Are you saying I'm Racist?

An evaluation of work to tackle racist violence in three areas of London

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Acknowledgements

About the Evaluators

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Sarah Isal is Deputy Director of the Runnymede Trust. She leads Runnymede's European programme, as well as its Criminal Justice programme. She has undertaken extensive research on preventing racist violence, most notably – *Preventing Racist Violence – Working with Actual and Potential Perpetrators (2005)*. She holds a Masters in Comparative Politics, and prior to joining the Runnymede Trust in 2001, she worked in the UK Office of the European Monitoring Centre on Racism in Xenophobia.

Áine Woods has worked on and managed a number of urban and inner city youth and community projects both in Ireland and England. Her work has included confronting racism and homophobia, and her research interests focus on identity and anti oppressive practice. In1993 following the murder of Stephen Lawrence, she was the co-ordinator of the Bede House Anti-Racist Detached Youth Work Project, the first recorded account of anti-racist detached youth work in the UK. She was the Pathway Leader and Senior Lecturer on the BA Hons Youth and Community Work at Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridge and is now an independent researcher on youth work initiatives.

Foreword

We need a new approach to race hate attitudes in society. Young people's lives can be blighted by racism – it can lead to violence, gang and criminal activity, and can sometimes lead to right-wing extremism.

These are issues that affect the whole community, contributing to residents feeling unsafe, living segregated lives, and having negative feelings about their neighbourhood. Poverty and issues around identity compound these problems. If young people who hold racist views are not engaged with in a meaningful way, they may, inevitably, continue to be a drain on resources, and a barrier to building a cohesive society, they may even become racists.

The Trust has funded work to support victims of race hate for many years, and continues to recognise the importance of supporting those who have had their lives deeply affected by prejudice and discrimination at all levels. However, we also believe that we have to seek ways to prevent this hostility and violence from developing in the first place as the only long-term solution. This is challenging work, and youth workers, teachers, parents and young people themselves need support and the tools to undertake such work.

The three organisations funded through this initiative, Working with Men, Leap Confronting Conflict and Searchlight Educational Trust have each developed their own approach but a theme shared by them all is the importance of taking time to build trusting relationships with young people so that a more open and honest dialogue can emerge about their own sense of identity. This work has to take account of the many factors which influence their views, which may include poverty, lack of self-esteem or hope. It is only when these attitudes are faced that a more fundamental change in attitude can come about.

We hope that by publishing this evaluation, it will provide some practical advice about how to go about undertaking more in-depth work on tackling racist violence, whilst also generating a debate about new ways to address the problem. Unless a new approach is taken we can expect to stay in the present malaise of racial conflict which blights many communities and remains unchanged.

The Venerable Peter Delaney MBE
Vice-Chair of the Trust for London
Chair of the Preventing Racist Violence Advisory Group

1. Executive summary

Overview

Racist violence continues to be a serious problem in Britain. In 2010/11 more than 51,187 racist incidents were recorded by the police in England & Wales, of which 9,464 (18%) occurred in London[1] and the British Crime Survey estimates that the actual number of such incidents is around 200,000 annually. A recent study by the Institute of Race Relations[2] indicates that more than 90% of perpetrators are white, 85% are male, and 60% are perpetrated by children or young adults under 25. The emergence of the English Defence League, and signs that inter-ethnic violence between minority groups may be increasing, both underline that this is an issue that continues to need to be addressed, especially through work with young people.

Current approaches, however, do not seem to be proving effective. Focusing on tackling the problem primarily through responding to incidents once they have occurred is too limited an approach. 'Zero tolerance' as a response to racism in work with young people (e.g. by teachers excluding pupils for such behaviour from school) fails to address the underlying causes of their attitudes and behaviour. There is little reason to believe that reactive and repressive responses will bring about the necessary change: a more proactive response that draws out the problem and confronts it with the aim of prevention is needed.

Three projects in London have been developing ways of working with young people to prevent them becoming involved in racist violence. The Trust for London initiated and funded this initiative after research had shown that, although young people tend to be the main perpetrators, there was little preventive work being targeted directly at those at risk of such involvement.

The projects developed a variety of innovative approaches, engaging mainly with groups of young people in neighbourhoods and schools. Most of the young people the projects worked with were white, but some were black or from other minority ethnic groups. Some were linked with gangs, but most were not, and the project workers found that racist attitudes were widely held among young people in their areas, and that being 'at risk' of involvement in racist violence was widespread rather affecting only a special few. Their experience shows that face-to-face work with young people at the local level by skilled practitioners can have a significant impact on racist attitudes and behaviour, thus reducing ethnic tensions and promoting integration among young people with different backgrounds and identities. There is an urgent need, however, to integrate the lessons from this initiative into mainstream policy around youth and community issues, and also into the core training and everyday practice of youth and community workers and staff in schools.

[1] Home Office Statistics, September 2011

[2] Racial Violence: The Buried Issue by Harmit Athwal, Jenny Bourne and Rebecca Wood. IRR Briefing Paper NO.6 2010

Key findings and conclusions

A The potential for involvement in racist violence, albeit usually in a casual rather than organised manner, was seen by projects as present for most young people in their areas, and not just for the small number who might hold extreme views.

- Most young people explicitly condemned racism, but at the same time would articulate negative attitudes and stereotypes relating to specific groups.
- The racist attitudes and stereotypes articulated by young people needed to be understood in relation to class, territorial, gender and other factors, as well as in relation to family, community and media influences.
- Most young people in all three areas had strong territorial attachments and were often unconfident or fearful as regards travelling outside their immediate local area.

B Engaging with young people to address sensitive issues such as racism required commitment, skill, patience, sensitivity, and the building up of a relationship of trust over a period of time.

- Exploring issues initially around identity more generally with young people provided a more effective way into discussions on racism, by contrast with a narrow, direct approach.
- 'Safe spaces' needed to be created to enable 'dangerous conversations' (i.e. on sensitive issues that are likely to arouse strong feelings).
- Taking young people out of their immediate areas, and providing structured opportunities for them to engage with young people from other areas and social groups, provided valuable opportunities for learning.
- Engaging with young people in sporting, musical and other kinds of activities of interest to them provided a favourable context in which addressing issues around racism and identity could take place.

C Local authorities, youth agencies and schools all need to take responsibility for such work.

- Denial, or 'zero tolerance' alone, are not the solutions: the problem needs to be opened up, debated and addressed.
- Youth workers and teachers need skills, tools and confidence to tackle the issues effectively.
- Addressing racism and identity issues should be an integral part of youth and school curricula.
- Peer educators can also play a powerful role in influencing racial attitudes and behaviour among young people.

D Tackling these issues is crucial for London's future as a harmonious and cohesive city.

- Approaches need to be tailored to the particular circumstances of local areas across the city.
- A sensitive approach is needed, that does not stigmatise whole groups and areas.
- The experience of the initiative shows that taking action to prevent young people becoming involved in racist violence is not only desirable but also feasible.
- The methods developed and used by the projects should be drawn on and implemented as appropriate across London.

Background to the initiative

The Trust for London's *Preventing Racist Violence Special Initiative* was launched in January 2007. The initiative was set up in response to findings from a report by the Runnymede Trust: *Preventing Racist Violence – Work with Actual and Potential Perpetrators (2005)*[3]. This report highlighted the fact that, although young people (and especially young men) are predominantly the perpetrators of incidents of racist violence, almost all work in this field over recent decades has concentrated on the *response* to such incidents, and virtually no targeted work has been undertaken with young people specifically on the *prevention* of racist violence.

Given that many young people growing up in London remain at risk of involvement in racist violence, bids were therefore invited by the Trust to carry out projects to develop preventive approaches, and three organisations were selected and funded to carry out projects over a three-year period. These organisations were:

• **Working with Men,** for deployment of an independent youth worker in Greenwich.

• **Leap Confronting Conflict,** for a 'peer education' project in Bexley.

• **Searchlight Educational Trust,** for sports-linked work in Barking & Dagenham.

Although the three areas of London where the projects were based were by no means typical of London or of the country as a whole, they were all areas where economic and demographic change has been disturbing established social patterns, resulting in changes in the dynamics of inter-ethnic relations. In such areas, ethnic differences often become more salient and sensitive, and there may be sharply increased support for right wing and other extremist groups, including among the young. These are trends taking place in many parts of Britain, and are likely to become increasingly prominent in coming years. In such areas it is crucial to work with young people whose attitudes and interactions will determine whether or not successful integration of different social groups occurs in the decades ahead. The methods used in the projects to address this challenge should therefore prove relevant across a wide range of geographical areas.

The projects

Working with Men has extensive experience of working directly with young people on personal, conflict-resolution and identity issues, and drew on this in establishing a project for a full-time youth worker to undertake independent work (under the aegis of Greenwich Youth Service) in the Thamesmead area of South East London. WWM implemented this plan with a single experienced youth worker who operated over the three-year period in the Central and West Thamesmead area, engaging with young people either through clubs or on the street, and building relationships with them to explore issues, challenge attitudes, and bring them into contact with young people from other groups and neighbouring areas. Latterly in the project he extended his activities to work with young people on race and identity issues in the local secondary school and a nearby further education college.

Outcomes

• Evidence of changing attitudes of young people engaged in the project – for example, groups of young people who had previously been hostile to each other, forming a football team and exchanging mobile numbers.

• Sustaining the interest and involvement of young people in a range of activities related to self-awareness and identity, and giving them skills in anger management, conflict resolution and self-defence.

[3] Sarah Isal, *Preventing Racist Violence – Work with Actual and Potential Perpetrators – Learning from Practice to Policy Change,* Runnymede Trust, London, 2005

- Work in schools with young people at risk of exclusion due to their overt racism and challenging behaviour, on issues of conflict resolution and identity resulted in a significant change in attitude and reduced risk of exclusion.

Leap Confronting Conflict is an established training and consultancy organisation working with young people, which focuses particularly on empowerment and participation, especially by means of peer education and mentoring programmes. Leap adapted this youth-led approach to working on racial and identity issues, in partnership with the Youth Service in the London Borough of Bexley. Leap developed a successful programme of cooperation with the Youth Service in recruiting and training a Bexley-wide group of young volunteers as peer educators, who have subsequently undertaken a variety of initiatives around racism and identity in their local areas. More recently, Leap has introduced their peer education approach to these issues into a local secondary school, and has also begun working with community outreach staff at a major local football club.

Outcomes

- A distinctive training approach to addressing issues of racism with young people, which raises awareness and develops personal skills by using the technique of generating 'dangerous conversations in safe spaces'.

- Creation of a team of young peer educators capable of taking initiatives on racism and identity issues with their peers in a variety of settings around the borough.

- Successfully initiating a racism and identity awareness strategy for pupils at a secondary school to be implemented by pupils themselves in the role of peer educators.

Searchlight Educational Trust is the educational arm of the well-established monitoring and campaigning anti-racist organisation Searchlight. SET extended its existing community-based work in the Barking & Dagenham area of East London to focus more directly on working with young people, and especially to prevent their becoming influenced by or involved with the BNP. SET used sporting activities (including a borough-wide football tournament) as a foundation for educational work around racism with young people and bringing together those from different areas and groups, but SET's development worker also undertook face-to-face work with groups of young people on local estates, as well as working with a local school. Latterly the main focus of SET's work has been on combating the influence of the BNP and political extremism among young people in the run-up to the May 2010 elections.

Outcomes

- Successful use of football and other sports to engage white youngsters in awareness-raising and anti-racist activities.

- Demonstration that community-based, overtly anti-racist work with young people in established white communities can be viable and can impact attitudes and behavior.

- Demonstration that sharing of personal experience of involvement in right-wing extremism can be a powerful tool for awareness raising and attitude change among young people.

Key learning points and recommendations

For practitioners

- Raising awareness around identity issues, and challenging racist attitudes and stereotypes, can help to prevent involvement in racist violence, especially in deprived areas experiencing rapid demographic change.

- Practitioners themselves need awareness and skill to undertake prevention work effectively, and should obtain training and specialist advice where necessary.

- Training young people themselves to act as peer educators around race and identity issues can make a major contribution to preventive work.

For policy-makers

- Youth policy needs to include a specific and explicit focus on the need to prevent racist violence.

- A multi-agency approach is essential, including the involvement of community groups, and linked to other relevant agendas, such as personal and social development, anti-social behaviour, and community cohesion.

- Youth workers need the support, awareness and skill to address issues around racism and identity in a proactive way. Training and professional guidance need to be provided for this purpose.

For funders

- There is a need to stimulate further work aimed at preventing racist violence among young people possibly as an explicit sub-theme within broader funded programmes addressing policy areas such as youth work, anti-social behaviour, and community cohesion.

- Initiatives should include provision for multi-agency cooperation, and for ensuring sustainability and mainstreaming subsequently.

- Evaluation of the effectiveness of the interventions should be an integral part of project and programme design.

2. Introduction

This report presents the results of a special initiative designed to develop methods for preventing young people from becoming involved in racist violence. The *Preventing Racist Violence Special Initiative* consists of three projects undertaken in South and East London, and has been funded by the Trust for London. The initiative was launched in January 2007 and the projects have now been in operation for over four years.

In mid-2007, the Runnymede Trust was engaged by the Trust for London (the Trust) to undertake an evaluation of the initiative, and has worked closely with the three individual projects since that time. Runnymede offered the Trust a formative approach to the evaluation, and has maintained regular contact with project workers, assisting with identifying issues, advising on monitoring and evaluation methods, and feeding back interim evaluation results. The present report is the final outcome of that work, and builds on a number of interim reports that have been produced over the three-year period of the evaluation.

The report is intended to provide an account and assessment of all the main activities undertaken by the three projects, and an assessment of the initiative as a whole together with its policy implications. As such the report will serve as an information base for all those who wish to know in detail about the initiative, and especially youth work practitioners who are interested in the specific methods and approaches that have been used. A much shorter, summary version of the report has been prepared for use by policy-makers and for dissemination to a wide audience.

Background to the Initiative

The initiative was set up partly in response to findings from the Runnymede Report, on *'Preventing Racist Violence'* prepared by Sarah Isal, published in 2005[2]. This report highlighted the fact that although young people (and especially young men) are predominantly the perpetrators of incidents of racist violence, almost all work in this field over recent decades has concentrated on the *response* to such incidents, and virtually no targeted work has been undertaken with young people specifically on the *prevention* of racist violence. The only well-documented account of a project targeted in this way is the report on the Bede Anti-Racist Youth Project, carried out in Bermondsey during the mid-1990s[5].

The Runnymede Report also identified the lack of attention to the need for such work on the part of funding bodies. The decision by the Trust to fund this initiative is therefore a pioneering initiative, which sets an example of good practice that will hopefully be followed by other funders in supporting projects in this field.

Policy & Social Context

Following the Report of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry, there has been recognition of the need for a more effective response to racist violence by criminal justice agencies. This must include not just their response to such incidents, but also what can be done to prevent them. The Trust for London's Preventing Racist Violence Initiative aimed to contribute directly to this policy agenda, and to combating hate crime more generally.

Its conclusions and recommendations are also relevant to a number of other broader policy agendas, including policy on crime prevention and the activities of Crime and

[4] Sarah Isal, Preventing Racist Violence – *Work with Actual and Potential Perpetrators – Learning from Practice to Policy Change,* Runnymede Trust, London, 2005

[5] Stella Dadzie, *Blood Sweat and Tears: A Report of the Bede Anti-Racist Detached Youth Work Project,* Youth Work Press, Leicester, 1997.

Disorder Reduction Partnerships, and policy for countering anti-social behaviour by young people and the attraction for them of extremist groups. In addition, the initiative's conclusions have important relevance for policy on social cohesion, as they highlight the need to find ways to break down barriers between groups of young people in multi-ethnic areas, and show a number of ways this can be done.

Although the three areas of London where the projects were based were by no means typical of London or of the country as a whole, they were all areas where economic and demographic change has been disturbing established social patterns, resulting in changes in the dynamics of inter-ethnic relations. In such areas, ethnic differences often become more salient and sensitive, and there may sharply increased support for right-wing and other extremist groups, including among the young. These are trends taking place in many parts of Britain, and are likely to become increasingly prominent in coming years. In such areas it is crucial to work with young people whose attitudes and interactions will determine whether or not successful integration of different social groups occurs in the decades ahead. The methods used in the projects to address this challenge should therefore prove relevant across a wide range of geographical areas.

The objectives

1. To change the attitudes and behaviour of potential perpetrators of racist violence;

2. To work with the wider community to change racist attitudes that have an influence on the attitudes and behaviour of the potential perpetrators;

3. To evaluate the merits of the different approaches to this work;

4. To share and learn from the work, and to influence other agencies including voluntary and community organisations, youth groups, other funders, local authorities, statutory agencies and government.

Implementation of the Initiative

In order to achieve the first two objectives of the initiative, the Trust invited organisations with experience in this field to submit proposals for specific projects they would undertake. Three organisations were funded:

• Working with Men

• Leap Confronting Conflict

• Searchlight Educational Trust

Each of these organisations undertook their own programme of work with young people, involving activities designed to contribute to the prevention of racist violence, drawing on their established methods and approaches for working with young people on personal, social and educational issues. None of them had previously carried out projects precisely focused on the prevention of racist violence, though all had experience of working on issues closely related to this.

• **Working with Men** has extensive experience of working directly with young people on personal, conflict-resolution and identity issues, and drew on this in establishing a project for a full-time youth worker to undertake independent work (under the aegis of Greenwich Youth Service) in the Thamesmead area of SE London. A single experienced youth worker operated over the three-year period in the Central and West Thamesmead area, engaging with young people either through clubs or on the street, and building relationships with them to explore issues, challenge attitudes, and bring them into contact with young people from other groups and neighbouring areas (e.g. through joint sporting activities). Latterly in the project he extended his activities to work with young people on race and identity issues in the local secondary school and a nearby further education college.

