



# 'More than yacking away'

A review of youth learning opportunities  
in the community radio sector



The connect:transmit project is supported by



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## Executive Summary

This report examines existing practice in the community radio sector in relation to training for young people. It draws on data collected in a nationwide online survey of 47 organisations, and follow-up phone interviews with 30 community radio organisations. No such research has been undertaken in the UK community radio sector until now and it forms the foundation for a two year project funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation which aims to increase the capacity of the sector to support the development of young people.

A wide range of community radio organisations responded to the online survey, the vast majority of whom saw training as a key part of their remit to deliver social gain.

81% of the organisations surveyed said that they worked with young people, often those who have not thrived in traditional learning institutions. 55% of survey respondents work with young people following 'non traditional pathways', 48% with young people not in employment or training, 52% with young people with disabilities, and 23% with young people learning English as an additional language.

Community radio organisations appear to create a unique learning culture that is 'different to school' in a number of ways. Buildings are often situated in the heart of local communities and operate an open door policy. The atmosphere is informal and many practitioners said that they try to create a 'participatory and equal approach'. In addition, community radio organisations are often sites of learning that bring together people from different generations, geographical communities, cultures and belief systems.

Community radio organisations can provide a space for young people to express themselves and be creative. Young people have the freedom and autonomy they need to produce programmes that help them to feel recognised and represented in their communities.

The vast majority of community radio practitioners surveyed said that their training taught speaking and listening skills (89%) as well as radio production (93%). Practitioners felt that community radio developed participants' speaking and listening skills through conducting radio interviews, working in groups, learning to speak to different audiences, thinking about accent and dialect, expressing personal views, developing analytical skills, planning

'Without community radio there would be no opportunity for young people to express themselves in an environment where they don't have to follow others' rules and can have a voice of their own.'

Station manager,  
Crescent Radio



Young people are valued for their unique contributions in many community radio organisations. They are described as, 'the yeast in the bread' and 'full of bright ideas'.

what to say, and learning about negotiation.

Practitioners felt that community radio helps young people to develop a range of employability skills and capacities as well as social skills relevant to their local communities and the wider world. This includes media and digital literacies, such as ICT and social media, as well as 'new' literacies, such as learning how to learn. Community radio organisations teach community awareness and run intergenerational projects which can be fundamentally important in changing the way that young people feel about themselves in relation to their community.

Common features of the pedagogical approaches adopted by trainers are the practical nature of the learning, the flexibility and tailoring of the training, and its inherent informality. Practitioners lacked confidence in talking about these pedagogical approaches, suggesting the need to develop a shared language to talk more coherently about community radio training practices.

A key challenge to training delivery is that of funding. The survey paints a picture of a sector in crisis, where workers fear for their jobs, or are working long hours for little or no pay. Over three quarters of survey respondents said that their organisation was not financially secure beyond the next 6 months, which inevitably affects their ability to deliver training.

The community radio practitioners surveyed had developed a wide range of partnerships, including with schools, colleges, and other youth organisations. Challenges in relation to this work included the limited staff time stations had to put into networking and building partnerships, and the fact that the partnerships developed were often for one-off projects, or without any long term financial commitment. Developing relationships with schools was often particularly time-consuming in terms of negotiating with teachers and fitting in with the curriculum.

Whilst 59% of survey respondents said that they evaluate training projects with young people, many of the practitioners interviewed said that their evaluation strategies were often ad hoc and involved only asking young people what they thought of a project. Organisations found evaluation challenging because they are short-staffed and collecting evidence is time-consuming, as well as not being aware of different evaluation techniques.

Only 39% of the organisations delivering training to young people provide accredited courses. Over half of these organisations teach radio production awards, but other delivery includes key/ core skills courses, employability qualifications, community action awards, youth achievement awards and arts-based awards. 36%



had developed their own in-house schemes of accreditation. Many practitioners were put off by the complexity of the current accreditation landscape.

The phone survey of practitioners collected a range of 'stories' about the impact of community radio training on individual young people. These stories are powerful and often moving, and highlight the need for the sector to move beyond anecdotal accounts and develop stronger evidence concerning outcomes.

In order to develop better practice in youth radio training, practitioners felt that they would benefit from a way of communicating with each other to share skills and advice on the delivery of training and working with young people successfully. Several organisations felt that a bank of centralised resources would be immensely valuable. This could include practical training guides, advice on policy and practice, and information about accreditation.

Practitioners were also positive about the creation of an online space for young broadcasters. Further work is required here to find out from young people themselves whether this would be useful and supportive. Most stations reported that young participants already make use of social networking sites – to promote their shows, communicate with audiences, and collaborate with staff members – which suggests that an online space for young broadcasters might be appropriate and valuable.

The report concludes that community radio organisations are able to deliver valuable 'social gain' by providing learning opportunities for young people. However, the sector is very under-resourced and needs support to deliver these opportunities more effectively.

Recommendations include:

- Developing shared resources for the use of the community radio sector, such as course content, routes to course accreditation, evaluation techniques
- Supporting community radio stations to secure funding for training and develop partnership working with schools and colleges
- Lobbying educators and policy makers about the benefits of youth community radio training and the fact that community radio is an under-resourced sector
- Providing young broadcasters with an online space to share ideas and network with others
- Supporting community radio practitioners to better understand and communicate about the work that they do with young people in order to enhance their discourse with other educators and funders.

Many practitioners that we spoke to felt that community radio organisations create a unique learning culture that is 'different to school' in a number of ways.



## 1. Introduction

This report looks at existing practice in the community radio sector in relation to training for young people, as part of the **connect:transmit** project. This is a project funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation and managed by Radio Regen, a community radio development charity based in Manchester, UK. The project partners and steering group members are SHMU FM in Aberdeen, Future Radio in Norwich, BCB in Bradford, and Preston FM.

The project aims to increase the capacity of the sector to promote the development of young people, specifically connected to training and speaking and listening skills.

The project intends to support the sector through:

- Documenting existing practice in the sector (specifically in the UK)
- Conducting evaluated pilot projects and disseminating an evaluation report and good practice guide at regional seminars and through a national conference/event
- Creating national networks for youth practitioners and young people at community radio stations
- Lobbying policy makers

## 2. Research methods

The report is the result of a process of mixed method research that took place between May and September 2012. The research involved:

**Desk research:** exploring the context of the community radio sector and its relationship to youth media training.

**An online survey:** circulated to the community radio sector and other organisations that teach radio production to young people. The survey was carefully developed by the project steering group to collect information concerning the range of organisations represented in the sector and their various approaches to working with young people, developing and funding training courses, and working with their local communities. 47 organisations completed the survey between June and September 2012.

**A follow up phone survey:** organisations who responded to the online survey were asked if they would mind being contacted by telephone to discuss their practice in more detail. Almost all



respondents were happy to be contacted and as a result 30 organisations were spoken to about the work that they do. These phone interviews were particularly useful as we were able to talk in detail to the practitioners (and in some cases young people) who are involved on a day-to-day basis in youth radio training.

### 3. Overview of the sector

In the UK, the *Community Radio Order* sets out the characteristics of community radio services. It states that these services must deliver social gain, should serve the needs of a particular community, should be not-for-profit (or non-profit distributing), should give members of the community opportunities to participate, and should be accountable to the community that they serve (*Community Radio Order*, DCMS, 2004).

Involvement in community radio production may help young people to develop a wide range of skills and competencies related to speaking and listening.

