Community First Grants Database Description

Background

The Community First Neighbourhood Match Fund was an innovative small grants programme targeting deprived wards and getting local people involved in funding decisions and delivering projects. The £30m programme was managed by the Community Development Foundation (CDF) for Cabinet Office between April 2011 and March 2015. The programme was independently evaluated by IPSOS Mori and the New Economics Foundation through a combination of surveys of those involved, longitudinal cases studies within a small selection of communities and analysis of administrative data.

The evaluation found that distributing public money using panels of local people is a good model for small grant funding programmes. Nearly 600 communities (594) established panels, and these panels were able to attract bids for local projects in keeping with the needs of the local community. Importantly panels were able to attract matched funding in the delivery of actual projects. In total panels made £27.2 million in funding recommendations to 17,956 projects. This yielded £93 million in matched funding, including just over £15.3 million in cash match and over 5.5 million volunteering hours.

Database File

The database file provides a near complete extract of the database and provides details on 17,176 of the projects covering £25.9m of expenditure, £90.6m matched funding and 5.3m volunteering hours – the vast majority of the projects completed during the programme.

Details such as grant amount, organisation name and project start/ end dates are provided. We have attached Office for National Statistics location (ward) identifiers which can be used to map the projects. Details of funding matches and volunteer hours are included also.

We have not provided full descriptions of each project because in some cases they included slightly sensitive information like personal names. Instead we have used text processing software to extract important descriptive 'key words' within each project description[1] – which provides enough information to get a sense of the project and to support further text analysis, text association or clustering into different types of project.

A table describing each variable in the database follows. The data base is in .csv format but can be converted other formats on request.

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[1] We used the TM package in R to process each project description: removing punctuation, numbers, converting to lower case, removing 'stop words' (common English words we are not interested in). Importantly we have also removed sparse words which appear in less than 1% of project descriptions.

Description of Fields (Columns) in Database

Field (column) Name	Description
No	A unique number for each project. The database is sorted by this number. It is an integer ranging from 1 to 17,176.
Organisation Name	The name of the organisation which delivered the project. This is a text field. Some of the names are included in quotes. Some of the organisations delivered more than one project and therefore have multiple entries in the database.
Project Title	The title of the project. This is a text field. Some of the projects were delivered in multiple areas or across different years and therefore have multiple entries in the database. Some projects were not named and the field is blank.
Key Words from Project Description	This is a text field which is derived from the project description provided by the delivery organisation. We have processed each project description: removing punctuation, numbers, converting to lower case, removing 'stop words' (common English words we are not interested in). We have also removed sparse words which appear in less than 1% of project descriptions.
Panel	This is a name assigned to the neighbourhood panel which made the grant allocation decision. The name is derived from the local authority name and ward within which the panel operated. A total of 594 panels are included in the database.
Project Start Date	Start date of the project.
Project End Date	End data of the project.
Paid Amount	Grant amount paid to support the project in £s.
Total Contributions	Total value of matched funding provided by the community in £s. This is the sum of the monetary value of volunteering hours provided, cash match and in-kind match (adjacent columns).
Volunteer Contributions (Hours)	The total number of hours that volunteers spent on the project.
Volunteer Contributions Amount	The monetary value of volunteer hours in £s. This has been calculated as the product of minimum wage, valued at £11.09 per hour, and the total volunteer hours.
Cash Contributions	Matched funding provided in cash, £s.
In Kind Contributions	Value of matched funding provided as in-kind, £s. In kind funding might include – use of equipment, facilities, provision of food to support an event etc.
Population Served	During the course of the programme new projects were asked to define who the main population served by the project would be. These include: Children, Parents & Families, Minority Ethnic Groups, Older People, People on low incomes, People with Disabilities/Learning Difficulties, The Whole Community, Young People and 'Other'. Around 9,640 projects have been coded. For the remaining projects this field is left blank.
Grant Fiscal Year	The fiscal year in which the grant was paid. Fiscal years run from April to March. This field contains the fiscal year of the programme from 2011 to 2015 inclusive.

Field (column) Name	Description
Number Of Payments	The number of payments made to the project.
WD11CD	The 2011 official statistics code for the ward within which the project ran. This can be used to add the data to maps.
WD11NM	The 2011 official statistics name for the ward within which the project ran.
LAD11CD	The 2011 official statistics code for the local authority district within which the project ran. This can be used to add the data to maps.
LAD11NM	The 2011 official statistics name for the local authority district within which the project ran.