With Regional Development Agencies being dismantled the focus has shifted to Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs). LEPs are expected to play a central role in determining local economic priorities and undertaking activities to drive economic growth and the creation of local jobs. They are also a key vehicle in delivering Government objectives for economic growth and decentralisation. Many regional networks are now focusing on building relationships with LEPs.
- Many of the task groups and panels that networks were involved in have also disappeared – some of these have been replaced by other activity at a regional level and others replaced by locally based activity.

7.3 The table below presents summarised achievements against planned outcomes, set out within the three-part classification of influencing policy outcomes; intermediary outcomes; developmental outcomes. Where there is evidence that the outcome has been achieved, this is shown in blue text; where evidence has not been presented at the time of writing, this is shown in red text. Some outcomes achieved in the first year of the programme may not have been sustained, for example representation achieved on regional boards which were subsequently dismantled. These entries have been starred *.

7.4 This and subsequent tables provide an indicative overview of progress in specific areas. It should be noted also that it reflects development of voice and influence in relation to Regional Network Fund (RNF) specified outcomes; networks may have made progress during this period in areas covered by other funding streams.

		Economic strategy and planning	Economic inclusion and skills development	Impact of recession
Influencing policy outcomes:	Sector perspective/priorities reflected in agencies' strategies/plans	VSNW 1NW COVER	BECON	VONNE MiNET
	Sector recognition /understanding demonstrated	COVER 1NW	VSNW MENTER BECON COVER	3SA (LVSC) RAISE
	Increased sector opportunities/funding	COVER RAWM	YHRF VSNW	
Intermediary outcomes	Increased representation	RAWM* VSNW* 1NW* COVER		
	Increased level of engagement with statutory bodies	SWF VSNW 1NW	VSNW YHRF BECON UNI	RAISE* 3SA (LVSC) MiNET

		Economic strategy and planning	Economic inclusion and skills development	Impact of recession
	New/developed relationships		YHRF MENTER COVER	3SA (LVSC) VONNE
	Improved evidence		MENTER UNI	3SA (LVSC) MiNET VONNE RAISE
Developmental outcomes	Robust sector structures/processes developed	1NW	MENTER	
	Improved communication with members	RAWM	YHRF UNI	RAISE VONNE

Key:

outcome achieved

*outcome achieved but not sustained due to changes in regional structures after May 2010

evidence not presented at time of writing

Baseline situation

- 7.5 In the period preceding funding, the economic downturn drew many of the networks into increasing levels of engagement with economic issues, including the development of regional strategies. However, networks were starting from different levels. In the South West, for example, the process for developing a single regional strategy had been unclear and South West Forum had not been involved in any consultation or development process. In contrast, VSNW was already holding a seat on the Regional Economic Strategy Advisory Group.
- 7.6 Networks focusing on the recession and unemployment were largely able to develop an increased voice drawing on research carried out or begun before the funding period. For example, VONNE had surveyed the sector on the impact of recession in the North East and drafted a report on results; LVSC had begun its Big Squeeze survey to assess the impact of the recession was having on the voluntary and community sector (VCS) in London. VSNW had some involvement with North West Improvement and Efficiency Partnership (NWIEP) research into tackling worklessness and YHRF had been engaged in commissioning research through the Worklessness Commission. BECON had worked with the North East Equality and Diversity Partnership Evidence Task Group in commissioning a research report from Northumbria University, *Closing the Ethnic Employment Gap in the North East* (2008).

Achievements

- 7.7 There is significant evidence of increased representation, increased engagement in consultations and contacts with statutory bodies, as well as improved evidence such as survey data on the impact of the recession. Of the 13 networks involved in this area:
- six presented evidence of influencing policy such as strategies and plans
 - all but one had evidence of intermediary outcomes, such as increased representation

- seven had evidence of developmental outcomes, such as improved communication with members.

7.8 Networks reported a number of ways that positive outcomes were achieved in relation to economic development during the funding period and examples of these are summarised below.

Influencing economic strategies and plans

7.9 VSNW (starting from a higher baseline in relation to work around economic development) demonstrated the potential of regional networks to provide a substantial third sector input to the development of economic strategy. During the funding period, VSNW reached over 200 groups through its consultation events in two consultation phases associated with the development of RS2010, and were subsequently selected for the expert panel looking at the work stream associated with the third sector. Specific outcomes included:

- volunteering was formally written into the RS2010
- a specific policy commitment to the 'third sector' with VSNW gaining responsibility for drafting this
- clear evidence of third sector influence in the document, ensuring 'hooks' for VSNW work in the delivery of the strategy.

Following the removal of the statutory basis for Regional Strategies in June 2010, VSNW was in a position to use its developed relations to refocus its work on 'Future North West', developed as a streamlined non-statutory, high-level framework, and published in August 2010.

7.10 The One North West Director held a seat at the Regional Strategy Advisory Board, with the Regional Strategy referencing anti-racism work, and including increased recognition of BME third sector providers and the need for further BME leadership investment.

Raising awareness of the impact of the recession

- 7.11 LVSC was able to use RNF funding to complement recession-related work through BASIS funding, completing two phases of its Big Squeeze survey on the impact of the recession on the VCS in London. London Funders stated that they were acting on the report's recommendations to maintain an evidence base 'so that the recession's impact on London's communities can be effectively tackled' and in the financial year 2009-2010 London Councils Grants Committee agreed a five-point plan to deal with the effects of the recession on grant-making and the voluntary and community sector, with specific reference to the Big Squeeze.
- 7.12 MiNET conducted mapping across the following BME voluntary sectors: health, criminal justice, housing, education, gender, children and young people. This was supported by volunteers and interns, who conducted structured interviews with BME-led groups working in those areas in each borough. There is early interest in the housing strand of this work from the Greater London Authority (GLA) and MiNET hopes to present findings to local authority commissioners. MiNET's BME recession work has attracted interest from the Deputy Mayor at the GLA and from the National Council of Voluntary Organisations (NCVO), which changed some of its own policy work as a result of it.
- 7.13 VONNE's recession surveys resulted in a body of evidence on the recession in the North East, and the resulting campaign, 'Surviving Not Thriving' built substantial media impact. Some of the report's key recommendations were taken up by Government Office North East (GONE), the RDA and Association of North East Councils (ANEC), with the Community Foundation using the report to target organisations under pressure. MPs used the report to lobby the Regional Minister at the regional Grand Select Committee and the Regional Minister lobbied the Treasury on behalf of the sector.

Highlighting the employment gap between BME and white communities

7.14 MENTER built improvement in the understanding of BME issues in accessing skills, employment and enterprise services through two major conferences – the first held together with the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) and East of England Regional Assembly (EERA) in November and a second in March 2010, sponsored by the East of England Skills and Competitiveness Partnership. BECON secured funding from One North East (RDA) under the Third Sector Capacity Fund for a 'Connect 2Work' project to tackle BME unemployment. UNI are preparing a child poverty paper and a BME employment paper.

Gaining increased access to funds for sector

7.15 YHRF made a successful joint bid with Local Government Yorkshire and Humber to the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership (RIEP) to take work forward linking VCS activity on worklessness with that of local authorities, matching long-term unemployed people over 50 and those coming off incapacity benefit to voluntary sector volunteering opportunities. See box below for more information.

Yorkshire and Humber Regional Forum and worklessness

Worklessness and the over 50s is a continuing regional problem. The aim was to gain greater recognition of VCS potential and experience in the issue, continuing links and dialogue between VCS organisations and public agencies on worklessness and over 50s (including: Age Concern; Jobcentre Plus; Government Office for Yorkshire and The Humber; Faiths Forum; Carers; Local Government Yorkshire & Humber; business sector).

Prior to the funding period the VCS had a good record of working on this issue and the Worklessness Commission, led by the Regional Forum, was looking at how this could be both acknowledged and built upon.

In June 2009, the Worklessness report was soft launched with Regional Minister, Rosie Winterton, and there was consultation on how to implement the findings. A subsequent meeting of the Worklessness Commission – with agencies and the VCS – all agreed an implementation and review plan based on the discussions at the Launch. The idea of a bid to the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership was pursued with the support of the leader of Barnsley Council and Local Government Yorkshire and Humber (LGYH) to resource a further stage of this work. At the end of 2009, the joint bid with LGYH was successful.

In October 2010 it was reported that this work is now a RIEP project on worklessness, for which YHRF have a sub-contract, enabling over-50s to be supported in volunteer placements with VCS organisations. Also, YHRF run the YH Volunteering Network with Volunteering England, including a project 'Young people, worklessness and volunteering'.

It was felt that relationship building was helped by having some joint interests/outcomes (for example, the work around volunteering, which was of interest currently to both the Regional Forum and Local Government Yorkshire and Humber).

Developing consultation activity

7.16 There are several examples of consultations, including One North West engaging 93 third sector organisations through seven sub-regional consultation events during the period, feeding into research commissioned by the North West Development Agency (NWDA), 'Unlocking the Potential of BME Communities.'

Increasing representation on panels and task groups

7.17 There are several examples of increased representation, including in the West Midlands, where RAWM focused on producing quarterly knowledge and intelligence reports about the role and contribution of the sector and the impact of the downturn on the sector. There was a significant increase in sector representation on economic taskforce structures in the region (see box below for more details). BECON was linked into the Regional Employability Framework through involvement with the VCS Employability Forum. Many of these achievements were not able to be sustained due to the dismantling of regional structures.

Regional Action West Midlands and the West Midlands Economic Task Force

Before the funding period, RAWM was one of three regional third sector organisations engaging with strategic agencies such as the RDA, with the other two specialising in Europe and Social Enterprise. The West Midlands Economic Taskforce was led by the Regional Minister, was administrated by the Regional Development Agency, and was a key strategic body which the VCS needed to both engage with and influence. There were a plethora of task and finish groups established at regional level arising from the economic downturn, meaning RAWM had to extend sector reach, build capacity and increase levels of engagement within and across the region. RAWM was resourced by the Regional Development Agency to directly engage with the Taskforce. Importantly, the Taskforce identified 20 Investment locations in the region which the VCS needed to be able to influence and engage with at a local level.

