



British Red Cross
Inspired Action
Case Study
Spirit of 2012

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Executive Summary

Introduction







Inspired Action (IA) is a project implemented by the British Red Cross (BRC) across four regions of the United Kingdom. Established in 2014, the project aims to inspire young people to volunteer, to improve access to volunteering opportunities for young disabled and non-disabled people, and to challenge negative perceptions of disability. This case study is focused explicitly on the activities that have been developed by IA in Scotland.

Context

The project works at the intersection of volunteering, disability and youth engagement to address the barriers that keep young disabled people from volunteering. IA is implemented in partnership with Whizz-Kidz, a charity that also works with young disabled people across the UK.

Mechanism

IA's implementation strategy consists of **six** activities:

-  **Inspiration Workshops:** delivered at schools, youth clubs or when invited by other organisations, focused on inspiring young people to take action and volunteer;
-  **Volunteering Engagement:** tailored support for young disabled and non-disabled people willing to volunteer, includes providing funds for equipment and support;
-  **Inspired Action Ambassadors:** ambassadors have a series of tasks to be fulfilled in a six-month time-frame as an alternative for young volunteers who, for whatever reason, are not able to start volunteering right away;
-  **Social Action Projects:** proposed and delivered by groups of young people who receive funds, support and guidance from IA and other partners;
-  **Disability Equality and Awareness Trainings:** offered in partnership with Whizz-Kidz to BRC staff and to IA volunteers (in a different version);
-  **Learning Events:** promoted annually, give volunteers from across the UK opportunity to gather and share experiences.

Outcomes

IA's outcomes were in-line with the outcomes Spirit promoted. The project made significant contributions to four of the eight thematic areas, including: Engaging Volunteers; Empowering Young People; Disability; and Wellbeing.

Engaging Volunteers: IA has successfully implemented measures that benefit volunteers directly, such as tailored support to access volunteering roles and close follow-up from IA. Engaging with young volunteers requires the right set-up to ensure that the benefits of volunteering are effectively transmitted both internally in the BRC and externally to young people.

Empowering Young People: Volunteers were involved in all decision making processes that concerned their experience. Because they are treated as partners, volunteers experienced improved self-confidence, together with appropriate follow-up and training. Volunteers reported being able to use what they learned later in their volunteering placements, in their daily lives and in their communities.

Disability: Some young disabled people lack the confidence necessary to volunteer in non-specialist organisations. IA helped to increase the overall likelihood that young disabled people

would feel more confident as volunteers, and addressed inclusivity with BRC staff. Engaging young disabled volunteers can take time. The project brings the debate about inclusivity within BRC to the forefront through trainings and fosters organisational change.

Wellbeing: Increase in confidence is the most notable improvement observed in the results of this case study, which was demonstrated by volunteer advocacy. Many shared their experiences at IA with other young disabled and non-disabled people, such as: helping young people to overcome isolation, creating of a welcoming environment where young disabled and non-disabled volunteers can work together to productively develop their capacities.

Conclusion

IA contributes positively to the four Spirit-designated thematic areas. Recruiting young people proved challenging, but once volunteers were placed, the outcomes were positive. There are several examples of good practices, such as the Confidence, Leadership, Assertiveness and Negotiation (CLAN) training, and the Ambassador project and tailored support for volunteers with disabilities.

Recommendation

Implementation recommendations consider that the project is in its last year. First, IA should consider concentrating efforts to engage service managers through concrete success stories in order to increase recruitment. Secondly, IA should expand the current strategy to work with schools and other key organisations. The project should be mindful when defining partnerships roles in the future, in order to make them more effective. In regards to monitoring and evaluation, IA should intensify efforts to increase the quality of data collected through exit interviews and surveys, collect data on disability awareness session with IA volunteers, and consider measuring contributions to organisational change on disability.

Recommendations concerning sustainability refer to the importance of guaranteeing the Disability Equality training has continuity, as well as documenting and sharing lessons learned with the sector and within BRC.

1. Introduction

Spirit of 2012 (Spirit) is a charitable trust endowed with £47 million from the Big Lottery Fund that aims to use national and local events across the UK as catalysts for social change. With a focus on engaging young people, Spirit encourages participation in sport, art and cultural activities and builds on the positive impact of the London 2012 Paralympic Games to challenge negative perceptions of disability and to promote social action.

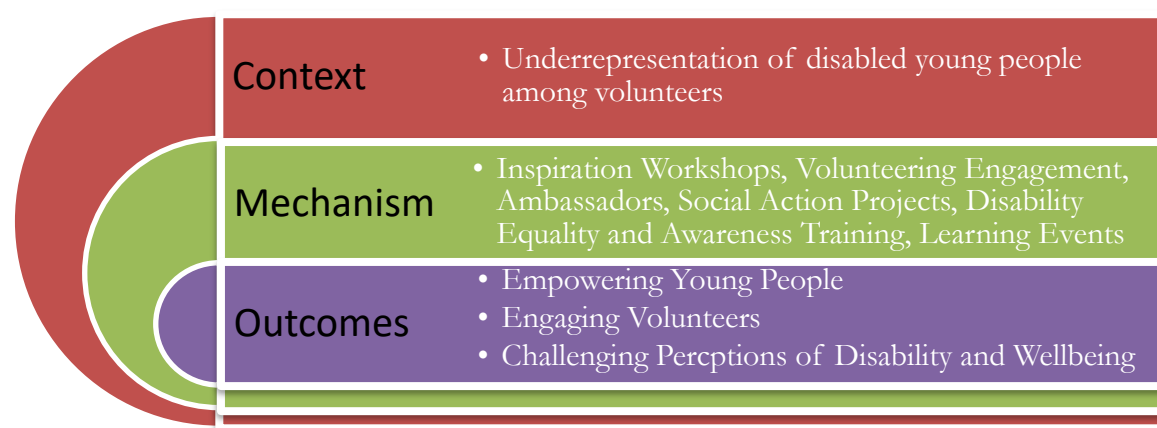
This case study is part of Spirit's External Evaluation. It aims to identify the main outcomes and impacts achieved by the Spirit-funded projects between the years of 2014 and 2017 and, where possible, determine a grantee's individual contribution towards those goals. It also aims to identify lessons and draw recommendations for Spirit and other grantees on how to improve implementation, in order to increase impact.

