

Name of your organisation	Free to Be Kids
Date of TFN event which you pitched at	01/05/2024
Name of the project TFN funded	Funding for our New Volunteer Coordinator
Were you able to undertake your project as you outlined in the application?	Yes
Can you describe and/or demonstrate the specific impact that TFN funding has had against your initial objectives?	<p>The support from TFN towards the new Volunteer Coordinator role has been a crucial investment in our organisation and a key component in reaching our strategic goal of doubling place numbers over the next 5 years. Since Covid we've been overwhelmed with demand for places for children affected by domestic violence and mental health challenges to get out of London, access nature, and rebuild the foundations of damaged mental health.</p> <p>Doubling staffing in our volunteer team within 2024 has been the first vital step on this journey, as this means doubling the number of volunteers for our projects for vulnerable children.</p> <p>We are already supporting c.250 children per year on our projects and the new hire has massively relieved some of the pressure on the sole volunteer coordinator, who was managing around 300 volunteers throughout last year.</p>
What portion of the project did TFN fund?	33%
How many direct beneficiaries did the TFN funded project reach?	250
How many indirect beneficiaries did the TFN funded project reach?	1,000
Were you able to leverage further funding as a result of TFN support?	No
If yes, how much were you able to raise and from whom?	-
Did you receive any pro-bono support, volunteer offers or introductions as a result of the event?	No
If yes, please can you provide details of the support you received?	-
How important was TFN funding in helping you achieve your objectives?	We would have found it difficult to achieve our objectives without TFN funding
Has the training you received from TFN better prepared you in pitching your organisation to potential funders?	Yes
Has TFN increased your capacity to raise further funds?	Yes

<p>Can you tell us any personal stories to highlight the value of the project?</p>	<p>Kaia, aged only 11, had a very difficult start in life. She grew up in deep poverty with neither a safe space to play or to express herself. Kaia's mother was subject to domestic violence, with Kaia repeatedly watching as her father hit, punched and assaulted her. Kaia was only 5. Now they have found refuge, Kaia has started to process some of the trauma she experienced but this has increased her levels of anxiety and stress as she is now old enough to understand what she saw. She struggles to trust or connect with others and doesn't talk about how she's feeling because she feels like she is burdening people. She has recently started being bullied, feels alone, and has very few, if any, friends. She no longer wants to attend school and has very low attendance. Recently, Kaia smashed a mirror and tried to cut herself with the shards because everything felt too much. She has been referred to CAMHS but after waiting 6 months is yet to even be assessed.</p> <p>Kaia began coming to our Thrive Outside projects last year. She had never left London before and marveled at the tall pine trees in the forest and the vastness of the sea and sand at the beach. Beyond a much-needed break from the turmoil at home, the projects proved especially powerful for Kaia because of the relationships we carefully helped her build with the other girls in her group. For the first time in a long time, Kaia felt lovable, and kind, that she belonged and was capable of having friends. The high adult ratios and careful support of our empathetic volunteers created a safe space for Kaia to express her individuality and she began to relax and smile away from the worries she faces every day in London. Her mum told us that since returning, she has been going to school more and even was brave enough to go and talk to a group of girls she has now become friends with.</p> <p>Kaia needs long-term love, care and support so we have offered her a place on our 2024 Journey Programme, which will give her more intensive support to find her voice and keep improving her confidence.</p>
<p>Since presenting at TFN, has your organisation undergone any other significant changes?</p>	<p>We have recently hired a new Youthworker to expand our targeted youthwork programme, the journey programme and our mentoring programme.</p>
<p>Do you have any other comments or feedback on the experience of the TFN process?</p>	<p>Nothing other than thank you!</p>