







Collaborative Activity Development

Sri Lankan Youth Association and Slough Mitra Mandal September 2021 - March 2022

Detail of the Activity.

This case study details the development and delivery of a 20 Week Badminton session developed in collaboration between the Sri Lankan Youth Association and Slough Mitra Mandal as a joint activation grant. It aims to support the new Sri Lankan community to join up with other community groups. Separate group sessions for males and females are being run to bring groups together through Badminton.

How Breaking Boundaries Helped.

Breaking Boundaries has supported the project through provision of a £1,200 Activation Grant to support 20 weeks of face to face delivery. IT has focused on developing partnership working between the two community groups, Sri Lankan Muslim Association and Slough Mitra Mandal, a Sri-Lankan group, and an Indian group respectively, who have been noted as living parallel lives in the Baylis and Stoke wards.

The activities focus on improving social connectedness through a session features an activity that both groups shared an interest in, Badminton, and Cricket for their children. It also focussed on putting the groups in shared space, doing the same activity and speaking with one another therefore setting the foundations for improved attitudes to diversity and cohesion.

The activity put the two groups together to be aware of each other's presence in the area and encouraged and facilitated them in collaborative efforts in increasing community participation and increasing community voice.

What's Happened – Impacts on Cohesion.

The ongoing project work demonstrates outcomes against social cohesion in these areas:

Improved attitudes to diversity

The facilitated social mixing encouraged in the project bringing the two previously disparate groups together has helped bring significant outcomes in terms of attitudes to diversity

"It is a great way to introduce people to each other and when there are any issues, helping them, it's a lifeline for people, so if they do have problems they know where to come." (Female, South Asian participant)

"I have really enjoyed seeing people come out of their shell, I'm used to doing other voluntary things, originally when it started off was there was lot of older people and quite a few of the ladies' health took a turn for the worst after lockdown so there's fewer people but I think there's a better mix of ages now. I enjoy being part of something and helping to make a difference, helping to organise things, I just enjoy it." (Female, Badminton participant, Slough)

A crucial part of this was developing and supporting both groups to collaborate for future events and sessions. This has been achieved by encouraging the group leads to work together which was easier as they meet every Sunday to play Badminton in the same space as this representative from one of the project partners identifies:

"Because I get to meet different people from different backgrounds and cultures and although I know quite a lot about that anyway it's just nice to learn something new every single day and learn different ways of communicating, handling situations, just generally widening my knowledge on how to handle certain situations and having the ability to work with a lot of other different people of different cultures, attitudes and behaviours."

The Future.

The Coordinator worked hard with the groups to make sure the activities could continue and they have also had detailed conversations about charging for the sessions so that it can be supported in the longer term.

- Building on existing activities and refining them to include a greater focus on cohesion maybe a better approach than constantly creating new activities.
- ✓ Working out in the community helps build trust with community groups and supported linking different organisations together









Empowering Women's Participation

The Ujala Foundation July 2022

Detail of the Activity.

This case study illustrates learning from approaches

Developed through Breaking Boundaries to bring to previously disparate groups of Women of South Asian origin through a range of activities. There are also strong co-production elements of delivery that can also be learnt from.

How Breaking Boundaries Helped.

Breaking Boundaries funding has enabled the group to continue post-pandemic. Within this, the funding has helped the group to secure a wide range of materials, e.g. sewing machines and art supplies, and recruit a fitness instructor to offer the women heavily subsidised exercise classes (£1 per person per session).

The activities focussed on:

The Ujala Foundation has delivered the group with a wide range of local partners including local artists, chemists, doctors who discussed cancer screening and the local police. Activities delivered through the coffee morning have and will continue to be decided based on participant preferences and they shape the programme of delivery.

What's Happened – Impacts on Cohesion.

The ongoing project work demonstrates outcomes against social cohesion in these areas:

Improved social connectedness and attitudes to diversity

Women who attend the group described the sessions as helping them with social isolation and loneliness, and bringing them in contact with other women they wouldn't have otherwise engaged with. The Ladies Coffee morning was understandably suspended during the Covid-19 lockdowns but now many participants have returned alongside new members.