The RNF supported RAWM in this engagement, with the aim of ensuring sector presence on the Economic Taskforce Structures (over and beyond RAWM) and on each of the emerging and newly established task and finish groups of worklessness, equality and diversity, regional procurement and social clauses, among others. This included a presence on the Economic Inclusion Panel and securing sector representation on at least 50% of the 20 Investment location strategy/steering groups.

By March 2010 RAWM in partnership with Advantage West Midlands had convened a meeting with all 20 impact location leads. From this initiative, five local authorities opened up discussions around greater VCS engagement. All meetings with local authorities were conducted with the respective infrastructure organisation or consortia in that locality.

Following the dismantling of regional structures, the West Midlands Task Force was replaced by sub panels. RAWM retained its place on both the Economic Inclusion Panel and the Equality and Diversity Panel.

Responding to change

7.18 The main obstacle to networks in the economic development and inclusion policy area has been the dismantling of RDAs and the development of Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), which are still evolving. However, some networks are already engaged with LEPs, for example:

- COVER has already secured a seat on Greater Cambridge/Peterborough LEP Board representing the sector and will represent the sector on other LEPs as they emerge and receive Government approval.
- RAISE has made early contact with LEPs as they are formed in the South East.
- brap is focusing on building relationships with LEPs.
- In Yorkshire and Humber, YHRF note that LEPs are perceived as following a narrow definition of economic growth (with little apparent comprehension of the wider agenda) and, as such, the VCS is currently sidelined.

7.19 This early engagement by regional networks with LEPs contrasts with recent research published by Capacitybuilders.² This research shows that 85 per cent of local voluntary and community sector support providers would be interested in working with a Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) but only 15 per cent have been approached to be involved.

7.20 VONNE has had some success, working with ANEC and with the Northern Business Forum to ensure that the VCS featured in the North East Enterprise Partnership (NEEP) proposal submitted to Government on September 6. VONNE also wrote to Eric Pickles MP and Nick Hurd MP following the omission of the VCS from the information that was circulated about key partners in the development of the LEPs. VONNE received express assurances from both that VCS organisations were to be involved in establishing LEPs and had a significant contribution to make.

² Capacitybuilders (December 2010) *Local Enterprise Partnerships and Civil Society Infrastructure* (www.improvingsupport.org/resources/view/2114-local-enterprise-partnerships-leps-and-civil-society-infrastructure)

- 7.21 Other relationships are also being developed. For example VONNE is prioritising the business community, including the Federation of Small Businesses and North East Chamber of Commerce.
- 7.22 Those networks collecting evidence on the impact of the recession feel that this will develop into recording the impact of the government/ public sector cuts and, as a result, there is continuing interest in this area of work. 3SA have attracted new funding specifically to continue with this strand of activity.

8. Influencing policy – civil society and service delivery

Overview

- 8.1 Eleven networks were involved in this policy area. The majority focused on the commissioning agenda, with others working on general third sector or BME third sector involvement, predominantly in relation to the Compact and National Indicator 7 (NI7).
- 8.2 Relevant changes post-election include:
- removal of National Indicator (NI) /Local Area Agreement (LAA)/Public Sector Agreement (PSA) approaches
 - shift in focus on health commissioning to GP commissioning.
- 8.3 The table below presents summarised outcomes for this theme as described in 5.4 above. Where there is evidence that the outcome has been achieved, this is shown in **blue** text; where evidence has not been presented at the time of writing, this is shown in **red** text.

		Commissioning	Sector engagement in planning, economic activity and service delivery	BME sector engagement in civic engagement and renewal
Influencing policy outcomes:	Sector perspective/priorities reflected in agencies' strategies/plans	3SA (LVSC) OEM (BME)		BECON BSWN
	Sector recognition /understanding demonstrated	VSNW BSWN RAWM 1NW OEM (BME)	SWF OEM	BSWN OEM (BME)
	Increased sector opportunities/funding	VSNW RAWM brap		BECON brap
Intermediary outcomes	Increased representation	RAWM BSWN		brap
	Increased level of engagement with statutory bodies	3SA (LVSC) VSNW BSWN brap	OEM* SWF	BECON BSWN OEM (BME)

		Commissioning	Sector engagement in planning, economic activity and service delivery	BME sector engagement in civic engagement and renewal
	New/developed relationships		OEM*	brap
	Improved evidence			
Developmental outcomes	Robust sector structures/processes developed	OEM (BME) brap		brap
	Improved communication with members	OEM (BME)		OEM (BME) brap

Key:

outcome achieved

*outcome achieved but not sustained due to changes introduced by the new government

evidence not presented at time of writing

Baseline

8.4 Prior to the funding period, networks' role and influence on commissioning was not very developed. For example:

- VSNW was not perceived as having a role and discussions were just beginning with partners.
- LVSC had completed some information work on commissioning and had held a conference bringing together network members interested in this area, and opportunities to influence the London Development Agency's commissioning framework had been identified.
- brap was in a similar position and had prioritised areas to influence on commissioning, identified a few organisations that were best able to target each issue and had contacted Government Office West Midlands (GOWM) to ask about clearer advertising of tender opportunities.

8.5 SWF had been taking an active leadership role in the Regional Compact but lacked dedicated resources for Regional Compact work. OEM had held a discussion event on LAA/NI7 at their conference in March 2009 and done some research on the impact of the sector on NI7.

Achievements

8.6 Of the 11 networks involved in this area:

- three were able to demonstrate that they had achieved policy influence
- ten had evidence of achieving intermediary outcomes, such as increased engagement with statutory agencies
- two had achieved developmental structures, such as building robust sector structures.

8.7 Where the level of influence had been tracked, there was evidence that this had increased over the funding period, but has subsequently reduced. OEM reported an increase in influence in relation to its work on NI7/LAA from six to eight for the generic network and five to eight for the BME network, but this area of work no longer exists.

8.8 Networks reported a number of ways that positive outcomes were achieved in relation to civil society and service delivery during the funding period and examples of these are summarised below.

Reflecting sector priorities in commissioning

8.9 VSNW was increasingly involved in shaping commissioning processes and was part of a national steering group with NHS NW looking at Social Value Commissioning. NHS NW part-funded a role at VSNW to effect commissioning processes in the NHS. VSNW are developing a procurement action plan on behalf of the regional partners, with phase one including the funding of free training opportunities valued at £40,000. brap have been working on developing relationships with other equalities bodies, such as Consortium of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered Voluntary and Community Organisations, Gender Matters, West Midlands Specialist Infrastructure Partnership (WMSIP) in order to build a collective voice to approach commissioners and regional stakeholders. In consultation with the Collective's members it has also created a lobbying plan for approaching and influencing commissioners. RAISE were involved in a meeting of the Reducing Reoffending Board (which included the Chief Executives of two unitary authorities and two borough councils), which considered the role of and opportunities for/barriers to greater engagement by commissioners of the VCS in the design, delivery and commissioning of health and social care services.

Recognising the sector through the Compact

8.10 During the funding period, South West Regional Compact won the 2010 National Compact Award for regional working and Regional Compact Partner meetings remain well supported and effective (SWF). However, there is great uncertainty over future resources for and significance of Regional Compact work. More details are given in the box below.

South West Forum, Black South West Network and Regional Compact

Prior to this funding, SWF was taking an active leadership role in the Regional Compact. The need for assessment of partners' implementation and commitment to Compact working was recognised. Some organisations were active in the Regional Compact group but not yet signed up formally, with 14 Regional Compact partners by March 2009. There was a lack of dedicated resources for Regional Compact work. BSWN sought to address the amplification of BME Voice by promoting the development of a Regional BME code able to engage the public sector at a strategic level.

Supported by this funding, SWF aimed to ensure that all partner organisations (signatories to the Regional Compact) were fully embedding Regional Compact principles and practice throughout their organisations and providing evidence of this. The funding enabled SWF to provide the secretariat for the Regional Compact Group and co-ordinate activities.

Over the funding period, BSWN managed a number of Compact revised events and supported the national partnership, carrying out joint surveys on the Compact, resulting in a national position on the need to keep a BME perspective. The BME code was recommended to the Strategic Leaders' Board in 2009 and the Regional Compact agreed to keep all elements of the South West Compact, including the BME code, in response to the Compact Review in 2009. The foreword welcoming the BME code was written by the Minister for the South West. It was agreed that the BME guidance was to be included in the National code, with the South West BME code to be included as an example.

The South West Regional Compact Group recently won the **National Compact Award for Regional Partnership Working** with BSWN and SWF together with other regional partners were instrumental in contributing to the outcome. The current member organisations of the SW Compact are: Black South West Network, Citizens Advice, Clinks, Creating Excellence, Equality South West, faithnetsouthwest, Government Office for the South West, Job Centre Plus, National Offender Management Service, Natural England, South West Councils,

South West of England Regional Development Agency, South West Strategic Health Authority, SWAN - The South West ACRE Network, Western Ambulance Services NHS Trust.

The Capacitybuilders' Regional Manager stated '*SWF are instrumental catalysts driving forward for the SW Compact Group who recently won a national award for Regional COMPACT. This achievement underpins the cross sector influencing role SWF has maintained with the majority of regional voluntary and public sector agencies*'

SWF noted that national awards have real value in securing engagement and commitment from partners.

Increasing BME sector engagement in civic engagement and renewal

8.11 BSWN developed and commissioned three community empowerment programmes working in three sub regions in the South West delivering engagement opportunities to 200 participants, resulting in a strengthened civic participation by BME communities in civic processes. Three short documentaries were produced and an online work group developed with participants.

Increasing engagement with statutory bodies

8.12 Several networks increased their engagement with statutory bodies in this policy area. For example, LVSC secured the opportunity to engage with the London Development Agency (LDA) on their emerging commissioning strategy. As this responsibility has now passed to the Greater London Authority (GLA), 3SA representatives established relationships with London Assembly members and ensured that questions on the commissioning of voluntary and community sector organisations were submitted to the Mayor's Question Time.