The concept of *social gain* is key to the legislation and to the definition of community radio in the UK. Social gain is defined in the Order as the achievement of certain objectives within the communities served by the station. There are four key requirements to the social gain remit:

- *the provision of sound broadcasting services to individuals who are otherwise underserved by such services;*
- *the facilitation of discussion and the expression of opinion;*
- *the provision (whether by means of programmes included in the service or otherwise) of education or training to individuals not employed by the person providing the service; and*
- *the better understanding of the particular community and the strengthening of links within it.*

The Community Radio Order, DCMS, 2004, p.2

The description of social gain in the legislation focuses on widening access to media production, and places training, learning and development at the centre of the sector's activities.

In our online survey, respondents were asked to describe their organisation. 45% of respondents considered themselves a 'community media organisation who exists to serve a particular community', 19% described themselves as an 'educational institution with a radio station or means of broadcasting audio' and 9% stated that they 'use radio as a training delivery tool.' Other organisations represented included an international NGO that supports community radio and a community radio station based in a school.

Through our phone interviews, we were able to put together a



more detailed picture of the sector and the wide variety of organisations involved in youth radio training. These organisations serve and reflect very different communities and have particular approaches to training. They include:

- Frome FM, a volunteer-led station which serves a small town with a population of 28,000. They have written their own training manuals and run Saturday workshops and evening classes for young people.
- Higher Rhythm, a Doncaster-based organisation with 8 paid staff and currently a large number of funded youth projects. Funders include Children in Need, Big Lottery, Home Office, local authority. They teach accredited courses in radio production, employability skills and community awareness
- Academy FM, a community radio station operating alongside and working in partnership with a local high school. They deliver NCFE radio production courses in the school and also offer less formal training for young people at the school and in the local community.
- Crescent FM, a community radio station for an Asian Muslim audience that broadcasts a range of programming in Urdu as well as other programming. They have recently had Children In Need funding to support their work training young people as presenters.
- A range of youth/ child led stations specifically set up and run by and for young people such as: Generate (run workshops for 'troubled youth'): Youthcomm (they host a youth-led festival called 'Minifest' every year), Takeover Radio (train an 'U18 Crew', offer courses for disadvantaged youth).
- Gravity FM, a small volunteer-led station in an isolated rural area. New youth presenters receive one-to-one training.
- Sunny Govan, a well-recognised Scottish charity serving all of Glasgow. They offer a wide range of training projects such as working with young people in secure educational units, and running projects with refugees and asylum seekers.
- SoundArt Radio (SAR), an informal learning organisation that works bringing 'sound art' and radio together. They have just completed a sound art and radio project funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation which involved them working with schools and other youth organisations.



## 4. Community Radio and youth training

### 4.1 Training as a 'food source'

Of the stations completing the online survey, 81% said that they worked with young people, and three quarters of these delivered radio training to young people. In our phone survey, many described training as being a key part of their licence statements to Ofcom. Training is seen as a necessity because many of the people that community radio stations work with have no previous broadcasting experience. It is therefore vital in order to achieve a 'shift of control' in widening access to media production<sup>1</sup>. In fact, Frome FM described training as the 'food source' of community radio.

Many stations that we spoke to said that they were struggling. The picture we got was one of a sector in crisis.

### 4.2 A sector in crisis

Funding is a big concern for all the stations that we spoke to. 53% of the stations that completed the online survey told us that they were working in a financially insecure situation and/or understaffed or run entirely by volunteers. Over three quarters of survey respondents said that their organisation was not financially secure beyond the next 6 months. According to Ofcom statistics, the average annual income of community radio stations fell 8% to £60, 250 in 2011. Ofcom also note that the median income is considerably lower than the average because a small number of stations generate a significant proportion of the sector's income<sup>2</sup>. Our phone survey suggests that this income is likely to have fallen further this year (2012). This is significant in relation to the connect:transmit project given that the vast majority of our survey respondents told us that they work with young people.

Of the 19% of stations who didn't work with young people, less than half said that this was because they had other priorities. 54% stated that this was because they did not have funding to work with this group at the current time, and 46% said that they didn't work with young people because they had 'no spare capacity' to do so.

Many stations that we spoke to said that they were struggling. Staff we spoke to feared for their jobs, some had already lost their jobs and were continuing to work on a voluntary basis, others had

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<sup>1</sup> See Lewis, P. and Jones, S. (2006) From the Margins to the Cutting Edge: Community Media and Empowerment. London: Hampton Press.

<sup>2</sup> Ofcom(2012) Communications Market Report. Retrieved from [http://stakeholders.Ofcom.org.uk/binaries/research/cmr/cmr12/CMR\\_UK\\_2012.pdf](http://stakeholders.Ofcom.org.uk/binaries/research/cmr/cmr12/CMR_UK_2012.pdf)



only ever worked on a voluntary level. The picture we got was one of a sector in crisis. One respondent felt that community radio organisations needed to change the way they think about themselves - away from 'underfunded victims' towards thinking of organisations as providing a service (and charging for this service).

### **4.3 Community radio and disadvantaged youth**

Many of the practitioners interviewed thought that if community radio organisations fail to thrive, young people - especially those from disadvantaged communities - would be affected, because of the many opportunities that they offer young people. Many organisations told us that notions of 'youth voice'<sup>3</sup> are vital to community radio practice, and felt that the uniqueness of the sector rests in the responsibility that it has to air the views of people traditionally 'locked out' of mainstream broadcasting platforms. Chrissy Moog from Sine FM/ Higher Rhythm highlighted this, as well as the creativity inherent in radio production, when she suggested that:

*'Community radio plays an important role as a creative platform for young people who don't otherwise have a voice.'*

Interviewees talked about their station's practice as often helping young people from disparate communities to 'learn to live together', not on a superficial level but in a way that involved critical and often challenging debate. For instance, at Sunny Govan, a community radio station situated on the outskirts of Glasgow, they ran a series of programmes called 'Smashing Dishes' which involved local asylum seekers and refugees telling their story on air. One show told the personal story of a Muslim, homosexual young person. The shows sought to challenge stereotypes and prejudices of refugee populations amongst young people and in the local area as a whole, to promote "unity in the community".

## **5. Who do organisations work with?**

97% of the survey respondents who worked with young people engaged with the 16-19 year old age group. Fewer stations worked with 14-16 year olds (87%) and fewer still with 11-14 year olds (68%). The survey data suggests that the sector has a bias for working with those who others might find difficult to reach – for instance, 55% work with those following 'non traditional

Because young people often have a say in what happens and the programmes that get produced, a space is created for the articulation of a range of different views – a space where young people can 'get heard and express themselves'.

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<sup>3</sup> By 'youth voice' we mean valuing and listening to the ideas, opinions, attitudes, knowledge and actions of young people



Community radio organisations are often sites of learning where people with different cultural attitudes, belief systems and views can co-exist. A culture of pooling skills, where everyone has something to give, is key to the work, particularly in the climate of limited resources.

pathways', 48% work with young people who are not in employment or training, 52% work with young people with learning and/or physical disabilities, and 23% work with young people who speak English as an additional language.

The 30 stations that we spoke to told us more about the groups of young people that they tend to work with. They fall into two main categories:

**Groups that people might call 'hard to reach', disadvantaged or vulnerable:**

These groups included people with learning and/or physical disabilities, young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs), youth offenders, African youth excluded from school, young people with mental ill health, LGBT groups, communities that were 'new' in a particular area, refugees and asylum seekers, autistic young people, and other vulnerable young adults. Point FM work in an area of North Wales where there is currently 82% youth unemployment. Forest FM work with vulnerable young adults who make a regular weekly programme, and described how the radio station has 'become like a social club'. Another station described a project that challenged the stigma of mental health issues with young people.

**'Mix of people' – old and young, academically able and those who struggle at school:**

Community radio organisations described engaging with a wide range of young people and older people, many of whom they felt would not ordinarily be working together. Intergenerational work (8-80 year olds) on programming, fundraising and other aspects of work was commonplace. Other community radio stations serving a geographical community seek to engage 'all' local young people – this often results in learning groups that include, for example, those who find school-based learning challenging as well as those who are successful at school.