The group is also run by a woman of White British ethnic origin improving social connectedness between these usually disparate groups in Slough. One woman highlighted,

"I've been coming for a year. I didn't know anyone but now I look forward to coming and seeing everyone on a Tuesday. I am really isolated except for when I come here."

The group was also described by members as helping to bring together women from different communities and cultures:

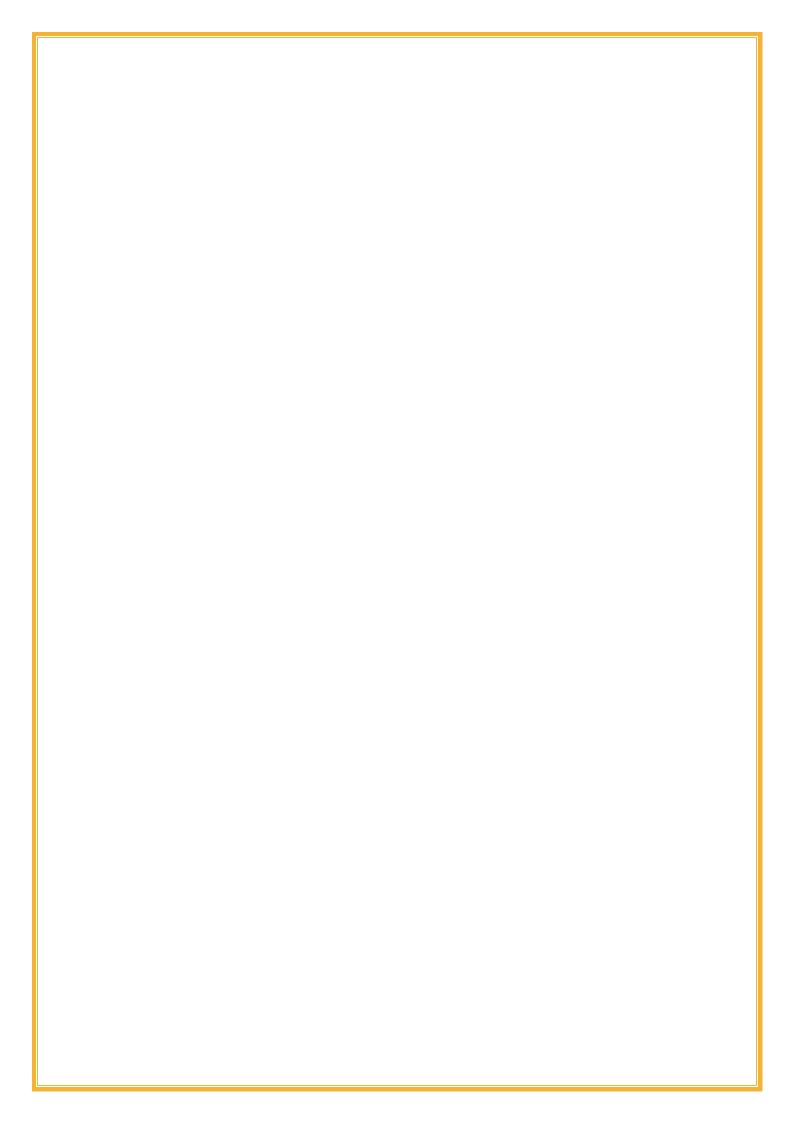
"We're all women, we all have problems and quite a few have health problems. It's taken time but now we've come together as a group, all different ethnicities and religions."

With respect to their position next to the mosque and members of the coffee morning, the sessions were also suspended during Ramadan to ensure that members did not feel pressured to attend the coffee morning during that time. This reflects better understanding of the needs of different groups and helps foster improved relations with the mosque for the future.

The Future.