Responding to change

8.13 Changes on policy and structures following the election had a significant impact in this policy area. Many prioritised work on the Big Society, as in the following examples:

- OEM has delivered five learning events on the Big Society – VCS, cross sector, rural communities, environment, BME, small groups. This has culminated in a paper presented to the Minister Nick Hurd on 25 November. OEM has also delivered many presentations on Big Society to organisations including Trade Unions Regional Conference and members annual general meetings.
- RAWM has taken the lead with the Big Society agenda in the Region. RAWM has maintained a relatively high profile in the sub regions with the Big Society Roadshows.
- brap is monitoring progress with the Big Society and analysing what influence this initiative may have, holding a debate with the Collective in October to try and understand how the sector's environment might change.
- RAISE continues to keep its members informed of the changing priorities, in particular how the Big Society agenda is likely to impact on their organisations and what they should be doing to prepare for the new commissioning and decision-making landscape
- 1NW has started to engage with Big Society agenda and has facilitated a series of sector consultation events across the region.

8.14 Other response to change includes:

- 3SA switched their focus on commissioning from the LDA to the Mayor and GLA and have received written assurances that there will be voluntary and community sector representation on the new structures in London. They are working with the London equalities and human rights network, HEAR, to develop a policy roundtable bringing together commissioners with representatives of London's voluntary and community sector.

- OEM - Work with NI7 and LAA has ceased but the positioning of the organisation from the first years' work has ensured that they are well placed to work with Local Authorities and the RIEP. A meeting was held with nine top tier local authorities and this has now framed the context for a follow up event to take this work forward in January 2011.
- OEM has briefed the sector on the OCS consultation and coordinated responses from the networks that they support.
- OEM BME: The coalition government cancelled all reward grant payments arising from the LAA stretch target scheme in June 2010 and subsequently removed all national indicator and LAA approaches. However, OEM BME has now diverted work in this area to the Big Society agenda.
- RAWM had been engaged with the Public Service Agreement (PSA) 21 board (Build more cohesive, empowered and active communities) until the board stopped in May 2010. Subsequently RAWM was able to incorporate many of the PSA21 activities into another programme Every Voice Counts. Through this programme they were able to enable sector engagement with local authorities across the West Midlands, thus increasing sector capacity and developing a portfolio of case studies.

9. Influencing equalities policy

Overview

- 9.1 Four networks had outcomes related to this policy area – BSWN, MENTER, MiNET and BECON. A major strength of many networks is their ability to draw together two or more specialist areas - in doing so they are able to target deeper levels of multiple inequalities such as health issues for older BME people. In addition, a number of networks have brought together individual equality streams. For example, VSNW supported the Lesbian and Gay Foundation and Merseyside Disability Federation to deliver joint work on a Personalisation research contract; YHRF has a cross equality network bringing separate networks together which has worked on common health agendas.

9.2 There has been a substantial shift in the equalities and human rights policy since the May general election:

- Coalition policy appears to prioritise deprivation rather than equalities with a focus on economic inequality rather than a human rights approach. Equalities do not appear to be a significant feature of the 'Big Society'. The Duty for Equality is not explicit for example in relation to BME engagement in LEPs.
- Removing regional structures makes 'communities of geography' more dominant (rather than communities of interest). In addition there may be a loss of detailed intelligence at the right spatial level with an averaging or blending out of inequality (for example, pockets of inequality within a region).
- The Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) is under review.
- There appears to be a loss of monitoring and policing of equalities with the disbanding of the Audit Commission.

These changes have potential significance for the targeting of networks' influence work in relation to equalities. For example, some networks reported developing new relations with the Government Equality Office, as collaborative work with the EHRC, which had developed during work on the single equalities legislation, became uncertain.

9.3 The table below presents summarised outcomes for this theme as described in 5.4 above. Where there is evidence that the outcome has been achieved, this is shown in blue text; where evidence has not been presented at the time of writing, this is shown in red text.

		Awareness of and response to needs of BAME third sector	Equality and diversity policy and strategy
Influencing policy outcomes:	Sector perspective/priorities reflected in agencies' strategies/plans	MiNET	BSWN BECON MENTER
	Sector recognition /understanding demonstrated	MiNET	
	Increased sector opportunities/funding		
Intermediary outcomes	Increased representation		MENTER BECON
	Increased level of engagement with statutory bodies	MiNET	BSWN MENTER BECON
	New/developed relationships	MiNET	

		Awareness of and response to needs of BAME third sector	Equality and diversity policy and strategy
	Improved evidence		MENTER BECON*
Developmental outcomes	Robust sector structures/processes developed	MiNET	
	Improved communication with members	MiNET	BSWN

Key:

outcome achieved

*outcome achieved but not sustained due to changes introduced by the new government

evidence not presented at time of writing

Baseline

9.4 Prior to the funding period, three of the four networks had begun work in influencing equalities policy. MENTER's work was the most developed, as they had worked with regional partnerships of Race Equality Councils and the Empowerment Partnership to scope issues and policy development needed and developed a cross sectoral partnership to coordinate equality / diversity work in the region. They had linked with the national partnership led by Race on the Agenda on the progression of the Equalities Bill and with the National Equality Partnership. BECON had discussions with Government Office North East (GONE) Children and Young People's team and held a themed event on Children and Young People. MiNET had no specific focus on EHRC in 2008-9.

Achievements

9.5 There is evidence of an increased level of engagement, improved evidence and some increase in representation, although there is little evidence of specific changes in policy/strategy as a result of networks' activity. Of the four networks involved:

- all four have evidence of achieving intermediary outcomes such as increased representation or engagement
- two can demonstrate developmental outcomes, such as improved communication with members.

These are summarised below. In addition, MiNET was able to lobby for continued funding for BME policy and voice agencies as described in the box below.

MiNET and London Councils funding

London Councils currently fund five BME policy and voice agencies, as well as other regional equalities agencies and a range of frontline BME groups. In Sept 2010 the funding to these was under threat.

MiNET have had a proactive lobby; they put together a policy position paper including a case study for each organisation. These were sent to each councillor on the grants committee. MiNET entered into dialogue with a number of the councillors and sent further case studies. They met with the Chair of the Grants Committee and also the Mayor of Lewisham. As a result the Grants Committee was better informed on policy and voice work, its impacts and the benefits of providing this regionally rather than locally.³

Increasing representation

9.6 MENTER worked with the East of England Regional Assembly (EERA) to improve public sector understanding of BME issues, largely through the Social Strategy Implementation Group review; they were then invited to join the new Regional Social and Community Inclusion Development and Implementation Board.

Increasing engagement

9.7 The National Equality and Diversity Forum asked MENTER for help in organising a roundtable event on equalities in the workplace in the East of England. With the EHRC and EERA, MENTER organised an extremely successful conference on the new Equality Bill and its implications in February 2010. MiNET took part in four consultations with the GLA on the London Plan and was the only BME organisation responding. They are able to identify changes in the London Plan which can be attributed to MiNET contributions. They have been less successful at securing effective engagement with the EHRC.

³ Decisions were made by the Committee on 14 December 2010 under agenda item 3, including that five BME policy and voice agencies receive funding until their commissions end in June 2012. However all decisions were subsequently overturned by Judicial Review.

9.8 BSWN formed a broad partnership with the 'Winning the Race Coalition' to act as a central focus for the BME community to ensure its voice was heard clearly during the development of the Equality Act. To ensure a broad understanding of its application, an equality manual has been produced and a series of awareness-raising workshops held in the South West.

Responding to change

9.9 The changes to the status of bodies following the election led to the greatest difficulties, including:

- MiNET feel that the review of the EHRC is affecting engagement.
- In 2009-10, BECON met with Children's Services Adviser (GONE) and a template was devised for gathering 'baseline data' on BME young people in local authority care. However, due to the planned closure of GONE the Children's Services Adviser is now no longer in post due to redundancy and therefore the ability to influence this area of policy is considerably restricted.

Other equalities activity

9.10 While other networks did not specifically identify equalities policy as one of their three priorities for influence, there are a number of examples of them influencing practice and structures:

- RAISE has advocated for an Equalities Impact Assessment on SE Partnership Board Sustainability Plan and advised SE Coast SHA on Equalities Impact Assessment.
- SWF has helped to shape and develop the structure of South West Stakeholders, which contains 'board' representation from the sector from BME (through BSWN) and Social Enterprise. This has helped to ensure that some equalities issues are shared with this new policy 'top table' in the region.

- 9.11 In addition, there are several examples of generic networks ensuring that equalities issues are reflected in their policy influence activities:
- Specialist members of the Equalities Partnership were paid to research and subsequently used their members / contacts in VONNE's recession work.
 - When working on a policy issue, 3SA approaches the main regional equalities groups to seek views and invite input. These include Inclusion London (disability), Rota/MiNET (race), Kairos in Soho (LGBT), London Civic Forum faith forum (faith), Age Concern London (elders, Employability Forum (refugees), Women's Resource centre (women's issues) and the Hear Equality Network. These agencies and networks can also provide detailed feedback on particular issues and case studies to help inform policy and feedback to public sector agencies.

10. Influencing other policy areas

Overview

- 10.1 Other policy areas focused on were:
- regional structures and planning (seven networks)
 - development of influence (eight networks)
 - health and social care policy (four networks)
 - European funding (one network).
- 10.2 Changes post-election include the following:
- The statutory basis for Regional Strategies was removed, with decision-making on planning and housing matters being placed solely in the hands of local authorities
 - Strategic Health Authorities (SHAs) and Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) are being phased out as part of the Government's NHS reforms with commissioning responsibilities passing to GPs.

10.3 The table below presents summarised outcomes for this theme as described in 5.4 above. Where there is evidence that the outcome has been achieved, this is shown in blue text; where evidence has not been presented at the time of writing, this is shown in red text.

