Case study: Breaking Boundaries in Barking and Dagenham

Partnership Creation

Youth Spot Bar
January 2022

Detail of the Activity.

This case study provides some useful insights on how Breaking Boundaries can bring different community organisations together to be able to work together to deliver activities that support the achievement of the programme's aims around cohesion. It illustrates how through facilitation work Breaking Boundaries City teams can enable other organisations to deliver through the programme.

Activity Development and Delivery.

The Youth Spot Bar is a youth led activity that seeks to engage with young people around issues that concern them in their local community, particularly related to the links between different community groups and identifying ways to address hate and street crime amongst young people.

Youth Spot Bar was first involved in Breaking Boundaries in 2018/19 around a community festival. They were involved more with the programme through the local Activator and a new project has been developed to run at Relish in the town centre from February 2022. This activity aims to bring groups together, get them engaged with each other to create connections between the young people, particularly White British and Black African/Caribbean groups.

The activity involves social activities around food, drinks, and music alongside sporting activities supported by a local group established by a Barking resident to bring young people into physical activity, a Community Tennis and multi-sports group.

How Breaking Boundaries Helped.

The link up of these organisations has been established through Breaking Boundaries and the activity gives both organisations a more permanent base for their activities, as one project lead commented that being involved with Breaking Boundaries has:

> "Spread our name a bit wider so more people know what we can do and the opportunities we can provide young people. We can link them up to our sports activities and the food and hospitality and working behind the bar and being part of the social hub, which is run by the young people and supported and they are buddied to an adult creative." (Project Lead, Barking)

Both projects are interested particularly in how their activities can help deliver the aims of the programme because they see a strong link up between what they are trying to do and what Breaking Boundaries is trying to achieve.

What's Happened – Impacts on Cohesion.

As the activities have only just started the main impacts around cohesion so far have been at an organisational level limited to the development of the partnership and improving some of their skills to support social cohesion work in the future.

Improved Partnership Working.

These organisations wouldn't be working together without Breaking Boundaries and the Activator getting them involved with the project. Working through these kinds of organisations – although often small in terms of their own staff – are the best way to reach into communities because local people often trust these organisations more:

> "Breaking Boundaries can support grassroots project to deliver…[and]…when you do that the relationship will be a lasting one. BB needs to be better linked into the grassroots work through us and give us the resources to deliver." (Project Lead)

This works because, as the Community Tennis Group lead highlighted, it enables delivery to be more consistent and regular. Where activities appear and disappear that makes local residents suspicious and resistant to getting involved because they are not sure that if they invest the time the project/activity will still be there in a few weeks/months. The lead highlighted that by building that trust means that the project/activity is more likely to become known through word of mouth because those participating in its 'trust' it more as something useful or relevant to their community.

What both leads also highlighted was that the initial establishment of contact to start the partnership building process should, if possible, happen face to face and that it needs to be managed effectively by Breaking Boundaries:

"I like to meet people face to face to help build the trust and help me pass on positive promises but this needs to be followed through otherwise you are letting lots of people…[in the community]…down. It's not smooth so it means my contacts look at me with suspicion this needs to be managed better." (Project Lead)

Improved skills around social cohesion work.

For both projects engagement with Breaking Boundaries has improved aspects of their delivery through support provided around management and key processes through the team at the local authority access:

"I've no funding…[outside of Breaking Boundaries]…I'd like to get the parents involved more. It was the networking that was important to me and through that I got involved in Breaking Boundaries…did my first aid and DBS and I'm starting my coaching course [It's important because…] if you don't link your services with others, it's hard to do these kinds of work" (Project Lead)

Through this, interviews with the project leads identified that this means the projects are better able to link with local people and support them in dealing with local issues they have worried about before (like littering or anti-social behaviour) yet have been unsure about how to deal with it.

By bringing these groups together through the community projects dialogue can be established, this enables those individuals to discuss solutions and identify ways things could be taken forward. Supporting the projects in this way means they can run better activities that are more likely to be referred to other through word of mouth.

The Future.

They are looking forward to how this activity can make lots of contacts with young people in the area. However, both organisations emphasised that facilitation and logistics support was important for them as they have limited resources to do this and deliver their activities.

Top Tips for Effective Delivery.

✓ **Let the activities be driven by young people,** they know best and perhaps 'you don't:

> "The wider multi-sports focus is useful and that needs to keep being pushed we've always tried to show that we don't just do one type of sport, let it be driven by young people." (Project lead)

✓ **Community organisations often need specific help in setting up processes and practices** so they can easily demonstrate to others that their activities are safe and well-managed. This can be a good way to engage community organisations because they are often already struggling with these things.

> "Before they give the funding help to set up venues for delivery and help to get engaged with them or the contacts to secure those things, BB could facilitate a lot more things. Help with the logistics, getting processes and policies in place, all the things that take a really long time to get in place. They've helped with some of that and that's really been helpful" (Project lead)

✓ **Reaching out through community organisations is often the best way to reach the most disengaged,** though the activities that run with them need to reassure local people that there is going to be long term options around them. Many are suspicious of projects that 'drop in' and then 'drop out' of areas because community links haven't properly been established. This puts the community organisation under pressure because they are the ones that face 'flak' from the communities they are working with, not Breaking Boundaries. It is then difficult to rebuild that trust for future activities.