Inspired Action (IA) is a project implemented by the British Red Cross (BRC) for a period of 36 months, beginning in 2014, in four regions across the United Kingdom, with a total budget of £951,429.00¹. Target audiences are young disabled and non-disabled people between 15 and 25 years-old from South and North England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

The project aims to inspire young people to volunteer, to improve access to volunteering opportunities for young disabled and non-disabled people, and to challenge negative perceptions of disability. It also aims to disseminate learning in the areas of youth and disability across the voluntary sector. This case study will focus on the activities developed by IA in Scotland.

1.1 Evaluation Design and Methods

The case study methodology is founded in an evidence-based approach known as 'Context, Mechanisms, Outcomes' (CMO)². The approach consists of identifying the context in which an intervention operates, the mechanisms (or different activities) used to implement the intervention and how that configuration (context and mechanisms) worked to contribute to the outcomes. The aim of this case study is to provide a qualitative description of the contexts, mechanisms and outcomes demonstrated by Inspired Action, a grantee of Spirit, with a particular focus in Scotland. The CMO configuration for IA is illustrated in Figure 1.



¹ Spirit contributed with £778,473.00, which represents 82 per cent of the project's total budget.

² See Pawson and Tilley (2004) accessed from: http://www.communitymatters.com.au/RE_chapter.pdf

Figure 1: Inspired Action, Context, Mechanism, Outcome Configuration

The evaluator collected and analysed both qualitative and quantitative data for this case study. Interviews were conducted with IA Managers, BRC staff, partners and volunteers in Scotland and London. A short focus group activity was held during a training session in Inverness, Scotland, in May 2016, as well as participant observations during this timeframe. Existing documents were reviewed including IA Quarterly Monitoring Reports; Training Materials, Case Studies, Feedback and Evaluation forms, Learning Events Materials. The collected data was then analysed against Spirit's Theory of Change Outcomes.

2. Context

This section presents a general overview of the volunteering, disability, and youth engagement sectors in Scotland and IA's main objectives and implementation strategies.

2.1 Volunteering, Disability and Youth Engagement in Scotland

The IA project works at the intersection of the areas of volunteering, disability and youth engagement to address barriers that keep young disabled people from volunteering. The literature indicates that volunteering can positively impact wellbeing through personal development, and improvements to self-confidence and personal image. Volunteering can also positively impact social relationships and professional skills, which are particularly important for young people who are entering the labour market.

Volunteer Scotland reports that on average, 27 per cent of adults in Scotland volunteer formally through an organisation or group³. A survey commissioned by the same organisation showed that 45 per cent of young people between 11 and 18 years old are engaged in some kind of informal volunteering, and 59 per cent participate on a regular basis⁴. These findings indicate that young people in Scotland are committed to serving their communities and it can be inferred that they benefit from volunteering.

Participation rates are lower for disabled people. As reported by the Disability Rights Commission, only 17 per cent of the active adults volunteering in Scotland are reportedly disabled⁵. These lower rates are of primary concern because people with long-term physical or mental health conditions that limit their daily activities have lower levels of general health and wellbeing when compared to the national-population averages⁶. Providing more disabled people with volunteer opportunities could contribute directly to their improved general health and wellbeing.

The Disability Rights Commission found that many disabled people reported never having been asked to volunteer. This shows that disabled people are not seen as potential volunteers, which indicates an attitudinal barrier that is based on negative (and false) perceptions of disability. Other barriers to participation identified in the report relate to the importance of having 'supportive intermediates to ease the path into volunteering', and physical access.

2.2 Inspired Action

The Inspired Action project was implemented since early 2014, to engage with young people across the UK through volunteering opportunities and humanitarian and first aid education and training. It is a partnership between BRC and Whizz-Kidz, a UK-based charity that works to ensure mental and physical barriers faced by young disabled people are addressed by providing access a range of volunteering opportunities. IA's works across four outcomes areas presented in Spirit's Theory of Change: Engaging Volunteers; Empowering Young People; Empowering Disabled People and Challenging Perceptions of Disability; and Wellbeing.

³ Scottish Office for National Statistics, *Scottish Household Survey Annual Report - Scotland's People*, 2015, Scottish Government.

⁴ Harper, H, Jackson, G, *Young People and Volunteering in Scotland Survey*, 2015, Volunteer Scotland, Stirling: Scotland.

⁵ Disability Rights Commission, *Disability in Scotland 2005-2020: The State of the Nation Report*, Scottish Council Foundation, Edinburgh.

⁶ Scottish Office for National Statistics, *Scottish Household Survey Annual Report - Scotland's People*, 2015, Scottish Government.

The rationale driving IA is that young people need to be encouraged and represented in order to meaningfully participate in and take positive action in their communities. Young people also need adequate support to develop their full professional and personal potential, which the BRC provides through support on placements, structured induction processes, and trainings on leadership, confidence, communication and other soft skills. The project also provides young people with space to develop their own volunteer role through the social action projects. Communication and learning were considered in the project design strategy including national and local events to showcase results, as well as internal and external promotion of IA support services.

The project is overseen by the BRC's Head of Youth Engagement, who also acts as line-manager to the Inspired Action National Coordinator. The National Coordinator is responsible for coordinating the partnership with Whizz-Kidz and supports the work of the five Inspired Action Engagement Workers (IAEW) across the UK. The IAEW workers are responsible for organising and delivering Inspiration Workshops, supporting volunteers through the BRC application process, finding appropriate placement, and other issues related to the volunteer's roles. IAEW workers also advocate locally to promote IA for partners and internally.

BRC is currently undergoing a major restructuring process that will directly impact staff and volunteers' recruitment. Roles within the organisation are currently under review and regional governance structures are being reconsidered, with changes likely to affect volunteering recruitment processes and the role of volunteers within the organisation.

Table 1: Inspired Action Outcomes and Indicators

Outcomes	Indicators
Outcome 1: Young people are inspired to become active humanitarian citizens and will have increased confidence, knowledge and skills through safe, high-quality volunteering opportunities	1,000 young people are expected to take up an IA volunteering opportunity and increase their confidence, personal and employability skills
Outcome 2: Young people have greater awareness and understanding of the issues faced by disabled people and have increased positive perceptions of disabled people	At least 50 disabled young people volunteer through IA, and work together with non-disabled peers
	950 non-disabled young people report increased understanding and appreciation of the contributions of young disabled-people
Outcome 3: Inspired young people to become active humanitarian citizens, young people will have increased project management, communication and leadership skills, through leading social action projects in their local communities	120 young people are engaged in social action projects and increase their communication and leadership skills through this activity

The project also aims to reach **5,000 young people** through inspirational, educational and disability awareness-raising events hosted by inspirational speakers and youth participation facilitators, some of whom are former volunteers themselves.