- **Leap** is an established training and consultancy organisation working with young people, which focuses particularly on empowerment and participation, especially by means of peer education and mentoring programmes. Leap adapted this youth-led approach to working on racial and identity issues, in partnership with the Youth Service in the London Borough of Bexley. Leap worked initially in the Welling area, and then developed a successful programme of cooperation with the Youth Service in recruiting and training a Bexley-wide group of young volunteers as peer educators, who have subsequently undertaken a variety of initiatives around racism and identity in their local areas. More recently, Leap has introduced their peer education approach to these issues into a local secondary school, and has also begun working with community outreach staff at a major local football club.

- **Searchlight Educational Trust** is the educational arm of the well-established monitoring and campaigning anti-racist organisation Searchlight. It extended its existing community-based work in the Barking & Dagenham area of East London to focus more directly on working with young people, and especially to prevent their becoming influenced by or involved with the BNP. SET's part-time project worker organised a range of sporting activities (including a borough-wide football tournament) as a foundation for educational work around racism with young people and for bringing together those from different areas and groups. He also undertook face-to-face awareness-raising work with groups of young people on local estates, as well as working with a local school. Latterly the main focus of SET's work was on combating the influence of the BNP and political extremism among young people in the run-up to the May 2010 elections.

As a group, therefore, between them the three organisations offer a set of contrasting approaches to addressing the initiative objectives. However, it will also be noted from the above that all the projects are working in areas that have traditionally been predominantly white working-class in character, but which have recently experienced inflows of visible minorities of migrant or refugee origin. To varying degrees these changes have led to increased tensions between ethnic groups in the areas, and increased activity of and support for extreme-right organisations such as the BNP. The three areas may not be typical of London as a whole, many of whose boroughs have been multi-ethnic for a generation or more, but they are undoubtedly constitute areas where young people are growing up in an environment that may foster racist attitudes and ideologies.

All of the projects developed and implemented a wide range of specific activities to progress work in their intended directions, albeit with some difficulties, delays and re-adjustments at times, but for the most part with identifiable positive outcomes. Their experiences are described and assessed in detail in the following chapters.

The Trust for London Advisory Group

The Trust has monitored the process of implementation of the initiative by the project organisations by means of an Advisory Group, which has met at six-monthly intervals. Projects present six-monthly progress reports, and Runnymede has also presented progress reports at certain stages. Advisory Group meetings were attended by Trust staff, the three project workers and their managers, Runnymede representatives, and a representative of ROTA (Racism On The Agenda) – the London-wide voluntary sector body that focuses on racial equality issues.

Both the funders and the projects have found Advisory Group meetings to have

been a valuable component of the initiative. The funder has been able to keep abreast of progress in the projects, including difficulties and delays encountered, while the projects have appreciated the feedback and continued expressions of support from their funder, and have felt confident that they could be open about any problems. Follow-up meetings between the funder and the projects have been able to be

arranged on occasions where problems required further consideration. The projects have also benefited from learning about each

others' approaches and progress through such meetings and follow-up bilateral communication (as well as through the thematic workshops for the projects organized by the Runnymede Trust, as described below).

Key Cross-Cutting Themes

During the course of the initiative, several important cross-cutting themes have been identified, that have called for joint attention and exchange of experience by the three projects. Such joint work has been led and coordinated by the Runnymede Trust.

A Understanding Youth Racism & Identifying Potential Perpetrators

– One key theme has been the nature of racism among young people, and the issue of how to identify 'potential perpetrators' (the term used in the objectives for the initiative). In early discussions, project workers indicated that it was neither feasible nor productive to try to separate out certain individuals as potential perpetrators, and to try to do so could have counter-productive effects on attitudes and willingness to cooperate.

– Runnymede therefore organised a workshop for the projects on this issue, for projects to share their perceptions and understandings. The work of Roger Hewitt on '*Routes to Racism'*[6], which was based on research with young people in Greenwich, was reviewed, as it shows the pressures and influences on all young people growing up in the kinds of areas covered by the projects. On the other hand, the work of Les Back (*New Ethnicities and Urban Culture*)[7], which is also based on research among young people in South London, emphasises the fluidity and uncertainty in the self-conceptions of identity of young people growing up in mixed schools in such areas, and the consequent importance of educational and personal development work with them.

– The project workers felt that the portrayal of racism among young people by Hewitt and Back was broadly the same as they were encountering in their project areas. They were agreed that in their areas "any young people could be potential perpetrators of racist violence", and that rather than trying to single individuals out, it is necessary to work more broadly with young people around racial and identity issues. Generally speaking, this has been the approach adopted in all three projects.

B Monitoring and Evaluation Methods: Challenges and Limitations

– A second important cross-cutting theme has been the use of monitoring and evaluation methods in the initiative. The difficulties involved in evaluating preventive work in this area had already been noted in Sarah Isal's original Runnymede Report, and while she recommended that this was an important activity that needed to be strengthened, she also recognised that it was unlikely to be feasible to obtain hard, statistical data and that anecdotal, qualitative data were likely to have to play an important role.

– When Runnymede took on the role of evaluator for the present initiative, they noted that individual projects have their own contractual responsibility to evaluate their work, and adopted an approach in which Runnymede would work alongside projects to support them in this task, so that internally-generated data could provide a core evidence base for the external programme-level evaluation. Runnymede therefore worked with the projects, offering a overall framework for monitoring and evaluation, within which their own individual methods could be developed and incorporated.

– However, although all the projects kept written records and made assessments of some kind of their main activities, the extent to which they undertook regular monitoring and evaluation of their work was variable. Although one of the project

[6] Roger Hewitt, *Routes of Racism: The Social Basis of Racist Action*, Trentham Books, Stoke-on-Trent, 1996

[7] Les Back, *New Ethnicities and Urban Culture: Racisms and Multiculture in Young Lives*, UCL Press, London, 1996

organisations had its own established procedures for evaluating its ongoing work, two of the projects did not seem to have a 'culture' of systematically evaluating their work, and their workers tended not to see a benefit in it and to feel it was a distraction from their work (or even a threat to it). Nonetheless, a substantial amount of qualitative data of various kinds was generated and able to be used for assessing the impact of the projects on the young people they worked with.

– This report therefore draws on such data as has been available by these various means, and through external sources and interviews with key personnel and partners. A fuller account of the experience of monitoring and evaluation in the initiative is provided in the Appendix.

The Report

The report itself covers work undertaken in the initiative from its outset at the beginning of 2007 up to summer 2010.

The chapters of the report that follow:

• Provide a description and assessment of each of the three initiatives, and

• Identify key issues, lessons learnt & policy implications arising from the experience of the initiative.

The report has been prepared by Robin Oakley, external consultant with The Runnymede Trust, with the assistance of Sarah Isal and Aine Woods. Robin Oakley has worked jointly with Sarah Isal, author of Runnymede's original report on *Preventing Racist Violence* and now Deputy Director of Runnymede, on the evaluation of the initiative over the past three years. Aine Woods, former Project Officer for the Bede Anti-Racist Project and Course Director for Youth & Community Work at Anglia Ruskin University, has also provided advice and support around issues of monitoring and evaluation, and has worked with the projects individually to assist them in these areas.

3. Working with Men: the ID Project

Summary

Working with Men's 'ID Project' has focused specifically on working with young men, in recognition of their experience of working with this group, and of the connections between masculinity and racist violence. The project has been carried out by a single experienced youth worker, who is black, and who has operated on a full-time basis over the three years in and around the Thamesmead area. He has been working under the aegis of Greenwich Youth Service, and has been formally based in their youth centres. However he has essentially operated as an independent worker, engaging in projects and other activities with young people not only in youth clubs, but also on the street, and in community centres, colleges and schools.

After undertaking an initial mapping and consultation exercise, he developed work with groups of young people (mostly white, but some black) in both Central and West Thamesmead, running workshops on conflict-resolution and identity issues with them.

- To engage them he used a variety of methods, ranging from regular informal contact to formal projects focusing on activities such as football, music and graffiti art.

- By building up their trust in him over time, he has been able to push his discussions with them into more sensitive issues such as racism and racist violence, which some of them have admitted involvement in.

- He has also, through these activities, taken them outside their own 'safe' local territories and to meet groups of young people elsewhere, thus breaking down both territorial and ethnic boundaries, and their associated stereotypes and defensive attitudes.

There is extensive anecdotal evidence that this work has led to significant attitude and behaviour change among many of the young people he has worked with.

In addition to his club-related and outreach work with young people in Thamesmead, he has also undertaken work in two of the main educational institutions in the area.

- Firstly, he developed an extensive programme of work in the local secondary school, Woolwich Polytechnic, contributing sessions around conflict, identity and racial issues to PSHE and citizenship programmes within the core curriculum, and working more intensively on these issues with groups of young people at risk of exclusion or referred by management for behavioural problems involving racism.

- More recently, he was invited to help resolve tensions, which included a racial dimension, which had developed among students at a nearby further and adult education centre (Greenwich College), and following the success of this work he has developed further activities there with students and staff.

All this work continues to be ongoing, despite the fact that the worker continues to operate single-handedly. He has forged strong working relationships with the two educational institutions already mentioned, but his attempts to build cooperation with the police and other agencies have been less successful. There is a need to ensure that his work is sustained and mainstreamed into the operations of agencies working

with young people more generally across The Borough of Greenwich. The Trust has recently agreed to extend funding to Working with Men to support this, and to provide time for him to produce training and guidance materials based on his work, and to engage with local agencies to help them to develop their own efforts on these issues. Overall, Working with Men's project provides a range of examples of good practice in work with young people aimed at preventing racist violence, and is worthy of wide dissemination and duplication.

Background

A. Working with Men: The Organisation

Working with Men (WWM) is a London-based voluntary-sector organisation that develops innovative work with boys, young men and fathers. It tackles a range of issues and concerns, including fatherhood, underachievement, sexual health and relationships, health and well-being, employment and training as well as violence and criminal behaviour. It aims to provide a range of practical and educational services to men and boys and provides support and services to both statutory and voluntary agencies providing services to men. It also aims to further society's general understanding of young and adult men's lives and aspirations.

B. The Local Context: Thamesmead

Working with Men's project (the ID Project) has been primarily focused on Thamesmead, of which the West & Central parts (where the project has been active) lie in the London Borough of Greenwich.

Issues of racism have had a high profile in the borough of Greenwich, particularly due to three racist murders of young black teenagers – Rohit Duggal, Rolan Adams, and Stephen Lawrence – during the early 1990s. The subsequent campaign and public inquiry relating to the case of Stephen Lawrence brought Greenwich and its neighbouring boroughs to national and international attention as a cauldron for racist violence. Community opinion remains divided between those who feel that racism remains a serious issue in the borough, and those who feel the situation is much improved and that it is time to put the history to one side and move on.

Thamesmead itself is a relatively isolated 'new town' area, which initially was predominantly white and working-class (although there is some private housing alongside the extensive local authority estates). It has high levels of poverty and unemployment, poor transport facilities, and a generally negative image both among many residents and outsiders. Levels of community involvement among residents are low, and feelings of lack of safety and fear of crime are high. In recent years it has experienced the arrival of a number of different ethnic groups, mostly refugees and asylum-seekers. This appears to have rekindled racist attitudes among the majority population, and has been reflected in support for far right political groups.

C. Project Approach

WWM concentrated their efforts on young men (aged 10-18 years), viewing them as the age group most likely to include potential perpetrators of racial violence. WWM characterised this group as "more likely to be struggling at school (and underachieving); be swayed in their opinion; have come into contact with the police and criminal justice settings and be relatively unsupervised by parents".

WWM's perspective on the relation between masculinity and racist violence:

"Masculinity plays a significant role in racist violence. Most street violence involves young men and this is particularly the case for racially motivated attacks. Groups and gangs, a sense of protecting and defending your own community (and family), the use of violence and weapons, and a view that conflict is dealt with by strength and violence - all have a strong gendered form.

"There are also a significant number of boys and young men who appear to be reluctant to reflect and engage on personal issues, and these are more likely to be those that are involved in racially motivated attacks and incidents. As well as strong traditional views of masculinity, some of these young men lack communication skills, have a fear of the different, see threats as more pronounced than they often are, and can have short fuses."

WWM described their approach as being one of bringing their established methods of working with young men on sensitive issues, and applying this approach to the specific issue of racism and racist violence. The approach involves being supportive of young men, but also challenging, and combining these in a way that young people remain engaged without becoming alienated. This is achieved by first building up a relationship of trust with young people, and allowing them to express their feelings in a safe environment, and only then to challenge them, using and imparting conflict resolution skills and operating in informal, detached settings. At the same time, work addressing issues of racist violence would also be undertaken in the wider community that provides the context of the young people's lives.

D. Project Staffing

WWM's project has been undertaken by a single project worker, who was specifically recruited to undertake the project. He is an experienced youth worker, especially in detached youth work, and has a background also in counselling. Furthermore, as a black youth worker, he has been able to use his identity to advantage in a number of ways, including in awareness-raising activities with young white people.

WWM arranged with Greenwich Youth Service for the project worker to have a base at Hawksmoor Youth Club in Central Thamesmead, from which he operated for the first two years of the project. Subsequently he was based at the offices of the Area Youth Service at the Youth Centre at Woolwich Common.

Activities undertaken

The main activities carried out by the project over the three-year period have been as follows:

A Initial mapping exercise and consultation with the local community

B Work with young people attending Youth Clubs in Central & West Thamesmead

C Work with students at Woolwich Polytechnic

D Work with students at Greenwich College

The following sections provide detailed information on each of the above.

A. Initial Mapping & Consultation Exercise

The early stages of the work were built around observations, conversations and generally working on creating a community profile. During this process the worker was able to build a picture of and assess attitudes within the local community, who the key players were, where the young people spent their leisure time and what they did during

that leisure time. The methods used during this observation period and consultation phase consisted mainly of walking around the area, and engaging in conversations with young people and residents, as well as attending local meetings and arranging discussions with other professionals. This process enabled the worker to establish a perception of the community he would be working in, and also provided an opportunity for the community to recognise and discuss with the worker what his intentions were for future work.

- This work initially began with the project worker visiting the key youth services, youth centres and projects providing youth work activities in the immediate vicinity. As regards the issue of racism, he quickly noticed in discussions with professional colleagues in the youth-work field that some were very engaged with issues of racism in the Greenwich area, whereas others felt this was no longer such an important issue and wanted to put the history of past events behind them and move on.

- The worker also visited community groups and other relevant public service agencies. The community groups were principally housing associations, residents and tenants groups and church groups. He found the most receptive to his purpose were church groups. The professional groups and public services included the police and local schools and colleges.

Consultation with the local community

The aim of the consultations with residents and young people were to record their experiences, views and opinions, and to find out their suggestions about how to address the issues raised.

The consultations involved 75 residents, and 61 boys across the age range 10-18, in both cases with a range of ethnic backgrounds.

The consultations were carried out in small groups organised with the help of local community groups, schools and youth organisations.

The methods used for collecting data during these consultations were informal, non-threatening and conversational, and involved raising questions such as:

- What's it like living in Thamesmead?

- What is happening at the youth clubs?

- How do you spend your time?

- Are there places that I should avoid?

Subsequently the project worker compiled a report summarising the results of his discussions and observations. This report provided an evidence base for him to develop his subsequent programme of activities, and also a resource to present to and discuss with other local agencies.

- In particular, the consultations with residents and young people confirmed the continuing prevalence of racist attitudes in Thamesmead, the feelings of lack of safety and fear of gangs, the need to avoid certain 'hotspots', and the unwillingness to report incidents and general lack of confidence in the police. This lack of confidence in the police came through particularly strongly in the consultation, and underlay an unwillingness to report racist incidents and other violent incidents, as well as to seek help from or cooperate with the police more generally.

- The consultations with colleagues and professionals were found less productive. The project worker found he did not gain so much from pursuing this aspect of consultation as many took the view that these issues were 'nothing new', or else

displayed a reluctance to discuss the topic of racism. (In fact he tried not to highlight that this was a key aspect of the work, but despite this, colleagues were aware of what the work was about.) He also found that there was a widespread reluctance to actually acknowledge or recognise that there could be an issue.

Those to whom the report was presented or sent included the local multi-agency safer neighbourhoods panel, the local community safety coordinator, staff at the local secondary school (Woolwich Polytechnic), area and borough-level youth service managers, and the local Racial Equality Council.

- The response of these agencies was variable, with some (such as the police-led local neighbourhood panel) appearing to be fairly negative, apparently because they felt that it was exaggerating or amplifying a problem that didn't really exist, and that it was being critical of their own responses. The most positive responses came from the REC and the local school.

- The REC used the data in a number of ways, including as a basis for promoting their plans for a third-party reporting centre in the locality, as a resource for local training, and for inclusion in their annual report on the local situation.

- As regards the school, whose staff had been included in the initial consultation, the project worker subsequently went in and discussed the report and its implications with key staff, and in particular with the manager of the PSHCE programme; and following this he was invited by the Head of Citizenship Studies to undertake sessions with Year 10 students. This in due course led to the development of a multi-stranded programme of work in the school, the details of which are described in a section below.

B. Work in Youth Clubs in Central & West Thamesmead

As already noted, at the outset of the project, the project worker was based in Hawksmoor Youth Club in Central Thamesmead. Here he established contact with a group of young people who were club users. He maintained contact with this group, organising a number of projects and activities, and well as having regular face-to-face discussions, over the next eighteen months. Soon after the outset of the project he also made contact with a different group of young people who were attending the Youth Club in West Thamesmead, a separate residential area near to though physically isolated from Central Thamesmead. His approach was essentially the same with each group, and many of the activities undertaken were similar.

1 Initial Work in First Year
The project worker used the initial period to establish relationships with young people attending the respective local youth clubs. He was in a good position to offer consistency to the young people by working in each club on a particular evening, familiarising himself with the workers and the members. The work he established in the clubs at this stage became the foundation for much of the work he delivered over the next three years.

Key exercises that he introduced created the space for group work – mainly discussions and exercises focusing on identity, belonging and fear of other young men. The work focused on culture and gender related games such as 'it's a man's world'. The young people taking part were encouraged to talk about themselves. The project worker was offering a sense of sameness, belonging and identity to the young people. In taking the risk in sharing experiences by exploring and expressing the real fear, the members of the groups were establishing their own group membership and bond. This section of the work was successful as it encouraged and acknowledged the safety in the relationships with the young people within the group. Once this approach was proving to be successful, it paved the way for the project worker to develop his work further.