## **6. Approaches and values in working with young people: Recognition and representation**

The majority of community radio organisations we spoke to told us that they see their volunteers as a team and don't differentiate between people using criteria based on their age. People who volunteer generally have autonomy to produce programmes about issues and concerns that interest them. Sometimes young people are teamed up with adults who share an interest, regardless of age or other demographics. Other organisations run youth radio



projects where young people are encouraged to develop their own voices on air.

Respondents generally described their organisations as 'democratic' spaces where adults and young people are treated the same. Some stations pointed out that it is also important to recognise that young people may need support – which does not mean that they are not capable and competent. One station illustrated this point by discussing a group of young people who ran the breakfast show very successfully but needed some adult presence and support.

One of the key unique aspects of community radio is the connection with an audience. Through this, young people learn to appreciate the listener when they are talking and to understand the different ways they might speak depending on who they are talking to.

As young people have the freedom to make their own choices about content, they are able to make programmes about issues that are more youth-focussed and play the music that they like. The station manager at Crescent Radio in Rochdale feels that:

*'Without community radio there would be no opportunity for young people to express themselves in an environment where they don't have to follow others' rules and can have a voice of their own.'*

Young people are not only involved in programme making but are also included in planning and in working on the development of some stations. This is particularly the case in those stations that are specifically set up as 'youth-led' stations. In these organisations, young people are involved in scheduling, rotate station manager duties, do administration and event planning, and are part of steering committees and other decision making bodies.

Because young people often have a say in what happens and the programmes that get produced, community radio practitioners believe that a space is created for the articulation of a range of different views – a space where young people can, in the words of one practitioner, 'get heard and express themselves' (Volunteer Co-ordinator, ALL FM).

At Sunny Govan, a group called 'The Friday Night Posse' run a show for gang members called 'for the troops by the troops' which provides a vent for heavy hardcore music that hasn't been heard since the crackdown on pirate radio stations. The show also tackles some of the 'difficult' issues around gang culture. At SoundArt Radio, they ask young people to bring 'themselves' into the station and their programming. They ask young people to experiment and do things differently by encouraging young people to 'play' with the conventions of radio and to 'challenge and unpick their assumptions', opening up a space where they feel they can have creative freedom.

Young people are valued for their unique contributions in many



community radio organisations. They are described as, 'the yeast in the bread' and 'full of bright ideas'. Many organisations suggested that it was important that young people's voices are heard because it counters the views of the 'middle aged, white stale males' who tend to dominate radio generally.

Young people learn literacy and numeracy skills without realising it as they engage in the work of producing radio programmes.

## 7. The learning culture

Many practitioners that we spoke to felt that community radio organisations create a unique learning culture that is 'different to school' in a number of ways. Buildings are often situated in the heart of local communities and operate an open door policy. The atmosphere is informal and many practitioners told us that they try to create a 'participatory and equal approach'. This evidence echoes what we already know about community media. The sector's non-profit status, the centrality of volunteers to the practice, the emphasis on non-hierarchical relations, self-management, process over product, and the centrality of dialogue-building to the practice locates it firmly within the field of community development, rather than mainstream media<sup>4</sup>.

Secondly, many organisations are real and regulated radio stations, and therefore have workplace rules and real deadlines. At Frome FM, a practitioner told us that young people seemed to feel that this made the experience more fun and 'an antidote to the classroom' – they enjoy the 'buzz' of speaking to a real audience. Many organisations said that young people also become 'work ready' because of this culture.

Importantly, community radio organisations are often sites of learning where people with different cultural attitudes, belief systems and views can co-exist. Long term adult volunteers often work alongside young people in what many stations call a 'family' approach. Such interdependent and intergenerational learning is commonplace across the organisations that we spoke to, and a culture of 'pooling skills' (where everyone has something to 'give') is key to the work, particularly in the climate of limited resources. This kind of atmosphere is seen as being particularly good for those young people who are vulnerable or have found school and other formal education institutions difficult to manage.

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<sup>4</sup> see for instance Day, R. (2009). *Community Radio in Ireland: Participation and Multi-Flow Communication* ; van Vuuren, K. (2006) *Community broadcasting and the enclosure of the public sphere* ; Manchester, H. (2008) *Learning through engagement in community media design*.



## 8. The development of speaking and listening skills and capacities

### 8.1 Teaching speaking and listening skills

The practitioners surveyed felt that speaking and listening skills were the competency most taught by community radio (89% teaching this) after radio production and audio editing (93%). The survey also asked respondents to comment on which aspects of speaking and listening they feel that they explicitly and implicitly teach (see Table A). Responses show that involvement in community radio production may help young people to develop a wide range of skills and competencies related to speaking and listening. The responses also suggest that practitioners could do more to ensure that they intentionally/explicitly teach some of these competencies.

**Table A: Which aspects of speaking and listening might your training develop?**

Speaking and listening skills and competencies	Explicitly teach this	Implicitly teach this
Improved confidence in speaking and listening	58%	42%
Talking to/ presenting to a group	57%	43%
Discussing with/ talking in a group	48%	52%
Talking to new people	43%	57%
Interview skills	96%	4%
Listening	78%	22%
Sensitivity to others	58%	42%
Speaking with individuals	57%	43%
Self expression	48%	52%
Improved negotiation	30%	70%
Finding a voice	57%	43%
Critical thinking skills	41%	59%
Adapting spoken language for different situations	55%	45%

In a recent evaluation of a previous Paul Hamlyn Foundation funded project it was reported that young people involved improved their confidence in speaking and listening. In particular they gained confidence in speaking up about ideas, listening to others, interviewing people and expressing their ideas about

Interviewees talked about their station's practice as often helping young people from disparate communities to 'learn to live together', not on a superficial level but in a way that involved critical and often challenging debate.



things that were important to them.<sup>5</sup>

Through our phone survey, we collected data concerning practitioners' views on the key learning outcomes related to engagement in community radio production and speaking and listening. These views are summarised in Table A.

### **8.2 Interviewing**

When we spoke in more detail to community radio organisations they said that through learning about interview techniques, youngsters can learn about how to impress at interview themselves. In addition, in order to conduct good radio interviews, young people need to develop transferable skills such as learning to ask thoughtful questions and to listen, analyse and synthesise answers to ensure that conversation flows.

In order to organise interviews it is also essential to use the phone and to speak to people that you don't know. At Siren FM, the station manager believes that this is a skill that many young people find difficult but it is also a key employability skill. Indeed, in a recent survey of schools, employers, educational groups and politicians, ASDAN reported that 94% of respondents felt that telephone skills were an essential work skill<sup>6</sup>.

### **8.3 Group work, discussion and confidence**

Some stations mentioned that through working in groups and making decisions together, young people increase their confidence as well as their ability to work well with a wide range of people. Participants also work collaboratively to discuss issues and concerns, and learn to lead and contribute to discussions.

At Forest FM, young people at a Scouts jamboree made a 30 minute programme together. The practitioner involved observed that even a small amount of engagement in making radio can make a big difference to the confidence of a young person.

### **8.4 Speaking for different audiences**

Many stations suggested that one of the key unique aspects of community radio is the connection with an audience. Through this, young people learn to appreciate the listener when they are talking and to understand the different ways they might speak depending on who they are talking to.

Community radio stations offer a range of work experience opportunities, not only those related to media careers.