3. Mechanism

IA uses **six different activities** to implement the project. This section introduces the activities IA proposed project, and notes about how each activity is developing.

3.1 Inspiration Workshops

The Inspiration Workshops are the entry point for the IA project. Inspiration Workshops are intended to motivate novice young volunteers to act, in part by introducing them to opportunities available in their local communities. Following the workshop, interested participants are invited to an informational induction. During the induction, participants are assured that IA volunteers will receive adequate support throughout their service tenure.

For each region, the IAEW is responsible for coordinating and delivering the Inspirational Workshops by liaising with local partners. Workshop speakers include young people from BRC or Whizz-Kidz, as topic usually centre on the benefits of volunteering and the volunteering experience itself. Workshops and IA volunteering placements are promoted through Whizz-Kidz clubs. Today, the majority of the Inspiration Workshops are delivered in schools in order to ensure the project is able reach as many young people as possible.

3.2 Engaging Volunteers

Once a young person becomes an IA volunteer, the IAEW assists them in applying for their preferred role within BRC. BRC service managers work to find the best possible placement for each young person and, when needed, adapting the vacancy to the young person's abilities and interests. In cases where the young person needs special equipment or additional support (e.g. transportation, personal assistance, adapted computer software), the project provides funding.

IA volunteers, like their adult counterparts, must complete mandatory volunteer BRC trainings, including First Aid. Training accreditations and results are recorded in the BRC internal monitoring system. In addition, IA volunteers receive a two-hour session on Disability Awareness and a four-hour Confidence, Leadership, Assertiveness and Negotiation (CLAN) training. Sometimes volunteers are invited to co-deliver the trainings for other IA volunteers and to take part in Inspiration Workshops as role models.

Young volunteers recruited through IA have constant support from their IAEW. They meet with IAEW staff at the beginning of their placement, have follow-up meetings every three months, and again at the end of their volunteering term. These meetings serve as a space to address any concerns regarding their roles and also to monitor achievements. Young disabled volunteers count with informal support from the network of IA volunteers, but the IAEW are the young volunteers' main references for any issue concerning their volunteering experience.

The partnership with Whizz-Kidz was expected to create a more direct path for disabled young people willing to volunteer. However, it has not been as effective as expected in opening recruiting channels through the partner's existing networks, despite the development of a special referral pathway for BRC.

The volunteers recruited through Whizz-Kidz have acted as informal ambassadors to the IA project and have been invited to share their experiences in Whizz-Kidz clubs and meetings across the country.

3.3 Inspired Action Ambassadors

Increasing the number of young volunteers that IA was able to identify proved difficult. In particular, aligning the demand for appropriate volunteering roles with the BRC requirements (e.g., timeframe, age, trainings) created a recruitment barrier. In response, the Ambassador role provides young people of school age with a flexible alternative for volunteering as activities can be carried out in out-of-school hours or in a more familiar setting.

The IA Ambassador position is a certified and official volunteering role that was created to provide young people interested in volunteering an opportunity to collaborate, and is a legacy of the IA project for the BRC. Ambassadors are given activity options that can be completed monthly over a six-month period as part of their volunteering assignment. Every month Ambassadors must provide IA with proof of their achievements through photos, films or short reports, and also through the Ambassador handbook, where young people register their activities.

3.4 Social Action Projects

IA encourage groups of young people to plan, develop and execute their own small-scale community projects, which they refer to as Social Action Projects (SAP). Successful proposals receive funds and support from IA and the regional IAEW. SAPs serve as an additional opportunity for young people to overcome the barriers to participation that exist in BRC formal recruitment processes, as mentioned previously.

The projects are selected by the Social Action Panel Team of five young people appointed by IA who meet through teleconference to feedback on SAP applications. Although the Panel Team has faced difficulties in meeting regularly, they are always involved in reviewing SAP applications.

Social Action volunteers have access to the CLAN training and benefit from project management training. IA also plans to connect volunteers with external mentors. However, this component has not been implemented, as Social Action volunteers receive direct support from their regional IAEW and other partners.

3.5 Disability Equality Training

Disability Equality Training is a major activity deployed by IA project to achieve its goals. The Whizz-Kidz partnership is key to this activity, as the organisation was involved in developing materials and delivering trainings with BRC staff. BRC staff training is a four-hour session focused on supporting disabled volunteers at the organisation. This element of the collaboration between Whizz-Kidz and IA has been considered successful by both partners. Disability awareness sessions are included in induction workshops, and a specific two-hour session on the topic is delivered for IA volunteers by IAEW. Workshops and IA volunteers' sessions are centred in reducing stigma and celebrating diversity.

3.6 Learning Events

Every year in November, IA invites its volunteers to share their experiences in a learning event, where they meet and learn about social action projects, and participate in different workshops about volunteering and disability awareness. Young volunteers are involved in co-facilitating activities related to different volunteering themes and their experience with IA. Staff and other partners are also invited to share their experiences in working with young disabled and non-disabled people. Young volunteers are also invited to attend BRC local forums and are informed about national and international opportunities to participate in other BRC-promoted events.

3.7 Monitoring and Evaluation

Because the project started in 2014, it incorporated Spirit's M&E framework in 2015.

The monitoring tools used to follow-up on the achievements of the young volunteers were adapted as the project progressed. The initial plan was to survey volunteers about their confidence, leadership, communication, professional and personal skills, as well as their understanding and appreciation of issues faced by young disabled people. An online survey was deployed but was not effective as few participants actually registered their feedback following the workshops. In response, data is now collected through paper surveys and collated manually by the project staff. IA plans to follow-up more closely with volunteers to ensure that they answer the final survey before leaving their volunteering positions, and turnout is increasing slowly.

Initial qualitative data collection methods included volunteer, ambassador and social action handbooks, designed to help participant track their achievements. However, this method was revisited when IA learned that many participants did not use the handbooks as intended, rendering the method ineffective. To track achievements, IA volunteers gain the BRC Recognise, Empower and Develop (RED) accreditation during their placement, and they also receive the BRC volunteering certificate if they complete all mandatory training sessions. The RED accreditation has been useful for the IA project because it allows to track achievements of each volunteer through an official BRC certification system. It is currently the main qualitative data collection tool used by the project.

Evaluative information is also collected through focus groups with young volunteers, open questions on feedback forms, reports on learning events, short case studies and internal evaluation reports, which provides a substantial amount of qualitative data.