Some outcomes achieved in the first year of the programme may not have been sustained, for example representation achieved on regional boards which were subsequently dismantled. These entries have been starred *.

		Regional structures and planning	Development of influence	Health and social care	European funding
Influencing policy outcomes:	Sector perspective/priorities reflected in agencies' strategies/plans	VONNE YHRF	MiNET	VONNE RAISE	YHRF
	Sector recognition /understanding demonstrated	SWF YHRF OEM RAISE RAWM OEM (BME)	OEM (BME)	COVER RAISE RAWM	
	Increased sector opportunities/funding		brap OEM (BME)		YHRF
Intermediary outcomes	Increased representation	VONNE YHRF* OEM* RAISE* RAWM	MENTER SWF	COVER* 3SA (LVSC) RAISE VONNE	

		Regional structures and planning	Development of influence	Health and social care	European funding
	Increased level of engagement with statutory bodies	VONNE YHRF OEM RAISE* OEM (BME)*	MENTER MiNET SWF 1NW OEM (BME) UNI	3SA (LVSC) RAISE VONNE RAWM*	YHRF
	New/developed relationships	VONNE YHRF OEM OEM (BME)	OEM (BME) UNI 1NW	VONNE VSNW COVER	
	Improved evidence	VONNE	MENTER OEM (BME)	3SA (LVSC) RAISE	YHRF

		Regional structures and planning	Development of influence	Health and social care	European funding
Developmental outcomes	Robust sector structures/processes developed	RAWM OEM (BME)	MENTER OEM MiNET 1NW OEM (BME)	3SA (LVSC) RAISE VONNE	
	Improved communication with members	VONNE OEM RAISE YHRF OEM (BME)	MENTER MiNET OEM (BME) 1NW UNI	RAISE VONNE	YHRF

Key:

outcome achieved

*outcome achieved but not sustained due to changes introduced by the new government

evidence not presented at time of writing

Baseline

- 10.4 Prior to this funding, several networks had already begun work linked to the Sub-National Review (SNR) and regional plans and governance. VONNE was a member of the SNR advisory group and had held a Sub-National Review (SNR) workshop and made an SNR submission on behalf of the VCS in the North East region. YHRF note that the Integrated Regional Strategy (IRS) was not yet devised, but they had developed briefings and had links with RDA about the new arrangements for regional governance. SWF had supported four representatives on the 'old' Regional Assembly, but there was no commitment from regional public agencies to regard the SW stakeholders' structure as an essential third component of regional governance.
- 10.5 In order to build structures and processes to develop influence MENTER had previously carried out capacity building within the sector to increase knowledge of partnerships and negotiation techniques. They had also developed links with a national BME infrastructure partnership – Voice4Change England.
- 10.6 In the health and social care area, work had begun on the personalisation agenda. For example VONNE had held two personalisation workshops for the sector in conjunction with the Care Services Improvement Partnership and In Control. Several networks (including RAISE and 3SA) had identified health strategies as a potential area for involvement, but had limited capacity to engage.
- 10.7 COVER had been one of the most active networks in health and social care. They ran regional a Health and Social Care Cluster of VCS networks and organisations. They had held a conference on the new regional Health Plan, funnelled VCS responses into the consultation and promoted the role of VCS in providing community-based health and social care services.
- 10.7 YHRF was aiming to influence European funding arrangements and, prior to this funding, was an active representative on the PMC (project management committee) and invited to chair the Cross Cutting Themes Sub Committee.

Achievements

- 10.8 Several networks made very good progress during 2009/10. However, the changing context meant that it was not always possible to build on these achievements in 2010/11. Of the 15 networks involved in these policy areas:
- three had evidence of influencing policy
 - 14 had achieved intermediary outcomes, such as increased representation
 - 12 had achieved developmental outcomes, such as establishing or strengthening structures or processes.

Examples of achievements are given below:

- 10.9 OEM (BME and generic network) reported an increase in influence (from 5/6 to 9/10) in relation to their work on the Sub-National Review. This area of work has since disappeared but they are now working with local authorities with influence back at level 7.

Reflecting sector priorities

- 10.10 Achievements for VONNE have included developing the Group of NE Learning Disability Providers, culminating in launch of Nets work, which is now funded by the Regional Valuing People Board and Department of Health. They also secured sector representation on the Valuing People Board and ensured that Personalisation was linked to the commissioning agenda through a reference group. VONNE submitted a response to the 'Big Care Debate' on the Social Care Green Paper.

Gaining sector recognition

- 10.11 SWF were successful in lobbying for a governance structure for South West Stakeholders which includes the social 'sector' as one of four electoral colleges. SWF played a leading role in implementing the new structure and manages funds for SWS secretariat provided by South West Councils. In 2010/11 SWS published 'Let's hear it for the South West' position statement - which includes a strong VCS component.

The work is yielding useful policy suggestions which SWF will be able to use with its BASIS funded programme which works with local authorities and their relationship with the VCS.

Increasing representation

10.12 Several networks made very good progress in increasing representation in 2009/10. For example, OEM was elected to the East Midlands Regional Assembly and the Assembly Board and meetings being established with the RDA; however these structures are now being dismantled. COVER secured VCS representation on Regional Health Boards; however these are now being dismantled. In June 2009, RAISE had no recognised position within the South East England Partnership Board (SEEPB) structure. However, by early 2010 RAISE had become one of the eight recognised stakeholders to the Board. Prior to the SEEPB being wound up on 31 July 2010, RAISE had become the secretariat to the Stakeholder Liaison Group.

10.13 In 2010-11, as part of the Health Inequalities Strategy delivery, two new regional groups were established to replace the London Health Commission, a strategic Health Inequalities Group and a Health Inequalities Strategy Delivery Group and 3SA has successfully lobbied for representation on both groups.

Developing relationships

10.14 VONNE established direct relationships at the highest level. They were a former member of the Regional Strategy Development Group (membership included Head of GONE, Head of RDA, Head of ANEC, and leading Local Authority officers). While the Regional Strategy was being developed VONNE developed excellent relationships with these other stakeholders including ANEC (Association of North East Councils) and the Northern Business Forum. The relationships stood VONNE and the sector in good stead as it meant that they were well placed to influence the development of the emerging structures following the Coalitions' announcement that Regional Strategies would be lost in favour of more local structures.

Increasing engagement/consultations

10.15 VONNE made submissions on behalf of the sector to consultations on guidelines for the formation of Leaders Boards and the Community Involvement Statement. UNI Held a successful round table in November on the Big Society with participants from BME and public sector organisations. MiNET have been making ongoing responses to the development of the Single Equality Bill, which has involved taking part in the consultation for the codes and guidance, sending out updates to the networks, tracking amendments.

10.16 MENTER has made very good progress, in particular leveraging in other funds and using RNF to maximise strategic join up. Examples of success include:

- a framework has been set up for guidance on infrastructure for BME groups with 58 groups consulted; nine BME groups supported plus the start up of a regional Gypsy/Traveller network with eight member organisations
- strong start up support of three BME fora (and development support to six more), taking forward representation of community issues in local partnerships.

10.17 In health and social care, networks have been established, events held and submissions made. RAISE held an event in March 2010 sponsored by both SHAs and Department of Health, with the agenda including commissioning and procurement, personalisation and health inequalities. They have also set up a VCS Health and Social Care Network. 3SA also established a sub-group of local health and social care networks. A joint LVSC and Third Sector Alliance response to the Health White Paper was submitted in October 2010. 3SA have attracted funding from the Department of Health, securing £10,000 nationally (via Regional Voices) and £45,000 from the Regional Public Health group for London work; both funds run over two years.

Development of robust structures and development of influence

10.18 A number of networks developed their structures in order to develop their policy influence. An example is given in the box below.

One East Midlands - Network landscape development

OEM focused on the implementation of a new network landscape model in the East Midlands to ensure overall effective policy influence in key areas.

Prior to the funding period, the way forward was launched at the March 2009 conference and buy in from stakeholders sought.

By October 2009, the OEM governance structure had been changed and a new Board was being recruited to the revised structure. The second regional partnership conference took place in September 2009, focusing on Volunteering, followed by the development of the England Volunteer Development Council in the East Midlands. The Social Inclusion Policy Forum was launched and there was an ongoing programme of presentations and feedback from key regional and sub regional networks such as VCS Engage, Regional Learning and Skills Consortium, sub-regional infrastructure Consortia

A third regional cross sector conference on Health & Social Care took place in February 2010. By March new Board members had been successfully recruited to the revised One EM Governance structure and two members co-opted to fill identified skills gaps. A successful application was made to DWP for delivery of work to promote European Year 2010 for combating poverty and social exclusion work through the social inclusion policy forum.

By October 2010, OEM had continued to support networks and structures developed in the previous year and maintained ongoing relationships and dialogue. Membership continues to grow (currently standing at 318 with three still to approve).

OEM's level of influence related to the regional framework has increased (from 5/6 to 8/9). Influence remains at level 8 or 9 as they feel that they now have greater understanding of their audience and stronger relationships to maintain dialogue.

European funding

10.19 During the funding period YHRF continued to chair the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) Cross Cutting Themes committee. The Regional Forum is also a member of the Evaluation Committee looking at the mid-term review of the Programme and trying to make sure that issues of VCS concern are included. **The downturn, changing economic position of the region and continued difficulties of VCOs finding match funding mean that the context of this Programme, and therefore the Regional Forum's opportunity to influence it, is subject to change.** The Regional Forum is trying to use its position to continue to argue for the contribution of the VCS and for technical programme changes, such as commissioning activity, which will better allow VCS involvement and has worked to find allies to support this.

Responding to change

10.20 Although the statutory basis for the Integrated Regional Strategy (IRS) was removed, the underlying aim remained: to support the VCS to be involved in economic development, to inform the VCS about the local economy and to make sure community interests were included. The focus changed to LEPs (as discussed in Section 7) and the Big Society debate. For example, YHRF included the evidence and case studies collected for the IRS about the VCS's economic role in their formal response to the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR). They held a 'Big Society' roundtable in Bradford, which brought together community activists, voluntary sector workers, academics and statutory officers to debate the Big Society and the opportunities and threats the policy poses.

