

SAFER COMMUNITIES ALLIANCE

Tackling Inequalities funded project



Who are Safer Communities Alliance?

The role of the Safer Communities Alliance (SCA) was to coordinate and develop opportunities for joint working with the small charities who were impacted by Covid-19, develop events within ethnically diverse communities and to bring services and communities together.



About the project

The 'Stepping Out' programme was a collaboration of small charities and communities working together to tackle inequalities and grassroots issues within vulnerable and ethnically diverse communities across North Kent (in particular in Northfleet, Swanscombe, Gravesend, Wilmington, Greenhithe, Dartford and Stone). To deliver the 'Stepping Out' programme, SCA worked with Refocus Project Ltd, YGM Dance Academy, All Shades of Life and Box out of It.

How did you achieve the aims and objectives of the project?

As we got to know the communities, we managed to get to know key young people and build relationships with them. They completed consent forms and were able to say what they would like. This broke down barriers and encouraged them to also talk about the impact of Covid-19. We then ran football, rounders, Zumba, street dance, afro beats dance, boxing MMA sessions and basketball in the local park.

In addition to outreach sessions that were delivered in the local parks, we have given out 180 sports equipment boxes. Whilst out in the parks, the outreach workers researched the type of equipment young people would like and the type of sports they would like to do. We then put the equipment into under 10's sets and over 10's sets. Some parts of the sets took a while to arrive, but within 6 weeks we had distributed 50 sports equipment boxes for the Alliance, 120 for Refocus and 10 for YGM Dance Academy.





How successful we were in achieving our aims and objectives?

- with 250 young people through the outreach sports sessions and by providing sports equipment boxes.
- Identified four ethnically diverse community volunteer leaders who connected with us and were able to motivate the young people to come to the sessions. All four were very enthusiastic and motivating throughout the project and we are looking at how we can utilise their skills more to help with ongoing community engagement.
- Refocus already engages with ethnically diverse communities and hard to engage young people, so we had access to these young people too.
- We now have a dance academy up and running with over 30 young ethnically diverse girls who could not afford to attend otherwise.
- We have recruited two unemployed young workers and paid them part time and one older ethnically diverse ex-offender with lived experience. He has achieved health and safety level 3 training and his level 2 safeguarding training and first aid.
- We have developed relationships with young people who initially didn't want to do anything and by the end, they have been playing basketball and joined in activities with other young people of which they would not have before.
- The local youth service in Dartford have informed us that they have never engaged with any of the youth like we have done in the last 3 months. They have asked us for training on how to engage with ethnically diverse communities.

- Massive bridges are now being built with the African community who had lost hope and felt they were quite isolated, especially due to Covid-19. They would never usually access dance and MMA in the park, and they loved it.
- The Stepping Out programme has developed a better relationship with all our members.



Success Factors and Lessons Learnt That Could be Useful for Other People

Successes:

- The outreach workers made all the difference and have helped to build fantastic relationships in the community. It has helped us to identify those who cannot afford to engage with local services/activities, and we hope to find ways in helping them to engage more.
- Seeing parents beginning to get involved with the children and young people made all the difference and it really helped build a great relationship. A lot of them are now taking part together and we have set up WhatsApp groups so they can keep in touch.
- Parents being open and giving feedback helped us to adapt quickly and continue to provide a service and increase attendance.
- All members communicating and supporting one another throughout the project.
- Building relationships and offering mentoring helped us to identify barriers in the community and helped us to move forward together.

Challenges:

- Some young people had arrived straight from Eastern European countries and we had to tell them they couldn't be involved due to quarantine rules which was

difficult.

- The funding was slow in arriving to us. We believe we could have delivered a lot more sessions and engaged with more young people if we had started in early July.
- The weather at times became a problem and we had to keep in close communication with the groups and members. We were grateful that they were happy to be so flexible and spontaneous at times.
- Some of the football was slow in being delivered due to weather and staff having to go back to work.
- Initially the virtual dance sessions were a challenge but feedback from the parents helped make them a success.
- For the older young people who came out later for the basketball sessions, the fading light made it hard to play so portable floodlights would have helped. Though we found many of the young people did not want to go home even though it was getting dark.





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