Looking forward, the group is set to continue, bringing in a range of partners and offering new activities such as a walking club to ensure that members stay active. Having moved out of the area, one member of the group is also planning to start a new coffee morning in their new local ward in Slough. This, they hope, will ensure that women across Slough have to opportunity to connect with others, participate in physical activity and actively participate in their local area.

- Seeking out existing activities to enhance them to have a new focus on cohesion issues. Using an existing project and supporting it to focus on cohesion through existing social elements combined with additional facilitated physical activity sessions can be a good way to deliver these types of activities. This avoids the need to find new settings and the set up and marketing needed for newly created activities.
- Supporting active social mixing in an informal group setting enables a sense of belonging and confidence to be developed relatively easily. New physical activity opportunities can help foster this as all participants are at a similar level and can learn the new activity together further fostering social mixing opportunities.











Intergenerational cohesion

Wexham Bowls Club and Paving the Way/Sri Lankan Muslim Association January - May 2022

Detail of the Activity.

This case study looks at how by challenging attitudes and perceptions towards a particular group associated with a Bowls Club has shaped the engagement with that club by young people and undermined connection between them.

How Breaking Boundaries Helped.

Following unsuccessful approaches in early 2022 to Wexham Bowls Club a site visit finally bore fruit as Breaking Boundaries staff sought non-traditional activity opportunities to engage young people in different forms of physical activity. The engagement also sought to identify ways in which visits by the White British participants could be organised to other faith settings including a mosque. Once agreed that targeted community groups would visit a £600 grant helped set up the activity.

The activity was focussed on inviting two very different community groups and those they worked with to the Bowls Club so that these disparate groups could be brought together through sport whilst also encouraging participants to engage in a more intergenerational way.

What's Happened – Impacts on Cohesion.

The ongoing project work demonstrates outcomes against social cohesion in these areas:

Improved attitudes to diversity and community participation.

By bringing these groups together attitudes and perceptions about the competitiveness of the game and those it involves were challenged. As a result, it changed the sense the young people had of where they could go to participate in their community. Previously the area occupied by the Bowls Club was viewed entirely as an area to be passed through to get to shops or other activities. Now the young people view the location differently and see it as something where they can be made to feel welcome and engage with older people who are just as competitive as them. The welcome that the young people received at the club surprised them.

"I think one of the things that really showed is that these things don't happen that often but they really are worth it for the community, to get people from different backgrounds and communities involved." (Male, White British)

The Future.

Initial discussions prior to programme closure had been focussed on further activation grant funding. The Bowls Club remains keen to be involved in similar activities in the future given the positive experience it members had of the visits and the Bowls that was played on the day

- Persistence in engaging is key. Site visits are also important to establish initial rapport and share ideas about what could be possible through delivery.
- Clarity on the benefits for sports club of participation need to be clear up front. Community clubs need to be told how projects and programmes can benefit their service users. Too much focus on starting delivery before taking adequate time to understand the link between a programme offer and the community needs it is seeking to address helps ensure full engagement by the potential partner.









New Skills and Working Practices for Cohesion Delivery

Slough Council September 2022

Detail of the Activity.

This case study provides insight into how Breaking Boundaries has facilitated changed working approaches in Slough for staff involved in the programme and their engagement with others enabling a more focussed approach on cohesion in the local authority and its partners.

How Breaking Boundaries Helped.

The impetus provided by the programme facilitated new connections to be made across the local authority between different teams encouraging them to connect. This was because Breaking Boundaries offered a vehicle through which the developing cohesion strategy could be delivered:

"It was an opportunity, we were in a position where we were developing a cohesion strategy so the project fitted nicely in with the direction of the local authority...[on cohesion]. We were also a frontline team working with communities and neighbourhoods and this fitted really well into our workstreams. We were really excited about using sport in community cohesion." (Community Coordinator, Slough)

In 2018, conversations facilitated by development of the programme enabled the Breaking Boundaries project to start working with the Youth Offending Team (YOT). These discussions focussed on how the young people working with the team could be more involved in shaping the physical activity offer in the local authority area.