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<sup>5</sup> Lewis, P. and Mitchell, C. (2012) Speak Up! Evaluation report, November 2012

<sup>6</sup> ASDAN Employment and Skills Forum, Virtual think tank Survey results, Autumn 2012. Downloaded at <http://www.asdan.org.uk/media/downloads/esf%20report-web.pdf>



When young people are producing radio for broadcast they have to follow Ofcom regulations and adapt what they say to comply with these regulations. They have to carefully consider the consequences of their words which, practitioners suggest, improves the precision and thoughtfulness of their speech. At SoundArt Radio, they believe that live radio demands good practice in terms of speaking and listening/ communication. Young people they work with are asked to 'perform themselves', rather than following a script or adopting a 'radio persona'.

Training is seen as a necessity because many of the people that community radio stations work with have no previous broadcasting experience. It is therefore vital in order to achieve a 'shift of control' in widening access to media production.

### **8.5 Accent and dialect**

Community radio organisations often work to represent and provide an outlet for the voice of marginalised groups. At Bradford Community Broadcasting they work to support young people to feel confident about who they are and how they speak. At the same time they want to work with young people to increase their life chances and feel that increasing awareness of the power of speaking in different ways in different places and for different audiences may be a part of this (and is something that radio production can help to highlight). This links to employment opportunities and improving life chances.

### **8.6 Expression/ voice**

'Youth voice' is a key theme that emerged frequently in our survey. As one practitioner suggested, this often translates as 'learning the confidence to say what they think' (Volunteer Co-ordinator, ALL FM). At Drystone Radio they provide young people with an opportunity to express their 'beefs and anguishes'. For example, one young person was able to air her views and explore issues around horse cruelty when she returned from Aintree (balanced with an interview with someone who is involved in hunts). In the opinion of staff at Drystone Radio, when young people get a chance to say what they think on the radio they often feel less frustrated about their lack of agency elsewhere in their life.

### **8.7 Analytical skills**

The process of putting together a coherent piece of radio might include interviewing, making decisions about content, and editing audio. Through engaging in this process our practitioners suggested that young people also develop critical and analytical skills and competencies.



### **8.8 Planning (what to say)**

Through engaging in a process of media design and production, young people are asked to think carefully about audience and plan what they are going to say before going on air. Many practitioners told us that young people learn to plan, often through a process of making mistakes but also through feedback from audiences.

This awareness of audience also teaches them to take a step back from the content and develop empathy and objectivity in relation to it.

### **8.9 Negotiation and persuasion**

Several practitioners told us that young people learn how to negotiate and persuade through their involvement in community radio. At Bradford Community Broadcasting, one practitioner suggested that a key part of this learning involved young people understanding that it's OK to disagree with others, and that this can actually lead to increased understanding.

## **9. The development of other skills and capacities**

Our online survey respondents also told us that community radio can (implicitly and explicitly) teach young people a wide range of transferable capacities and skills related to but beyond the development of speaking and listening skills (see table B). As one practitioner suggested:

*'Community radio for young people is much more than yacking away into a microphone. It is an entire community package which is self-sustaining and develops skills and confidence and not to be afraid of failure, learning to work together and playing to the skills of each individual within the team.'*

Station Manager, Point FM, Wales

In our phone interviews, stations told us that community radio helps young people to develop skills and capacities relevant to the world of work and social skills that they can make use of in the local community and wider world. Key elements of this learning are summarised in the following sections.



**Table B:** When you deliver 'radio training' to young people what do you teach?

Community radio 'teaches'	%
Speaking and listening skills	89%
Employability skills	61%
Literacy and numeracy	54%
Digital literacies	61%
Background to community radio	71%
Radio production	93%
Audio editing	93%
Community awareness	68%
Intergenerational capacities	32%
Music production	29%
Confidence and assertiveness	86%
Creativity	82%
Problem solving	57%

Through working in groups and making decisions together, young people increase their confidence as well as their ability to work well with a wide range of people. Participants also work collaboratively to discuss issues and concerns, and learn to lead and contribute to discussions.

### **9.1 Employability Skills**

Employability skills discussed by respondents included time management, effective planning, discipline, facing and overcoming challenges, and more practical issues such as learning to dress appropriately for work and not being afraid to use the telephone. The work is 'practical and meaningful' for young people as they are involved in producing real radio shows that are broadcast in their local area (Station Manager, Crescent FM). Community radio stations offer a range of work experience opportunities, not only those related to media careers. At DBBC (Bolton) they offer some volunteers the opportunity to take a course in office administration from which, they say, 28 volunteers have found work.

### **9.2 Literacy and numeracy skills**

Many practitioners suggested that young people learn literacy and numeracy skills without realising it as they engage in the work of producing radio programmes. For instance, they write running orders and scripts for programmes, measure times and percentages of music to talk, and plan interview questions, links and intros. Through editing audio together for programmes, literacy development often becomes more critical and engaged as crucial decisions about audience need to be made.

### **9.3 Media literacy**

Recent socio-technical change has resulted in widened notions of



literacy which has raised the importance of media literacy. Ofcom's definition of media literacy is 'the ability to access, understand and create communications in a variety of contexts'. In relation to access, community radio provides young people from a variety of backgrounds with access to 'professional standard' equipment and resources as well as an understanding of regulation in relation to radio. Understanding is increased through interaction with a range of media sources as young people put their own shows together.

As young people engage in the process of media production, they also increase their understanding of the medium in order to create a piece of radio. One practitioner told us that young people were encouraged to listen to a range of different radio stations, shows and genres in order to think about style and genre for their own work. They also brought in other media sources such as newspapers to comment on the content of these in their radio shows.

#### **9.4 New literacies**

In our changing world, many have argued that we should look to rethink notions of literacy. New literacy thinkers suggest that in the current global environment, being able to think and speak for yourself, being critical and empowered, being creative and innovative, understanding systems and 'learning how to learn' are all key to 'success'. In addition, multicultural nations and communities are now the norm throughout the world, and education may have a role here in negotiating differences and developing a critical understanding of a diversity of languages, discourses, styles and approaches<sup>7</sup>.

Practitioners told us that community radio training can support young people to learn to live in diverse neighbourhoods. Many mentioned that training explicitly encourages young people to develop a stronger awareness of their community, to form intergenerational relationships, and to develop empathy. In addition, as young people work in and lead diverse teams, they practise skills such as diplomacy and careful listening. Several practitioners made it clear that young people are asked to work in non-peer groups and are given responsibilities that they may not have in other aspects of their lives. At the youth-led stations in particular, youth volunteers are asked to work as station managers, learning more about how the stations interact with the local community, and about sponsorship and fundraising.

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<sup>7</sup> See Cope and Kalantzis (2000) *Multiliteracies: literacy learning and the design of social futures*. London: Routledge



### 9.5 Digital literacies<sup>8</sup>

61% of respondents said that they taught 'digital literacies' through radio training. As well as learning skills in recording and editing audio, young broadcasters need to be able to conduct research using the Internet and other sources, and identify credible sources of information. They would probably also use social media to publicise their show and link with possible interviewees.

The teaching of digital literacies by community radio is particularly important because of the type of young people that community radio organisations often work with who, because of their backgrounds, are less likely to have used digital technologies and are therefore more likely to struggle with issues related to 'technological resourcefulness'<sup>9</sup>.

## 10. The value of a 'community' approach

Community radio organisations are based in and broadcast to a local geographical community or to a community of interest. Very often this community is marginalised and encounters difficulties in relation to issues of representation and recognition. This is significant in terms of the opportunities that the sector offers to young people living in these communities. As one practitioner suggested:

*'Community radio is a brilliant way of giving a mouthpiece to any community without a voice. In doing that, they can build up confidence and pride in who they are and what they do and for the community itself. Ardwick, Levenshulme, Gorton rarely have positive news stories in mainstream media. They can generate positive news through community radio, it is instrumental in building the self-worth of a community.'*

Volunteer Co-ordinator, ALL FM, Manchester

Community radio organisations often fill a niche that is 'too local' for BBC and commercial stations. This is even more important as local commercial radio is increasingly taken over by large conglomerates<sup>10</sup>. For example, young broadcasters at Drystone Radio in the Yorkshire Dales were able to organise a debate that

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<sup>8</sup> Digital literacies: are 21<sup>st</sup> century skills that involve developing an ability to engage critically with digital technologies

<sup>9</sup> Enyon, R. and Geniets, A. (2012) On the Periphery? Understanding Low and Discontinued Internet Use Amongst Young People in Britain. 'Technological resourcefulness' is defined as the ability to access and meaningfully interact with technologies.