4. Outcomes




The outcomes presented here refer explicitly to the achievements of IA in Scotland. Although the context for the intervention is specific to this country the outcomes provide important insights about IA throughout UK. The case study discusses IA's contributions to the different elements of Spirit's 'Theory of Change'⁷ and its overall input under each of the four thematic areas. The **outcome pathway** for each thematic area is presented **at the beginning of each section**. The **outcome boxes marked in green** represent areas where the project is actively contributing to.

4.1 Engaging Volunteers

Engaging volunteers is a central element of the IA project. Figure 1 shows the outcomes pathway for this specific thematic area. The project is contributing, with different levels of success, to all of the outcomes in this area.

The Inspiration workshops contribute by communicating the value of volunteering and promote the high quality volunteering opportunities. At this point, 24 months since the start of the project, **45 per cent (2,263)**⁸ of the UK target number of Inspiration Workshops participants have been reached. Twelve months remain for the project to reach its final target of 5,000 young people taking part in the Inspiration workshops across the UK.

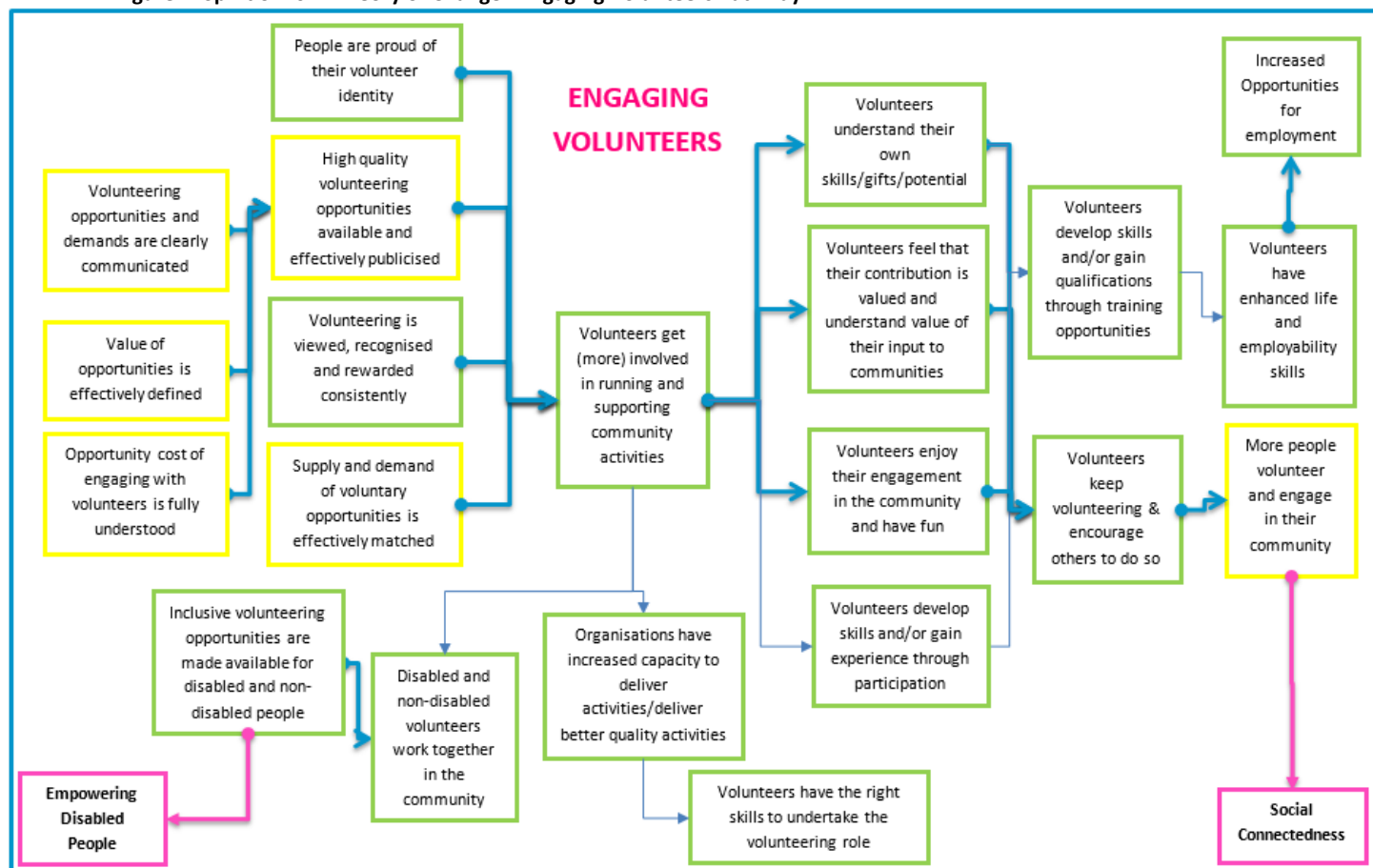
Three main challenges and their respective mitigation responses were identified in terms of the Inspirational Workshops:

-  **Project set-up:** this took longer than expected, and the project required a formal start-date extension in order to measure progress against the initial 36-month targets
-  **Reaching young people:** the project team focused on developing the ideal strategy to reach young people across the UK. The work with schools and local community activities has proven to be the most effective for the project
-  **Reviewing the Whizz-Kidz partnership:** the project team saw the need review the partnership with Whizz-Kidz to ensure IA could make better use of the partner's network of youth clubs and increase awareness about the project.

⁷ IA received the Spirit M&E framework in early 2015 and have been trying to adapt it in the best possible way since, but the quality of the data collected against the Spirit indicators was inevitably affected. This data will be used as a reference, but is not the case study main source of information for the outcome analysis.

⁸ Monitoring Data provided by Spirit, March 2016

Figure 2: Spirit of 2012 Theory of Change - Engaging Volunteers Pathway



The target for young people reached through Inspirational Workshops in Scotland is 20 per cent of the UK target of 5,000-person, a total of 1,000 young people is expected to be reached. So far only 17 per cent (172) of this target has been achieved⁹. The gap in recruitment and the difficulty in reaching remote areas of the country affected the project's ability to reach the target for the region.

Another challenge identified in Scotland refers to promotion of IA amidst BRC service managers and recruitment staff. According to the findings, BRC service managers and recruitment staff often act as gatekeepers to volunteering opportunities, deciding whether or not to take a young or disabled volunteer. If recruiters never worked with disabled or young people before there could be some resistance in trying it for the first time.