10.21 In the West Midlands, the West Midlands Task Force is no longer in existence. This has been replaced by sub panels and RAWM still has a place on both the Economic Inclusion Panel and Equality and Diversity Panel.

10.22 The changes in health and social care policy and structures brought differing responses from networks. COVER is managing consultation on the Transforming Adult Social Care White Paper, which will have a significant impact on the VCS.

RAISE has begun work on the GP commissioning agenda, working with Strategic Health Authorities (SHAs) to identify skills gaps in GP Consortia, as well as addressing the lack of understanding by sector of the implications of GP commissioning. In the West Midlands, the Strategic Health Authority is also in the process of closing down and being replaced by Health Watch. RAWM has held a strategic health event, built a good understanding of this area and is now in discussions with Health Watch.

10.23 3SA's involvement in health and social care has grown enormously but they lack the capacity to develop this further. The project has grown to the extent that it needs a dedicated project worker. This is an example of how the Regional Network Programme has often kick-started activity that has grown and developed, but needs funding both to sustain activity and enable it to develop further.

11. Improving leadership, income diversity and efficiency

Overview

11.1 All networks had planned activity and outcomes related to leadership, income and efficiency.

11.2 The table below summarises achievements against these outcomes. Where there is evidence that the outcome has been achieved, this is shown in **blue** text; where evidence has not been presented at time of writing, this is shown in **red** text.

Theme	Outcomes	Networks*
Leadership and accountability	Enhanced leadership skills to enable more effective/sustained strategic engagement	VONNE 3SA brap YHRF BECON RAISE
	Increased quality of participation in networks	VONNE 3SA MiNET OEM RAWM OEM BME BSWN
	Better collaboration between regional networks to develop joint strategic priorities	BSWN
	Positioning for undertaking third sector workforce and skills work maintained.	BSWN

Theme	Outcomes	Networks*
Income diversity/sustainability	Increased sustainability for regional networks	VONNE COVER 3SA VSNW OEM BECON OEM (BME) YHRF RAISE MiNET brap RAWM MENTER 1NW
	Greater sustainability of network members; more BME third sector delivery organisations demonstrating their ability to meet quality standards and to demonstrate value added	brap
Efficiency and performance	More effective use of resources	COVER BECON
	Impact demonstrated	OEM

Theme	Outcomes	Networks*
	Quality demonstrated	SWF
	Increased partnership and collaborative working to improve performance, impact and efficiency	VONNE OEM BME VSNW 3SA BECON 1NW BSWN

*UNI's workplan covered less than a year and so outcomes on strengthening the network were less ambitious

- 11.3 The changing context since the programme began has particularly affected potential income. The reductions in public expenditure have meant in general there is less funding available for the sector and some funding streams have been withdrawn (such as Third Sector Capacity Fund in the North East). In addition many of the agencies that may have been considered as likely funders for regional networks (RDAs, SHAs, Government Offices) are being dismantled.
- 11.4 However, there were significant achievements for most networks in this period in other areas. The leadership function has grown, with leadership development training for some staff and members. Financially, many networks attempted to strengthen their position during this period, either by exploring social enterprise/income generation options, increasing the range of funders or carrying out strategic review and business planning. In general, generic networks are in a stronger position than BME networks, but all face a difficult time ahead from March 2011.
- 11.5 In two cases, regional BME policy influencing networks were newly established. Information on the development and strengthening of one of these is presented below.

brap– establishment of the Collective

Prior to RNF there had been previous attempts to develop regional BME third sector 'influencing' networks in the West Midlands, but these had been unsuccessful, due largely to lack of clarity of purpose, stakeholders' differing expectations, inadequate capacity, and a mismatch between skills and aims.

Funding began in December 2009. By March 2010, a steering committee had been established as a vehicle for organisations to work together. Members had worked together on the aims of the network and next steps, and on lobbying and marketing plans. A workshop was delivered to Collective members called 'Are You Funding Ready?' in February 2010. brap's work with regional and sub-regional bodies raised the profile of the Collective.

By October 2010, the training programme had been developed to meet the changing landscape. Membership was expanded to the wider region and working with other networks had given the BME sector a chance to share practice, knowledge and skills. brap has been exploring ideas on sustaining the Collective once RNF funding ceases, including either setting up a social enterprise working on equality training or specialist BME capacity-building work. Membership continued to increase, including a possible affiliate membership of Barrow Cadbury Foundation. brap had developed relationships with seven networks, especially in Telford and Warwickshire. The training programme and use of social media in engaging with the sector has also been successful. 20 case studies are also in the process of being produced.

11.6 Resources have been invested in developing leadership capacity through organisational strengthening. In networks' external work, leadership has been demonstrated through targeted activities, more proactive communications approaches and in more developed relationships both with other voluntary sector organisations and with public sector bodies.

Specific examples of internal achievements are as follows:

- VONNE – the CEO, Policy Manager and Policy Officer all attended leadership development training. They also brought in a local journalist to train Communications staff and increased visibility with the media, with a regular paper review slot.
- In 2009/10, YHRF worked on a programme of leadership development for BME VCOs and contracted to deliver training around leadership and skills relating to commissioning. The Regional Forum is leading work with infrastructure organisations to develop a joint collaborative approach to delivering services across the region
- RAWM has shown leadership in bringing groups together in the West Midlands Third Sector strategic forum.
- Over the last 18 months LVSC have focused on developing the 3SA steering group to ‘gel’ the group and build their capacity, through awaydays, clear objectives, planned approach and priorities. The RNF focus has helped the steering group accept that they were not able to work on everything and needed to focus on priorities. As a result there is clearer leadership (including a new chair) and more agreement among the steering group as to what is taken on and why. The network is also more linked to the London Regional Consortium (LRC), MiNET, London Civic Forum and other key regional bodies.

Financial viability/sustainability

- Several networks have been exploring social enterprise/income generation options. For example, COVER has developed a focus on ICT and computer recycling, with the ‘i-trust’ brand, BECON has developed a Community Interest Company.
 - VSNW increased its range of funders during the funding period
 - VONNE had a £1.5 million turnover with income from more than 10 different sources in 2009/10, with reserves standing at £415,000 of which £290,000 are unrestricted. In anticipation of decrease in funding for 2011/12 onwards a strategic review of VONNE was carried out.
 - RAWM - Business Planning has been taking place in preparation for reduced funding in 2011.

Accountability/governance

- Political and economic changes had resulted in a greater need from the sector for information and representation; as a result many networks have seen an increase in membership and engagement. There are several examples of strengthening governance and accountability for example:
 - One EM membership has grown from 144 to over 300
 - OEM BME membership had grown from 19 to 83 over the last 12 months
 - MiNET membership increased by 43
 - brap membership is now over 400 and website to be launched in December should increase membership/reach further

Performance/efficiency

- MENTER is working towards PQASSO with accreditation.
 - Communication tools have vastly developed over the last year (as demonstrated by OEM and others) including use of social media (twitter, blog, face book) and more effective websites.

Responding to change

11.7 As mentioned above, the financial climate and changes to regional structures have had a significant impact on networks ability to increase their sustainability. The better-resourced generic networks and one or two BME networks (such as MENTER) typically have funds to last for 18 months or so from 1 April 2011. Many BME networks have no funding in place from 1 April 2011. Examples of difficulties include:

- LVSC has lost funding from other sources and has restructured to compensate. There is currently no dedicated Third Sector Alliance Development Officer to take forward the work. Changes to the way the network functions have not been popular, with several Steering Group members complaining about a lack of engagement and a dilution of the role of the network. The reductions in funds have meant the Third Sector Alliance has worked more closely with the London Regional Consortium

on key policy priorities. LVSC is currently reviewing the role of its networks and policy work in light of the changing regional structures in London.

- MiNET has generated income by undertaking work for ROTA and others, but this is not a viable path to sustainability. MiNET can continue in its present form until June 2011, after that it will drastically change unless it secures the necessary funds.
- RAWM receives its main core funding from the Advantage West Midlands (RDA) contract which will be decided on in December. The future outcome of this contract will have a major impact on RAWM's size and how it will look in the future.
- RAISE is in the fortunate position of having reserves which will see it through 18 months from April 2011 at current spending levels. A review of the future of the organisation has been commissioned which will report in February 2011. The new CEO has brought a fresh optimism and transparent working practices to the organisation and the staff team is already considering future work priorities/possibilities.

11.8 There is an inherent tension between leading the sector to develop its own agenda while responding to government initiatives and consultation. This also applies to the networks' own organisations, where board members may be understandably focused on the internal needs of the organisation (and their own organisations) rather being able to provide the leadership required by the changing policy agenda.

11.9 The balance of involving members rather than staff in activities continues to be a challenge for many networks. For example, members of 3SA were not actively engaged in publicising the 'Big Squeeze' survey in phase 1, this responsibility mainly being taken forward by 3SA (LVSC) staff. In phase 2, 3SA aims to involve the Steering group and wider 3SA membership in actively promoting the report and its findings and recommendations.

For many it is difficult to secure consistent and sufficient involvement of members at a regional level, particularly for BME networks where members are more likely to be small organisations with few or no paid staff.

12. Other investments and other benefits

- 12.1 Information on other funding and how this complements Regional Network funding is presented in the table in Appendix 4. The picture varies enormously - for some the funding is relatively small compared to the total income, whereas for others (predominantly BME networks) it is the only source or one of the major sources of funding.
- 12.2 For those with strong and established funding from (such as the RDA-funded post in VSNW for economy work) RNF funding has been able to add value to and supplement already well-grounded work. However it also means that it is often difficult for networks to specify the specific changes that result solely from the Regional Network Fund. Examples of complementary funding are given in the two boxes below

MENTER

MENTER has two BLF projects, the first providing for BME infrastructure and the second for regional infrastructure via the regional consortium (East Region Infrastructure Network). MENTER's Big Lottery Funded BIO project (BME Infrastructure and Outreach) has produced a draft framework for guidance on infrastructure for BME groups located throughout the East of England. MENTER is currently working with East Hertfordshire and Broxbourne Council for Voluntary Services on a joint statement on the added value and separate roles of joined up generic and specialist infrastructure support.