<sup>10</sup> See Rushton, K. (2012) Local radio at threat from Global's takeover of GMG Radio. Daily Telegraph, 17 August, 2012



raised awareness of 'fracking' in the local area, and ran a local news story about police in the area losing their cars.

Young people are also involved in intergenerational projects such as at Forest FM where multi-age groups came together to think about regeneration work in their town, or at Point FM where everyone involved in the station worked together to build a new studio. Some stations teach accredited courses in community awareness and intergenerational work and many ask young people to adapt and use their existing skills to work with older people.

Practitioners told us that they ask young people to make sure that they reflect their community in their shows, and to think of the radio as a 'tool' or a 'resource' for the community. Previous research conducted on community radio training has suggested that for many young people this is the first time they have thought about themselves as part of a local community and this can be fundamentally important in changing the way they feel about themselves and others<sup>11</sup>. Participants on an evaluated community radio course at ALL FM said that involvement in the learning opened up their social networks and enabled them to meet people who lived in their geographical community but who they might never have met otherwise. One participant stated:

*'...it's really fun getting to know people from the community who you wouldn't have the chance to talk to without being involved in something like this. All the skill learning part is just a bonus I think, the real reason is just really to meet people from the community.'*

Community learning course participant, ALL FM

Training explicitly encourages young people to develop a stronger awareness of their community, to form intergenerational relationships, and to develop empathy.

## 11. Training and pedagogical approaches

When we surveyed practitioners by phone, we asked them about the approaches that they adopted when training young people (i.e. pedagogy). Several practitioners talked about an 'active' approach to pedagogy, where they started with hands on, practical work - learning technical skills first through demonstration - then asked participants to practise this in a controlled activity. Others took this approach but included 'theory' first and revision after the practical activity. 'Theory' here could involve how to plan a good interview, thinking about genre, or input on the history, ethos and community of their station. Practitioners noted that flexibility was key and it was often necessary to adapt methods depending on the

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<sup>11</sup> Manchester, H. (2008) Learning through engagement in community media design. Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Manchester.



group and context of the learning. Learning was often described as 'student-centred.'

The practical or hands on elements of the learning were often seen as important in motivating and engaging young people. The practitioner at Forest FM suggested that, 'when you work with young people, their learning has to be proactive and interactive, not passive – forget PowerPoint.'

Informality was a key issue that arose in relation to pedagogical approaches, and this was thought to be a huge asset of community radio, enabling radio practitioners to engage those for whom traditional educational institutions may not have catered. Practitioners described a wide range of approaches to training that could often be tailored for different people. Organisations often adopted a one-to-one approach and used mentoring systems where a more experienced volunteer worked closely with a new volunteer.

We also found that many of the practitioners we spoke to were not very confident talking about their own pedagogical approaches and practices. Practitioners tended to talk in quite vague terms of 'practical work' or technical skills and 'teamwork', rather than drawing on sound pedagogical theory and practice, or showing an understanding of the discourse of media education. This is probably linked to their experience and qualifications, which as detailed below are predominantly in broadcasting rather than in education. It might be valuable for the sector to look at developing a shared language to talk about community radio training practices in relation to pedagogical theory.

Involvement in the learning opened up young people's social networks and enabled them to meet people who lived in their geographical community but who they might never have met otherwise.

## 12. Who are the trainers?

In our online survey, we asked what qualifications and experience trainers tended to have. 89% of respondents said that trainers at their organisation had broadcasting experience, 44% said that they had broadcasting qualifications, 63% had teaching experience, but only 15% had a school teaching qualification. 30% did have a qualification in teaching in the lifelong learning sector.

Many of the practitioners we spoke to were broadcasters first and had come to radio training from this perspective. They spoke of a 'skill share' within their organisations where those with more teaching experience would come together with those with broadcasting experience to design and teach courses. Some organisations paid external trainers to come and deliver radio training. Several organisations in the sector have delivered a 'train



the trainers' qualification. Given that over half of community radio trainers do not have a teaching qualification of any kind, it would seem that this is something the sector could find very beneficial.

### 13. Key challenges in training delivery

We asked practitioners about the key challenges for their work with young people, in order to target the outcomes from this project for the sector. We found that many practitioners had similar concerns around working with more formal organisations, funding, working with young people and the social aspects of radio work.

#### 13.1 Working with formal organisations

Community radio organisations, particularly those run by volunteers, sometimes found it hard to fit into the more formal structures of education institutions. For instance, they said that it can be difficult to work with young people in schools because of the demands of the curriculum and entrenched ways of working with young people.

Some practitioners had found that if you wanted to work with schools, it was necessary to start communicating with them months in advance of the project dates. This may be difficult in cultures of short term funding where rapid responses are sometimes needed. Some practitioners suggested that contractual agreements might be a good idea with schools as it is good practice to be clear about expectations.

Some community radio organisations have worked with colleges however they have found it difficult to negotiate the financial arrangements and that there was a lack of transparency. Being a small organisation working with a much larger organisation also caused some tensions to arise.

#### 13.2 Funding for training

As noted earlier, many of the practitioners we spoke to painted a picture of a sector in crisis or at least very under-resourced. This affects their ability to deliver training and has been significant for many organisations who have had to stop working with certain groups, especially those that require more time and resources (e.g. young people attending pupil referral units).

In an environment characterised by scarcity of funding opportunities, it is hard for organisations to develop sustainable

In an environment characterised by scarcity of funding opportunities, it is hard for organisations to develop sustainable relationships with educational institutions, many of whom are also struggling with limited resources and an ever changing set of demands from policy makers and others.



relationships with educational institutions, many of whom are also struggling with limited resources and an ever changing set of demands from policy makers and others. Only 13% of survey respondents said that their training was supported by mainstream training funding.

Practitioners told us that in their experience 'Community Radio Fund' grants (an Ofcom fund designed to support 'core costs' for community radio organisations) are not generally given to stations for trainers' salaries even though the organisations that we spoke to see training as a core activity.

Where organisations are working on their own or with few colleagues and under pressure, they told us that it is difficult for them to network and work closely with other stations. It is also hard for them to work with others to disseminate and lobby about their work, although such work is seen as essential in the climate of crisis and struggle in which many organisations find themselves.

### ***13.3 Working with young people***

Some practitioners told us that there were challenges relating to working with young people that needed to be carefully handled and thought through. One of these was the inherent 'liveliness' of many young people which could be a problem for (some) older volunteers. Some practitioners said that older volunteers complained that young people were too noisy, others told us that it was difficult to manage intergenerational training as young people tended to pick up skills more quickly than their older counterparts. On the other hand, some stations said that older volunteers appreciated young people's vibrancy and ideas. In relation to this, some practitioners found that young people did not always have an understanding of diversity or a sensitivity about 'who people are' – this was often a learning curve and where staff did not have time to work with young people, conflict did arise. Some practitioners described working closely to challenge (young) people who had 'bigoted' views and/or a tendency to use inappropriate language.

Practitioners told us that retention of young people can be a problem as they tend to have a lot of competing activities including school work, exams and other interests. Financial difficulties restricted the involvement of some young people, who needed to be out earning money, or were not able to pay the small subscriptions that some organisations require.