Over two years, relationships were developed through conversations around local cohesion issues and work with the young people facilitated through over 100 volunteer hours from members of the Youth-Led Change Team who led the design of several exercise programmes.

The activities focussed on:

Slough had success through the work of the Coordinator and Activator to develop new partnerships at first between the local authority (as host for the programme) and project partners, but then across the local authority to join groups together. Although having a focus on cohesion through the local Cohesion team, there had always been challenges in developing concerted focussed action around it. This was particularly the case between the sports/health and cohesion teams in the local authority.

The developments and partnership working led by the Youth-Led Change Team created a seated exercise offer, an older people exercise tour and a teenage Sport and Financial literacy offer. Alongside this, some young people also volunteered to support a Disability Multi-Sports offer and a Polybat offer.

Fundamentally, the programme has encouraged Breaking Boundaries staff to think differently about their working approach and the types of partners they work with. They have been enabled to look outside contacts into other fields that are not normally linked to physical activity but do have an interest and role in developing and improving community cohesion.

"The more we spoke to communities, the more we were able to shape the programme. We also changed significantly...[in our working approach]. We moved in a completely different direction in the way the council operated. That supported some of the engagement in BB and communicating with residents...[to collect intelligence about the local cohesion issues they were facing]" (Community Coordinator, Slough)

What's Happened – Impacts on Cohesion.

The ongoing project work demonstrates outcomes against social cohesion in these areas:

Increased community participation and sense of belonging

The activities that have resulted from this work have been better targeted at groups because of the expertise the community partners bring to set up. This has been noted by participants who identified how they were more engaged in activities in their communities and had a sense of belonging to something bigger than their immediate friendship/peer groups:

"it was a nice way to get out with the community and have time out and meet new people." (Participant, Slough)

"I get to meet different people from different backgrounds and cultures and although I know quite a lot about that anyway it's just nice to learn something new every single day and learn different ways of communicating" (Participant, Slough)

Improved partnership working

The Community Co-ordinator is clear that the relationship that has been developed with the YOT is one of the best outcomes from the programme in Slough. They have overcome historically poor links with other teams across the local authority and built stronger links.

These have supported the development of a new activity offer that has supported work with key target communities including newly emerging groups like the Bangladeshi community; tackling distrust between different Asian groups and facilitating work with the Roma community. This has made it easier

Like other city areas, they note that the initial establishment of contact to start the partnership building process was best facilitated by the face-to-face contact encouraged by Breaking Boundaries. However, it also highlights the need to maintain regular contact with organisations over the long term (this work took over two years before it gained a proper foothold, as the project lead notes:

"We had some really good connectors and through the hard work and constant conversations and social media and attending things, it [Breaking Boundaries] meant more to people. Some of the relationships we have now with the groups we wouldn't have had to the extent we have them without BB. Our community engagement was shallow before and groups are a small part of that engagement tool. Now being invited to dinners and for coffee, it puts us in good stead. We work more with the groups now and they have a really good cohort we can engage." (Project Lead, Slough)

Improved knowledge and skills to support community cohesion

for the Community Coordinator the experience through Breaking Boundaries enabled them to have improved skills in engaging with different partners and those they work with to really understand why communities did and didn't get on with each other. This then highlighted key barriers to social connectedness and addressing the parallel lives in local areas:

"Internally and externally, we were able to connect with a wide range of diverse groups. We were able to provide a wide range of opportunities. It's the YOT in particular as it was such a hard thing to set up. We put people in a room who wouldn't have been there otherwise. Now it's a good partnership because we set up relationships with other people. The YOT lead, is [now] working with loads of our groups now" (Community Coordinator, Slough)

The Coordinator and Line Manager identified that they improved their understanding of the challenges their delivery partners faced and had built up over time. They highlighted how their working approach has changed and that they had better skills in engaging partners outside the sports sector.

The Future.