The project is advertised internally to BRC staff several times throughout the year, including Disability Equality Training during annual National Assembly for staff and volunteers, and at managers' meetings and service groups. High-level internal staff are also targeted for involvement with the project as members of the IA steering group. A clearer message about the what type of support is needed to recruit and maintain young and disabled volunteers, and what is available through IA, together with more information on the success stories, could help motivate BRC staff responsible for recruitment in Scotland

⁹ As reported by the grantee, July 2016

“it is not up to us to take volunteers on, all we can do is support them through the volunteering process, but what you need then is for service managers and coordinators to be linked up with IA better than they have been. I think that tight-up could certainly have been better and it didn't help the fact that we went into a restructuring process” - Inspired Action Staff.

To overcome these challenges, the project is trying to increase their work with IA Ambassadors, which provides more flexibility to the volunteering experience, as mentioned previously.

IA addressed recruitment issues (supply and demand of volunteering opportunities), but the number of volunteers is still below the expected number for this point in the project. Currently, 62 per cent (623) of the total target of 1,000 volunteers recruited have been reached. The number of volunteers recruited in Scotland to date is 59, 29 per cent of the target for the region (200 volunteers)¹⁰.

Transportation in Scotland is a major issue influencing the ease of volunteer recruitment, especially in areas such as the islands. Many young volunteers don't have a driving license or a car to reach trainings or events where they would be working, which meant that service managers are not eager to take them as volunteers. The IAEW worked on transport and accommodation solutions to ensure that young people willing to volunteer could do so safely. For this reason, the budget was to include additional expenses for travel and accommodation which were not considered initially. This budgetary shift represents part of the learning process in implementation.

While IA is facing important challenges in regards to recruitment, the data shows that once volunteers are placed IA provides them with necessary level of support.

It is clear through this evaluation that IA volunteers demonstrate pride in their identity and feel valued by the organisation. These findings were visible through the positive ways in which they spoke about the support they received, as well as their engagement with the project during the training. The learning events offer volunteers the chance to celebrate their achievements together and to share their experiences with stakeholders and partners. IA volunteers offer continuous support to their communities through their first-aid training, which is a skill that they gain through volunteering, and other services provided by BRC.

The volunteers that were interviewed for this case study agreed that the exclusive training sessions provided by IA to its volunteers were central for developing their skills, especially the Confidence, Leadership, Assertiveness and Negotiation.

The monitoring tools in place, especially the RED accreditation, were important mechanisms that supported volunteers in recognising their skills as well as to track self-improvement and document new skills. Being able to review personal targets and goals throughout the volunteering placement was consistently mentioned as a positive aspect of IA. Therefore, The RED accreditation is a good practice in ensuring volunteers are prepared to document soft skill mastery to future employers, such as leadership and communication.

The evaluator identified four cases of volunteers transitioning from volunteering to employment in other organisations or using the volunteering placement to get tangible work experience in

¹⁰ As reported by the grantee, July 2016

Scotland. Additionally, two current Scottish IA volunteers reported their willingness to talk to other young people about the benefits of volunteering. One of them is already doing so through Whizz-Kidz clubs, and the other is working with the IAEW in Scotland on how best to share his/her experience with other young people.

4.2 Empowering Young People

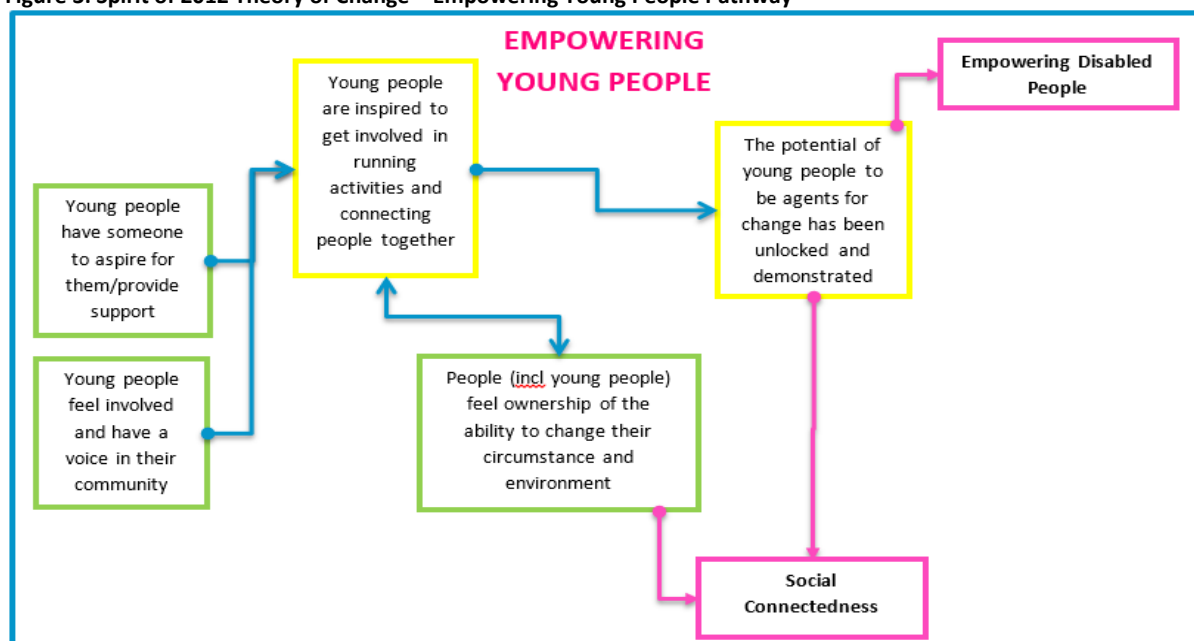
The project's rationale to empower young people goes hand-in-hand with Spirit's Theory of Change. The findings show that the project is contributing to all five outcomes in this area.

In Scotland, both volunteers and support managers reported the IAEW plays a key role in supporting young disabled and non-disabled people to overcome barriers to participation and ensures they have the best possible conditions to develop their volunteer roles. Volunteers also said that the IAEW is available to support them at any stage of their placement, helping mediate issues with service managers or other practical aspects related to the BRC internal processes. This additional support differentiated IA, increasing engagement with young people who would otherwise not have access to volunteering opportunities. The IAEW also supports service managers in integrating new members to their teams and offers advice on how to match the volunteers' skills and interests with appropriate roles.