Relationship issues between young people and station managers can be complex and tense. Whilst station managers need to

uphold Ofcom regulations to ensure the future of the organisation, young people sometimes feel that the manager is deliberately getting in the way of broadcasting what they want. For instance, the lyrical content of some young MCs work may sometimes be inappropriate for broadcast in relation to Ofcom regulations.

### **13.4 Social aspects of radio work**

Whilst community radio can be a great way for participants to get to know other people, especially whilst they are being trained, it may be more of a challenge to ensure that this social element is retained when people become volunteers delivering their own shows. The way that radio stations operate may make it difficult for volunteers to get to know each other - once volunteers are trained up to make a programme they tend to only develop social connections with others working on their show (if it's not a solo show) and those coming before or after their show. This suggests community radio organisations may need to develop strategies to encourage volunteers to make social connections, perhaps through hosting social events or providing areas for people to sit together. Unfortunately where space is short it can be difficult or impossible to make such provision available.

## **14. Building partnerships**

Our online survey asked respondents to tell us who they worked in partnership with on training projects for young people. Results are in Table C.

**Table C: Who are your partner organisations that help you to deliver your radio training projects? (tick all that apply)**

	<b>Response %</b>
Local schools	48%
Youth organisations	44%
Local colleges	48%
Local media organisations	16%
Community learning providers or other community groups	32%
Employability training providers	24%
Local businesses	12%
None of the above	20%
Other	4%

It is interesting to note here that 5 of the 25 organisations that answered this question did not specify any partner organisations.

In addition we might suppose that the 3 organisations who didn't answer this question did not have partnerships. There is therefore some work to be done for the sector in developing these relationships.

### **14.1 Positive partnerships**

Many of the organisations that we spoke to in the phone survey did have partnerships with educational and other institutions that they had built over the years. However it was beyond the scope of this survey to ask in detail about how these partnerships work and how they contribute to the way that the stations are run.

Several stations had partnerships with universities which were useful in providing volunteers (e.g. media studies/ media production students), access to advice on research methods, and access to a range of 'experts' for interviews. At Siren FM, the local university uses the radio station to teach the practical element of several courses (the station manager is paid to teach some elements of the programme), and they also have a relationship with Lincoln College.

One station has an ex-teacher working as a school liaison officer – they go into schools to recruit young volunteers and raise awareness of the station through competitions. Other stations run projects in which they work with various organisations. For instance, Sunny Govan worked with Oxfam Scotland, NHS promotions, youth groups and integration networks on a youth radio project.

### **14.2 Challenges in relation to partnerships**

There are a number of challenges for the organisations we spoke to in relation to building partnerships.

Many stations said that they struggle with establishing partnerships due to the lack of paid staff with time to put into networking and advertising their services. Partnerships that do develop often form around a small pot of funding and are therefore not sustainable in the long term. Several stations described having good relationships with their local authority and local schools but no financial relationship between them.

Several stations said that they had to make decisions all the time about what would benefit their community most. For instance, one practitioner said that they did not offer work experience placements as it was an 'administrative nightmare' but that they had an open door policy for the community.

Partnerships that develop often form around a small pot of funding and are therefore not sustainable in the long term.

Practitioners had mixed experiences of working with youth services and youth workers. Several practitioners said that although some youth workers are committed and enthusiastic, others are less conscientious and don't take time to organise training and events, or will take a break when the community radio practitioner arrives. This can make the work more difficult and less effective partly because it takes time for the community radio practitioner to build the relationships with young people that the youth worker already has.

In some cases partnership projects can fail to attract young people to the station and it is necessary to take training out to other organisations. This can make the work practically more challenging (in terms of e.g. relocating equipment) and therefore more expensive to deliver.

Practitioners told us that retention of young people can be a problem as they tend to have a lot of competing activities including school work, exams and other interests.

When working with schools (especially secondary schools) practitioners discussed the need to contact the teachers months in advance of starting the projects. This long lead-in time can be frustrating for community organisations who often have to work to tight deadlines. Practitioners also described the amount of negotiation needed with teachers and schools about what they are going to do. For instance, there is often a need for the radio work to fit in with the curriculum work, which requires careful planning. Some practitioners said that it was difficult to balance the relationship between young people and themselves and the teacher. The community media practitioner often comes across as the 'cool' youth worker, whilst the teacher is the one doing the disciplining. Managing this relationship involves a lot of careful discussion with the teacher as well as suggesting ways of working more creatively. Trainers need to be very adaptable and have to negotiate with teachers carefully. As teachers are often overworked it can be difficult for them to prioritise sufficient time for these discussions and negotiations.

Sustainability is important, as school projects are often short-term. Where projects are short-term, there can also be concerns around developing relationships of trust with young people. Practitioners suggested that one way around this is to develop students as mentors for other students.

## 15. Evaluation and monitoring

59% of those who answered the question, "do you currently evaluate training projects with young people" said that they did, 11% said they only did so if funders demanded it, and 30% stated that they didn't do any evaluation. Of those who did evaluate



projects, a variety of evaluation strategies were used, as detailed in table D, with practitioners using on average 5 different techniques.

**Table D: What kinds of evaluation strategies have you adopted with groups of young people (tick all that apply)?**

Evaluation strategy	%
Recording attendance and demographic data	83%
Tutor assessment	72%
Distance travelled evaluation techniques e.g. Outcome Star	33%
Surveys/ questionnaires	67%
Focus groups	17%
Learning journals	44%
Blogs	17%
Shared social network	28%
Audio/ video diaries	33%
Interviews with participants/ stakeholders	72%

Long term adult volunteers often work alongside young people in what many stations call a 'family' approach. This kind of atmosphere is seen as being particularly good for those young people who are vulnerable or have found school and other formal education institutions difficult to manage.

When we asked practitioners in our phone survey about evaluation they often said that they tend to do evaluation 'informally' by 'asking young people what they think' during and at the end of training courses. Some stated that they evaluate projects by listening to what young people say rather than adopting more formal methods. These informal approaches to evaluation may not have been seen as an 'evaluation' strategy by those responding to the online survey.

Some stations described more formal evaluation strategies such as written end of course evaluations (by learner or tutor), or allowing a half day at the end of a course for focus groups and paper based evaluation surveys to be completed. These stations also considered following participants after they had finished courses to monitor their progression.

A minority of stations (two that we spoke to) saw evaluation as part of their course delivery - developing an individual learning plan with course participants, measuring attendance, and holding focus groups and interviews. Others discussed more creative approaches to evaluation such as using audio diaries and graffiti boards.

Challenges that respondents discussed in relation to developing evaluation strategies included:

- finding it difficult to measure change
- being short-staffed in terms of paid people
- not being aware of different evaluation techniques

- youth workers at their organisations not being trained to conduct evaluations and finding it onerous
- finding time to collect testimonials and other evidence in the 'busy' atmosphere of radio projects

Our survey data suggests that practitioners would benefit from a set of centralised resources looking at evaluation strategies and methods, perhaps also including templates and exemplar databases/ analytical tools.

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## 16. Accreditation

Only 39% of the stations that deliver training to young people said that they delivered accredited training. Most of these (64%) deliver radio production qualifications. Others deliver:

Key/ core/ transferable skills or similar qualifications	27%
Youth achievement awards	36%
Community work/ community action awards	36%
In house schemes/ self-certification	36%
Employability qualifications	9%
Arts or creativity-based awards	18%
Other (eg HND qualifications, creative/media diploma)	9%

The most common award mentioned in phone interviews was the NCFE Level 1/Level 2 in radio production which was delivered on site at several stations. In some cases, a grant was awarded for the radio station to deliver the course for a limited amount of time. For instance at Somer Valley, they taught a Level 2 NCFE course in radio production to 17 people with a youth service grant of £35k.

