

BREAKING BOUNDARIES

Case Study: Building Cohesion Understanding and Skills of Young People, Manchester (Sept 2022)

Detail of the Activity

This case study provides insight into how Breaking Boundaries has supported the training of young people to be community coaches supporting some to move into new employment opportunities. It highlights how through community consultation, programme activities can be shaped to address local needs to facilitate engagement in delivery by a programme.

Activity Development and Delivery

Discussions begun through the programme with key partner Youth on Solid Ground who had previously run activities for Breaking Boundaries who identified that significant cohesion issues were the lack of social inclusion that several young people felt living in their local areas in Moss Side and Whalley Range.

How Breaking Boundaries Helped

Breaking Boundaries created the space for the local Coordinator to discuss ways of addressing cohesion through social inclusion with partner Youth on Solid Ground and consultation with young people in the target areas:

"[It was]...asking people about what they felt about the community, what they want and what they need, what is missing, etc. It was to help to get the information to inform next plans and projects." (Project Partner, Manchester)

Through this it became clear that cohesion issues were arising from the barriers that local young people faced in being able to access employment opportunities. In partnership, the Breaking Boundaries team and the partner organisations identified the opportunity to consult further with local young people. This identified an opportunity to develop a Coach Development Pathway.

The Coach Development Pathway uses the power of sport and physical activity to improve the lives of children and young people and the communities they live in, and to offer a greater sustainability for the Breaking Boundaries programme.

Working in partnership with StreetGames, it was launched in January 2022 at Denmark Road Sports Centre, and brought together young people from Moss Side and Whalley Range. Many of these young people were members of clubs and organisations already involved with Breaking Boundaries (Youth on Solid Ground, Families against Violence and Claremont Youth).

16 young people aged 16-24 initially enrolled on the programme. They then took part in the first 6 monthly module culminating in the completion of a L2 Certificate in Coaching Multi Sports.

Delivery of these courses aimed to provide a pathway for young people so that by the end of the programme they

can increase community participation by delivering sport and physical activity in their neighbourhoods. There are also further opportunities to gain work

experience with MCRactive (host of Breaking Boundaries) in supporting their holiday programmes, which may also lead into paid work.

What Happened – Impacts on Cohesion

14 young people completed the training and attained a Level 2 Certificate in Coaching Multi-Sports with two individuals went on to apply for a coaching opportunity with GLL who run the leisure facilities for MCRactive, although these individuals were unsuccessful in securing employment on this occasion. Interviewees identified that the shift in focus brought some good cohesion benefits because:

“Because in the end we listened to the communities and did what they wanted to do rather than it being dictated to them and us as delivery partners.” (Delivery Partner, Manchester)

These areas have resulted in the following key outcomes:

- **Improved Partnership Working:** the interviews highlight how groups were talking more extensively with each other around the Coaching Pathway and were building stronger connections and contacts as a result.

However, it is clear this is strongest where the programme has put trust in the community groups to lead the development of the ideas and been

encouraged to move beyond approaches that are only focussed upon delivering sport activities.

“The biggest successes we have had is where groups have been able to have ownership over the project which could have happened earlier” (Project Lead, Manchester)

- **Increased community participation and sense of belonging:** the interviews highlight how programme staff have seen greater engagement by the young people involved in the Coaching Pathway in other activities being run by the programme and also supporting some of the other activities run by MCRactive. Participants highlighted their training had helped them to:

“Invest more back into the community needs and reach out to young people my age” (Participant, Manchester)

“To inspire others to do what you love doing for a living” (Participant, Manchester)

“People have been more appreciative of me - happy to know that I'm there to help people...[through the coaching]...and it is appreciated” (Participant, Manchester)

- **Improved skills around social cohesion work** – delivery of cohesion workshops as part of the training activities has meant these young people better understand how to consult and address some of these issues. They also have the coaching skills to deliver their coaching to support the development of cohesion :

The Coordinator and Line Manager identified that they improved their understanding of the challenges facing some young people and the contribution social exclusion can make to cohesion challenges.

The Future

A further cohort is due to begin the Coaching Pathway in October 2022 whilst the programme lead identified that many of the partnerships developed through the programme will continue beyond Breaking Boundaries. This is because groups have continued working collaboratively to create a sustainable way for them to carry on delivering sport in their communities.

Top Tips for Effective Delivery

- **Trust is key, stepping back and allowing community groups to shape delivery and approaches can support the biggest successes.** By avoiding too much prescription groups can use their expertise in their communities to identify the best options for project delivery and build strong links with the communities to share their lived experience of local cohesion issues. This also enhances engagement and recruitment strategies.
- **Avoid ‘pigeon holing’ groups and issues into delivery framework imposed from outside. Co-production processes help build trust and empower communities to drive forward delivery.** This helps to build delivery that is directly relevant to local needs and empowers participants to see outcomes from.
- **Cohesion issues may not just stem from conflict between, or the separation of communities** such challenges maybe driven by the lack of social inclusion of individuals.

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