MENTER's equalities work is mainly funded by the Capacitybuilders Improving Reach fund. The RNF funded the race equality component which was delivered through a regional partnership – the Regional Race Equalities Councils Partnership. The RNF also funded Chief Officer time to distil and disseminate the learning from this equalities work at strategic forums and partnerships, including in drawing up the regional strategies equalities proofing framework or compiling a list of good practice toolkits for the Regional Empowerment Partnership (part funded by the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership) and LGA equality/diversity networks.

The MENTER Head of Policy and Enterprise post that led on its economic project was funded by the East of England Development Agency. Involvement of the Chief Officer and the Head of Infrastructure were funded by the Capacitybuilders Regional Network Fund. Chief Officer time was used to link the project with similar national work carried out by the Black Training Enterprise Group mainly round increasing diversity in apprenticeships.

LVSC/3SA

RNF economic development work complemented its recession work funded with Big Lottery BASIS funding. As a result of the RNF investment the economic work obtained a higher profile, leading to further investment from the Trust for London. LVSC have secured three-year funding from the Trust for London to continue the Big Squeeze survey; they have been awarded £45k per annum for three years. 3SA were approached by the funder and encouraged to apply as a result of the profile that the Big Squeeze had among the London voluntary sector and funders. 3SA believe that this is a result of the RNF investment which focused on continuing and promoting the Big Squeeze work.

12.3 Development of a higher profile, good personal relationships and strong network connections has placed networks in a stronger position to bring added value to other areas, as well as to respond to the changing agenda.

12.4 As well as the policy outcomes and internal strengthening outcomes described above, the funding has had a number of other benefits:

- Leverage of national funds - providing capacity for regional networks to meet and share experiences which has resulted in some joint national bids, for example a contract with Department of Health (DH).
- Leverage of local funds, as illustrated by the following:

'The money that VONNE had from the RNF meant that we had some capacity to respond to the demand from the learning disability sector. The small amount that we could give has proved to be a catalyst for DH investment.'

- Some support to enable a greater move to a business enterprise model (COVER, BECON).
- Provision of core capacity, which has enabled both a more strategic influencing role to be delivered and an emerging response to a significantly different policy context.
- Support to learning within and between networks.

13. Conclusion and future for the networks

Conclusion

13.1 There is significant evidence that the Regional Networks Fund has contributed to the policy influence of regional networks. There are numerous examples of changes in policy and strategy. As well as examples of influence at a regional level, there is evidence of networks' ability to 'punch above their weight' on occasion with influence at a national level.

13.2 There is evidence that networks are valued by partners. For example:

Steven Broomhead, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) at the North West Development Agency (NWDA) was recently on public record as saying: *'VSNW has engaged with the agency to ensure that the VCS voice is clearly heard; they showed us how the sector is a key player in the future of the North West.'*

VONNE's Strategic review and evaluation (2010) states *'Policy makers in economic development, social inclusion and healthcare are calling for VONNE to proactively contribute towards the development of policy, providing a grass-roots perspective and, most notably, an expert opinion. They aspire for VONNE to help them to understand the real needs and capabilities of the third sector at a micro-level, with little room for holistic, broad-brush messages. As importantly there is a call for VONNE to assist policy makers to recognise the potential capabilities of the third sector to contribute to individual policy agendas, for example health, rural, enterprise and physical regeneration.'*

13.3 There is evidence that networks are valued by members, with many networks reporting an increase in membership over the funding period. VONNE members' survey found that 69% of respondents felt that VONNE had made them aware of the opportunity to shape policy in the North East.

- 13.4 There is greatest evidence of activity and influence in the economic policy area, with almost all the 17 networks funded active in this area.
- 13.5 In general generic networks aimed to influence strategies and plans, to better reflect the sector's perspective and priorities. Similarly, BME networks aimed to represent their members' and BME communities' perspectives and priorities, predominantly around equality of access to services and equality of opportunity such as access to employment.
- 13.6 The extent to which networks are able to influence is related to the strength of network. There have been different levels of funding and activity in the past, which has had an impact on the development of the networks and their activities funded by this programme. In general, networks can be classified as follows:
- Establishing and developing new networks, particularly governance and internal structures, in preparation to influence.
 - Developing networks.
 - Established and maintaining influence or developing new areas of influence.

The table below presents networks according to this classification.

	Generic networks	BME networks
Establishing and developing new network		brap OEM BME UNI
Developing network		BECON MiNET
Established network, maintaining or developing influence	RAISE RAWM COVER SWF YHRF VONNE VSNW LVSC/3SA OEM 1 NW	BSWN MENTER

13.7 The key factors contributing to success are:

- getting the evidence - data to demonstrate the contribution that the sector makes
- strength and diversity of relationships at high level and building on these has helped in all areas - investing in meeting individuals one to one really helps when influencing. Networks have been able to use their strength of engagement to push for representation on new partnerships
- providing leadership.

13.8 Collaborative working – both between generic and BME networks and with other agencies – has been a key tool for developing influence. Positive outcomes in policy influence were often the result of combined efforts.

13.9 Other important features are:

- structures through which mandated representatives from the sector can be identified, be supported and feedback on their activities, enabling involvement of wider membership as well as staff
- being proactive in providing a secretariat function, which develops profile, enables networks to act as connectors or 'glue' and can lead to further opportunities
- improved communication, use IT, use of the media.

13.10 There is evidence that RNF has supported networks to improve leadership, Income diversity and efficiency. RNF grants have contributed to strengthening networks, with most networks able to develop their membership and leadership functions.

13.11 Regional networks have developed and used different communications channels and tools. Attendance at briefing events has increased over previous years, and targeted engagement activities have also placed both networks and their members in a stronger position to respond to the challenges of new policies and structures, and reductions in funding.

13.12 While there may be a pull towards crisis management as a result of loss of income and capacity, responses have also been well considered and strategic. Many of the networks have shown political awareness and provided leadership, adjusting activity, looking for new contacts and keeping members well informed. For some networks the changes, while problematic, have provided an opportunity for a new direction and focus.

13.13 The networks' funding picture varies enormously: for some RNF is relatively small compared to the total income, whereas for others (predominantly BME networks) it is the only source or one of the major sources of funding. For those with strong and established funding, RNF funding has been able to add value to and supplement already well-grounded work.

13.14 RNF has on occasions been the only funding for a policy area and has kick-started an area of activity. For example, 3SA's involvement in the health and social care sector has grown enormously and the project has developed to the extent that it now needs a dedicated project worker. This is an example of how the Regional Network Programme has allowed such activity to grow and develop, but it needs funding both to be sustained and to develop further.

13.15 Other benefits of the RNF have included:

- leverage of national funds
- leverage of local funds
- providing support to enable a greater move to a business enterprise model
- providing core capacity, which has enabled both a more strategic influencing role to be delivered and an emerging response to a significantly different policy context
- supporting learning within and between networks.

13.16 RNF was a relatively small investment for each network, but it was placed strategically and on many occasions complemented other funding resulting in greater influence. As well as increasing their policy influence in the funding period, regional networks found their strengthened position, communication channels and links to the sector put them in a good position in relation to emerging structures. The RNF enabled networks to engage on occasion with the formation of national policy and, within a changing context, supported them to reposition themselves and to be alert to both local and national opportunities.

Future picture

13.17 The changing external context has brought additional challenges for networks and these will continue. These can be summarised as:

- changes in structures
- changes in policy
- changes in funding.

13.18 The dismantling of Government Offices, RDAs and other regional agencies will result in a loss of relationships and potential sources of income. It will be important to maintain relationships with individuals in order that when new structures emerge, networks are able to follow up on these relationships. A greater number of relationships will need to be developed if aiming to influence at a local level. There is evidence that the strength of networks' previous engagement will support their push for representation on new partnerships, such as LEPs.

13.19 The shift away from regional organisations means that there is a greater danger of duplicating work of local and national infrastructure. However networks feel that members appreciate good quality policy interpretation and support in the context in which they operate, and at a level that is closer to them than national. This policy support may not be viable on a local level and regional input may be the level at which there is a critical mass to justify the resource and still be connected locally. There is evidence that relationships have been developed at a national level, with OCS, NVCO and NAVCA.

13.20 Many networks have been adept at responding to the changing policy agenda. In particular there has been significant activity in the following areas:

- Local Enterprise Partnerships.
- Big Society, with several networks organising events on this theme.

13.21 Influencing the equalities agenda will be more challenging, with the coalition government's emphasis on economic inequality rather than a human rights approach and the loss of the monitoring and policing of equalities through the Audit Commission. The loss of regional structures makes 'communities of geography' even more dominant. Many BME networks feel that that Voice4Change England needs to be the vehicle to support engagement and lobbying at a national level and have been increasing support to V4C.

13.22 In recent months there has been a greater move to campaigning and public positions' linked to budget cuts and proposed policy change, requiring a different approach to engagement. There are some early indicators that this will continue.

13.23 The continuing reduction in public spending is affecting resources available for both regional networks as well as their members. This is affecting plans for sustainable development as well as the capacity of members to participate in activities. However some networks report that this change and uncertainty is drawing organisations closer and making joint working easier.

13.24 BME networks and their members are likely to be particularly affected. There is likely to be less BME support for groups, with some networks reporting that sub-regional and county level groups are closing and this is impacting on support available. Some BME networks report that members are requiring practical help (such as funding fairs) rather than a strategic body. As a result at least two networks are moving increasingly to a delivery based approach which they hope will inform their remaining strategic role.