Another commonly mentioned award was an ASDAN-certified 'Skill Me Up' award, sometimes delivered in partnership with a local youth service. This qualification provides trainees with recognition of what they have achieved in respect to their community and voluntary work at the station. Some stations had delivered the Arts Council 'Arts Award', which encourages young people to take part in arts activities and experience artists and their work.

Stations provided a variety of reasons for not delivering accredited courses, including lack of capacity – seeing the accreditation process as complex, hard to grasp and time-consuming, and impossible for them to commit the required resources to in the current financial climate. Other stations said that colleges draw



down all of the funding to deliver accredited courses and it is often difficult for community organisations to compete.

Several stations told us that they do not deliver official accredited training programmes but have devised a process of in-house certification in order to recognise the input of volunteers at their station.

Many stations told us that they were very interested in delivering accredited courses and would like to know more about how to go about doing so. Sunny Govan told us that there is a demand for training, and would like to see future work linked with Individual Learning Accounts<sup>12</sup>. They are considering working with a local university (Caledonian) in order to use their resources as a backdrop for this.

## 17. Young people and social media

85% of stations that work with young people said that they made use of social networking sites. Of these, 96% used Facebook, 87% Twitter, and 13% of respondents said that they had their own bespoke networking space. Organisations tended to use social networking sites for promotional purposes – places where young people could promote their own shows and the organisation (91%) and communicate with audiences (86%). 77% of respondents said they used social networking sites for young people to communicate and collaborate with each other and with staff members. Only 3 organisations said that they didn't use social networking sites with young people - reasons given were fears around child protection issues, lack of staff expertise, and having tried it but found it unsuccessful.

When we spoke to practitioners, many of them said that young people tended to enjoy using a 'social media style' of broadcasting where they drew on a range of social media channels to publicise (and broadcast) their shows and audio. Several practitioners said that they did not need to encourage young people to consider using social media in this way. In many cases, it was young people who had helped the organisation move forward with a social media strategy for the content and publicity of the organisation.

Practitioners did identify some challenges with using social networking with young people. For instance, there is a need to be clear about appropriateness (without being too dictatorial). In addition, communication and participation can be an issue on a

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<sup>12</sup> Individual Learning Accounts are only currently used in Scotland where they provide a small amount of means-tested funding (up to £200) for training individuals aged 16 or over



closed site as young people may feel that having to input a password makes it inaccessible and does not fit with their everyday digital practices. Practitioners found it more successful when they used an existing social media channel such as Facebook.

## 18. Case studies

When we spoke to practitioners many of them spontaneously started telling us about individuals who had benefitted from community radio training. We outline some of these stories in this section of the report. Some of these stories are powerful and highlight the need for the sector to move beyond anecdotal accounts and to develop stronger evidence concerning outcomes.

### 18.1 *Young people with special needs: Siren FM*

One young man with special needs was on day release from his school over the period of a year. He has now been working as a volunteer at the station for 3½ years and recently interviewed Mark Thompson from the BBC.

Siren also work with a 23 year old autistic man who has a passion for jazz, who comes and does a radio show every week with live phone interviews. He interviews famous jazz musicians and is not afraid to just call them up. The volunteer manager at the station picks him up from the bus station each week – his care is signed over to Siren FM for an afternoon a week.

### 18.2 *Takeover Week: SoundArt Radio*

During a designated 'takeover' week, one young man who came in didn't appear to care about his appearance and found it difficult to make eye contact. He bumped into an old friend and after a few days they came to staff saying that they'd decided together to overcome their fears. They wanted to produce and present a metal show and wanted to interview a band. By the end of the week he was smartly dressed, making eye contact, and engaging with others in the station. He said it was 'the best thing I've ever done.'

### 18.3 *Young people in charge: Generate Radio*

Two young people set up this station and now run and manage it. Before getting involved in community radio they were not engaged at school, or in training. After completing a community radio course at their local youth centre, they went and studied at college before setting up their own organisation.

In order to conduct good radio interviews, young people need to develop transferable skills such as learning to ask thoughtful questions and to listen, analyse and synthesise answers to ensure that conversation flows.



#### ***18.4 Underachieving at school: Somer Valley FM***

The station worked with a young man who had been written off by school at 14 years old. He was under-achieving and had developed few communication skills, either verbal, written or oral. In addition, he caused trouble at school. He became engaged in radio production, and in particular the technical side of radio, and now has developed a career in radio.

#### ***18.5 A 'safe' space for expression: Drystone Radio***

One young man who makes a programme for this station finds it very difficult to express himself outside of the radio station. However, he produces fascinating programmes in the radio station and has found therapeutic expression in a programme. His programmes have a big youth following on Facebook.

#### ***18.6 Representation and recognition: Sunny Govan***

A Muslim homosexual young person went on air as part of their "Smashing Dishes" series. This was a significant step for him, given that he felt persecuted about his sexuality, and had been told by his family that he would be safer if he "forgot about his sexuality". Being able to tell his story on air shows the confidence he gained to come out about himself, not only to his family, but to the wider community.

#### ***18.7 Engaging NEETs: ALL FM***

One young man was not attending school or college and spent a lot of his time smoking marijuana. He had little self-esteem and his life was in a mess. After involvement and programme-making at ALL FM, he became a youth engagement worker and then got a breakfast show for 6 weeks at BBC1xtra. This is particularly remarkable because at the start of training at ALL FM, he'd have said that the time the show started was his bedtime.

#### ***18.8 Engaging vulnerable young people: Frome FM***

A specialist college for people with learning difficulties emailed the station and asked if a young man could come in with a support worker over a period of a year. He was a vulnerable young man who lacked confidence and belief in himself. He loved being at the station and ended up running his own show, which he loved. He has since been offered a full-time job at the local council.



## 19. Sector needs analysis

### 19.1 Practitioner needs

As part of our phone survey we asked practitioners what kind of support they felt that they needed in order to develop their own practice in youth radio training. As we spoke to a wide range of organisations, we received a range of responses, but some similarities emerged.

Practitioners felt that they would benefit from a way of communicating with each other in order to successfully share skills and advice on the delivery of training and working with young people.

Several organisations said that they felt the value of a bank of centralised resources would be immense, as they often feel very isolated from each other. Where resources are tight, few practitioners can spare time to develop their own resources and expertise, or find time to go out and network with others.

Practitioners said they would benefit from:

- A sharable resource of training materials
- Best practice guides in different areas of working with young people e.g. how to set up a course, training mentors
- Details of nationally recognised courses and accreditation routes
- Advice on mapping skills-learning onto radio production courses
- Advice on policies in relation to young people e.g. safeguarding policies, legality for working with people under adult age, employment regulations around volunteers, health and safety for training, codes of conduct for young volunteers
- Advice on funding/ monetising their practice
- Advice on partnership building e.g. example contracts with partner organisations re expectations of each other
- Practical tools e.g. how to do CRB checks

After speaking to practitioners we also felt they would benefit from:

- Guidance on evaluation and monitoring – thinking beyond anecdotal case studies
- A change in their approach to funding – from a grant-led approach to a service-led approach
- A space to discuss their professional training practices in order to get better at talking coherently and to different audiences about what they do

It might be valuable for the sector to look at developing a shared language to talk about community radio training practices in relation to pedagogical theory.



## ***19.2 For young broadcasters***

Practitioners also felt that young broadcasters could benefit from a radio network of their own where young people could help and support other young people. Further work is needed here with young people themselves to assess how important this is to them and what kind of space they would find useful and engaging.

