

Engaging BME Communities In Sport

Headingley Stadium, Pavilion

Wednesday 24th February 2016

The workshop conducted was part of the Socio-Cultural Regeneration in UK Cities regeneration cluster research project. The workshop focused primarily on engaging BME and marginalised groups with regards to examining potential challenges with engaging BME and marginalised individuals in community sport. Participants were encouraged to develop a set of practices which promote and endorse 'cultural awareness' among communities to engage this particular group. The participants were encouraged to develop intervention programmes that could be introduced to local authorities and National Governing Body funding agencies to help better actively engage these marginalised communities in sport. Participants were introduced to the work of Sporting Equals, a charity that specifically works with targeting physical activity engagement with marginalised and ethnic groups on the periphery of regular sports participation.

Opportunities were provided for participants to collate and discuss ideas in a focus group, which enabled a fluid dissemination of ideas and contexts associated to overt and covert barriers that may restrict opportunities for BME individuals and marginalised groups. The focus group provided the catalyst for examining why many of these issues occur and why they continue to remain problematic. Statistical data was provided to support and illustrate the existing dialogue around this discourse, and provided a general overview of the participatory breakout of BME engagement in physical activity within various communal settings nationally.

Participants were engaged in a process of challenging their own understanding how they may engage in promoting ethnic diversity across sport with regards to opportunity and community structures. Participants evaluated their own understanding of how marginalised groups engage in sport within their own communities. Key headlines around this discourse were presented to indicate the current landscape of the BME population in the UK and their engagement in physical activity. The impact of the multi-media platforms was considered in relation to how this context impacts the existing dialogue concerning BME engagement within sport more generally, and the proliferation of positive rolemodels within the media. Participants then reflected on the issues that they were aware of regarding the participation of BME groups within their community, with the aims of providing solutions to how these issues can be overcome.

Conclusions were then drawn following the development of an intervention to help engage BME and marginalised communities into physical activity and communal activities. Participants explained how their respective interventions would benefit and support these marginalised contexts, and aligned this to potential funding streams from local authorities, National Governing Bodies and Government. The workshop concluded with participants considering what they have gained from the session, and how this information or new knowledge would inform their existing practices in relation to work with BME and marginalised individuals. The participants found the workshop to be highly productive in enlightening them to some of the issues which exist when considering this particular demographic. Participants highlighted a new sense of confidence in being able to better engage BME and other marginalised groups in physical activity and communal activities. The participants were particularly interested in being able to potentially put their intervention

ideas into formalised practice if at all possible. Overall, the workshop was successful and impact has clearly been demonstrated with regards to developing cultural awareness of the existing issues which permeate inequality among BME and other marginalised groups.