Guaranteeing that volunteers there are exposed to various placement options and are positioned to make informed decisions about their volunteering role is a important feature of the project implementation strategy. One of the volunteers interviewed shared her views of the project in this aspect:

"In IA you are very much included in everything, you are very much given all the different options and choices. It is very individual and tailored to you. It is also very good because you are able to see the progression you have gone over a period of time, and there's a sense that you achieved something at the end of it. And a lot of time you feel a lot more confident of your value as a young person, as part of IA your opinions are valued as a young person" – Inspired Action Volunteer.

Figure 3: Spirit of 2012 Theory of Change – Empowering Young People Pathway



Both disabled and non-disabled volunteers receive tailored support from the IAEW and are offered a variety of options to develop their volunteering experience (e.g., Ambassadors role, Social Action projects, regular volunteering). This approach ensures IAEW staff support will be useful and reliable, which empowers young people to make decisions about their individual volunteering roles with more confidence.

“What I see most through this project is ensuring young persons are part of the process now, whether disabled or non-disabled. We are looking at their skills, we're looking at what they want to do, we are considering their options and allowing them to get involved in the whole decision making process, which would not necessarily would be allowed previously” – Inspired Action Staff.

Based on several interviews, volunteers feel confident over their ability to change their environment and circumstances. They reported, for example, feeling comfortable speaking to their supervisors about issues arising in their volunteering placements and performing tasks they were not used to, such as delivering training sessions or making presentations for large audiences.

The evaluation data cannot confirm that IA is unlocking young people's potential as agents of change in their communities. Although data is being collected on this outcome, and there are promising anecdotal cases, stronger evidence would be necessary.

SAPs are a concrete example of how IA gets more volunteers involved in launching community service activities. The activity has already achieved its target for number of participants involved



Young people take charge of the registration of participants at the learning event (November 2015)

in SAPs (139 participants from a target of 120, in 13 different projects) and continues to promote them. It is important to acknowledge that no SAPs has yet been conducted in Scotland. Service managers explained that it has been difficult to find the right environment to promote the SAPs, as the projects have to be supervised by a teacher or another responsible adult. IA is currently looking for the right places and people to be involved in order to ensure the SAP will be successful in Scotland.

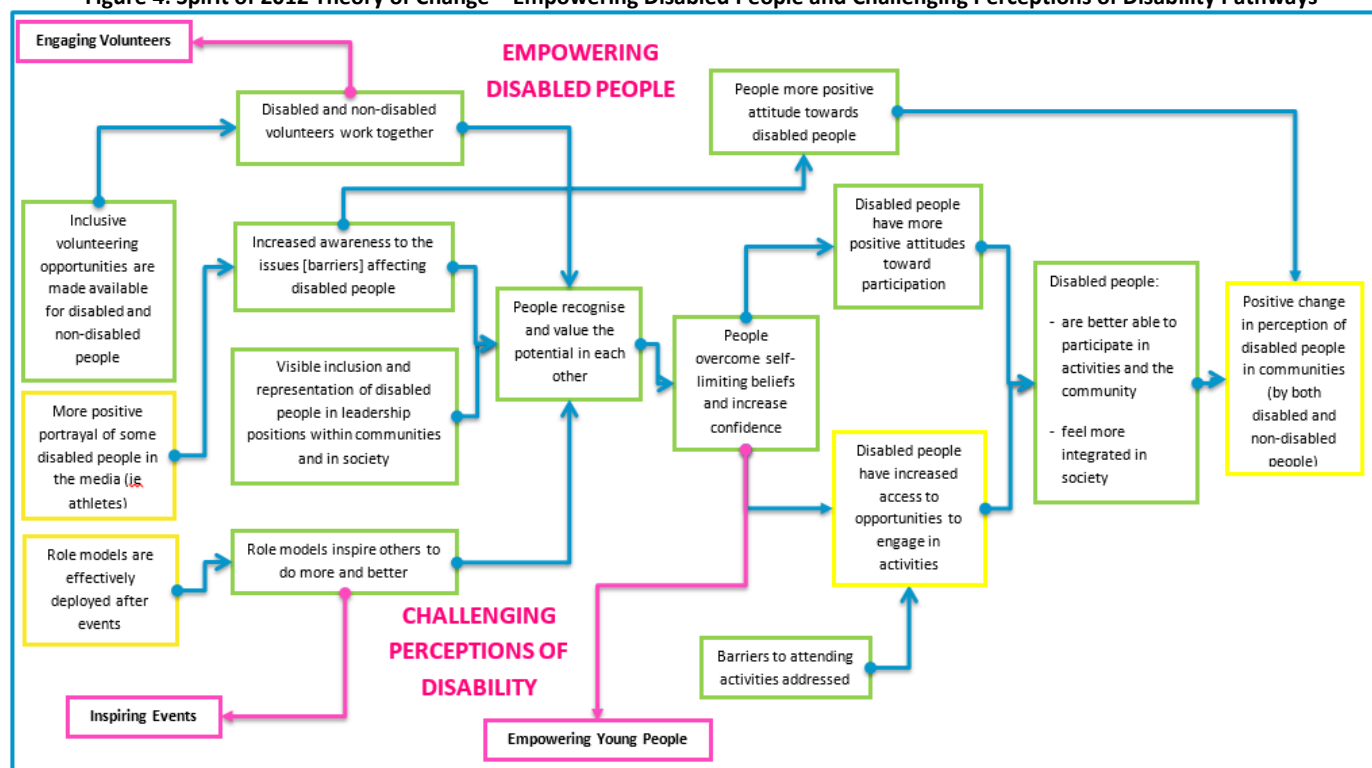
Ewan's Story

Ewan (22) is a young disabled person who lives near a big city in Scotland. He is a wheelchair user and has been participating in Whizz-Kidz clubs as a volunteer for a while. Last year, Whizz-Kidz informed Ewan about a volunteering opportunity in the BRC team in Edinburgh. He was keen to take it, as he saw that working with young people could contribute to his plans to become a teacher. However, Ewan was not used to using public transport by himself, and found that making travel arrangements difficult. After discussing the issue with the Whizz-Kidz supervisor, he decided to speak with the Inspired Action Engagement Worker for the region. During their conversation, they discussed what IAEW could do to help Ewan overcome the transportation challenge and what Ewan's contributions could be as a BRC volunteer. That talk left Ewan feeling more confident about what to expect from the placement and the activities he would carry out as a volunteer. With support from the BRC team, Ewan was able to arrange transportation, and as a result, gained confidence about using public transport in general.