"Is your family RACIST?" was one of the exercises introduced to the group. They were asked to state all the racist statements they had ever heard or used. One of the young people asked the project worker to make a contribution, which he did, and this had quite a powerful effect as the young people assumed that he would not offer a contribution.

This work took place with a group of young white men, and highlighted the everyday use of language with a clear understanding of what the statements meant e.g. 'spear chucker'. This was a reference made by one of the young people, who at the time was not challenged as the project worker consciously wanted to establish a relationship.

Significantly, this same young man was later a participant in football project (see below). When the project worker asked him to critique the performance of members of the opposing black/Somali team, he identified one as someone he had been to school with and commented "He's sweet". The project worker also reported that this young man, who was initially very wary of him, had over time become much closer to him, and had taken the initiative to approach him for contact and discussion outside the formal sessions. The project worker felt that these incidents were clear evidence of a positive outcome in terms of attitude and behaviour change from a young person who had initially exhibited openly racist attitudes.

- **A personal, non-confrontational approach**: The main element of the project worker's approach with these young people was based on his initial training in counselling. His method was very much person-centred and non-confrontational. He was able to engage with the young people in a non-hierarchical manner. The conversations were in depth and as a consequence it was evident that the young people wanted to talk and express their thoughts and opinions. The issues covered in these face-to-face sessions included gender, life-styles, sex, gangs and guns, relationships, violence/conflict and racism. Very quickly he had established a relationship with the young people, and with their collaboration created some very focused workshops on identity.

- **The importance of accessibility**: He also took care to make himself readily accessible to the young people, which was possible at that time because he was initially based at the Hawksmoor Youth Club. Young people would often come to the premises looking for and wanting to speak with him, and he helped them with various initiatives, including for them to prepare a funding application for some equipment. In effect, his presence there had led to the establishment of an 'unofficial drop-in centre' for a range of young people, which enabled him to continue to strengthen his relationships with them, and thus be able to address more sensitive issues with them such as racism.

- **Benefit of residential event:** This capacity was further developed by his participation in a residential session in Wales. This brought together young people from several different localities in Thamesmead, who would not normally engage with each other directly, and some of whom were peripherally involved in gang activities. He ran a conflict resolution workshop at this residential, which generated discussion on a range of issues among the young people, promoting their interaction and opening up a dialogue around issues of racism in a manner that had not been possible previously.

2 Work in Second/Third Years

During the second and third years of the project, the project worker was able to build on the foundations he had established in the first year, and to develop the level of intensity. He continued to see both groups of young people on a regular weekly basis,

and engaged them in a variety of small projects to maintain their interest and to create opportunities for awareness-raising, confidence-building and skills development. Many of them had become sufficiently confident in him to discuss personal issues with him, as well as for him to be able to challenge their views and opinions in discussion. All this allowed him the opportunity to press further on exploring sensitive issues with them, such as racism.

His work with the West Thamesmead group particularly moved forward in this direction. There had been a sharp rise in the number of violent incidents involving groups of young people of different backgrounds in the local area, some of which involved the use of knives and other weapons. The work focused on the factors responsible for these young people's attitudes to 'others', particularly to those of African descent. Sessions addressed issues such as the causes and effects of conflict, negotiation, peer pressure and non-aggressive self-defence techniques. The project worker also used films such as 'American History X' and 'The 1968 Olympics Black Power Salute' as tools for discussion, inviting the young people to compare the issues highlighted in the films to their experience locally.

Addressing racism with young people in West Thamesmead

Seven boys in this week's session, of those two were new to my discussion-based sessions. We completed the "what do you think?" question sheet on asylum seekers, immigrants and refugees. Comments made:

"They shouldn't come here and act like they own the place"

"I'm tired of all this stuff"

"This country is just so unfair to its own"

"We are the minority in England, especially around here"

This was a really good session; the energy was calm, not charged as before. This led to a more reflective time, in fact, the session continued until 9.30 as the boys did not want to leave. When asked if they needed more facts to decide on their opinions, all the boys said "no" yet when we talked they asked so many questions.

I also gave them a sheet that asks what comes to mind when you think of asylum seekers, refugees or immigrants. Comments made:

"thieves, spongers, freeloaders, dirty, beggars"

"I feel sorry for some of them"

"We just don't like them"

As we began to discuss these answers, one of the youth workers who is Somalian tells the group that he was an asylum seeker and asks if this is how they see him. Their jaws hit the floor!! Not only through embarrassment but also through the fact that they have known him so long, yet he has never shared this. He told them his story which was about fleeing the war, they lapped it up and again the questions just kept coming.

These are some of the questions that the young people asked the Somalian youth worker:

"What was it like being or living amongst bombing and people carrying guns? Is that why Somali kids like to fight with knives?"

"What did you think of England when you came here? Did you know any white people before you came here? Did you like white people before you came here?"

(from the project worker's notes)

3 Examples of Specific Activities

The project worker used a variety of activities as vehicles for engaging the young people, so that he could explore and raise awareness of issues around identity and racism with them, as well as providing them with experiences which could challenge and maybe change existing prejudices and stereotypes.

i Film Project

– One of the early initiatives he took with the young people in West Thamesmead over the summer holiday period in 2007 was a film project. This was created from some of the feedback from the first consultations and discussions held with the young people. They videoed the sessions themselves, and the DVD recorded them talking about their perceptions of what goes on in the area, the issues that concern them, and what they think should be done about them.

– The DVD has subsequently been used by the project worker as a resource for stimulating discussion and debate in workshop sessions with the young people. It has enabled both him and them to look back at 'where they were' in terms of attitudes at the outset of his contact with them, and also enables him to raise issues based on their remarks in those early sessions.

ii Hawksmoor Football Project

– Early on, a partnership was developed between the Hawksmoor Youth Club and the South East Circular Project, to use sport – or more specifically football – as a basis for educational work. This allowed young people from Hawksmoor to obtain coaching badges, become referees, or join a football team composed of young people from different parts of the local area.

– The main objective of the project was to enable the young people to interact with people from other areas and ethnic/racial groups who they wouldn't normally mix with, and thus question and change some of their attitudes towards people from these groups. An additional objective was to enable them to travel outside the Thamesmead area and thus feel less isolated geographically.

– The number of young people involved ranged from 5 to 15 young people, depending on the particularly activity, and almost all were white. On one occasion the project worker took them to a Charlton Athletic football camp where many of the participants were black. On a subsequent occasion, the worker was very surprised to find that they had gone on their own to a football coaching session in Newham, where once again almost all the participants were black. This was a group that previously had been unwilling to get on a bus on their own just to go anywhere out of the immediate area, and he felt their self-motivation and confidence to do this was a very positive outcome from the initiative. The worker also reports that later on several members of the group joined an established local football team, and therefore began travelling regularly outside the area and mixing with other young people from a wide variety of ethnic groups and backgrounds.

Attitudes of the Hawksmoor Football Group

Below are examples of the attitudes held by some of the football group, and of how these changed during the project. These are taken from the project worker's notes.

In the early stages of the football project I took the group to a Charlton Athletic football camp and we watched the DVD that I made, which led to a few frank discussions. Here are some of the comments made; "paki is not a racist term, that's what they are" "travellers are thieves and stink" "there are too many foreigners" "only bad thing about England is that we let in too many foreigners" "we should be able to say niggers; cause you can" "Muslims are bombers, why let them in" "why are there are so many black youth workers? you're alright" "we just don't like rude boys" "the poles are taking all our jobs"

The guys also saw me talking to a group of about 20 young black boys who happened to walk past the club. (I was asking them where they hang out and what would they do if they had the choice.) Once I returned to the club they went to town on me. They were petrified that I was inviting the boys to the club…" they are robbers and thieves", "I was robbed by a black boy; it was probably one of them", "Are you trying to get us beat up?"

Later, three of the group began to travel from Thamesmead to Newham in order to take part in a football project ran by the same coaches who ran the Hawksmoor project. 95% of the participants in this project were black males.

Comments afterwards from the young boys/men:

"We enjoyed the training; these guys are serious about their football"

"They were really friendly to us, they were alright, cool"

"We were the only white kids there but it was ok"

"We don't mind travelling as long as it's worth it"

"We did not feel it was unsafe but I did feel a bit intimidated"

"it did not matter what colour the boys were, we just want to do something with our lives"

iii Mural Project

– In West Thamesmead, the project worker helped a group of approximately 14 young people to start work on a mural project .The mural was to be used at the youth club. Discussions with the young people about graffiti art highlighted that they respected a well known and established graffiti artist, Astek. The project worker therefore invited Astek, who regularly undertakes community projects, to work with the young people. However the group was not aware that this artist had a speech defect, yet no one made any comments or jokes about the impediment or that he was mixed race. Again, whilst the group members were meeting to work together on the mural, they were encouraged to share their experiences in their community/school and home. This was a space for them to feel valued and willing to make powerful contributions about their notions of identity.

iv West Thamesmead Football Project (Open Talk, Open Minds)

– In late 2008, the project worker organised a football match to bring the West Thamesmead group together with a Somalian team from a Woolwich Youth Club. The two groups subsequently agreed to take part in a dinner 'to share their cultural cuisines': one group brought KFC chicken & chips and the other brought spicy chicken curry with rice.

– In August 2009 football was again arranged with the same groups. The explicit focus of the event was for each team to play the game, but whilst the game was taking place the project worker asked those who were watching from the sidelines to critique the players' level of football skill. They also had to choose the players that could form a good team. The end result was a football team created

by the young people, crossing the boundaries and creating friendships. The key question posed by the project worker was "would you consider playing on the same team?". The purpose was for the groups to recognise good football skills, achievement and aspiration as qualities of individuals, rather than basing their judgments on ethnic identity and perceptions of group difference. The positive outcome was evidenced by the swapping of phone numbers between the different groups, and the eagerness of the boys of both groups to play together more often.

– This initiative is a clear indicator of how far the West Thamesmead group had developed. Normally these two groups of young people would not interact with each other; as there is a history of hostility, racism and conflict. Earlier comments made by some of the West Thamesmead group about Somalian boys were that they were 'scum', 'low life',' bullies' and 'thieves'. Following the games the project worker would discuss with the groups the basis of the statements. This process continued in a non-threatening manner and eventually the groups began to accept that perhaps their opinions were not always true.

– This initiative, now known as the 'Open Talks, Open Minds' project, has now developed into a regular meeting between the two groups. As well as helping to reduce tensions between the groups through football, these young people will now form a single team that can be entered in local leagues. The participants will also be offered an option of six-month apprenticeship with Charlton Race Equality (certificate level 1 & 2 in coaching). This new project is a partnership between the ID Project and Greenwich Integrated Youth Service, with the project worker acting as coordinator.

4 Youth Service Perspective and Assessment

The key outcomes of the component of WWM's project that has involved first-hand work with young people linked to youth clubs in Thamesmead are the following:

1   The success of the project worker in engaging with, and gaining the confidence of young people linked to and independent of the clubs in the area.

2   His ability to sustain their interest and involvement through a range of activities, which have raised their self-awareness and sense of identity, and given them valuable skills in areas such as anger-management, conflict-resolution and self-defence.

3   Then, building on this, his success in being able to specifically address issues of racism, and to involve them in activities that – albeit largely through anecdotal evidence – have demonstrably influenced their attitudes in a positive direction (e.g. through the football projects).

It would not be reasonable to expect interventions of this kind by a single, often isolated, youth worker to have an immediate and extensive impact upon young people generally, and the overall situation, in a local area. Nonetheless, there are sufficient indications in the existing record to indicate that the project worker's interventions have undoubtedly had an impact on the specific young people he has worked with, and have addressed issues of racism in an educational way that does not seem to have been normal practice within the Youth Service.

This positive assessment is reflected in the perceptions of the project by the project worker's Youth Service co-worker in the West Thamesmead Youth Centre, by the former head of the Youth Centre, and by the Youth Service Manager for Thamesmead and neighbouring areas of the London Borough of Greenwich.

The Youth Service co-worker at West Thamesmead, who is himself Somalian by background, said that in his view the club had been essentially "turned around" as a result of the project worker's involvement. The young people attending the club had

been very prejudiced against black people, and by means of the 'football project' in particular, he and the project worker had been able to take the young people on a journey in which their new experiences had 'broken the barriers', and led them to rethink their stereotypes about other groups and build new friendships. He felt that key factors in the project worker's success were (a) his independence of the Youth Service (so that he was not constrained by bureaucratic requirements and procedures), (b) his flexible yet always targeted approach, and (c) his willingness to spend time building a relationship with the young people, to listen to them before challenging them, and to enable them to take the lead. As a result, they could resist the attitudes being handed down by their parents and families, and by some of their more prejudiced peers, and feel more confident about handling themselves in the local area as well as when going out of their 'home territory'. He felt that more work of this kind was needed, and that this approach should be incorporated into the existing work of the Youth Service.

The Youth Service Area Manager, and the former head of the West Thamesmead Centre, both also gave a very positive assessment of the work. They had not had hands-on involvement in it, but had received regular feedback that was always positive, and had kept an overview of its development. They particularly noted the strong rapport that the worker had been able to build with the young people, how the football project had helped with this, and how as a result he had been able to address sensitive issues including racism in a successful and productive manner. They did not consider that racism and racist incidents were such a major issue in the local area as they had been previously, and were not aware of any recent incidents having taken place in youth clubs. However, they agreed it was important to keep these issues on the agenda, and were in favour of preventive work, especially in the way it was being delivered with a focus around conflict resolution and identity. They felt that developing a training programme to share the skills and experiences of the project would be beneficial, and they also considered that involving young people directly in future work, eg in the form of some kind of peer education programme, would be an effective way forward. They also felt that increased multi-agency cooperation would enable such work to be more effective, and said that the Youth Service would like to have closer cooperation with schools for engaging in work of this kind.

C. Woolwich Polytechnic

Woolwich Polytechnic is a Boys Secondary School in Central Thamesmead, located near to the Hawksmoor Youth Club. It is a very large school, which draws its intake widely from across the borough, although many of the students come from the local Thamesmead area.

The project worker began working with young people in this school in late 2007. This followed the contacts he made with staff at the school during the initial mapping and consultation. He then went back to staff with his completed report, and was subsequently invited by the school to undertake a series of sessions for Year 10 students as part of their Citizenship Programme. This was the first of a variety of contributions he has made at Woolwich Polytechnic.

The two main strands to his involvement at the school have been as follows: firstly work with Year 7 & 8 students on conflict resolution and identity issues which was linked to their core curriculum, and secondly work with Year 10 & 11 students who were facing exclusion and who had been referred to him by school management.

1. Curriculum-linked work with younger age-groups
The involvement with the Year 7 & 8 students emerged as a consequence of the initial contacts the project worker made with local agencies at the outset of his work in Thamesmead. A specific teacher (now Deputy Head for Year 8) was already using material on identity and issues relating to the Holocaust, and had noticed that this focus on identity and on racism tended to be a "turn-off" for white British students. He

invited the project worker to assist him to address these issues with the students by means of extra-curricular activities and discussions, to which the project worker would bring his own particular approach and skills. From the project worker's perspective, this was a valuable opportunity to have access to a predominantly local group of young people who were growing up in an area where racist perceptions and hostility to outsiders has been an integral part of the local culture, and where young boys are at risk of being drawn into the local gang culture.

The specific activities undertaken with these younger age-groups at Woolwich Poly have consisted primarily of small workshop and group discussion sessions.

- These began in 2008, with weekly workshops for Year 7 pupils on conflict resolution, including anger management and techniques for avoiding escalation of incidents and self-defence.

- For Year 8, sessions on sex education, gender and self-esteem were also run, in partnership with Greenwich Youth Service.

- In 2009, the focus shifted more strongly to identity, and the project worker developed an art project in which the work of the black American conceptual artist Glenn Ligon (who incorporates texts around minority issues into his paintings) was used as a resource for stimulating participants to talk about their personal feelings and experiences.

Most recently, the project worker has been exploring these same issues more intensively, and with a more direct focus on racism & related issues (e.g. stereotyping, nationalism, patriotism), in a new six-week programme of hourly sessions with small groups of students from each of Years 7, 8 & 9, selected by the relevant Heads of Year. These are ethnically mixed groups, who meet on Fridays and are withdrawn from lessons for the purpose.

- The school sees these sessions not just as for students who can particularly benefit from the experience personally, but as for individuals who can also play informal leadership roles around the issues and have an influence within the peer culture. The school reports that, because the project worker is now well known and liked among students at the school, selection for participation in these sessions is highly prized, even among the white students who are less keen on or comfortable with the specific subject-matter.

- The project worker himself sees these sessions as enabling him to focus his work more directly on particular young people who may be at risk of becoming involved in racist violence. For example, he is now doing 1-1 follow-up work with one of the white participants who openly expressed strong racist views in sessions. He reports that from the comments made in the sessions there is clear evidence of shifts in attitudes away from stereotypical ideas based on ignorance to more open-minded perceptions of other groups.

2. Work with Year 10/11 students facing exclusion

Following his initial involvement with Year 7/8 groups, the project worker was also invited to work with a group of up to 12 older students from Year 10 who were facing exclusion (had received 'final warnings'), and who were participating in a specially-designed programme to meet their needs. Overt racist attitudes and behaviour were among the reasons a number of these boys were being disciplined and facing exclusion.

The manager of this programme accordingly invited the project worker to meet informally with the boys, who agreed they would like him to work with them (several previous attempts with other people had apparently been unsuccessful). As a result, he joined them for a 'residential' course which had already been arranged, and ran sessions on themes such as anger management with them, as well as taking the

opportunity for a discussion on racism. Three of the group openly expressed racist views, and one expressed a desire to join the BNP.

Subsequently, the project worker continued his involvement with this group of young people, running an 8-week 'non-contact boxing course' with them, to develop their self-defence and conflict resolution abilities. He also ran a photography project with them on the theme of identity, and took them out on trips by minivan to places such as Brick Lane and Stamford Hill. Most of them had rarely been outside their local area, and were unaware of the variety of different communities living in London. They made a photographic record of these trips, not only of the locations but also of the people living there such as Orthodox Jews, whom they spoke with in order to ask permission to take their photographs. These trips were designed to challenge their assumptions about people and places, and to help them to develop a more positive image of London as a multi-ethnic city and to raise their self-esteem about their own identity and position within it.