A new disability group has been established and work with the YOT continues and both are linked in with other community groups to facilitate further working. The capability of different partners has been extended to engage with others so they should have the ability to develop new partnerships independently in the future:

"They all have a little better understanding on how they open up their offer and some of their events are incredible and if they opened up a little more, there is more opportunity." (Project Lead, Slough)

- Persistence is key, such change can often take months and even years to establish, consistent messaging is also important so that understanding of programme focus is maintained.
- Proactive and ongoing engagement on a one-to-one basis keeps partners engaged. This helps to build programme understanding and maintains connection even whilst activity delivery may not be ongoing. It can also be an important source of local intelligence on emerging cohesion issues that can facilitate new project/delivery development.
- ✓ Use the expertise of community groups to identify engagement and recruitment approaches they have the trusted links that others may take much longer to establish.









Using Partners to Access Community Groups

Paving the Way April 2019

Detail of the Activity.

This case study outlines how local community groups can help support access to targeted groups and provide additional support for events and activities focussed on enhancing social cohesion.

How Breaking Boundaries Helped.

Paving the Way is a community Voluntary Group that has been established within Slough for over 20 years. The group is involved in a wide range of activities within Slough such as sporting activities, local events and have also worked with the Council to regenerate the local area. As part of Breaking Boundaries, Paving the Way has organised community cohesion events and grassroots cricket sessions in Slough.

The group's representative highlighted that, prior to Breaking Boundaries, Paving the Way had already been running sports-based activities and events but had at points found it difficult to negotiate with the council for support, e.g. in one instance they explained that they had tried to get cricket nets put up in the park with the support of the council but had struggled. Breaking Boundaries has addressed this for them and they are now much better linked in to the council.

Since participating in programme delivery for Breaking Boundaries, Paving the Way have established weekly grassroots cricket sessions, available to anyone who would like to participate but aimed particularly at young people in Slough. These sessions were designed to make cricket more accessible, as the only other cricket sessions available nearby at Berkshire Cricket being at county league level and require a fee to join.

What's Happened – Impacts on Cohesion.

The ongoing project work demonstrates outcomes against social cohesion in these areas:

Increased community participation and sense of belonging

As a result of being held on a public and visible area within Slough, have encouraged a lot more people to try cricket out and, as stated by the group's spokesperson:

"have encouraged a lot more intergenerational dialogue and conversation."

As part of Breaking Boundaries, Paving the Way, in acknowledgement of England's winning of the Cricket World Cup, also held a summer community cohesion event in which they were able to deliver a wide range of cricket based activities, from cricket themed face painting, quick cricket games, cricket word quizzes and arts and crafts activities. These also encouraged conversations between participants about local cohesion issues.

The event, the spokesperson said, was a huge success and engaged a lot of residents whom may not have previously attended an event, in particular young people and engaged more volunteers whom would work with Paving the Way in the future. However, explicit cohesion benefits beyond bringing different groups together and the conversations they had about local issues are not apparent. It was also highlighted that without the Breaking Boundaries funding, Paving the Way would not have been able to offer activities for free which reduces the barrier of people engaging in sport and encourages people to take part in activities within their local community.

Improved partnership working

When asked about their partnership with Breaking Boundaries, the Paving the Way spokesperson was very positive, stating that they have had clear lines of communication with the Breaking Boundaries Community Coordinator who kept the group in the loop with the programme, saying:

"They have a clear vision of what is expected of us and what we need from them; we have established a really good relationship."

The Future.

As a result of their increased awareness about Breaking Boundaries and opportunities they have had to engage with people across Slough, in the second year of the programme, Paving the Way plans to continue their current Breaking Boundaries activities with renewed motivation and determination. Looking forward, Paving the Way are hoping that they will able to engage with more young people, encourage them to become Community Champions and take part in training so that they can become qualified coaches.

Top Tips.

There is a need to focus in more depth of ways of using these original engagements to develop delivery that works more explicitly on the programme's cohesion outcomes building on the new cricket opportunities the programme has already been able to provide. These currently are very limited.









Building New Partnerships

Berkshire Cricket and Slough Council April 2019

Detail of the Activity.

