

## NR5 Project, Norwich

### Innovative educational and arts facility expands with help from EEDA funding

#### Summary

An injection of capital from EEDA has helped to create a purpose-built base in Norwich for socially excluded young people. Housing a new community radio station and music-recording facilities, the NR5 centre opens up new opportunities for young people from deprived areas. By enabling them to gain skills, qualifications and confidence, NR5 helps them aspire to jobs and careers.

<b>County:</b>	Norfolk
<b>Programme:</b>	Economic Participation
<b>Date:</b>	February 2008

#### Main messages

- Community-based charity expands into new premises with EEDA funding through the Investing in Communities programme
- Increasing its ability to attract hard-to-reach young people and adults
- Encouraging users to make a positive contribution to the local economy
- Using creativity to increase aspirations, confidence, self-esteem and skills
- Giving a fresh chance to young people at risk of falling out of mainstream education
- Providing new, flexible accommodation and leveraging additional funding
- Re-engaging adults with further education.

#### Case study

##### Creating a focus for music and creativity

Taurean Black suspects his life would have taken a very different course if it had not been for the influence of the Norwich NR5 project, which has received capital funding through EEDA's Investing in Communities programme. As a 14-year-old he was in trouble at school for misbehaving and is "pretty certain" he would have ended up in prison if he had continued down his previous route.

Five years on, he makes music CDs which are on sale in the shops, has just had a music video shown on BSkyB and is now doing 'MC' work presenting his own music shows. He puts his turnaround down to NR5. "I started coming here from school. Coming here has pushed my music side forward and got me off the street. I've had something to wake up for instead of going out to make trouble. Now, young people are hearing my music and they know where it's based, so that brings more people in to NR5."

With the backing of EEDA, Taurean is a success story that the team at NR5 works hard to replicate – helping young people realise their potential as productive members of the local economy.

### **Learning skills for life and work**

NR5 is a community-based education, training and social inclusion project that works with the hardest-to-reach groups in some of the most deprived areas of Norwich, such as North Earlham, Larkman and Marlpit. By encouraging young people and adults to learn new skills – for everyday life and work, but also in the creative and media sectors – NR5 offers an important new model for engaging them with mainstream world of employment.

The project was set up in the late 1990s by two volunteers as a response to groups of young people congregating on the streets and committing anti-social behaviour. It became a registered charity in 2001 and moved into a converted 1930s semi-detached house. This had a school inclusion project in the front room, an IT suite in the dining room and administration offices in an upstairs bedroom. "It really wasn't fit for purpose," said Paula Sanchez, NR5's business development director. "We had 60-70 people a week and it was very, very busy."

EEDA became convinced of the scheme's value for helping socially excluded young people gain skills and confidence to enter the workforce. In summer 2006 it approved a capital funding package of £658,000 through its Investing in Communities programme to allow a purpose-built facility to be constructed. And it provided more than £20,000 in revenue to help the project recruit staff. In addition, EEDA's funding is helping to attract a further £460,000 in private investment and £267,000 in public sector investment.

The new building includes two recording and rehearsal studios where the project offers vocational music education for the over-16s as part of a community college provision. It is a base for the highly popular community-based Future Radio, and has four classrooms where pupils at risk of falling out of the mainstream educational system can take a two-year

alternative curriculum. This offers GCSE English, Science, Maths and Art, as well as other courses.

### **Young people learn radio skills**

Students are taught in small groups, and have access to intensive support. The project workers are available out of school hours and deal with both social and educational problems.

It is the bias towards creative arts, together with the presence of Future Radio, that is a major draw for many young people and adults and their families. Younger children tend to follow their older siblings who impart the skills they have learned to the newcomers, thus putting something back into the project.

News of the success of people like Taurean Black also gets around the local community, acting as a further draw to young people who believe they, too, could have a future in the music industry. Future Radio is also contributing to NR5's prospects. Now an OFCOM-licensed community radio, it can sell advertising space on the airwaves to generate income, which it sees as a vital unrestricted revenue stream to ensure its sustainability.

An indicator of NR5's success is that it now has around 1,600 young people on its database, together with 21 full-time and part-time staff. A further 150 adult volunteers help with its community radio project.

### **Conclusion**

NR5 is proving itself an innovative and effective way of helping young people in Norwich to get off the street and learn across-the-board skills for life, as well as skills in the creative industries. With the backing of EEDA, and a new purpose-built facility, it should continue to go from strength to strength, benefiting both individuals and the region's economy.

### **Financial facts and figures**

- EEDA provided £658,000 in capital funding, plus £23,000 in revenue funding.
- EEDA's support is helping to attract a further £460,000 in private investment and £267,000 in public-sector investment.

### **Additional information**

- To learn more about NR5, please go to: [www.nr5project.co.uk](http://www.nr5project.co.uk)

## Extra quotes

**Dawn Jackson, director NR5**

“The radio is a huge project for this area. Everyone loves it.”

## About Investing in Communities (IiC)

The Investing in Communities fund is part of EEDA’s Economic Participation programme to improve employability and increase economic opportunities for individuals unable to participate in the region’s economy. EEDA sets the strategic priorities and objectives for the fund, and works with local decision-makers to identify local needs and direct funding into appropriate local solutions.

## Contact details

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