Photography project, January 2009

A comment made by one of the young people while out on a trip:

"Are you trying to say that I am racist? It's got nothing to do with that. I don't know the people, don't know the area - I'm out of my comfort zone!".

An account of a trip from the project worker's notes:

Six boys in the session. The aim for today was to head out on the street and give the boys a chance to get used to using a camera. Initially I thought there might be an issue with the facilitator being non-white but it was cool as he is a hip-hop/grime and a fashion photographer. He showed them some of his work and talked about boys from Thamesmead who he has photographed, which got their attention. After a briefing from the tutor, off we went. We were given a tour of Abbey Wood that was led by the boys, which was an eye opener. Lots of different types of communities here including a large traveller's site. It seems a bit of a rough area, which all the boys hate.

Overall I would say that this was a really good session for a number of reasons. First it was great being able to sit back and observe the group. John (chap who wants to join the BNP) did not leave the tutor's side, they were engrossed in conversation most of the time, mostly talking about music and meeting different artists. It was also evident that he is a bit detached from the other boys, not much conversation. In fact I would say it appeared that they did not have much time for him. Standing back made me think that this boy is quite vulnerable, I'm convinced his racist attitude is a way to gain favour with his peers.

Secondly it meant that the boys spoke to people, asking them if they would pose for pictures. Some people were only too willing to get involved, some were funny. I guess the day had a real community feeling, young people doing something different. They took about 800 shots, some were really good. One boy in particular, Tom seemed to have a natural eye for pictures, he was trying all sorts of techniques and used several props. I think we got a good flavour of the area, particularly the people and the skyline. In the end we walked for about three hours which was tiring, but worth it.

(The young men's names have been changed in the account above.)

An initiative with African boys

Alongside the above, the project worker also worked with a group of Year 9 African boys, who (in his words) "have all expressed a hatred for white people and have admitted to carrying out several violent and unprovoked attacks on innocent members of the public". He first engaged with this group during a workshop on conflict-resolution, and they asked to continue working with him around identity issues. The project worker considers that one beneficial outcome of this work is that the experience has been cathartic for these young people, but a second is that it has led them to more positive action. Specifically, when they felt they were being treated in a discriminatory way by staff, they decided to adopt negotiation as a tool for addressing their concerns, and went to discuss these with their Head of Year. The project worker felt this was a very significant change of attitude and approach by members of the group, which was a direct outcome of the work he had done with them.

3. School Perspective and Assessment

As with his work with the Youth Club groups, the project worker's objective in his work at Woolwich Polytechnic has been to contribute to the prevention of racist violence by assisting these young people – who are in an at risk age group and social environment, and some of whom admit to racist views and involvement in racist violence – to explore issues around identity, and to give them anger-management and conflict-resolution skills.

His approach has also been similar to that with the youth club groups, although he had to adapt this to a context in which, rather than building up relations slowly with individuals who participated by free choice, he had to start initially with a workshop format with groups who had been assigned as participants by the school management. Subsequently he has found it more effective to reduce the scale of his activities, and to work with individuals on a 1-1 basis so that he can build up personal relationships with them, and respond more directly to their needs and experiences.

The objectives of the school in involving the project worker were not specifically oriented towards the prevention of racist violence, but rather towards more generally increasing self-awareness and self-management of young people attending the school in relation to ethnic and gender-related issues. This reflected a view, consistent with that of WWM, that racism among young men is usually an integral part of wider aspects of personality and identity that are linked generally to 'masculinity' and the experiences of growing up particular kinds of social environments.

Staff interviewed at the school said that there was not any overt problem of racism and racist violence within the school itself, which operated successfully as an integrated multi-ethnic community. However, they were aware that the situation outside the school, in the students' families and local neighbourhoods in and around the Thamesmead area, was often very different, and that many students had prejudiced attitudes and stereotypes that derived from these backgrounds.

In the light of this, they considered that the project worker's involvement with the pupils was in practice making a significant contribution to combating racism and the prevention of racist violence, given the presence of racist attitudes in the local culture, and the pressures on young people to become involved in gang-related and other potentially racist kinds of behaviour outside the school. It was also seen as making a specific positive contribution to helping the school to break down barriers and animosities that might exist between students from different groups, and thus to build and maintain its own successful multi-cultural ethos.

As to what precisely was enabling the project worker to be successful with the students, staff said that although the school is already strong in areas such as

counselling and special needs, there were several factors that were particularly important.

- The first was that the project worker was an outsider rather part of the regular staffing structure: he was interesting and new, and students did not feel constrained as they might with their regular teachers and other staff. What was crucial, however, was that they had the opportunity to get to know him, and feel confident in him, and discover that sessions with him were rewarding and beneficial for them.

- This points up the second key factor in the project worker's success as seen by the school: his style and skills for working with young people on sensitive issues, especially around racism and identity. Crucial here were that he took plenty of time to build up a relationship with them before opening up such issues, that he allowed them space to express their opinions and experiences and to feel comfortable in doing so, and that he did not try to 'teach' or 'judge' them in any way. On the other hand, the school noted that, having won this confidence, the project worker could then press the students hard on issues and their opinions, but was always fair and rigorous. The school also valued the way he was able to use his own identity as a black male worker as a resource for challenging the students' assumptions about other people.

D. Greenwich College

During 2008, the project worker also began working in Greenwich Community College, a large further education institution with its main base in Plumstead, an area adjacent to Thamesmead. The College draws its students from across the borough of Greenwich, and is very multi-ethnic in student composition.

1. Main activities

The project worker's involvement came about through links between the College's Student Liaison Officer and the Youth Service. It was initiated in response to staff concern over tensions between black and white students in the student common room. This was a space that had in practice become dominated by black Nigerian and West Indian young men (mostly in the 16-19 year age group), resulting in many white young people and girls feeling too intimidated to enter the student union lounge. Working in cooperation with the Student Support Officer, the project worker engaged with the students, and introduced a six-week programme of sessions on conflict resolution, involving group exercises and discussions. These covered issues such as identity, culture and coping with violence, and included physical fitness training, non-contact boxing and self-defence techniques. Sports sessions were also organised, along with some separate sessions for girls. The broad aim was to break down the existing male-dominated culture of the student union, and make the premises accessible and beneficial for all.

The view of staff at the College was that the project worker's involvement proved very successful, and the culture of student area was basically turned round. The key factors were seen as the project worker's ability to relate to the students as a black male and his particular skills for working with young people. In particular, it was his ability to successfully engage with the young people, by winning their confidence and 'bringing them out', so that the issues could be addressed openly with them. Several of the students who had originally been seen as the most problematic were subsequently given roles as 'supervisors' within the student common room, so that they could develop their leadership skills and become part of the solution rather than of the problem. The project worker remained in regular touch with these students on an informal basis subsequently, through his ongoing visits to and presence in the College.

Subsequently the project worker's activities have expanded to assist the Student Support Officer in a number of other ways, and in particular in his mentoring work with

students who are referred for behaviour problems and are 'on report' while facing the prospect of exclusion. These activities have included helping with sports activities, running a DJ workshop, doing sessions on money management, and working on a 1–1 basis with individual students as appropriate. As evidence of the success of the project officer's involvement, the Student Support Officer cites the fact that of 8 students 'on report' who they worked with during the last academic year, only 1 was eventually excluded.

The project worker has also been involved in wider activities within the College. Most notably, as a contribution to Black History Month in October 2008, he was invited to give a presentation to students and staff on the '1968 Olympics Black Power Salute'. He showed a documentary film that illustrated the injustices faced by Black Americans, and how the successful black athletes had drawn attention to these by their actions. This event is featured on the School website.

2. College Perspective and Assessment

From the college's perspective, however, the project worker's involvement has not been seen as specifically or directly oriented towards preventing racism and racist violence. Staff did not consider there to be any problem of overt racism within the school, and felt there was good mixing between ethnic groups in the College. The staff view was that the initial problems in the student union were not ones of racism, but rather ones more to do with gender and life-style of particular groups of young people, viz. a very loud and aggressive style of behaviour by some groups of young black men, who were insensitive and unaware of its impact on others.

Nonetheless, staff were well aware of the history of racism in the local area and that that the situation was different outside in the community, and that the attitudes and behaviour of students from different backgrounds were influenced by their families, especially their perceptions of and attitudes to other ethnic groups. Staff therefore felt that the work being done by the project worker and others on addressing identity and conflict issues within the school was extremely relevant to the prevention of racist violence, both within the school and in giving the young people the awareness and skills to prevent or defuse such incidents externally. By building mutual understanding and respect among groups within the school's multi-ethnic student body, and by providing young people with self-management and conflict-resolution skills, they would be better equipped for life in a multi-ethnic society generally.

Overall, the staff view was that the project worker had brought a number of qualities and skills that helped them to address the specific initial problem in the student common room, and then to support ongoing mentoring and other work with students at risk of exclusion. Staff particularly cited the open-minded and non-judgmental approach of the project worker, his patience in listening to the various points of view, and his skills for defusing conflict situations. The project worker had brought new approaches that strengthened the work they were already doing, and they had learned a great deal from working with him.

Overall assessment

Working with Men's 'ID Project' has been oriented primarily towards achieving, within the Thamesmead area of the London Borough of Greenwich, the first broad objective of the Preventing Racist Violence Initiative: "to change the attitudes and behaviour of potential perpetrators of racist violence".

At the outset of the project, WWM identified the specific outcomes it aimed to achieve with the young men targeted to be:

• increased awareness of issues related to identity, being a man and racial violence;

• increased confidence in dealing with conflict and potentially violent incidents;

- increased confidence in communication skills and their sense of themselves;

- increased sense of belonging to Thamesmead as a whole.

The WWM project has fully addressed these issues with a number of different groups of young men in a variety of settings (principally youth clubs and educational institutions), and there is clear evidence that the various interventions have had a significant positive impact in all of these directions. This evidence consists primarily of the records and observations of the project worker, supported by the perceptions and experiences of other professionals connected with the work.

This outcome has been achieved through the adoption and implementation of a well-defined approach, exemplified by the consistent work (described above) undertaken by the project worker over the three-year period.

The approach shows similarities with the approach adopted in the earlier Bede House Anti-Racist Youth Work Project, conducted in Bermondsey in the 1990s, the only previously documented project using similar methods. The Coordinator of that project, Aine Woods, has been working closely with the project worker and the external evaluators to assist documentation of what has been achieved, and her assessment of the crucial features of WWM's approach that have enabled it to be successful are as follows:

1 It provided the young people with an opportunity to understand the fear of other young people, to explore the notion of self in a supportive and non confrontational manner. It was also a process which encouraged young men to listen to their own voice and each other's. It also worked at breaking the taboo about crossing territories through the effective use of football and art.

2 The work created a platform for young men to voice their opinions and share with each other their fears and misconceptions about race and identity. It also challenged a belief system which for some was quite entrenched. The understanding of conflict, both internal and external, was explored in a sensitive and respectful way.

3 The project worker did not attempt to re-create a 'culture' of the area or patch, rather he respected an already established system that has been in existence for some time. He did not approach the work as a medium for change but more as a tool to listen to the voice of the young people, therefore moving at their own pace.

4 The work also considered the mental health well-being of the young people, focusing on understanding conflict and anger management. And a further key component of the work was effective collaboration with colleagues within other agencies such as schools and colleges.

Overall, the approach can be characterised as a clear example of good practice within the youth work field for action to prevent racist violence among young people at risk of involvement in such activities.

The practical implications for future work, however, are ones of how to multiply the use of this approach in appropriate agencies in and beyond the local area, and how to mainstream it into the regular work of schools and the youth service, so that it can indeed achieve this broader impact in due course. The fact that the Trust has already agreed an extension of funding for WWM to develop training and guidance materials based on the work is a positive step in this direction, and WWM is already in process of preparing this 'tool-kit'. However, the willingness of the local agencies to cooperate in this process and to implement the approach in their work will also be essential.

Key Lessons from WWM's Project

1 The importance of initial mapping and consultation for planning and implementing subsequent work in any specific local area.

2 The beneficial use of sport and cultural activities as vehicles for awareness-raising, breaking down stereotypes and building inter-relations among young people across different areas & ethnic groups.

3 The importance of taking young people out of their own neighbourhoods and widening their geographical and social experience.

4 The importance of skills, sensitivity, patience, time, and continuity in undertaking work with young people on sensitive issues such as racism and identity.

5 The impact of the ethnicity of the worker, and the opportunities it creates for awareness-raising.

6 The need to create trust and a 'safe environment' when working with young people, before addressing sensitive issues like racism.

7 While in areas such as Thamesmead, all young people may be seen as 'at risk' of involvement in racist violence, more in-depth 1-1 work may be needed with individuals displaying strong and overt racist attitudes.

8 The advantages of an independent single worker: flexibility, responsiveness, can build up personal relationships.

9 The disadvantages of an independent single worker: isolation, small-scale operations, lack of support.

10 The danger that good work may get lost, and not be sustained or built on, if it is not strategic and supported by organisations: such a framework should be established at the outset.

11 The need for independent workers to be able to cooperate with agencies and draw on their resources without being co-opted.

12 Local youthwork and educational agencies need to mainstream work focusing on issues of racism and identity, and develop the awareness and skills to do this in all staff.

13 Specialist advice and support need to be available to agencies for this purpose.

4. Leap Confronting Conflict: the 'fair share' project

Summary

Leap set out to develop a programme of work in Bexley for preventing racist violence by young people, by using their well-established strategy of building and supporting teams of 'peer educators' who would engage directly with their peers.

Leap's approach involves addressing issues around racism in the context of identity issues more generally, reflecting their view that racism needs to be understood and tackled in the context of a wider range of issues including class, gender and territoriality. This approach is reflected in Leap's training methods and materials, which have been further developed for the project to include a specific focus on racism.

Working in partnership with Bexley Youth Service, with whom they already had an established relationship, they began work initially in the Welling area, engaging young people and youth workers through the local youth club. This initial work ran into some difficulties, particularly as some of the local staff were not happy about what they saw as the presumption that there was a problem of racism in the area.

Thanks to their strong partnership relationship with a senior manager of Bexley Youth Service, Leap were able to restructure their approach. Instead they began work with a new group of young people recruited from across the borough, to train them to become peer educators and leaders more generally in addressing these issues among young people. These young people have subsequently taken a variety of initiatives to address race and identity issues with their peers, both in their own clubs and schools, and within frameworks such as Black History Month and Anti-Bullying Week.

Leap were also able to grasp an opportunity that arose to build a successful programme of cooperation with a local school which, following an OFSTED report, had come under pressure to address these issues. Here a systematic approach is being used whereby teams of Year 9 students have been recruited and trained to work across the school as peer educators on race and identity issues.

More recently Leap also began a strategic programme of work with Charlton Athletic Community Trust, beginning with a programme of training for sports coaches and other staff who work with young people across the borough.

In these ways Leap now has initiatives in place with several key partners in the borough of Bexley and these initiatives continue to be ongoing.

Background

A. Leap: The Organisation

Leap Confronting Conflict (Leap) is a youth charity which works nationally with young people aged 13-21 years, mainly from disadvantaged and excluded backgrounds, to explore the causes and consequences of conflict in their lives and to find solutions.

Since 1987 Leap has offered a range of training courses for both young people and adults who work with young people. The course topics include training in Peer Mediation, Leadership Skills, Gangs and Territorialism, Identity and Prejudice as well as training in designing and facilitation skills for workshop delivery. Leap has well developed methodologies to fulfil its objectives and a range of programmes that include action research, youth-led programmes and dissemination of high quality resource materials and manuals.

- Leap describe their training style as "lively, engaging, challenging, rigorous and fun". They use a variety of training methods and techniques, including drama exercises, games, image work and group discussions, as means of developing skills and understanding among the young people and adults they work with.

- Leap has a core staff, together with a substantial pool of experienced professional trainers, of mixed gender and ethnicity, who deliver their adult and youth training and consultancy programmes around the country.

- Leap works closely with – and provides services to - a wide range of partner organisations in its work with young people, and especially with schools, youth services and youth offender institutions.

- Within these frameworks, Leap places strong emphasis on ensuring young people's voices are heard and empowering them to identify and then find their own solutions to their problems, especially in the fields of identity and conflict. Peer mediation, conflict resolution frameworks and peer education are central tools in Leap's approach.

Leap has a number of youth programmes funded by a variety of funding bodies. These include an accredited course for 16–21 year-olds on conflict resolution, peer mediation and facilitation skills, and a national peer mediation project (PeerLink) which is Leap's network for young people involved in peer mediation and conflict resolution across the country. A major project on Gangs and Territorialism was recently completed, and this led to recognition of the need for further action research around the issue of identity and territorialism among young people. The current project focusing on preventing violence, entitled 'Fair Share', is one of three projects that have followed-on from this earlier work. The other two focus on young people and weapons ('Fear and Fashion' project) and intergenerational conflict on a housing estate.

B. The Local Context: Welling/Bexley

Leap's 'Fair Share' project has been based in the London Borough of Bexley. The reasons for this choice were firstly that Leap, through initial desk research, had identified Bexley as an area in need of and appropriate for anti-racism work, and secondly that they had already developed a successful working relationship with Bexley Youth Service (BYS), built around delivery of a training programme for staff on race and diversity issues.

The Borough of Bexley is predominantly white in terms of population, but the area has a history of serious racist incidents and of BNP activity. At the last Census, 91%

of the population of Bexley classified themselves as white, and only 8.9% were ethnic minorities - compared to 29% across Greater London as a whole. However, the proportion of ethnic minorities in the population in Bexley has been increasing sharply, particularly in the Thamesmead area. Leap had noted that academic research indicated that "areas most likely to support racism are those, which are racially homogenous, but near to others where there is dramatic change".