After almost one year as an Inspired Action volunteer, Ewan was thriving in his position. Although he was already a proactive young person, Ewan's supervisors at BRC and Whizz-Kidz say that now he is feeling more confident to talk in public, which is essential for a teacher. He delivered a training in one of the Whizz-Kidz clubs, and consistently supports the IAEW in Scotland to deliver Confidence, Leadership, Assertiveness and Negotiation (CLAN) trainings and Disability Awareness sessions for other young volunteers. He says Inspired Action is fun and rewarding, and that volunteering with IA has enabled him to accomplish his goals at his own pace, respecting his rhythm and wishes. Ewan is now training to become a professional teacher, which his supervisors believe is largely linked to his experience with IA. It is clear that Inspired Action played an integral part in empowering Ewan to pursue his dream by fostering his self-confidence and providing the opportunity to harness important life skills.

4.3 Disability

Figure 4: Spirit of 2012 Theory of Change – Empowering Disabled People and Challenging Perceptions of Disability Pathways



Empowering young disabled people and challenging perceptions of disability is another central aspect of the IA project, and it involves both volunteers, partners and BRC.

IA provides disabled young people with increased access to volunteering opportunities, although not at the expected pace. According to the data analysed, 54 per cent (27) of the 50 disabled volunteers expected were reached. Scotland has reached half (5) of its target of 10 young disabled volunteers¹¹. Although the numbers for Scotland are not high, reaching those volunteers was considered very significant by the IA team, as previously there were no young disabled volunteers working in the region. Whizz-Kidz reinforced this affirmation in the interview, mentioning that there are very few possibilities provided in Scotland for young disabled volunteers to meaningfully learn or work in able-bodied environments where they might significantly contribute to that organisation.

IA young disabled volunteers are seen as role models in their communities according Whizz-Kidz the BRC staff and the IA Managers interviewed. In Scotland, one volunteer is working as an informal IA ambassador by talking to other young disabled people about the experience of volunteering in a non-specialist organisation. Other young disabled volunteers have been placed in leadership positions during various learning events which reinforces IA's contribution to challenging negative perceptions of disability.

The training sessions on Disability Equality were developed and provided in partnership with Whizz-Kidz are contributing to increased awareness to the issues affecting disabled people in society and, in particular, in the workplace. Currently this is the only training of its kind in the BRC. To date, 27 training sessions have been delivered, three of which took place in Scotland.

¹¹ As reported by the grantee, July 2016

The evidence provided to support an assertion of increased overall awareness is not extensive, as the post-training surveys only cover a small sample of participants. However, the available findings are positive. According to the feedback data, 95 per cent of training session participants felt more confident in their understanding of the challenges disabled people face as a result of the training. Specifically, these trainings are designed to ensure BRC staff is capable of working with young disabled people. According to the feedback results, 89 per cent of participants felt more confident about their abilities to work with and enable young disabled people to volunteer with British Red Cross following the training.

Disability Equality training, and practical examples about the benefits of having a young disabled or non-disabled person in a volunteering role, were mentioned by some interviewees as a potential tool to reduce service managers' resistance in taking on disabled young volunteers. These facets could also contribute to organisational change:

"It would be good to have all staff involved in disability awareness session so they could understand what it possible to do and to treat the individual like a person and see beyond the chair, don't make assumptions and be inclusive" – Inspired Action Volunteer.

Observations gathered from the Disability Awareness session cemented the assumption that that young non-disabled IA volunteers had a positive attitude towards their disabled colleagues. They interacted without patronising each other and the activities promoted an environment where no differentiation was imposed between disabled and non-disabled participants. Volunteers reported that having the session on disability helped them in seeing things in a different way.



Inspirational Workshop in Scotland

All interviewees in Scotland stated that IA played a role in helping them to recognise young disabled volunteers' potential. One young disabled volunteer explained that participating in IA programming directly increased his confidence and helped him to overcome self-limiting beliefs about volunteering. That belief was reportedly mostly related to the lack of visibility of disabled people as volunteers in other non-specialist organisations.

Another interesting issue relates to the challenge of working in 'able-bodied environments', which were referred to as "non-specialist organisations":

"We feel that young people are beneficiaries of an organisation's help, and they come to be volunteers within that organisation. In that experience they have an environment and





professionals who are adapted for them. Coming to a non-specialist organisation could be quite scary, so as much as we try to deconstruct stereotypes of disabled people, we realised there's some work to be done with disabled groups to talk about their perception of abled-body people. They are getting more involved in working together and hopefully both sides will change their perceptions" - Inspired Action Staff.

The volunteers and partners interviewed said that IA experience is a positive transition for both the partner and the young disabled volunteers participating. Volunteers mentioned feeling safe in an able-bodied environment and getting to work at their own rhythm as essential elements for this experience to be positive. The partner affirmed that the volunteering experience was meaningful and represented a real contribution to the community, which was reflected in the young volunteers' confidence and leadership skills.

As a result of the positive experiences of integration, young disabled volunteers interviewed and focus group participants reported that they felt more confident to try new activities. From learning how to book travel and make arrangements for their own transport needs, to gaining the confidence to conduct a workshop and deliver it to different audiences, disabled and non-disabled volunteers gave many examples of how IA is contributing for their social integration. It is clear that the project is contributing to positive changes in perceptions of disabled people in the community and within BRC, although data collected did not provide evidence to affirm this contribution will be sustainable once the project is over.

4.4 Wellbeing

Interviewees identified several ways IA is contributing to increased volunteer wellbeing. These include:

-  **Overcoming loneliness and isolation:** the extra layer of support provided to young people is important to make them engage and feel part of a group. Connecting young people from isolated regions, and young volunteers with their peers contributed to reduced loneliness, according to volunteers and BRC staff;
-  **Creating the right environment:** Disability Equality training and the partnership with Whizz-Kidz contributed to making young disabled volunteers feel welcomed. Young volunteers felt more comfortable in the workplace which contributed to bringing the BRC in Scotland team closer together;
-  **Providing the right conditions:** volunteers are given the necessary tools to feel confident about themselves and to learn new things;
-  **Setting goals:** volunteers were able to identify their goals and the barriers they might face in reach them in a paced manner, respecting their own individual rhythm.







Laurie Flexman from the IA steering group talks at the learning event about his experience volunteering with WK and BRC

All interviewees mentioned **increase in confidence** as a major achievement for IA volunteers. All volunteers mentioned the importance of the CLAN training and the RED accreditation in creating the right environment and providing them with the right conditions to develop their confidence and measure their progress through their volunteering placement.