This case study outlines the learning from new partnership development in the early implementation of the Breaking Boundaries programme in Slough. It highlights how new relationships were established.

How Breaking Boundaries Helped.

The partnership working has been facilitated by Slough District Council and Berkshire Cricket being brought together through the Breaking Boundaries programme, a relationship that was very limited prior to the programme being in place. This initiated a new extended relationship between the two organisations that hadn't existed before.

Working together, the organisations developed a shared agenda focused on extending the community level offer for cricket in the authority area engaging participants through Slough Cricket Club and other local community partners. The partnership work has had a strong focus on development of cricket opportunities, but the cohesion focus has been much less prominent and should be a key focus for the ongoing development of the partnership.

Slough were approached by YST to be involved in the early development of the Breaking Boundaries programme. The timing was very good for Slough Council as they were working on a new cohesion strategy and wanted to look at how a sport element could be developed through the project and help to support the plan delivery.

For both the local authority, and Berkshire Cricket, this was the beginning of a totally new relationship as any cricket link up between them had been relatively small scale previously.

What's Happened – Impacts on Cohesion.

The ongoing project work demonstrates outcomes against social cohesion in these areas:

Improved partnership working

The joint working facilitated by the programme has opened up new contacts with individuals through them offering new locations for cricket and additional opportunities for Women and Girls to take part.

The council and Berkshire Cricket have an entirely new relationship which means they engage actively together to provide new opportunities for Slough residents to take part in physical activity, and look actively at how they can both work together on cohesion issues.

Local community organisations have been able to take on the running of additional programmes of cricket activity in local parks and help establish new provision for Women and Girls, the first in this part of the county. These teams have already been invited to participate in future festivals. Without Breaking Boundaries these cricket developments wouldn't have happened.

The Active Communities Manager, Slough Council identified:

"It's been the engagement with new partners based in the community where the biggest steps have been taken and this has then helped the development of project ideas and the allocation of the grants, and that has allowed us to connect to other local events to publicise Breaking Boundaries"

A Cricket Development Officer from Berkshire Cricket added:

"We now speak to Slough on a weekly basis about ideas and the World Cup Trophy tour was a joint venture between us when we hadn't worked together before. Breaking Boundaries has forced people to come together and start talking about things that can be worked on together. There are six local authorities in the county and Slough is now the second one I have contact with because of what Breaking Boundaries has encouraged in the area"

The Future.

Although early days and before activities were due to start, interviewees highlighted the need to continue to focus on developing the partnership and the momentum it was beginning to show. This is planned through continued meetings, use of the Activation Grants, and further networking to bring additional community groups into the partnership.

- To foster new partnerships initial meetings should always focus upon identifying where objectives overlap and identify initial activities where this crossover can be used positively including identifying ways in which volunteers can be actively used to provide additional support. This should also focus on how cohesion impacts might be produced from delivery on top of any specific cricket outputs.
- ✓ It is critical to be clear about project expectations for groups and new partners, especially about where key responsibilities will lie for running activities and what role different partners will take.









Programme Ambassadors

Aarushe Sandhu April 2019

Detail of the Activity.

This study explains the benefits that occurred for an individual who became an Ambassador for the Breaking Boundaries programme. A role created by the programme that brought numerous outcomes for the individual involved.

How Breaking Boundaries Helped.

Aarushe Sandhu first became an ambassador on the Breaking Boundaries programme in Slough after volunteering at an event at Berkshire cricket ground. It is a new role in the area created by the programme. Before becoming involved in Breaking Boundaries, Aarushe already had a passion for sport and was undertaking her gold Duke of Edinburgh award, so the Breaking Boundaries programme has provided an opportunity for this to happen in the targeted areas of Slough through cricket, rather than other avenues that Aarushe was involved in.

The activities focussed on:

For Aarushe, being an ambassador for the Breaking Boundaries has enabled her to become more involved in her local community whilst also providing her with the opportunity to encourage other

young people to get involved in sports in Slough. This is creating some cohesion benefits by bringing young people together through those activities, but more work is needed to address the wider cohesion outcomes sought by Breaking Boundaries.