Within this wider borough context, Leap & BYS specifically identified Welling as a suitable location in which to work, firstly because of their opportunity to engage with an established group of young people at Welling Youth Centre, and secondly because Welling's predominantly white population make-up reflected the above situation. They were also aware that during the 1990s the headquarters of the BNP had been adjacent to the Club, which had been regularly vandalized by BNP supporters. Although the BNP had not been active in the borough after the headquarters were closed in 1995, there has recently been increased activity in neighbouring boroughs, and race-based gangs have also started to emerge in Bexley. Given this history and the general character of the neighbourhood, they felt that Welling would be a location for potential maximum impact for working with young white people on these issues.

C. Project Approach

Leap's approach in the project has been to use its existing and well-tested methodology of youth engagement and peer leadership training in conflict resolution and identity (as indicated above), and to adapt it to anti-racist work.

The principal objectives of Leap's project were to:

- Work with young people in the London Borough of Bexley through the use of interactive training programmes on the themes of conflict, identity and prejudice.

- Work with local services to identify young people who are potential perpetrators of racism and engage them with interactive, bespoke training programmes.

- Monitor attitudinal change of young people on our training programmes, particularly in respect of identity, culture, race, prejudice and stereotyping.

- Support them back in their communities to deliver conflict resolution workshops to others either within the youth service or in schools or in local community centres with adults.

So far as the actual training offered to the young people is concerned, the approach developed for the project, for use in the workshops with young people who are to act as peer educators, takes them through a series of stages.

- The first stage is to enable them to explore their own identities and experiences of oppression, and this is then followed by introducing broader models of prejudice.

- The second stage involves providing them with an opportunity to explore how prejudice and oppression operate in society, and more specifically in their own communities and schools.

- The third stage involves developing their skills for addressing these issues subsequently in their local environments, and helping them to work out what their role will be and how to implement it.

Leap developed a number of exercises and other materials to support the implementation of this approach, and examples are provided in the sections below.

D. Project Staffing

Leap's project has been overseen throughout the three years by an experienced project manager who already had a good working relationship with BYS. This continuity from before and then during the project has provided an important element of stability and oversight, as well as assuring the robustness of Leap's core partnership arrangement.

Delivery of the training has involved a number of trainers, varied in ethnic identity, and all contracted in from Leap's trainer pool to undertake specific tasks. Although they were all experienced and skilled trainers, the task of addressing race and identity issues in the sensitive context of Welling has presented them with new challenges. There were also indications that a lack of continuity of trainers in the early stages of the project was adversely affecting the commitment of some of the young people to remain engaged with the project. Subsequently, however, one of the trainers who had been particularly successful in working with the young people on the issues then took on a lead responsibility for implementation and coordination. He has been able to build strong and effective working relations both with the staff of partner organizations and with the young people themselves, and has been able to provide continuity and confidence at the level of practical implementation of the project..

Partners

Leap's approach has required working with and through key partner organisations. Leap's primary partner has been Bexley Youth Service. BYS has been able to provide Leap with access to young people for work on racism and identity issues, both in youth clubs and on borough-wide initiatives in the field of peer education. All Leap's activities with BYS have been planned and implemented in close consultation and cooperation with senior management of the Service, and principally with the Youth Development Coordinator who has played a major role in facilitating Leap's work in the borough. From the perspective of BYS, Leap has been able to bring expertise for work on important issues that they did not have the skills and resources to address in such a targeted way internally.

Leap's two other main local partners for the project have been Bexleyheath School, and Charlton Athletic Community Trust. Both organisations were enlisted more recently, as complements or extensions to the core work with BYS. As with BYS, both involve strategically planned work, in which Leap's special expertise is added to and assists the ongoing programmes of the agencies (see below). The partnerships are in both cases led at senior management level in the organisation, and this has been an important ingredient for their success to date, in work that continues to be ongoing.

Activities undertaken

Leap's activities in the London Borough of Bexley have consisted of:

• An initial 'conflict audit' of the area.

• Work with Bexley Youth Service, consisting primarily of:
  – Initial work in Welling Youth Club
  – Subsequent work with a Bexley-wide group of peer educators

• A programme of peer educator training in Bexleyheath School.

• Training for staff at Charlton Athletic Community Trust.

The following sections provide detailed information on each of the above.

A. Local Conflict Audit

Leap's first action on starting work in Welling was to conduct a 'conflict audit' of the neighbourhood. This is Leap's standard practice on beginning work in a local area, and is defined by Leap as "a method of interviewing local people by stopping them and asking them their views and opinions of their area, so that local priorities and concerns are properly understood." The street conflict audit was complemented by a series of informal interviews with small groups of young people at Welling Youth Club, and was then followed up in a discussion with local professionals and service providers about the findings and their implications.

The street conflict audit was conducted by two Leap staff over two full days in January 2008. They targeted the area in and around Welling Youth Club and Welling School. However, because of poor weather, they were obliged to undertake many of the interviews in local shops, cafes and pubs. In this way they spoke to a total of 42 local people, of mixed ethnicity and gender, with ages ranging from 11 years to the late 60s. Most, however, were in their 20s or older, so that the picture obtained specifically from the street audit was primarily of the perceptions of adult residents in the area.

According to the report of the street audit, two main themes emerged: youth culture and community change.

- Youth culture was a central theme of concern in all conversations with adults, as well as with some of the young people. Specific concerns included groups moving around the area, hanging around on the streets, drinking, intimidation and lack of respect, use of drugs, and graffiti and vandalism.

- There were some mixed views on the merits of the area as a place to live. But all agreed that there had been major changes taking place in the local community, with new nationalities and cultural groups moving in, with a breakdown of inter-generational understanding and respect, and with a feeling that the area was no longer as safe as it used to be. White respondents expressed particular concern at the change in the ethnic composition of the area, but also stressed that the BNP were no longer active in the area and said that racism was no longer the problem that it used to be. However, responses from several of the ethnic minority interviewees quoted in the report indicated that they did not share this view, and experienced racism as a continuing problem.

The interviews with the young people at the club, who were all white and whose ages ranged from 11–16 years, indicated mixed attitudes towards the local area, and reflected much of the content and the racial perceptions of the white adults in the street audit. While the area was seen as fairly boring, it was liked because it was perceived as relatively safe and friendly compared with neighbouring localities, and because it was mainly white. Their main concerns were about gangs and the perceived effects of black people moving into the area, and many incidents were cited of themselves or others being abused, beaten up or robbed by black people. The following box illustrates the racialised character of their attitudes and perceptions:

"The area's good coz there's no blacks."

"The youth club's OK coz there's no black people. John (black youth worker, name changed), he's OK, he's alright coz he doesn't stab people does he. Well, he might do, but I dunno."

"Some of them are alright. Not the pure black ones. Half castes are OK."

"Everyone around us knows each other – you could ask us about anyone. All the trouble comes from the black people, the pakis. I'm not racist, but I've always been mugged by black people."

"I feel like I belong here. Blacks shouldn't be here. I think the Turks, Muslims and blacks should get here; and the white, Italians, Chinese and Spanish should get there – and we should fight."

"We should only let in Italians and Chinese. Blacks are just blacks – they run around with tazer guns killing white people for no reason. The Muslims came and bombed London, innit."

"There are loads of fights and stabbings coz there are too many black people in this country, they're taking over. They're building new houses just for them."

"You know this is true coz you see it on the news every day – the blacks getting off the planes. And my parents talk about it."

"It's difficult to get on with them (blacks) coz they go over the top. You'll have a disagreement with one of them and then they'll be like, they want to fight about it and hurt you."

"There are different groups in the school. There are some black guys in my year and they're the ones that mug the Year 8's. There's this one black guy who's ok, but he's a bit…."

"Black people come down here from Thamesmead – like T-Block. There was this time last year, there were loads of them outside school, they had balaclavas on. It's happened a few times. They use knives to mug us. They're always older."

"I'm not being racist but I'm more scared of black people than white people coz they're the ones that create the trouble."

"They always say we're being racist about small things. It's like black people can say something and it's ok, but if a white person says it, then you're racist."

The follow-up meeting with local professionals and service providers involved youth workers, community safety officers and a schools development worker. Commenting on the findings of the street audit, they emphasised or added the following key points:

- The "I'm not racist but" approach was seen as very common, and something they had grown up with hearing from local people.

- Whereas elsewhere in London racism can often be 'in your face', in Welling it is both quieter but also more entrenched.

- Racist incidents are very under-reported, although more mechanisms are now in place to encourage it.

- Practices in schools can encourage racism: e.g. in a recent inter-racial fight, the school said there was no racist element, but only the white pupil was excluded. Whites feel they do not get 'fair treatment'.

- 'Gangs' receive a lot of media attention, but most young people are not directly involved, though they often pretend to be, so as to benefit from the 'power of association'.

- The sense of territorialism is strong, as evidenced by the large number of English flags on display.

- Family can be a major influence on young people: parent-child conflict is common, and many come from broken (or breaking-up) families.

In the light of their initial desk and street research, Leap concluded that the following were the key elements that were emerging specifically as regards racist or discriminatory attitudes and behavior in the local area.

- Older inhabitants of the area making reference to 'them incomers' who they see as changing (and in effect destroying) the makeup of the local community.

- Young people were more willing to engage in conversations about race and were more likely than adults to express explicitly racist points of view

- Some of the ethnic minority shopkeepers and workers of the town told of being recently attacked and of being regularly verbally racially abused.

- Fear of local young people was the biggest focus of adults of all ethnicities in Welling. Young people were identified as the ones who sometimes harass, verbally abuse and attack ethnic minorities in the area.

The data from the audit were subsequently used by Leap primarily to decide the specific methods and content for the training sessions with the young people.

- One key lesson was the need not to focus too narrowly on issues of racism, given on the one hand that it was overtly denied, and on the other that racialised perceptions were interlinked with many other issues, such as concerns over immigration, housing, safety, gangs, and so on.

- A second was the need to adopt an open, flexible and conversation-based style, allowing the young people to voice their strong opinions and to explore issues at their own pace, rather than dictating or overtly pushing agendas with them.

> The results of the audit also sensitised Leap to consider issues such as the impact of the ethnic identity of trainers on the young people in the sessions, and also the impact of the young people's strongly racist views on the trainers – both at the personal level (especially for the BME trainers) and on what techniques they would need to use to respond to these in the training context. This, and subsequent experiences in initial training sessions, led Leap to withdraw one of their less experienced black trainers, and to insert one of their most experienced white trainers on identity issues into the leading role in the team working with the young white people.

B. Work with Bexley Youth Service

As already noted, Bexley Youth Service (BYS) has acted as Leap's main partner organisation for its work in Bexley. Leap's relationship with BYS predates the project, and the partnership therefore already had firm foundations which could be built on.

> Bexley Youth Service is the youth work agency of the London Borough of Bexley. It undertakes work with young people aged between 11 and 25 years, aimed at facilitating and supporting their personal development and their capability to play a role in the wider community. It cooperates with a wide variety of other agencies, and its activities are focused on four core curriculum areas: health and economic well-being, personal achievement, self and social awareness, and citizenship. It runs five youth centres, undertakes detached street-work across the borough, organises specific projects, and runs the Bexley Youth Council.

The following sections describe the main components of Leap's partnership work with BYS.

1. Initial work in Welling Youth Club

Following consultation with Bexley Youth Service, Welling Youth Club had been identified as the most appropriate location for Leap's initial work in the area. The reasons for this choice have already been explained above.

Work in the club began at the beginning of 2008, and proceeded in parallel with the conflict audit carried out in Welling. To begin with, training sessions were provided for young people, and these were followed by workshops for staff. However, several difficulties were encountered and the work was not able to proceed as had been intended, and in due course Leap decided not to continue focusing their work on Welling and on particular youth clubs, and to work with BYS on adopting a borough-wide approach instead.

- The first activity was to hold two 'taster sessions' with a group of 12 young white people in their early teens at the Youth Club in January 2008. These young people, who attended both the Club and Welling School, had been recruited at relatively short notice and with no preparation, following a period of some disturbances at the club. The trainers therefore had to scale back their original aspirations, and instead concentrated on using the opportunity to get to know the young people and to explore issues with them, so that hopefully more focused training for equipping them to become peer educators could be undertaken subsequently.

- These were followed by three 2-day workshops organised for Bexley Youth Service staff at the Youth Club, beginning in March 2008. During the previous year, prior to the start of the project, these staff had already received awareness training on 'race and diversity' issues from Leap trainers (as part of a Bexley-wide training initiative for youth workers), and so were familiar with both the issues and Leap's work. The new workshops were more practical in orientation, and focused respectively on "Working with Challenging Behaviour', 'Working with Diversity and Conflict', and 'Working with Gangs'. Delivering workshops on these themes to youth workers is part of the staple work of Leap's trainers, who are both experienced in such delivery, and in doing so in a variety of different geographical areas.

- The third workshop focusing on gangs, which was held in July - some months after the first two, involved a new set of Leap trainers and also recruited some additional youth workers from across the borough. During this workshop, tensions developed between some of the participants and the Leap trainers, resulting in several of the Welling workers leaving and not returning for the second day. The focus of these tensions appears to have been a disagreement over whether racism was a significant issue locally and which therefore needed to be addressed. Leap's trainers appear to have been perceived as 'outsiders' who were driving the issue of racism because of a prior agenda they had brought with them. By contrast, the youth worker participants, who lived within the local community, felt that racism was no longer such an issue and was being exaggerated, and therefore rejected the approach being taken by Leap's trainers which they considered to be inappropriate and an unjustified criticism of their community.

- This breakdown in the relationship with the staff was followed by an incident at the Youth Club that further obstructed Leap's plans to work with this group of young people. Following some disruptive behaviour the previous day, the group were banned from the Club, and Leap's workers were unable to proceed with the second stage of their workshop programme on conflict resolution with the young people, which was also the stage for selection for participation together with Leap's trainers in a forthcoming residential event.

At this point it was becoming clear that Leap's original plan to focus their work specifically on Welling Youth Club was no longer viable. Leap and BYS therefore explored the possibilities of working with the local secondary school or a neighbouring youth club with as alternatives.

- The local secondary school was a potentially attractive option as it is adjacent to the youth club and could still provide access to the young people who had been initially involved. BYS was also interested as it had received reports of possibly racially-motivated incidents at the school. However, the school had recently been placed under 'special measures' following an OFSTED report, and therefore wanted to concentrate on core school work rather than taking on an extra-curricular programme of work with young people as Leap/BYS proposed.

- The neighbouring youth club seemed a more promising option as it was multi-racial in its atmosphere and clientele, and an older, more mature group of young people in their late teens was identified. They were motivated to become involved in the work, because one of the club members had recently been the victim of a racially-motivated murder (Robert Knox: some of the group had witnessed this event), and the group were already engaged in activities locally to try to raise awareness of racist violence and the need to prevent it. However, the whole experience had evidently been very traumatic for them, and both Leap and the youth workers felt the young people wouldn't be ready for a programme on conflict resolution so quickly after losing their friend, and what they needed at this stage was professional support in terms of grief counselling.

2. Bexley-wide group of peer educators

By the autumn of 2008, therefore, it had become fully clear to Leap that their original strategy, of focusing particularly on the area of Welling, was not proving feasible. At this point, one of the particular strengths of Leap's approach in Bexley – building a strong partnership with a committed senior manager in the Youth Service – proved important. After jointly reviewing the difficulties Leap had encountered in attempting to work specifically in Welling, the BYS Manager proposed a different approach, one of "how to grow your own youth workers".

- Instead of working in a single club, selected young people would be recruited via the range of youth clubs across the borough, and transport provided to bring them together for training sessions centrally – a process which would also facilitate their formation as a borough-wide group.

- They would be equipped to become leaders and peer educators for their fellow young people in their particular areas, and at the same time to become a cadre of trainee youth workers of the future.

- Leap's trainers would add the dimension of addressing race and identity issues to their training, and also equip them with facilitation skills for this purpose.

To drive and support this new, rejuvenated phase of their programme, Leap brought back in one of the trainers who had been involved earlier, who was white and who was particularly experienced in this type of work, to coordinate Leap's involvement in the initiative. He began by spending time in the youth clubs, meeting the staff and young people and familiarising them with Leap's project in order to gain their support.

The BYS manager's Bexley-wide 'home-grown' group consisted of young people had been recruited directly as individuals, and not formally through or on behalf of the youth clubs they might attend. It was envisaged that they might well subsequently return to do some work in the youth clubs they attended, but that they would do so independently, and directly with other young people as peers (i.e. rather than through established youth work staff). Although the scope of their work remained broadly

defined as addressing issues of conflict resolution and identity, it was also made clear that this would include a specific focus on the issue of racism.

Following a pre-meeting in November 2008, between February and April 2009 Leap ran 4 evening sessions for this group of young people. These were followed by an intensive 3-day course in July, which had been specifically designed for the purpose, under the title "Young Leaders' Training: Working with Challenging Behaviour, Identity and Prejudice". Based on the concept of 'Dangerous Conversations, Safe Spaces', the aim of the course was to equip the young people with the skills and confidence to engage their peers, in both formal and informal settings, in discussion and debate on sensitive issues which were likely to arouse strong feelings – including the issue of racism. The idea was not only help them with the skills to raise such issues and manage the discussions, but also how to create an atmosphere and environment in which people would feel comfortable and secure for sharing their views and experiences on these issues with others.

The feedback from the participants at the end of the course was very positive. They appreciated the style of the training, and especially enjoyed the use of games and the open and friendly way the trainers related to them. They felt they had gained understanding of prejudice and how it can affect people, and also how to avoid and deal with conflict, and they were keen to extend this understanding further and to apply it in their own work with young people.

The trainers' evaluation was also generally positive. They felt that the young people had engaged well, and the workshop had set the foundation for a long-term relationship with the group. They also felt that the materials that had been specially developed for dealing with issues around prejudice and identity more generally, and in particular around the ideas of the 'pyramid of hate' and the relation between the oppressed and the oppressor, had been successful in providing a framework for exploring core issues with the young people.

