

Case Study



Project

Waterside Community Sport

Organisation

Derry City Council

Date

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Contact

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Contacts details

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Project value

£125,000 over 3 years

About the Organisation

Waterside is a Neighbourhood Renewal Area (NRA) on the south side of the river in Londonderry within the boundaries of Derry City Council. It comprises three distinct areas made up of nine housing estates. These are deprived neighbourhoods and there is a lack of facilities, which is compounded by the insular nature of the estates. It is a mixed, mainly Protestant area, though even the Protestant majority can split along former paramilitary divisions.

The Waterside NRA organisation is a fledgling group set up to support the local community in the local NRA catchment.

Project overview

The grant funded a project co-ordinator plus £5,000 each year for the programme to deliver against the 5 project objectives:

- Align sporting and physical activity opportunities with the overall NRA process of developing communities and building capacity;
- Establish a network of contacts and connections within each of the nine estates;
- Examine baseline needs;
- Plan programmes around needs; and
- Establish local programmes.

What has it achieved?

A successful dance group has been established in a few areas and there are plans to bring them together and begin to break down some of the barriers between neighbourhoods.

So far over 70 local residents have gained some form of qualification through this project, meaning there is a wider range of skills in the community. It could also mean greater expansion of the programmes through an increased volunteer network.

How did the project get people involved?

The project co-ordinator worked with local agencies in each of the nine areas to provide activities and engage people to undertake sports qualifications. Activities include football tournaments, exercise referral schemes, walking groups and inclusive games for people with disabilities.

The schools programme, Fit Futures, was conducted in partnership with the University of Ulster as part of a research programme. The project worked with several local primary schools during curriculum time.

Much of the promotion was through the newly formed neighbourhood partnership boards and word of mouth. It took a lot of groundwork in the early stages of the programme to get buy in from local residents who were sceptical of someone from outside their area.

What was innovative and what worked well?

Because of the limited project resources and the large number of neighbourhoods targeted, the project co-ordinator only worked where she was accepted by local residents. The project co-ordinator was able to channel her energies to make an impact as opposed to just getting buy in from people. Once other neighbourhoods saw what the project achieved they wanted to be involved.



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Were there any unexpected outcomes?

The Fit Futures school programme has taken longer to show impacts than expected. This is because of the way the programme has evolved during the previous years. There have been changes to the assessment tools and also the session structure.

Some of the interventions have found a useful dual purpose. The project activities are a diversionary activity for young people in the areas. This is important especially during the marching season when tensions rise between different communities. It gets young people active and removes the potential for trouble.

The future...

The NRA is very committed to the project and have already allocated funding to extend the project until March 2010.

There is still a lot of development work to be done in the last two years of the project. But the training and qualifications are starting to pay off. Many of the people who have gained qualifications are now running activities in their neighbourhoods, and this is the key to sustaining the programme beyond the extended funding period.

As the NRA programme continues it is hoped that this project will play an important role in community engagement and bringing neighbourhoods together whilst continuing to provide the core service of community sport and physical activity.

Lessons from the project

There are many lessons to be taken from the Waterside Community Sport project about how sport and physical activity can play an important role in regenerating deprived areas and improving community cohesion.

- The project co-ordinator took time to integrate herself into the community. By taking part in community activities, the project co-ordinator is now seen as a valuable ally in community development both by local people and by other community partners.
- Individual initiatives were refined as the programme progressed ensuring they were continuing to meet the aims of the project.
- Using an academic body to help with monitoring and evaluation is a good idea but there needs to be input from other partners on the tools to be used. The tools first tried in this project were not feasible and had to be changed.
- Progress has been slower than expected on the project, showing these interventions take some time to bed into the community before they can show a real impact.