13.25 The need for leadership will be greater in these challenging times. Continuing challenges include:

- the tension between taking account of the issues of the sector and developing its own agenda while responding to government initiatives and consultation
- the tension between providing support to the sector and developing relationships/increasing public sector understanding of issues
- the difficulty of securing consistent and sufficient involvement of members at a regional level, particularly for BME networks where members are more likely to be small organisations with few or no paid staff.

13.26 The RNF complemented and added value to other funding to regional networks. RNF grant funded work helped to build external contacts, create linkages and develop internal skills, knowledge and reach into the sector, all of which ensured regional networks relevance in the changed context.

The RNF had allowed the staff time needed to:

- enable a persistent approach to getting access to policy tables
- develop the capacity of grassroots network membership and to encourage, support and add value to other voluntary sector and cross-sector networks at regional and sub-regional level
- increase influence through collaborative working and more formal partnerships and coalitions.

13.27 The rapidly changing context after the May 2010 general elections meant that networks have had to become more entrepreneurial and alert to both local and national opportunities. Despite the loss of some key supportive contacts, many of the networks found that their increased influence and their strengthened skills, communication channels and links to the sector put them in a good position in relation to emerging structures. It should also sustain them to find new business models in a challenging funding climate, to strengthen existing relationships and develop new collaboration.

APPENDIX 1: Selection of policy themes and agencies to influence

Table 1: Policy themes chosen by region

Region	Policy area	Economy, regeneration and employment	Third sector, service delivery and civic renewal	Regional structures and planning	Development of influence	Health and social care	Regional policy and equalities issues	Other issues
East Mids	OEM (generic)		X	X	X			
	OEM (BME)		X	X	X			
East	COVER	XX				X		
	MENTER	X			X		X	
London	LVSC/ 3SA	X	X			X		
	ROTA/ MiNET	X			X		X	
North East	VONNE	X		X		X		
	BECON	X	X				X	
North West	VSNW	XX	X					
	1 NW	X	X		X			

Region	Policy area	Economy, regeneration and employment	Third sector, service delivery and civic renewal	Regional structures and planning	Development of influence	Health and social care	Regional policy and equalities issues	Other issues
South East	RAISE	x		x		x		
	UNI	x			x			
South West	SWF		x	x	x			
	BSWN		xx				x	
West Mids	RAWM	x	x	x				
	brap		xx		x			
Yorks/Humber	YHRF	x		x				x
Total		11	10	7	8	4	4	1

APPENDIX 1: Selection of policy themes and agencies to influence

Table 2: Agencies to influence chosen by region

Region	Agency to influence	RDA	GO	SHA	RIEP	Reg Ass Councils/GLA/ Mayor/Strategic Leaders Boards	Other regional employment/ skills bodies	Regional third sector	Regional equalities bodies	Other
East Mids	OEM (generic)	X	x		x					
	OEM (BME)	X	x							x
East	COVER	X		x			x			
	MENTER	X						x	x	
London	LVSC/ 3SA		x			xx				
	ROTA/ MiNET		x			x			x	
NE	VONNE	X	x			x				
	BECON		x		x		x			
NW	VSNW	X		x			x			
	1 NW	X	x			x				
SE	RAISE	X	x	x						

Region	Agency to influence	RDA	GO	SHA	RIEP	Reg Ass Councils/GLA/ Mayor/Strategic Leaders Boards	Other regional employment/ skills bodies	Regional third sector	Regional equalities bodies	Other
	UNI		x					x		
SW	SWF	X	x	x						
	BSWN			x		x	x			
West Mid	RAWM	X	x	x						
	brap				x			xx		
Y/H	YHRF		x		x					x
Total		10	11	6	4	6	4	3	2	2

Appendix 2: Levels of influence tool

Source

Drawn from *The Axis of Influence: a tool for community groups and networks who want to improve their influence*, published by CDX and Changes with support from the National Empowerment Partnership and now known as 'Voice'.

Approach

As part of establishing baselines, Regional Networks will be asked to assess where on the influencing scale they felt they were before the network funding was available. They will be asked to revisit this towards the end of the programme, perhaps in conjunction with Regional Managers as part of the face-to-face monitoring meetings. It is proposed that a level is given for each of the three policy areas and each of the three agencies that the network is aiming to influence.

Scale

We propose that only the top half of the scale is used as follows:

Below Level 5: Not yet fully organised to influence

Level 5: organised to influence

The network:

- has a clear plan which is reviewed and evaluated
- communicates effectively with members
- composition reflects agreed priorities
- has active and engaged members who feel they belong.

Level 6: know the political landscape

The network:

- understands that different aspects of the external environment will affect what it is trying to do
- is clear about what works for and against it in the external environment
- maps the external environment and knows the potential for influence

Level 7: know who to influence

The network:

- knows how it is viewed by those it wants to influence
- has a plan for dealing with people who may have a negative influence or negative attitude
- has effective and useful contact with key people in useful positions in specific organisations
- approaches people at appropriate times to maximise positive outcomes
- knows where the authority lies for making decisions.

Level 8: link with others to influence

The network:

- makes contact and builds strategic relationships with organisations working around similar issues from different perspectives
- promotes good relationships between groups and networks
- brings own specific voice to an alliance
- links with other networks – identifies common concerns, agrees common strategies and knows the issues they are working with
- develops and maintains links to national bodies.

Level 9: know how to influence

The network:

- understands different ways to influence
- has a promotional and communication strategy
- has position statements on issues relevant to aims
- has up-to-date information on local, regional, national and global policy contexts
- communicates effectively to a diverse range of people and organisations
- understands competing perspectives of the issue has realistic expectations
- knows the degree to which it is willing to compromise
- understands where, by whom and how decisions are made
- advocates on behalf of its members
- challenges – in a constructive way

- has plans which recognise the priorities of statutory agencies
- operates independently of the statutory sector.

Level 10: influence

The network:

- is consulted and asked opinions
- takes part in joint decision making
- has a formal place on relevant boards, partnerships etc.
- is involved in the process of shaping priorities
- can identify its contribution
- is invited to chair or facilitate partnership meetings
- is encouraged and supported to take part (by other partners)
- instigates joint discussions about power, boundaries, roles and function of the partnership etc.
- provides feedback which is sought and valued
- sees desired changes arising from its challenges.

Appendix 3: Baseline levels of influence

Table 3: Baseline levels of influence by theme (based on self-assessment)

Region	Policy area	Economy, regeneration and employment	Third sector, service delivery and civic renewal	Regional structures and planning	Development of influence	Health and social care	Regional policy and equalities issues	Other issues
East Midlands	OEM (generic)		6	6	5			
	OEM (BME)		5	5	5			
East	COVER	7, 7				7		
	MENTER	7			7		7	
London	LVSC/ 3SA	8	6			5		
	ROTA/MiNET	9			8		8	
North East	VONNE	7		8		7		
	BECON	7	8				6	
North West	VSNW	6, 6	5					
	1 NW	Did not complete baseline						
South East	RAISE	7		10		7		

Region	Policy area	Economy, regeneration and employment	Third sector, service delivery and civic renewal	Regional structures and planning	Development of influence	Health and social care	Regional policy and equalities issues	Other issues
	UNI	Did not complete baseline						
South West	SWF	7	8	7				
	BSWN		8, 8				7	
West Mids	RAWM	7	5	6				
	brap		5, 5		5			
Yorkshire & Humber	YHRF	8		8.5				9.5

Table 4. Baseline levels of influence by type of agency (based on self-assessment)

Region		RDA	GO	SHA	RIEP	Regional Association of Councils/GLA/ Mayor/Strategic Leaders Boards	Other regional employment/ skills bodies	Regional third sector	Regional equalities bodies	Other
EM	OEM (generic)	5	7		5					
	OEM (BME)	5	6							7
East	COVER	7		7			7			
	MENTER	7						7	7	
London	LVSC/ 3SA		7			6, 6				
	ROTA/ MiNET		8			9			8	
NE	VONNE	7	7			6				
	BECON		7		4		4			
NW	VSNW	6		7			5			
	1 NW									
SE	RAISE	10	7	7						
	UNI	Did not complete baseline								
SW	SWF	8	8	6						

Region		RDA	GO	SHA	RIEP	Regional Association of Councils/GLA/ Mayor/Strategic Leaders Boards	Other regional employment/ skills bodies	Regional third sector	Regional equalities bodies	Other
	BSWN			7						
West Mid	RAWM	6	8	5						
	brap				5			5, 5		
Y/H	YHRF		9		7					10

APPENDIX 4: other funding and future funding

Network	Other funding and complementarily	Sustainability and funding from April 2011
<p>OEM.</p> <p>OEM (BME)</p>	<p>2009-11 £102,500</p> <p>Big Lottery; Learning Skill and Improvement Service (via New College Stamford); Skills Third Sector (via South west Forum); DH (via Yorkshire & Humber Forum)</p> <p>RNF has allowed us to align strategic funds to achieve maximum impact. For example we have linked together BME RNF funding with Big Lottery funding to deliver sustainability and funding advice seminar for BME groups in Nottingham. This attracted more than 100 delegates with excellent feedback and requests for similar events in Derby and Northampton.</p>	<p>Big Lottery and LSIS will continue post March 2011 (£88,000)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A forward paper has been written for the Board to determine the future of OEM and its direction • 2 projects provide management and overhead costs – EMFAN (East Midlands Funding Advisers’ Network) and LSIS (Learning Skills and Improvement Strategy) • Downsizing staff <p>BME - without coordinator or coordination worried that there will be no funding available for this work – making effort to secure funding. Will continue to send briefings and updates</p>
<p>COVER</p>	<p>Capacitybuilders capital money for ICT resource centre. ICT services now significant income generator. RNF funded part of CEO and part of Finance Officer giving COVER capacity to explore options and develop business ideas.</p>	<p>A smaller core team will remain. All activity will transfer to the building in Waterbeach. The Policy and Information staff team will be made redundant at the end of March 2011 (East of England Development Agency (EEDA) funding for these staff ends at that time).</p>