However, the trainers also noted that the issue of race remained largely unspoken, and they tended to have to raise the issue with the young people themselves to begin the more challenging conversations. Most participants placed more emphasis on other forms of prejudice that they were experiencing, especially around age, gender and class (the latter being particularly salient for them in the opinion of the lead trainer). The presence of a single black participant within an otherwise all-white group appeared to be an inhibiting factor as regards addressing the race issue explicitly, but the trainers also felt there was also an entrenched 'colour-blindness' among the white group and that this could mask implicit racist attitudes. As a consequence, the trainers recognised they needed to think further about how they could be more explicit about the race dimension during future training, while still ensuring that the environment would be a safe one for the black member of the group.

Example of an exercise focusing on identity

The following is one of the core exercises which Leap has used to train the borough-wide peer educators group in Bexley, as well as year 9 students at Bexleyheath school (see subsequent section below). It enables young people to explore their own identities, as a prelude to exploring the nature of prejudice and conflict more generally, and how these arise in their own communities.

My Identity: 4 Pictures of Me

Intention: For participants to reflect on how they see their identity, how others may perceive them, and how this might lead to conflict.

Process: Each participant takes a piece of paper and draws an image to express their own identities, using the following four questions:

- I see myself as…

- Other people see me as…

- This is what I do/skills I have…

- This is how I'd like to be seen

Debrief: The conversation following this exercise focuses on the diversity (visible and invisible) already in the room. Questions are used to support the young people to explore whether their different identities – or perceived identities – could lead to conflict, and how they felt about other people seeing them differently to how they saw themselves.

In the Bexley-wide peer educators group, a number of the young people found it very challenging to identify how others would see them, apart from being the same as how they saw themselves. After some conversation it became clear that the young people who had a stronger sense of how others saw them were the one young black member of the group (who was able to identify the negative stereotypes relating to young black men) and two young women (who felt that they were often stereotyped about the area they lived in and how they dressed).

When this exercise was used at Bexleyheath School, the young people were much more able to identify how other people saw them, particularly in terms of their perceived class which was based on the school that they went to and the area that they lived in. It became clear that many of the young people were unhappy to be stereotyped as 'chavs' involved in crime, and that this experience of prejudice made them feel anger and frustration at the outside world. The trainers used this conversation as a springboard with the group to begin exploring whether they had also stereotyped other people. The young people identified that other racial groups, and supporters of particular football teams were seen as acceptable targets; however, they began to recognise that their experiences of prejudice were very similar to those they were involved with perpetrating against others.

Subsequently, this group of young people (totalling 10 in all, with an age-range from 15–24 years) were active in a number of contexts over the summer and early autumn of 2009, including running their own workshops in their youth clubs for Black History Month & Anti-Bullying Week. Other follow-up activities included:

- Several participated in an outward-bound residential course where they worked with a group of young people on issues around oppression using training tools provided to them by Leap.

- Another member of the group returned to his youth centre and ran a six-session programme for excluded pupils on issues around prejudice and identity, again using materials from Leap's programme, including evaluation tools.

- A further four were supported to run two one-hour sessions on conflict and prejudice at Welling Youth Club. This was recognised as a major success for the programme given the previous difficulties in accessing the youth club, and one which can probably be attributed to the young people running the training themselves rather it being delivered by external trainers.

In September 2009, Leap held a further full-day workshop with the group, which included a review session of their work, but which focused primarily on developing their facilitation skills and planning future one-hour sessions that they would run. The trainers noted not only the range of activities the young people had undertaken subsequently, but also the extent to which they had grasped the concepts that had been introduced in the previous training and were applying them in their own work.

Subsequently, the group has continued to meet regularly and engage in a wide range of peer-education activities, under the personal support and guidance of the BYS Youth Development Manager. They have run a range of sessions for their peers, had placements in clubs, have secured funding for training materials, and have prepared portfolios to gain qualifications and accreditation for their work. The BYS manager reports that the element around racism and identity that has been added by Leap remains prominent in their work, and a dominant focus in their discussions with her. This provides an important indication that the impact of Leap's intervention is currently being sustained and mainstreamed within BYS.

3. Youth Service Perspective & Assessment

Leap's work with Bexley Youth Service – after some initial setbacks – has progressed successfully and has shown some very positive outcomes particularly in terms of the follow-up activities being undertaken by the new borough-wide cadre of peer educators.

The viability and impact of Leap's work in Bexley has been dependent on the cooperation and support received from their key partner, Bexley Youth Service. Within BYS, the Youth Development Manager has been the sponsor and champion for their work, has inserted and integrated it into her ongoing educational programmes, helped to overcome problems, and is now active in ensuring its sustainability and impact both within BYS and more widely in the borough.

Her personal assessment of Leap's work has been very positive. From her perspective, Leap has been able to add a dimension to the educational programmes of the youth service that she is personally committed to addressing, even though there is not any explicit or formal policy to do so in BYS (apart from a more general requirement to be addressing broader issues such as community cohesion and anti-social behaviour). More specifically:

- She sees Leap being able to bring three key elements in their work focusing around conflict resolution, identity and racism: specialist skills and expertise for working with young people on these issues, the time to do so, and 'hard knowledge' around the issues that they can transmit to the peer educators.

- She considers that Leap's input has been very impactive for the young people, and has said that she had never seen them so engaged as when they were working with Leap's trainers on these issues.

- However, she recognises that the challenges to explicitly address racism have been tougher than anticipated with some of the older staff (though welcomed by the young people), and she also feels that it is essential to maintain continuity of the trainers working with specific groups of young people.

- Finally, she feels she already has a strong legacy in terms of the current Bexley-wide peer educators group, and she is clearly committed to continuing to work with Leap as external partners, and to supporting the extension of their work and its impact within the borough.

> "This Initiative remains exciting and fresh. The potential and excitement in developing, fostering and implementing new models to explore and create tools for young people to challenge, accept and understand difference has been at times incredibly frustrating and at others inspirational."
>
> BYS Interim Report, August 2009

C. Bexleyheath School

Leap has been developing and implementing a programme of peer education training at Bexleyheath School, focusing on community cohesion, race and identity issues, since autumn 2009. From the outset of the project Leap had been intending to involve local schools in its work as well as the local youth service, and so, given that the earlier attempt to work with Welling School did not materialise, the opportunity to work with Bexleyheath School has been an important development for their initiative in the borough.

> Bexleyheath School is a large co-educational comprehensive school with approximately 2150 students of 11–19 years of age. It is set in modern buildings in spacious grounds, and takes pupils from across the borough of Bexley. The borough is served by selective grammar schools, and the attainment level at entry to the school is below the national average. The school's intake is predominantly White British, though there are increasing numbers of BME origin (currently 17%).

Following an OFSTED inspection in 2007 the school had been placed under special measures. A further inspection in June 2009 found that progress was being made, but the school was still rated overall as 'inadequate' and was given a notice to improve. 'Community cohesion' was one of the areas in which the school's performance was judged to be inadequate, and it was required to devise and implement a plan of action to address this.

Prior to the most recent inspection, Bexley Youth Service had already been in contact with the school, offering assistance after hearing reports of racist incidents there. Although, according to BYS, the school did not accept that recent incidents had been racist, it responded positively to BYS's suggestion of involving Leap to help work with students on addressing community cohesion issues. On the one hand this would help the school with responding to the OFSTED requirement to address these issues, and on the other Leap's 'peer education' approach was seen as consistent with the school's commitment to promote student participation and responsibility, and a student-led approach.

1. Leap's Activities

Working in partnership with the Assistant Vice-Principal (Community and Engagement), a plan was developed to recruit and train a cadre of peer educators and mentors, who would then use their skills and experiences to work across the school and in particular with younger age-groups. It was decided to draw this cadre from Year 9 students rather than the more senior ones in Years 10 and 11, so that they would still have two more years in the school in which to develop their capabilities and use their skills, and so that during this period a positive and proactive approach to community cohesion issues could be embedded in the school culture.

Implementation of the programme began in January/February 2010 with 14 one-hour 'taster sessions' being delivered to all 360 Year 9 students. Following this, 46 of these students from Year 9 were selected for participation in a 5-day programme of training around prejudice and identity issues, led by Leap trainers, and were taken 'off timetable' for this purpose.

The 46 students were trained in 3 separate groups with the following overall aims

- To support participants to reflect on the concept of identity, their own identities and feelings of belonging, and their values in relation to conflict.

- To develop participants' skills and confidence in dealing with conflict constructively, and particularly how to challenge prejudice.

- To work with young people to consider how to use their learning in their community

By the end of the course participants had been trained to provide a one-hour awareness-raising sessions for all Year 7 students. The student participants also came up with proposals for a charter and 'call for action' for the school, which would set out a new approach in the school to issues around prejudice and identity. This work would be progressed when they returned as Year 10 students.

Example of an exercise used by Leap in Bexleyheath School

The aim of the exercise was to help the Year 9 students who would become peer educators within the school to explore how prejudice might be operating within the school and local community, and what they could do to challenge it.

Creating Change: Prejudice in our School

Intention: To explore what prejudice operates in the local community and what it would take to change it.

Setup: In small groups, ask students to create three tableaux (frozen pictures) on the following themes: 1). What prejudice happens in this community? 2). What is the effect of this on the community? 3). How would we like it to be? Ask students to show these back, slowly moving from each image to the next.

Debrief: The conversation here focuses on whether the third image is possible/ achievable, and what would have to happen in order for that change to be made. Participants are supported to consider making small changes first – over their own behaviour and thoughts – before going on to consider how they might intervene to challenge prejudice in their community.

One group of young people showed images about students staying in racially segregated groups in the playground. The first image showed two groups with their backs turned to each other with the second image showing young people from the two groups looking suspiciously and angrily at each other. The third image – how they would prefer it to be – showed the two groups coming together and shaking hands.

When the facilitators explored these images with the group, it became clear that racially segregated groups were a constant theme in the school, but that it made many of the young people both feel unhappy (about how other groups treated them) but also justified prejudicial views of other groups. Yet, when exploring the second image – the impact – the majority of young people in the class admitted that this was not the way they wanted their school to be, or to be seen by others. In order to create the changes identified in the third image, the young people (who were predominantly white) recognised that they had to take responsibility to break the divide, but expressed fear about doing so.

After lunchtime, one young person – who most expressed the difficulties of trying to break the racial segregation in the school – returned to say he had approached a group of young people from a different race and had attempted to start a conversation with them. He knew one of the other young people in the group and he responded well, but says he experienced racial remarks from some of the other groups members, making him feel that the effort wasn't worth it. Facilitators supported him and the rest of the group to reflect on the courage he had to do something differently, and that change doesn't necessarily happen quickly, but over a period of time.

Leap, following their regular practice, conducted an internal evaluation of the reception of this training by each of the three groups, using end-of-course questionnaires which they subsequently analysed. These show a very positive reception by the participants, who consistently affirmed they had gained substantial learning and skills around dealing with conflict, prejudice and identity issues in schools, The students also gave a very positive assessment of the training style and the training methods used.

Some examples of what they had learned, given by students at Bexleyheath School on their end-of-course questionnaires after Leap's five-day training:

"I knew what (prejudice) meant but not in detail"

"I have developed skills on how to prevent prejudice."

"I have learnt not to call people names without knowing the real reason"

"Give everybody a chance before judging them."

"Try not to judge people by what they look like."

"Little comments can really affect people's day to day lives. Good and bad."

"Prejudice can start with sly remarks but could lead to extermination."

"A joke can turn into violence"

"(I have learnt) how bias leads to violence in the pyramid of hate"

"I have gained more skills to deal with conflict at home/school."

"I don't argue aggressively with people's views/opinions any more."

"I have learnt a better way to understand other people"

"I know I will take what I have learnt with me through life"

2. School's Perspective and Assessment

Leap has taken good advantage of the opportunity that has arisen for them to work in Bexleyheath school, and the programme of work has been planned and is being implemented in a strategic manner and with strong and direct support at senior management level.

The willingness of students to join peer educator teams and deliver training to their peers is clear evidence of a successful outcome for this initial stage of the strategy for work in the school, as is the positive reception of Leap's five-day training course by this group. A further indication of positive reception for the initiative is that a number of staff also spontaneously came to join or observe sessions run by Leap.

The Assistant Vice-Principal who is coordinating the work has given a very positive assessment, both of Leap's overall approach and strategy, and of the performance of Leap's trainers. From his perspective, Leap brings to the school three key elements: the expertise to address these issues, the time to do so, and the resources – although, as he points out, while the school has been delighted to have Leap's services for free, the school has also had to put a lot of time and effort into the initiative, which they have been very pleased to do, especially given the positive outcomes to date.

He sees what he refers to as the "Leap group" playing a leadership role among students in the school in the coming two years, and acting as "peer mentors" on these issues alongside school prefects. He particularly values Leap's input for its ability to assist the school to address the requirements of OFSTED, but also stresses that under the school's new management it is anyway a key element of the school's mission to address social and identity issues with students and to relate effectively to the community around it – as witness his own brief at senior management level. He does not see the school as having overt racial problems, but agrees it is essential to take proactive and preventive steps to address the racial and ethnic dimension with students, and is very pleased that Leap's work has enabled the school to find an explicit way of doing this.

D. Charlton Athletic Community Trust

In early 2010, Leap widened the scope of its activities to work with the Charlton Athletic Community Trust (CACT). Working with CACT provided Leap with the opportunity of offering training to sports workers who have a borough wide remit for working with young people, and can thus impact the wider community in the area. It also provided the opportunity to reach young people from a wider range of backgrounds, rather than the predominantly white group that Leap had been working with previously.

CACT is a charitable organisation that is independent of Charlton Athletic Football Club, but which uses links and the Charlton name to promote and support the delivery of a wide range of educational and sporting initiatives across the boroughs of Bexley and Greenwich. CACT particularly works with schools and other youth and community organisations, and especially targets disadvantaged and socially excluded groups, using crime-reduction initiatives and community-based football coaching sessions. Using the power of football and sport generally to engage young people, CACT works in partnership with a wide range of bodies, and the scope of its initiatives cover education, health, employment, social inclusion, disability, mental health, and women's and girls' development.

The aim of Leap's involvement has been to help to develop the skills of CACT football coaches and other front-line staff for addressing issues around identity and prejudice in their work with young people. This involves not only providing them with an awareness and understanding of the issues, but also giving them skills and techniques for challenging inappropriate remarks and dealing with incidents generally involving racism and discrimination. It also aims to enable them to be proactive in addressing such issues, as an integral part of their essentially educational work.

Leap is providing two 3-day training courses for the initial group of staff. The first course, which has focused on leadership, conflict resolution, and developing skills for challenging inappropriate remarks, has already been held. The second, which is due to be delivered in September, will aim to develop their skills as facilitators. It will be designed to equip them to deliver one-hour workshops on racism and identity issues, and initiate and manage structured discussions on these issues.

Leap's internal evaluation for the first course, based on end-of-course questionnaires completed by the participants, show a consistently positive reception for this course, with all feeling that they had gained greater self-awareness and skills in handling situations of conflict. The following selection from their comments illustrates their perception of how the course impacted them:

"This programme has helped me to learn alternative approaches to conflict."

"I am more aware of my actions and more confident."

"I know the effects of a conflict which tend to lead to a worse situation if carried on. Also, what I could do to stop a conflict without getting myself into further trouble."

"I can now identify what makes me angry, and can now avoid the triggers more successfully."

"We had reactions and responses explained to us, and I think I can control myself more, so less reaction and more response."

"Before, I would react to conflict, now I would think and respond first."

"I can now view both sides of conflicts and be less biased."

"Now I understand the reasons for conflicts, and have the confidence to deal with them as I didn't before."

"When I came in, I was unaware much of how a 'teaching' leader behaves, but now I know how to lead myself as well."

"I believe I've become a self-leader. Well, a better one than before. My skills have improved and I've gained a lot."

At this stage, it is too early to make an assessment of the impact of this new strand of Leap's work, although as indicated above, the initial feedback from the training was extremely positive. However, its potential for influencing the attitudes and behaviour of young people is obviously substantial, given the very large number of young people who engage with the Trust's activities (estimated by CACT as around 7,500 each week).

Overall assessment

leap's project in Bexley primarily addresses the first of the Initiative's overall objectives, i.e. to work directly with young people to change attitudes and behaviour, although its more recent work with the Charlton Athletic Community Trust has moved towards addressing the Initiative's second objective of working at the level of the wider community. However, insofar as young people are members of the wider community, agents within it, and some may become future leaders of it, Leap's project is clearly of potential importance for the wider community, even if the latter has not been directly targeted or engaged in Leap's work.

As an initiative focusing directly on young people, however, the objectives and design of Leap's project mark out a clearly structured approach to the prevention of racist violence, based primarily on equipping young people themselves to take the lead in such work, in the role of 'peer educators' who will proactively address race and identity issues with their peers. Leap has implemented this approach by working in partnership with relevant local agencies – initially and primarily with Bexley Youth Service, and subsequently with Bexleyheath School and others.

The implementation of Leap's project experienced some delay in the early stages, due to difficulties in gaining effective cooperation from specific youth centres, and in particular to resistance from staff encountered on the first site on which they had planned (and begun) to work. This resistance appeared to be rooted primarily in a reluctance among local staff to acknowledge and address the locally sensitive issue

of racism. Thanks, however, to the strength of Leap's partnership with BYS, and the support of the senior manager there who has sponsored Leap's involvement, an alternative approach of building a new and independent borough-wide cadre of young peer educators was adopted and implemented, and this has proved very successful. Members of this group have undertaken a wide variety of initiatives focusing on race and identity issues in various settings, and this programme is now being sustained and mainstreamed within BYS.

School-based work then developed very positively with Bexleyheath School. Although this only began in autumn 2009, it has moved forward in a strategic and effective manner, and teams of older peer educators have provided workshops for younger students as well as undertaking other initiatives in the school on race and identity issues.

The reception of Leap's work by the various partners has been very favourable, each seeing Leap as assisting them to address important issues around identity and cohesion that they have had neither the skills nor resources to tackle themselves.

Leap itself, as an established training organisation, routinely monitors its own training and other activities, using a variety of monitoring and evaluation methods. For this project Leap has further developed some of its techniques to enable them to capture data relating to racism and identity issues. These data show a range of positive outcomes, albeit mainly of a qualitative nature.