However practitioners suggested that this resource might include:

- Information about progression routes
- Easy to understand starter packs/ technical guides for new young broadcasters
- A young broadcasters 'radio training academy' that provided courses and materials that young people could dip in and out of
- Ways of encouraging international radio relationships as a standard part of training programmes for young people



## 20. Conclusions and recommendations

This report highlights the great importance of learning and training provision by community radio organisations in delivering the 'social gain' that is key to the definition of community radio in the UK.

Many of the organisations surveyed delivered radio training to young people, often those who have not thrived in traditional learning institutions. Community radio creates a unique learning culture which is generally informal and participatory and allows space for people traditionally 'locked out' of mainstream media to develop their own voice. Community radio organisations bring together diverse communities of learners and often deliver intergenerational learning projects.

Young people engaged in learning in community radio stations develop their speaking and listening skills and improve their confidence and assertiveness, as well as learning new digital and media literacies. The experience both increases their employability and encourages and enables them to be more aware of their local communities and to become more active citizens.

The community radio practitioners that we spoke to had powerful stories to tell about the youth radio work that they deliver and its impact on young people. Some stations conduct good evaluations of the learning projects that they deliver, but many organisations either do no evaluation at all or only do so in an ad hoc fashion.

Many community radio stations are struggling to survive in the current funding climate, which inevitably has an impact on their ability to engage young people. Partnership working with schools and colleges could maximise the learning opportunities provided by the community radio sector, but such partnerships are time-consuming to develop. This is difficult for staff who are already working long hours for little or no pay, particularly given that partnerships are often short-term and/ or of little or no financial value to stations.

Key aspects of the pedagogical approaches used by community radio practitioners included learning through 'hands on' interactive practical work, and being flexible and informal. Many of the practitioners we spoke to were not very confident talking about their own pedagogical approaches and practices and were not familiar with the discourse of media education. Many stations provided accredited training for young people, but more did not. Those who didn't said that they would like to know more about



accreditation but were unsure how to go about this.

Organisations and individual young people often used social media to publicise their shows and the station. However, very few organisations used social media to enable young people to talk to each other about their radio productions, or to link them up to wider networks of support in relation to their work.

The following conclusions and recommendations are drawn from our review of the youth learning opportunities currently provided by the community radio sector:

'Community radio for young people is much more than yacking away into a microphone. It is an entire community package which is self-sustaining and develops skills and confidence and not to be afraid of failure, learning to work together and playing to the skills of each individual within the team.' - Station Manager, Point FM

1. Community radio stations require support for the sector to deliver more effective training to young people. This support might encompass:
  - A set of resources for the sector that includes advice on getting started, content for courses, how to evaluate and monitor courses, how to accredit community radio courses
  - A place for practitioners to share their ideas and courses
2. The community radio sector needs advice and support in relation to funding and partnership working for training. This might encompass:
  - Advice on linking radio work with school and college curricula
  - Lobbying work with educators about the effectiveness of youth community radio training as an educational tool
3. Young broadcasters would benefit from an online space where they can share ideas about content, get feedback on material that they have produced, and network with other young broadcasters and those already working in the radio industry
4. Community radio organisations need support to be able to communicate more effectively about what they do in relation to youth radio training. This support could be provided to the sector through:
  - Further research looking at how making radio can support young people to develop skills and capacities
  - A resource that helps community radio organisations to understand some of the pedagogical theory that they are adopting in order to talk about what they do to other educators and funders
  - A set of resources that presents the 'unique selling points' of radio training and making
5. Policy makers should be made aware of the benefits of youth community radio training and take note that community radio

is both an under-used and under-resourced sector. We feel strongly that without powerful advocates, the capacity and effectiveness of the community radio sector is threatened, which has significant consequences for the range, depth, passion and meaningfulness of learning experiences available to young people across the country.



# Appendices

## *Appendix A: List of organisations participating in phone survey*

Academy FM	Folkestone, Kent
ALL FM	South/Central Manchester
Awaz FM	Glasgow
Bradford Community Broadcasting	Bradford, West Yorkshire
CreateTeam	Tameside, Greater Manchester
Crescent Radio	Rochdale, Greater Manchester
Drystone Radio	Cowling, North Yorkshire
Fife Youth Radio	Leven, Fife
Forest FM	Verwood and East Dorset
FromeFM	Frome, Somerset
Future Radio	Norwich, Norfolk
Generate Radio	Duns, Berwickshire
Gravity FM	Grantham, Lincolnshire
Higher Rhythm/Sine FM	Doncaster, South Yorkshire
Hillz FM	Coventry, West Midlands
Mon FM	Isle of Anglesey
Point FM	North Wales coast and Vale of Clwyd
Preston FM	Preston, Lancashire
RadioReverb	Brighton, East Sussex
Redruth Radio	Redruth, Cornwall
Siren FM	Lincoln, Lincolnshire
Somer Valley FM	Norton Radstock and Wansdyke, Somerset
SoundArt Radio	Totnes, Devon
Station House Media Unit/shmuFM	Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire
Sunny Govan Community Radio	Govan, Glasgow
Takeover Radio	Leicester, Leicestershire
The Voice	Barnstaple, North Devon
Voice FM and Unity 101	Southampton, Hampshire
Wythenshawe FM	Wythenshawe, Manchester
Youthcomm	Worcester, Worcestershire



## ***Appendix B: Questions for interviews with stations***

The interviews were semi-structured but these questions (and the themes represented here) formed the basis of the discussions we had with stations.

1. How would you describe your organisation?
2. Funding situation
3. Do you work with young people? Can you talk about the kinds of projects that are currently running?/ projects that you have run in the past?
4. Can you tell us more about your students? (Eg ages, abilities, demographic data)
5. How do you tend to deliver your training?
  - a) Practicalities eg group size, where does it take place, when?
  - b) Training models/ pedagogy – active learning? Critical learning? Collaborative learning?
  - c) Learning culture – is it different to school? How is it different? What do young people value about the CR station as a site for learning?
6. What do you explicitly teach when working with young people? (in terms of key skills, knowledge, capacities?)

Specifically in relation to:

- **speaking and listening skills**
  - employability skills
  - digital literacies (eg use of social media, using web effectively)
  - confidence and assertiveness
  - community awareness
- AND
- literacy and numeracy
  - background to community radio
  - radio production
  - audio editing
  - intergenerational skills
  - music production
  - creativity
  - problem solving
7. Which speaking and listening skills/ capacities do you think CR training can help to develop/ improve for young people?
    - Improved confidence in speaking and listening
    - Talking to/ presenting to a group
    - Discussing/speaking in a group
    - Talking to new people



- Interview skills
- Listening
- Sensitivity to others
- Speaking with individuals
- Self expression
- Improved negotiation
- Finding a voice
- Critical thinking skills
- Adapting spoken language for different situations

8. Do you deliver accreditation as part of your training? What accreditation? What are the concerns/ challenges you have around accreditation (can ask all of those who do/ do not deliver accredited training) Also eg why do you not deliver accreditation?

9. What evaluation strategies have you used for your projects with young people?

- Recording attendance, demographic data, etc.
- Tutor assessment
- Distance travelled evaluation techniques e.g. Outcome Star
- Surveys/ questionnaires
- Focus groups
- Learning journals
- Blogs
- Shared social network
- Audio/ video diaries
- Interviews with participants/ stakeholders

What are the issues/ challenges for you in relation to evaluation?

10. Do you use social networking sites with young people? Which do you use? How do you use them?/ for what? How successful is this? How do you encourage young people to use them?

11. Who do you work in partnership with? What works well? What are the issues that you find challenging in relation to partnership working?

12. Tell us more about your trainers? Do they have teaching qualifications/ experience? Broadcasting experience? What kind of training/ development would be of benefit to them?

13. How does training fit into your business plan? What revenue do you receive from training?

14. What would be of (most) benefit to you in an online toolkit/ space for support in developing your training with young people?



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