Aarushe had already been involved in Youth Parliament before joining the Breaking Boundaries project as an ambassador and so has felt that she has been able to effectively share with other young people both within youth parliament and her school what Breaking Boundaries is, and how they can get involved.

What's Happened – Impacts on Cohesion.

The ongoing project work demonstrates outcomes against social cohesion in these areas:

Improved knowledge and skills to support community cohesion

When asked about her involvement in Breaking Boundaries and the impact it has had on her, she said that it has enabled her to meet new people within the local community and to develop skills such as communication in addition to her coaching skills, now at a level 2, which she can put on her CV and university applications. She identifies that:

"It just helps you to stand out from the crowd; it shows you are involved in the local community and help other people around you."

Beyond meeting new people and bringing groups together, Aarushe says she has yet to have a major impact on wider cohesion issues but expects that to become a bigger part of her role in the future.

When asked if there are any particular barriers the Breaking Boundaries project faces, Aarushe suggested that it can be difficult to engage some people in cricket, because they just presume cricket isn't for them. To combat this moving forward, Aarushe stated that she was involved in developing a girls' softball team which she hoped would engage more young females within Slough to get active.

The Future.

Looking forward, Aarushe plans to continue her involvement with Breaking Boundaries as an ambassador and would encourage others to do the same, stating:

"I would say to other youngsters like myself to come along and join, it's an amazing experience. Sport is so important, and this is a way for young people like me to have a say and make an active change."

The future also needs to have a much greater emphasis on work around cohesion issues and supporting young people in the local target areas to identify them and help to co-produce solutions to them that could be delivered by the programme and the work that Aarushe does in the future.

Top Tips. ✓ Ambassador models utilising local people to use their lived experience to help engage people and market the programme are a valuable mechanism for ground a programme in a new delivery area.









Supporting existing activities

Slough Modest Sisters and Baylis Court School June - August 2022

Detail of the Activity.

This case study looks at how existing activities can be supported to extend their influence into addressing local cohesion issues without the need for an entirely new activity to be created. This activity involved sustaining a Yoga group that worked with White British, Black African, Pakistani and Indian groups.

How Breaking Boundaries Helped.

Following some community engagement work, the Breaking Boundaries team became aware through the local health authority of a diverse Yoga group that they could no longer support. The mapping work by the programme post-Covid involving Community Champions at Baylis Court School identified this group as one with formative relationship between a range of ethnic groups that needed supporting to build some further cohesion outcomes from its work. Through a grant of £480 the hybrid (Virtual and face to face) provision could be maintained for a further 8 sessions

Delivering the key focus of Breaking Boundaries of physical activity focussed on enabling social mixing between a diverse ethnic mix of participants who could build on initial social connections whilst also continuing the wellbeing benefits from the physical activity it provided.

What's Happened – Impacts on Cohesion.

The ongoing project work demonstrates outcomes against social cohesion in these areas:

Social Connectedness.

Supporting the activity meant that Breaking Boundaries enabled it to remain open so that it could continue to feature representation from Black Caribbean, White British, south-Asian and mixed-African people this group dynamic allowed the project to widen social connectedness between these participants.

""It was such an amazing platform for women to come together to a place where we could talk and comfort each other, it was a relief, it was our time, it was for us...many women, they didn't have that opportunity before" (Female, Pakistani)

"those weeks and sessions have made such a difference, that one hour a week is embedded in now, it's an hour for us." (Female, South Asian)

The Future.

Baylis Court School has already been the host of a couple of Youth Led Change Team events and is keen to continue this work with its student cohort.

Top Tips.

Mapping activities run through public health services can highlight activities that are relevant to a programme and save the time and effort of establishing entirely new activities. Furthermore this helps sustains activities where social connection might otherwise be lost, with finessing such activities can be encouraged to incorporate cohesion related activities particularly around socialising and conversations around cohesion matters.