Leap's programme of work in Bexley continues to be in process of development, and further outcomes will follow. At present, however, the borough is already benefiting from the existence of the new borough-wide cadre of young peer educators who have the ability to address racial and identity issues with their peers, and from what appears to be a successful model for addressing these issues through a peer education approach specifically within a local school.

Key Lessons from Leap's Project

1 Undertaking an audit of attitudes and perceptions of local people around issues of racism and identity is essential for understanding the specific features of the local area in which work is to be undertaken.

2 Substantial time is required for planning work on sensitive issues such as racism, and for building necessary partnerships with local agencies.

3 Strong relationships are necessary with appropriate individuals at management level who are committed to addressing these issues, in order to ensure that partnership relations are robust, and for handling and solving any problems that may arise.

4 In any area some youth clubs and schools may be more willing to cooperate on these issues than others. Where resistance or non-cooperation is encountered, workers should be flexible and seek alternative partners or pathways in order to progress their initiatives.

5 It is important to grasp and build on any opportunities that may arise with agencies or in other settings, where racial problems have occurred or there have been other pressures to address racial issues, and to offer assistance for addressing these by means of preventive work on racist violence and other activities to promote social integration.

6 Locally-recruited youth workers and other professionals may share racist attitudes that are current in the community, and may be defensive and resistant as regards opening up and addressing such issues.

7 Young people, once their awareness and confidence has been raised, may (due for example to inter-racial mixing in school) be much more open to and positive

about addressing racial and identity issues than the generations above them in their families and local communities.

8   External trainers working with young people and local agencies on sensitive issues such as racism and identity need continuity of personnel so as to ensure that mutual trust and understanding is maintained.

9   The racial dimension of identity should not be isolated from other dimensions: all dimensions should be addressed, as they are often interconnected, and the class dimension may be particularly important for shaping young people's attitudes.

10 Working broadly on conflict and identity issues can provide a framework for building confidence and understanding which then permits more sensitive issues such as racism to be addressed with less resistance. On the other hand there is the danger that in this way focusing on racism can be avoided, so it is also important to ensure that issues of race are specifically addressed in workshops and discussion sessions, and that trainers and peer educators have the skills to do this.

11 It is vital to recognise young people's own experiences of oppression and prejudice in self-defined terms before beginning to explicitly focus on issues of race and racism, without which there is a risk that the training will be perceived as being an exercise in 'political correctness'.

12 A 'peer educator' approach, in which young people themselves take the lead in raising racial and identity issues with their peers, has great potential, and in some respects may be more effective than youth-worker or teacher-led approaches (although it should complement, rather than replace these). It is essential, however, that when working on such sensitive issues, young peer educators have ready access to professional support.

13 Peer educators should be drawn from sufficiently young age-groups that they will still have several years for working in this role, but they should also be sufficiently old and mature that they have the confidence and experience to work on sensitive issues such as racism with all age-groups of young people.

14 Internal monitoring and evaluation tools, especially those in which workers record details of conversations and responses of young people when issues around race and identity are raised, are both feasible to use and valuable for assessing the impact of their interventions. These need to be designed to ensure that a specific focus on race issues is included in the recording process.

5. Searchlight Educational Trust project

Summary

Searchlight Educational Trust is a research and campaigning organisation which works at community as well as national level.

SET's project focused on working with young people in the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham, with the aim of raising awareness of and countering racist attitudes, and dissuading them from supporting the BNP. SET had already been active in anti-racist work in the borough, within the framework of the Daily Mirror-sponsored 'Hope Not Hate' campaign, and had good support from the local council & trade unions.

SET's plan was to develop sports-related activities which would be the vehicle for exploring issues around racism with groups of young people. These were organised by a part-time project worker, who operated from a local community base and who also widened the activities beyond sports.

The main sports-related activities were focused on football. Key activities at borough level included organising an annual Hope Not Hate Football Cup at the Dagenham Town Show for teams of young people from across the borough. Latterly SET was also active in engaging young people in campaigning in the run-up to the local elections in mid-2010. SET's project worker also engaged on a face-to-face basis with young people on the Gascoigne Estate, where for the first two years he had an office base in a local community centre. Although he was not a trained youth or community worker, he had success in engaging the young people due to personal qualities of openness and willingness to share personal experience of past involvement in the far-right, and local partners felt that by this means he had a significant impact on young people's attitudes locally. He also undertook a number of activities at a local secondary school. However, access to both local schools and estates did not prove easy, partly due to the sensitivities of the issue of racism in the borough, this in turn due to past national media interest and the political strength of the BNP (prior to their defeat in 2010). SET recorded a number of their activities on video, and used these with young people and also made them available on the internet.

Local partners felt the initiative had had a significant impact on young people, by raising awareness of issues around racism and identity, and by bringing them together to build bridges across different groups and areas of the borough. They also considered that the project had been successful in turning many young people away from supporting the BNP during the period of the elections in mid-2010, and that in this way it contributed to the BNP's electoral defeat.

Introduction

A. Searchlight Educational Trust: The Organisation

Searchlight Educational Trust (Searchlight) is a charity which aims to inform organisations and individuals about the true nature of racism and fascism, its causes and consequences. It monitors and undertakes research into racism and fascism and disseminates the information through educational projects, the media, trade unions and the voluntary and community sector. It uses a community development approach to tackle fascism and the extreme-right locally, nationally and at European level.

Searchlight has been active in the Barking & Dagenham area for many years, undertaking a variety of anti-racist activities, mainly to counter the growth of the BNP presence in the area. SET's project continues this work, adding a specific focus on working with young people.

B. The Local Context: Barking & Dagenham

The Borough of Barking and Dagenham has a predominantly white working-class population which has been established there for several generations. At the 2001 Census, 85% of the population identified themselves as white. There is a strong sense of community and identity among the established population, which has built up among the second and third generations of families who originally moved to the area from inner London. However, there are also severe problems of social and economic disadvantage, including high levels of unemployment, and the lowest levels of household income in London as a whole.

Recently there has been an increase in numbers of black and other ethnic minorities into the borough, principally people of African origin and from Eastern Europe. This is rapidly changing the population composition, and according to ONS mid-year estimates, around a quarter of the population are now from minority ethnic communities. As in other parts of East London, this process appears to have stimulated racist attitudes among the established white population, no doubt helped by the often negative character of media reporting on this issue.

It has also led to extensive support for far-right groups in the area. The BNP has been extremely active, and with 12 councillors at the outset of the project, Barking and Dagenham has been its strongest political base at local government level in the country. This base, however, was completely eliminated in the 2010 elections.

C. Project Approach

The project's stated aim has been to address the real and legitimate concerns of young people and their role within wider society. Its specific objective has been to de-racialise some of their thinking and empower them through leadership schemes, sporting events and community initiatives.

The approach used by Searchlight has involved both formal and informal engagement with groups of young people, bringing them together to address prejudice and stereotypes, through various arts, media and sports activities as well as through community engagement (such as through its Daily Mirror-sponsored Hope Not Hate Campaign). Searchlight adopts an explicitly anti-racist approach in its work, which has been particularly prominent in its main sporting initiatives.

D. Project Staffing

SET's project in Barking & Dagenham has been delivered by a single project worker, working independently and on a part-time basis. The project worker is not a professionally-trained community or youth worker, but has long experience of operating as an anti-racist activist at both community and national levels. On average he has been in the borough on two to three days a week, either during the daytime or in the evenings, as the work requires. This enabled him to have a regular and continuous presence at his initial base on the Gascoigne Estate (and later at the nearby 'East Street' centre), so that young people and others could know where to find him.

Key Partners

A number of partners have played a key role in enabling SET's project to be implemented. To begin with, Searchlight's access to the borough for undertaking this project is due to an established working relationship which it has with the Labour-led local council and with the trade unions in Barking. Labour councillors have played a key role in supporting the initiative to undertake activities at borough level, and also in making additional resources available for the project.

One Councillor in particular, who at the time represented the Gascoigne Estate and had Executive Responsibility for Community Safety, Parks and Open Spaces, played a particularly important role in sponsoring the initiative, and providing the project worker with advice and support on working with local agencies. At the outset, her view was that it would be better for the project to operate independently of the Youth Service. She therefore arranged for the project worker to be based in the offices of the voluntary sector organisation Crime Concern, which were located in premises of the Community Centre on the Gascoigne Estate in central Barking. This provided a community base for the project worker's activities, as well as a central location which was convenient for working across the borough more generally.

It also very importantly enabled the project worker to operate under the guidance of and with the support of the Director of the local branch of Crime Concern (as it then was), who was a very experienced local community worker and activist in the borough, and to have cooperation with her professionally-trained staff. Following the closure of Crime Concern later in 2008, she continued to provide both strong personal support for the project worker, and as well as alternative office space at the nearby youth referral centre ('East Street') of which she became Director subsequently. In a very direct way, therefore, she was the key 'partner' for SET's project, in the sense that she has acted as a local sponsor and 'champion' for the initiative in a local environment that has presented a variety of challenges for work with young people focusing on racial issues.

Other partners for subsequent initiatives have included the local police, and Dagenham Park School. In both cases, a key individual has acted as the point of contact and enabler for the project worker. In the case of the police, this has been an experienced PC who is a member of the local Neighbourhood Police Team for the Longbridge Ward, and who works with young people and organises local youth clubs. He has cooperated with the project worker over organising sports activities for young people, as well as in other initiatives. In the case of the school, this has been one of the Assistant Heads, and further details of this partnership are provided in the section on work with the school below.

Activities undertaken

The following were the main activities undertaken by SET in the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham:

A Initial audit of the local situation in Barking & Dagenham

B Borough-wide sports-based & other activities

C Work with young people on Gascoigne Estate, Barking

D Work at Dagenham Park School

A. Initial audit of the local situation in Barking & Dagenham

SET's main focus in the beginning of the first year was make a more detailed assessment of the situation in the local area, particularly as it affected young people, and to begin to establish contact with them and build relationships with people and agencies responsible for their after-school and recreational activities. And more specifically, to identify attitudes and responses around racism in the local community, and the significance of these for the young people living in the area. This initial audit was conducted principally by means of direct personal conversations with key individuals and groups.

What immediately struck the project worker, as he tried to engage in conversations locally, was that most people were uncomfortable with the issue of racism being introduced into work with young people. It seemed to him that there was a general consensus that racism did not exist, and some people reacted very defensively, as if he had questioned their commitment or credentials for identifying and tackling the problem. However, he felt that this element of discomfort and denial was, at least in part, a reaction to the intense focus of the national media on the borough because of its recent and well-documented history of far-right and extremist activity.

In his conversations with councillors, council employees and youth workers, he found that the key issues which they identified as affecting young people were poor parental supervision, lack of male role models, territorialism, fear of crime, drugs and alcohol, and housing and job shortages. However, he felt that levels of crime and anti-social behaviour were not as bad as often made out in the media, particularly in comparison with some inner London boroughs, but that public concern about these issues was being exploited by the BNP and the issues were also being racialised. In this context, raising the issue of racism had become very sensitive, so that persuading people that racism and social cohesion should be explicit foci of work with young people proved difficult. One senior council officer told him that he should not "go looking for problems" when he explained his intentions. It became clear to the project worker that if he was going to be able to engage successfully with young people on issues around racism and identity, he would need to tread carefully and adapt his approach to the situation, as well as identifying and building alliances with those who would support his work.

SET also conducted a series of meetings with a wide range of statutory and voluntary sector bodies who could act as local partners. By this means they secured the support of the council and the police for the initiative, and offers of cooperation for specific activities such as providing an input into the Dagenham Town Show. Voluntary Sector bodies included London Youth and Barking and Dagenham CVS, who could be sources for volunteer workers and other support. Contacts were also made with local schools at this point, with a view to providing training and additional sporting opportunities.

In the light of the audit, SET also decided that rather than recruiting an external specialist sports development worker to undertake all the sports-related work, as had also originally been intended, it would be more effective to have the project led by the

project worker in more of a community development worker role. In this way he could provide local continuity in relations with the young people and with local agencies, and could organise bringing in a variety of different specialist sports coaches as and when required. The Gascoigne Aid and Advice Shop on the large Gascoigne Estate in central Barking, which at the time formed part of the local office of 'Crime Concern', was chosen as a suitable location for the project office.

2. Borough-wide sports-based & other activities

SET's target area for its work with young people has been essentially the Borough of Barking & Dagenham as a whole, reflecting its ongoing work and strategy in the local community generally to undertake activities, linked to the Daily-Mirror sponsored Hope Not Hate campaign, which would combat the influence of and political support for the BNP in the borough. Although the project office was based on the Gascoigne Estate, and the project worker undertook work specifically with young people from that estate (as will be described in the subsequent section), his main focus was to develop activities that would be impactive across the borough more widely or as a whole. Indeed, his first major initiative was cooperating with Dagenham Park School to organise a sports-oriented 'community open day' which drew young people from quite a wide surrounding area, and thus had a broader impact than on the school's catchment area alone, although as a basically school-based event this will be described in the section specifically devoted to the school which follows below.

1. Borough-wide sports-linked activities
Hope Not Hate Cup, Dagenham Town Show 2008

SET's first fully borough-wide initiative was to organise a 'Hope Not Hate' football cup competition at Barking & Dagenham Council's annual Dagenham Town Show in July 2008. The aim was to use an established local community event as a context for using football as a vehicle to promote awareness of racism, to bring together young people from different areas of the borough and different ethnic groups for cooperation around a common interest, and to promote a shared sense of civic pride and responsibility.

• This initiative was undertaken at the request of the council, and had their full sponsorship and support, as it did also of local trade unions.

• The local police also cooperated in the event, with one of their youth and community officers bringing a team from the police-sponsored youth club on the Longbridge estate to participate in the football cup.

• According to Searchlight over 100 young people took part in this event.

• The key activities were the football competition set up between a number of local youth teams, a series of workshops covering various different sports, and stalls and exhibitions from a variety of local and anti-racist organisations.

• Contributions and materials were provided by 'Show Racism the Red Card', the GMB union, 'Kick it Out' and 'Philosophy Football'.

Searchlight reports that the feedback from both young people and adults was very positive, and that all engaged well with both the sports and the anti-racist dimension. This assessment was confirmed by the police officer who worked as a partner for the event, and also by one of the leading councillors who played a sponsoring role for it.

Stubbers Residential and FA Certificate Course, April 2009

One of difficulties the project worker encountered in trying to use sport as a vehicle for bringing together young people from different groups and parts of the borough was their unwillingness to travel outside their immediate local area. To help overcome this, SET decided to organise a 'diversionary opportunity' to enable young men aged 14-18 years to get away from home in an interesting and new environment.

With the support of the trade union GMB, SET offered 20 places for young people to go for three days to Stubbers outdoor activity centre in Essex. Here as well as engaging in adventure-type activities, they were able to play football and gain a certificate from the Football Association to show they had organisational and coaching abilities for working in their own communities. Places were offered not only to youngsters from the Gascoigne Estate, but also from the nearby Thames View and Longbridge Estates (the latter recruited in cooperation with the local neighbourhood police). The trip also provided opportunities to open up discussions around racism and community issues alongside the sport and adventure sessions.

In terms of outcomes, SET felt that the young people bonded together well, despite some major differences in the home lives of those from different estates. Taking them away from home had enabled this to happen and had also allowed the young people to explore a range of issues around racism and identity that affect their lives. As regards sport, there were also very positive outcomes, with 11 of the group being awarded a Junior Football Organiser certificate, and four of these immediately volunteered to help organise and act as referees in the next Hope Not Hate football cup.

> SET prepared a video to record the young peoples' experiences on the Stubbers residential, and from their comments it is clear that they felt it had been very beneficial for them as well as enjoyable. A very positive assessment is also given by the (then) Head of Youth Services in the borough who participated in the event.
>
> (see http://www.youtube.com/user/SearchlightInfo#p/u/22/Ha6PvarMzDI)

> Some key comments from young people attending the Stubbers residential:
>
> "We met friendly people from Longbridge youth centre. We all ate together. We didn't talk to them at first but it was good to get to know them and (we) had fun together"
>
> "I liked playing football with people from a different area"
>
> "The discussions were good. I feel differently about other people (who I don't know) now"

Hope Not Hate Cup, Dagenham Town Show 2009

For the second year running, SET helped to organise an anti-racist football tournament at the borough council's Dagenham Town Show in June 2009. As before, it was organised in partnership with a number of other organisations, including 'Kick it Out', 'Show Racism the Red Card' and the trade union GMB, and the local MP attended to hand out prizes. Around 200 young people aged between 13 and 16 years were involved, a substantially larger number than the previous year, with a corresponding increase in the number of teams participating. All the young people were given a sports bag to take home which contained anti-racist materials, including t-shirts, badges, posters, wristbands and a mug supplied by the local trade union branch.

Six of the young people whom SET took on their residential course at Stubbers played a large part in the planning and implementation of the day's activities. All of the residential group participated in the event in one way or another, either having maintained their friendships or being pleased to become re-acquainted, thereby continuing to help with the process of breaking down the social and territorial barriers that potentially divided the young people attending it.

The local police also once again were involved with the event, bringing teams from their own locally-sponsored youth clubs to play in the competition. Their assessment from a police perspective has been that this annual competition has played a very positive role in bringing young people together from across the borough, thereby building the kinds of bridges and solidarities that play an important part in preventing inter-group conflicts among young people along territorial and ethnic lines.

2. Pre-election Activities

With both national and local elections looming in May 2010, the atmosphere in the borough in late 2009 became increasingly politicised as the BNP began to raise their profile and the media gave the borough steadily increasing attention. With already 12 councillors, there was speculation that the BNP might gain control of the Council, and this was seen as a very real possibility by SET and its partners in the Hope Not Hate Campaign in the borough. Early in 2010 it was also announced that the leader of the BNP, Nick Griffin, would be standing as the party's parliamentary candidate for the seat of Barking, with the aim of displacing the incumbent MP Margaret Hodge. The high-profile presence of the BNP further increased the politicisation in the borough and the attention of the media, especially in relation to controversial issues such immigration and racism.