Network	Other funding and complementarily	Sustainability and funding from April 2011
	<p>Other funds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European Social Fund (ESF) Technical Assistance funding • ESF Volunteering into Employment • Digital Online and Digital Switchover • ReBoot recycling operations based at Waterbeach. 	<p>Elements such as the website and e-bulletin will continue to be produced by intern students.</p>
MENTER	<p>EEDA, Capacitybuilders, Frontline Engagement through Regional Infrastructure(FERI) (BASIS – Big Lottery Fund (BLF))</p> <p>None secured April 2011 to date other than ongoing funding</p>	<p>MENTER will continue to operate for at least 1.5 years in a restructured form, continually reviewing the future and identifying opportunities to support communities of interest and share good practice and learning – a legacy from the successful work carried out.</p>
MiNET	<p>Received money via the Modernisation fund which did contribute towards development and reach. There is also synergy between MiNET’s work and that carried out in the south and west sub-regions of London funded by Capacitybuilders.</p> <p>£6000 LDA (via LVSC) for marketing.</p> <p>£10,000 from ROTA to carry out consultation work with BME groups.</p>	<p>MiNET has income generated by undertaking work for ROTA and others, but it is not a viable path to sustainability. MiNET can continue in its present form until June 2011, after that it will drastically change unless it secures the necessary funds.</p>

Network	Other funding and complementarily	Sustainability and funding from April 2011
LVSC	<p>Regional Public Health Group £35,000 for health policy work</p> <p>Skills Third Sector £1,000 for mapping research on voluntary and community sector workforce development issues</p> <p>Bassac £1,000 for post-election event organisation</p> <p>Department of Health £10,000 for health policy work</p> <p>Trust for London £15,000 and a further £45,000 per year for three years for policy work on the spending cuts in London.</p>	<p>Funding has not been secured to date to keep the network in its present form.</p> <p>Currently looking at options; funding has been secured to develop the recession work - £45,000 per year from December 2010 for three years from Trust for London to fund policy work on the effect of the public spending cuts on the voluntary and community sector in London.</p>
VONNE	<p>Short term plan 2010-11:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all projects and RDA core funding continue to Mar 2011, RNF halved • last year used £34k reserves (currently £250k reserves) • no core funding from Mar 2011, biggest funders CB and ONE (RDA) • 2 BASIS projects – partnerships & procurement 	<p>Some funding. - BUT reliant on reserves to provide core functions</p> <p>DH Learning Disability Network £100k</p> <p>BLF Policy and Representation P'ship £200k</p>

Network	Other funding and complementarily	Sustainability and funding from April 2011
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Offender Management Service (NOMS) – pay CEO for 14 days pa to be on Programme Management Board (ERDF might do same) • ONE granted £15,000 for evaluation / exit strategy • Capacity Builders funding for leadership work, procurement work, improving reach and infrastructure co-ordination and that has helped them achieve outcome 2. <p>VONNE receives £75,000 worth of Core funding and a further £39,000 for project work around economic regeneration. (Project ends June 2010). It would therefore be wrong to attribute all of the success to the Regional Network fund.</p>	
BECON	<p>Applications to several funding programmes have been unsuccessful. Funding from RDA 3rd Sector Capacity Fund. Majority funding ends March 2011.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Third Sector Capacity Fund (ONE, the RDA) – ‘Connect to Work’ tackling BME unemployment, £150k to Dec 2012 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A locality – facing agenda – focus on Newcastle and Stockton, Middlesbrough and Sunderland • Maintain the ‘network’ with reduced activity (BLF project finishes) – e bulletin, newsletter possibly content of 4 local networks

Network	Other funding and complementarily	Sustainability and funding from April 2011
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NE1 BLF BASIS, influencing policy, £85k to Dec 2012 • CIC set up to trade training delivery, £5k from SES 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic work – more informed by delivery work – use the learning <p>No funding starting in April 2011</p>
VSNW	<p>2009-10 funders have included:</p> <p>Department of Health (DH) - as part of Regional Voices; NHS NW - to improve commissioning; DH NW - for specific activities; NWIEP - around apprenticeships and worklessness; RDA - some core and some for action on procurement and commissioning; Fair Train; LSC - further funding for skills network and SPV development; £86k from RDA – first funding</p> <p>2010-11: The Big Lottery, North West Development Agency, NHS NW, Dept of Health, Learning & Skills Council, North West Together We Can, House of Commons, Government Office North West, Rathbone UK</p>	
1NW		<p>Some BASIS investment, for a joint project with two other equalities focused agencies and will operate on a part-time basis. During 2011-12 will be integrated into VSNW work.</p>
RAISE	<p>SEEDA: 2009-10 - £250k; 2010-11 - £125k</p> <p>BLF: 2009-12 £500k</p>	<p>Adequate reserves for 18 months at current spending level</p> <p>Currently undergoing review of future of organisation</p>

Network	Other funding and complementarily	Sustainability and funding from April 2011
	<p>Cb: 2009-11 Consortium Development Grant £50,000; RCG £50,000; Modernisation £192,000 DH: £15,000 p.a. as Strategic Partner</p> <p>Funding from Volunteering England which has enabled RAISE to undertake a volunteer management mapping exercise;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding from Children England which will enable RAISE to deliver a series of events for Child Trust Board members and to maintain an ongoing relationship with Children England and other partners. <p>Historically within RAISE this funding stream was considered 'seed corn' money and enabled the organisation to lever in additional funding. For the past 2 lots of 3 year funding the budget (approx 60,000 per year) has been used to fund a policy post and associated costs, tied in directly to the work streams of the Government Office.</p>	<p>Need to review role for RAISE post March 2011</p> <p>Focus on income generation</p> <p>Collaborating with other regional networks re; potential future</p> <p>May consider charging members for services</p> <p>Could be 'home' for VCOs without geographical or sectoral base</p>

Network	Other funding and complementarily	Sustainability and funding from April 2011
	<p>Complemented other CB projects by part funding a post – enabling the health work to move forward.</p> <p>Contributes financially to a policy post that enables the policy influencing, specifically with regards to health, to take place.</p>	
UNI	<p>UNI received the RNF from April 2010 and has not received any additional funding. However, in recent weeks UNI received additional support with operational costs from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethnic Minority Business Advocacy Network £1,082 - to host the UNI Network Roundtable consultation on the Big Society, Comprehensive Spending Review and LEPs. • Voice4Change England: Bursary to enable a UNI Coordinator to attend the NCVO Fundraising Conference in London. • Support to host a workshop UNI Members to have Quality Assurance training in January 2011 in order to explore the prospect of UNI becoming accredited with 	<p>No funding as yet from April 2011, but pro-actively seeking opportunities which are opening up</p>

Network	Other funding and complementarily	Sustainability and funding from April 2011
	<p>the aim becoming qualified to develop services as a Quality consultancy for diverse groups in SE.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • financial strategy <p>UNI had BASIS funding from May 2008- May 2010 – c £500k, to develop BME networks at local level in the South East Region and support a regional voice</p>	
SWF	<p>Funding for major research project involving Higher Education Big Lottery Fund (Research) .£464,000 over 4 years</p> <p>Funding for strengthening voice and influence work Big Lottery Fund (BASIS2) £263,000 over 3 years</p> <p>Support to local authorities in working with VCS South West Councils (RIEP) £75,000 over 2 years</p>	<p>There is likely to be some immediate impact on cash flow once RDA and Capacitybuilders funding comes to an end in March. As SWF is so well connected with the sector it is in a good position to respond to its active intelligence base to capitalise on opportunities.</p> <p>The Forum's board are reviewing a number of possible options for collaborative ventures which are currently being explored with the caveat that the organisation should do all it can to retain its focus on its mission.</p>

Network	Other funding and complementarily	Sustainability and funding from April 2011
		<p>There is good potential in expanding the benefit of a BASIS 2 project (which runs to 2012) which is working with key LAs civil society commissioning officers to develop, share and promote good practice for commissioning civil society organisations.</p>
BSWN	BASIS Funding	<p>Post 2011 Continuation of BASIS funding BSWN is looking at devising a fee paying service offer targeting SW local authorities and related public service agencies as a means of “protecting” and maintaining its engagement with the BME agenda in the region. The network is also looking at ways to leverage greater support from board members and volunteers as an aspect of capacity building the organisation.</p>
brap	RNF builds on work being conducted through our R2O (Routes to Opportunities) programme and complements Big Lottery (LIFT) and Reaching Futures programmes	<p>No funding post March 2011 for collective however legal structure could well be a social enterprise - will be looked at by brap who will still be around post March 2011</p> <p>Costing Model looked at for training and products that people are likely to pay for.</p>

Network	Other funding and complementarily	Sustainability and funding from April 2011
		<p>brap see the Collective as important part of its corporate social responsibility function and wish to continue it, funding the website could be absorbed into its current function and possible working with the Heritage Lottery Fund to deliver training around commissioning for the BME sector is being looked at. A Brokerage service could also possibly be introduced.</p>
RAWM	<p>Department for Communities and Local Government Sport England Advantage West Midlands</p> <p>ESF and ERDF 650,000</p> <p>Our programme is complemented by BIG, RDA and DH funding, particularly around outcomes 1.</p> <p>Targeted Support Fund, 2012 Volunteering Fund and Advantage West Midlands contract has all been secured during this period.</p>	<p>These funds are all in place post March and cover direct project funding.</p> <p>The Advantage West Midlands contract which will be decided on in December is the main core funding programme and the future position on this contract will have a major impact on RAWMs size and how it will look in the future.</p>

Network	Other funding and complementarily	Sustainability and funding from April 2011
YHRF	<p>CB funding for infrastructure support and a social enterprise project. There are also a number of other projects that run as cross cutting themes that work alongside the CB funding:</p> <p>Other funds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various kinds of RIEP funding. • BASIS for rural project and BME project. • Small amount from V/England. • Private sector for FOOTSEY (Soc Enterprise trade fair) 	Unclear