

BREAKING BOUNDARIES

Case Study: Building Partnership for links with New Communities, Birmingham (Sept 2022)

Detail of the Activity

This case study provides insight into how a new project lead (Coordinator) built on previous partner links to develop a new project in limited time bringing together the White British community with refugees who were occupying multiple hotels in the targeted area.

Activity Development and Delivery

A previous Coordinator met a colleague from the Living Well Consortium at a jobs fair in 2021 and they expressed an interest in being involved in Breaking Boundaries. The Living Well Consortium work with community organisations in the Edgbaston and Birmingham area and could see links with activities for young people combining multi-sport and creative arts activities to bring together residents and non-resident groups together

How Breaking Boundaries Helped

Breaking Boundaries had, through it's City Leadership Forum, got leaders thinking about how to facilitate conversations between young people from different backgrounds. It was also a chance to reflect on conversations that they had been involved in and how these could lead to more cohesion outcomes in the future.

The new Coordinator, was able to restart discussions with the Consortium to facilitate and organise activity between groups of people that they work with who enter temporary accommodation ie refugees in multiple hotels used as temporary accommodation in Edgbaston.

The Coordinator was able to facilitate a link up with George Dixon Academy, a secondary school in Birmingham. They got involved because they were seeing more of the young refugees attending their school.

This led to an initial programme of eight sessions of multi-sports activities and cohesion discussions that linked the White British pupils at the school with Arab and European young people in the temporary accommodation provided by the Cobden Hotel.

What Happened – Impacts on Cohesion

These areas have resulted in the following key outcomes:

- **Improved Partnership Working:** the interviews highlight how these new partnership relationships have been established through the delivery Breaking Boundaries has organised:

“The ownership was a lot more on them, it was more getting to know each other, which is so important before the next steps” (Project Lead, Birmingham)

The relationship now forged between George Dixon Academy and Living Well Consortium are now in contact

and connected with community organisations that had no idea each other existed before Breaking Boundaries took place. It has also given people the opportunity to engage with activities they wouldn't ever engage with, along with people they would not have ever participated with.

The link between George Dixon Academy and Living Well has developed so much that they are looking to connect for future summer projects as well.

- **Increased social connectedness and sense of belonging:** The link between George Dixon Academy and Living Well has improved social connectedness.

This has occurred and been supported by connecting the White British pupils and Arab/European young refugees through the multi-sport activities and cohesion work that has run alongside them. This has enabled the White British pupils to understand more about the lives of the young refugees.

The school has also been connected to refugee families and had discussions about them attending their school in

future years. Young people in these families have been connected to others in their local area and have built a better understanding of each other's lives.:

“I enjoyed listening to other people's stories. People talking about their own experiences, their backgrounds which was part of the activity.” (Participant, Birmingham)

“I enjoyed the fact that the children enjoyed it and they were getting exercise at the same time and making new friends as well.” (Project Lead, Living Well Consortium)

The Future

The link up between George Dixon and Living Well continues to develop and both are hoping to put on further sessions in the future. Due to the success of this approach, Living Well have expressed an interest in being a part of any legacy conversations for the project and are particularly keen to explore any legacy projects linked to the Birmingham Commonwealth Games. The Edgbaston Foundation (Breaking Boundaries lead) is also planning to actively engage with Living Well after the project finishes to help their service users and groups they work to access the ongoing community work in Edgbaston.



Top Tips for Effective Delivery

- **Other community organisations can be useful conduits into communities,** Direct contact with community groups need not always be initiated by the programme. Some community groups may be more responsive to consortium groups who bring a greater focus on the challenges faced by the voluntary and community sector. This enables engagement strategies to be made more relevant to the targeted groups.
- **Clarity on the benefits for the community organisation of participation need to be clear up front.** Community groups 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.
- **Working with participants to co-produce activity delivery** helps engage them in a project whilst also building in longer term engagement.

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