“Before, like any young person, I did feel like I had to count on an older person to tell me what to do. I’ve never been in charge of anything. I’ve always been partially in charge and that [delivering a session during the learning event] taught me how to be in control and not be frightened” – Inspired Action Volunteer.

In addition to the RED accreditation, there is evidence to show that young volunteers’ confidence increased including:

-  Co-delivering CLAN and disability awareness trainings with the IAEW;
-  Delivering workshops and training sessions to young disabled people at other organisations;
-  Willingness to go out and talk to other young people about the benefits of volunteering;
-  Participating in the learning events and delivering sessions on their own.

Confidence, Leadership, Assertiveness and Negotiation Training

The evaluator observed that during the CLAN training young participants who were already more assertive and proactive were prompted to think about those skills and how they could make the best of them in their volunteering roles. Gradually through the day, the assertive volunteers started opening more space for other participants to speak during group activities, and were happy to pass on their roles as leaders to other people in the group whenever asked. At the same time, it was evident that the participants that were not as outspoken or confident at beginning of the training session found their own ways to express themselves and to exercise their leadership skills. Volunteers participating in the training session highlighted the value of balancing assertiveness with listening, communication and teamwork, and affirmed the training was important to develop personal confidence and leadership skills.

5. Conclusion

The findings discussed in this case study point to a positive contribution of IA to Spirit's goals in the areas in which the project works. Although challenges in recruitment are visible, once volunteers are placed in roles the overall results have been positive. The following good practices were identified:

Participatory approaches: results point to the importance of involving young volunteers in making decisions about what they wanted to do as volunteers and defining their own personal and professional learning goals. Volunteers reported value in recording how they evolved in their positions through the monitoring tools available and felt more confident in the skills they developed.

Confidence, Leadership, Assertiveness and Negotiation training: the CLAN training, together with the RED accreditation, is a major tool to ensure young disabled and non-disabled people are able to start building their confidence and leadership skills. The training is taught in an accessible language and is participant-focused.

Tailored Support: individualised support worked as a safety net for young volunteers to try new things and for service managers to learn more about disability. The IAEW worked in managing expectations (of staff and volunteers), adapting job descriptions and creating the right environment for volunteers to thrive, offering young people the best possible opportunities to develop professionally and personally.

Learning events: provided an important opportunity for IA to gather young volunteers where staff could collectively receive volunteer feedback and how to improve. It is also an empowering moment for those young people who are invited to share their experiences with stakeholders and other young people.

Young disabled and non-disabled volunteers as role models: young volunteers acted as role models for other young people and engaged others in volunteering. Sharing their experiences as volunteers, including the challenges and the benefits, is key to motivate other young people to volunteer.

Volunteering in non-specialist organisations: it can be challenging for young disabled people to volunteer in able-bodied environments, but there is an added value when the volunteering experience is in the right environment and can boost the young person's confidence.

Disability Equality and Awareness: IA and BRC are playing an important role in contributing to the public conversation about inclusivity through IA activities and training sessions.

IA is working closely with BRC Diversity Team, Youth Engagement and Diversity managers and other departments in the organisation. The project was included in the Youth Leadership Team Manifesto, and the learning and experiences gathered in engaging young and young disabled volunteers were forwarded to the BRC corporate strategy for 'People and Learning' in 2015. Richard Glenholmes, one of the team's IAEWs, was invited to join Spirit Youth Advisory Board, which was an unexpected achievement of the project in regards to knowledge sharing and advocacy in the sector.

6. Recommendations

The recommendations presented here take into account that the project will finish by June 2017, meaning that major changes might not be productive or feasible at the moment. However, opportunities exist to concentrate on what has been working, to share the lessons learned and to guarantee sustainability of the outcomes.

Effectiveness and Impacts

Share Success Stories: at this stage of implementation, the project could benefit from concentrating on promoting success stories to engage managers and recruiters in the organisation. It could make service managers feel more motivated to take on young disabled and non-disabled volunteers if managers hear more about real examples of challenges that are overcome and the types of support IA provides.

Engaging with young people: requires the right set-up to engage with young people. Schools are a good place to start, but volunteering opportunities should be discussed at universities and in other spaces as well in order to reach more potential volunteers.

Effective partnerships: although the partnership with Whizz-Kidz was not as fruitful as expected in regards to recruitment, it was very positive in providing high-quality training to BRC staff. As the partnership appears positive for both organisations, IA should consider making the role of each partner in the project clearer to ensure mitigation strategies can be adopted rapidly when either partner feels that the partnership is not yielding ideal results.

Monitoring tools: data collected through the RED accreditation was useful for wellbeing and leadership but not provide enough information on other elements of the project such as inclusivity. Refining the strategy to conduct exit interviews and a significant number of participant surveys is a challenge the project has to address before June 2017 to improve the quality of monitoring data collected. IA could also consider measuring contributions to organisational change if the project continues its activities with BRC staff on disability.

Sustainability

Documenting and sharing lessons learned: BRC and Whizz-Kidz are currently developing a best practice guidance document to share learnings and tools on how to engage, involve and retain all young people in volunteering opportunities and social action projects. This guidance document will be delivered by the end of 2016. It is important that this document is shared with other organisations in the sector and consolidated within the BRC.

Disability training: there is no indication so far that BRC is willing to adopt Disability Equality as an internal, regular training. Considering that the training has demonstrated, positive results, the BRC, and specifically the Diversity Panel, should incorporate the disability-specific training as a regular training session, particularly for managers and recruiters.

Future evaluation: as not all the BRC regions decided to take on the project, a future impact evaluation could compare the number of disabled and young volunteers registered in those regions that did take on the project with those that did not to see the difference in inclusivity.

Appendix 1: List of Interviewees and References

List of Interviewees

Name	Role and Organisation	Date
Gaynor Smith	Inspired Action Coordinator, BRC	06/06
Sam Spalding	Inspired Action Engagement Worker in Scotland, BRC	07/06
Sharon Taylor	BRC Service Manager in Scotland	08/06
Heather Robertson	Whizz-Kidz Partner in Scotland	28/06
Natalie Bell	Inspired Action Volunteer and Whizz-Kidz Ambassador	14/06
Stuart Mitchell	Inspired Action Volunteer	06/07
Focus Group	7 Inspired Action Volunteers, 1 BRC intern, 2 Service Managers	28/05

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