As regards the direct impact on young people, the BNP did not have any formal 'youth wing' in the area, and SET was not aware of young people in Barking & Dagenham being individual members of the party. However, there had been attempts by the BNP to campaign and recruit outside schools and colleges in the borough, and there was concern that through the raising of the profile of the BNP at this time, their ideas would be influencing young people and fostering prejudices which they might hold.

In this context, the project worker continued his campaigning work in the community within the framework of the Hope Not Hate Campaign, and this intensified in the early months of 2010. However, he found that his work with young people was increasingly being 'cold-shouldered' by people working within the council or with schools.

- There was also evidence of intimidation of council staff by the BNP, and, faced with the prospect of a BNP takeover, two of the key people in the council with whom the project worker has been cooperating decided to leave their posts at this time and to work elsewhere.

- In addition, the young people's centre at 'East Street' where he was based, was told that their funding should not be expected to continue.

More specifically, in relation to the activities being developed by the project worker, the council decided that they would not continue with supporting the 'Hope Not Hate Cup' at the Dagenham Town Show, as it was too much focused on anti-racism. Again, this appeared to be a direct response to the political concerns related to the BNP (several individual BNP councillors had specifically voiced opposition to SET's work), and reflected a wish among many councillors and staff to avoid undertaking activities that could be politically controversial, and exploitable by the media and the BNP.

Thus, SET's initiative, which had proved very popular and successful in its first two years, was not able to be repeated in 2010. The local police officer, who had worked in partnership with the project worker on this football-related project for young people in 2008 and 2009, stated in interview that both he and the young people he worked with were very disappointed that the initiative was not being continued, and that he felt that a valuable bridge-building exercise for promoting integration among young people across the borough was being lost.

Despite these difficulties, during the months prior to the election, the project worker continued to be active in campaigning work in the local community. He also continued to maintain contact with young people from the Gascoigne Estate and other parts of Barking through the 'East Street' centre, engaging them in discussions, and encouraging them to be active in resisting the influence of the BNP on promoting racism in their schools, their families and in the wider community.

- These activities included a day of action organised within the framework of 'Hope Not Hate' in which over 500 people attended to hand out leaflets and other materials designed to counter the BNP's racist message. Forty of these were young people of school age from the borough, many of whom cited SET's work locally as the catalyst for their engagement and participation.

- SET also joined with 'Kick It Out', the Football League and Dagenham & Redbridge Football Club for an anti-racism day at the latter's ground in March. This was a pioneering initiative by a football club which has a very strong and explicit commitment against racism, and which is proactive in working with its local community. The day invited fans to 'sign up against racism', and entrance prices to the home game against Macclesfield Town were drastically reduced in order to encourage wide attendance. SET recruited and paid for 100 young people from projects and youth centres they had worked with across the borough to attend the day's events.

> Some comments from young people engaged in anti-racist campaigning work with SET:
>
> "We want to be part of this to beat the BNP"
>
> "We feel important like we have the right to take part"
>
> "My opinion counts in stopping racism"
>
> "You said I could meet Billy Bragg"
>
> "You've made me want be part of something positive, not something negative"
>
> "I knew antiracist man would be here"
>
> "I've told my mum and my dad not to vote for the BNP because it is bad for Barking"

> From the project worker's record:
>
> "During the recent elections, I was walking through Barking market when I was called over by a young man I did not at first recognise as he had grown up quite a bit. He was working on a market stall with a large group of his family/relatives around him and he said "Hey, antiracist man, we're going to vote to beat the BNP.""

On election day in May 2010, the Hope Not Hate campaigning team took their open top bus for a drive around the borough as a final step in getting their message across. In particular they visited local estates and schools, where (in the words of the project worker) "dozens of school children came out and waved and shouted "Hope Not Hate" and cheered at us". The short video film they made of this drive-around demonstrates the very positive reaction they and their campaign were receiving from local people, and especially from children in the area who clearly recognise the Hope Not Hate 'brand' and express their approval of it and their opposition to the BNP. And by the end of the day (or early the following morning), it had become clear that the desired electoral outcome had been achieved in the borough had been achieved, with the BNP losing all its council seats, and the party's leader being soundly defeated at parliamentary level.

(http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tzZ9JdoEJoA&feature=player_embedded)

3. Partners' Perspective & Assessment
Precisely what part SET's project worker and the Hope Not Hate Campaign more generally played in this electoral outcome is difficult to tie down precisely, let alone quantify. However, there can be no doubt that the campaign had a high profile in the borough and was widely influential, and that the project worker played a leading part in supporting and participating in it in a variety of ways. As well as organising the activities

described above, he records that over the three years the project "had given out close to 500 Hope Not Hate t-shirts, and thousands of badges, pens and pencils, bags and other anti-racist materials to young people". He was also active in using the mass media to reach a wide range of local people, and records that he had sixteen requests for interviews about young people in the borough from TV, radio and newspapers between February and April 2010. Anecdotal evidence, such as the quotations above, clearly show that his work promoted participation both by young people and members of the wider community, fostered a sense of commonality across groups and civic pride, and helped to change attitudes particularly among the young people he worked with (see also below).

Interviews with several key partners for his work at borough-level showed that they too perceived that his work – both with young people as individuals, and through his organisation of community-level activities – had a substantial impact on raising awareness around issues of racism and the impact of the BNP, and significantly helped towards achieving the very positive electoral outcomes. The councillor who had been responsible for community safety and recreation articulated this view strongly, and in particular felt that the introduction of the 'Hope Not Hate Cup' at the Town Show got the message across to young people widely. What had enabled SET to be successful in organising events of this kind was on the one hand their good relations with the council, unions and sports bodies, and on the other the attractive and engaging programmes of activities they developed for young people and the discussions they engaged in during them. She felt it was crucial to have an impact of this kind on the 'rising 18' generation, not only as new voters, but also because she knew personally that many went home and talked about the issues with their parents, friends and in school. From her own observations on polling day (she stood as an independent candidate in the local election), a lot of young people came to vote, but many made it clear they were not voting for the BNP. She felt that whether directly or indirectly, SET's various activities with the young people had made a significant impact in the borough.

As has been indicated above, the assessment of the local police was also very positive about the contribution of SET's sports-related initiatives to raising young people's awareness around issues of identity and racism, and bringing together youngsters of different ethnic groups and from different areas. The local police representative felt this kind of work played an important role in developing more tolerant and understanding attitudes among young people, and in this sense contributed to the prevention of potential racist violence. He did not feel, however, that it was possible to measure this in terms of any statistics for reported incidents, due to the limitations of such data and the wide range of possible factors involved.

C. Work with young people on Gascoigne Estate, Barking

The offices of Crime Concern at the community centre on the Gascoigne Estate served initially as the base of the project worker for his activities in the Borough of Barking and Dagenham, as explained above. They also provided him with the opportunity to work directly with young people from the estate.

The Gascoigne Estate is a large, high-density local authority housing estate located on the edge of Barking Town Centre. It has approximately 2,400 low, medium and high rise properties, and nearly 7,000 residents. It has a multi-ethnic population, and has relatively high levels of unemployment, poverty and overcrowding. The estate also encompasses a primary school, two community centres, a parade of shops, a health centre, a doctor's surgery, and a social services family and adult centre. The estate has recently been undergoing a major redevelopment and regeneration programme.

1. Main Activities
Initial Film & Discussion Sessions

The project worker began his work on the Gascoigne Estate by running two-hour sessions several nights a week for young people in contact with the local community centre (known as 'Baseline'). These were relatively fluid and unstructured. The worker showed films and documentaries that addressed issues such as race and identity, and were followed by food and informal discussions. His aim was to use the films as a vehicle for raising issues and getting the young people to empathise with particular characters or situations, and then in discussion to share and debate their own perceptions and experiences with others. He used a variety of films, including feature and documentary films covering US & British history and the Holocaust, as well as film produced directly by Searchlight for educational purposes.

He found that using the films in this way was successful, despite the fact that the young people didn't have any special interest in these subjects, and it seemed that it was often the prospect of food that was motivating them initially to come along for the sessions. Once there, however, he was able to hold their attention and engage them in conversation, although depending on the age-group, attention spans were often short and he found he needed to use short extracts & keep opening up discussion.

- Specifically, he found that they were all able to identify that the key issues the films were addressing were around racism, hatred and identity, and that they always stated that in their opinion racism was wrong.

- However, they were not able to marry up this view with accepting that some of the language or opinions they expressed outside the sessions, especially about asylum-seekers, were also racist.

- They defended themselves by arguing that they had the right to 'freedom of speech', that some of their friends were black or of mixed parentage, and by claiming that their negative remarks about asylum-seekers were accurate and deserved.

- Following the discussions, however, in which he and the youth work colleagues challenged their views and the myths and inaccuracies behind them, the young people began accepting that they may have been misinformed, and expressed relief that they were being able to obtain a more correct picture of the situation.

Some Responses from the Young People:

"I'm going to tell someone at school who's always going on about Asylum Seekers that they're wrong."

"They (the BNP) also say that Africans are stealing the houses here but I know that isn't true either because I have seen the houses for sale and they're not given away for free. I'd never thought about it"

"I don't understand why people would lie about people that they don't know."

The sessions established a rapport between the project worker and the young people, and legitimacy for challenging language used about groups of people based on their race or ethnicity. The sessions were also beneficial for the youth work staff, who were unaware that there existed such animosity towards asylum-seekers and were "shocked at the level of racism expressed". Initially some of them had been reluctant about holding sessions on these issues and concerned that they could create problems where there was none. As a result of the sessions, the project worker now gained support from key staff for his work.

Further work on Gascoigne Estate

During the second year of the project, the project worker continued to engage with young people on the Gascoigne Estate. The director of Crime Concern provided him with proper work space in the estate's advice shop, where he could engage with young people when the youth centre was closed. She also pressed for more work to be undertaken around issues of racism and community cohesion. However. this was not seen as a priority by some of the other staff, who felt that drugs, knife crime and sexual health issues were more pressing, and there were other groups working around the estate on these issues. As a result there was competition for time and attention, and conflicts over how to fit project sessions into the timetable.

An additional problem for the project worker was the unwillingness of the young people to travel outside the estate. The project worker therefore focused his attention more on activities he could undertake with the young people within the centre and on the estate itself. In particular he developed projects with them that would foster a sense of awareness of and pride in local identity. One such project was to develop t-shirt designs with them, and a second was to undertake a music project, using words to express local identity, fears and aspirations.

There was also a shift in the user group of young people coming into the centre. This now became more ethnically mixed. It included a group of young Kosovan men, who were friendly but very oriented towards work and their studies, and also to their families. There was some antagonism towards them from other young people, and they in turn could be quite competitive, particularly with some of the young black people, over social priorities and access to facilities. Using the young Kosovans as an access point, the project worker was able to engage a wider range of young people in discussions during the various activities at the centre, and to do so several times a week. He was able to focus these discussions around a range of relevant issues, including race and immigration, cultural etiquette, asylum, stereotypes, language, and religion.

These discussions, he felt, enabled the young people to explore some of their limits and boundaries when living and socialising together, and to develop greater mutual understanding and respect. In this way, flash-points could be avoided and conflicts prevented in the interactions between the various groups. Enabling them to share stories and experiences, both of migration and living in the community, and to find common values and common elements of identity alongside the perceptions of difference and diversity, also helped to promote a real sense of integration.

Move to East Street Centre

Early in third year, the Crime Concern Project on Gascoigne Estate was taken over by another organisation, and the manager left her post. Instead she moved to work as manager for the 'East Street' youth referral centre in the centre of Barking. This was a blow for the project worker as he lost his base and main sponsor for work with young people on the estate. She offered him alternative office space in her new centre, and he decided to accept that as it was not too far from the estate, and also well-placed for pursuing his wider work in the borough.

He tried to keep in touch with the young people, but it was not easy to persuade them to leave the estate and come the short distance up to the East Street centre. As a result, his further efforts from his new base to engage them in discussions and other activities proved largely unsuccessful. Over the course of the third year, therefore, the strand of face-to-face work with young people became of less significance in SET's project, and greater emphasis was place on borough-level work related to the elections and developing links with schools.

2. Key Partners' Perspective and Assessment

The two partners/stakeholders who had the closest knowledge of the project worker's involvement with young people on and around the estate were the ward councillor and the manager of the Crime Concern office. Both had in general a very positive opinion of the work he undertook with the young people and of its impact.

The ward councillor emphasised the importance of the project worker being independent of the youth service, so that he could be flexible and responsive to the opportunities that arose for work both with young people and in the wider community, and not constrained by formal procedures and established professional practice. She felt that the youth service had a rather structured educational approach to after-school activities, and that the organisation Crime Concern provided a more informal context for the project worker to operate, while still being alongside experienced youth workers who could provide assistance and support.

Both the ward councillor and the Crime Concern manager were well aware that the project worker did not have any formal training as a youth or community worker, and that there were therefore limitations as to his skills and experience for face-to-face work with young people. On the other hand, they felt that his very straightforward, open and personal approach was a great asset in his work with the young people, and that they engaged with him willingly and enthusiastically for this reason. In particular, the way he would talk directly with the young people about his personal experiences of growing up in a similar environment and his personal involvement with far-right organisations was something the young people found "fascinating". Both sat in on some of his sessions, and felt that his story-telling had a "charismatic" quality "that worked" with the young people. They considered that by sharing experiences in this way, and opening up discussions in which there were no boundaries, the project worker was able to draw out the young people's own views and opinions, and have a powerful impact on their attitudes and awareness.

The fact that his input was usually delivered in the company of other youth work staff provided on the one hand protection and support for the project worker. On the other hand it enabled the other youth workers to observe and learn from the project worker, so they could better address issues around racism and identity in their own practice. The centre manager recognised that her staff team did not have the experience or skill to address these issues, and given the importance she attached to issues around racism and community cohesion, she had welcomed the project worker's contribution to filling the gap. She encouraged broader follow-up conversations between her staff and the project worker, particularly over how to challenge when racist comments were made, as it provided an opportunity for upskilling them in this important aspect of youth work.

The above comments and assessment by the key partners in contact with the project worker during his period on the Gascoigne estate are of particular value as they had first-hand knowledge of his work, knew the local context from inside, and yet could provide an independent and professional view on the strengths and limitations of what had been achieved. The limitations obviously include that this was part-time work, and that the worker had not been professionally trained, and that his dependence on the community centre manager for support was vulnerable and in due course resulted in his loss of this component of face-to-face work with young people. On the other hand, his commitment and persistence in keeping in touch with the young people and engaging them in discussion and debate, as well as organising activities for them, enabled him to have a significant impact on their lives and attitudes. The partners' view that it was precisely his untrained and independent approach, in which he could be open, direct and responsive with the young people, that had enabled him to have this effect.

D. Work at Dagenham Park School

Dagenham Park School is a medium-sized mixed comprehensive Secondary School in the London Borough of Barking & Dagenham. It has arts college status, defines itself as a 'community school', and caters for students of 11-18 years. It is located in a deprived area with high unemployment and with an ethnically mixed population.

In late 2007, SET opened discussions with several local schools about the possibility of developing sports initiatives with an anti-racist message, linked to the Daily Mirror-sponsored 'Hope Not Hate' campaign. Dagenham Park School responded positively to this approach, and the project worker has subsequently worked in cooperation with the Assistant Head, who has responsibility for 'Inclusion' issues, which includes community cohesion and wider community links.

1. Main Activities

SET's work at the school has consisted of jointly organising a sports-focused 'community open day' at the school in early 2008, followed by two initiatives undertaken in later 2008 and 2009 with young people involved with different groups of young people.

Dagenham Park School Sports Open Day

In April 2008, SET jointly organised with Dagenham Park School a 'community open day', designed to highlight a range of sports in the community and with an anti-racist theme. The school provided the premises, and SET organised the activities and recruited the participants. From SET's perspective, this was not just an activity focused on the school, but also a vehicle for introducing anti-racist themes and branding into the community more widely, and doing so by promoting wide-scale participation in a variety of sports.

- The day was opened by the local MP, Jon Cruddas, and over 200 children took part in the sporting activities which carried a clear anti-racist message.

- The sporting activities included workshops, which were provided free of charge, in dance, music, handball, basketball and football.

- The featherweight boxing champion (and former pupil at the school) Kevin Mitchell gave a demonstration of his skills and achievements.

- Professional dancers from the 'Afrika, Afrika' tour also gave a performance.

- The local Sikh community provided food and refreshments.

> The anti-racist message was conveyed at a number of levels. Overtly these included the distribution and wearing of t-shirts with the 'Hope Not Hate' logo on the front, and strong and explicit statements against racism and in favour of multi-cultural integration being made by speakers and other key participants such as the boxer Kevin Mitchell. Implicitly the message was also conveyed by the participation of children, sports professionals and other key personnel from a wide variety of different ethnic groups, and by the inclusion of multi-cultural food and dance in the programme. These dimensions, and the very positive reception of the event by the participants, were documented in the video film of the event which is available on YouTube:
>
> http://www.youtube.com/user/SearchlightInfo#p/u/55/IgG7QUBW3d8

The success of the Community Open Day led to a number of follow-up activities at the school. One was that the boxer Kevin Mitchell now runs regular sessions there for young people, in which he continues to promote an inclusive and anti-racist message.

Subsequent activities at the School

Subsequently, the project worker was invited to work with pupils involved with the referral unit at the School on the themes of racism and racist bullying, undertaking a film project with them.

- Eight sessions were run in July 2008 that encouraged the pupils to address issues around racism and identity.

- With the assistance of the project worker and a film-maker colleague from SET, the pupils scripted, acted and then edited two films focusing on racism and identity, which were then shown to the rest of the school prior to the summer break.

After a gap when the school switched status to become a Church of England School, and there were changes at senior management level, SET's involvement was revived via personal links to the Head of Sixth Form.

In December 2009, the project worker undertook two sessions with some 50 students in Years 10 & 11, focusing on the themes of identity, racism and immigration.

- Once again he used his personal experience of growing up in similar circumstances and his involvement with the BNP/extreme right as a vehicle for engaging their interest and for encouraging them to reflect on their own experiences and perceptions of the situation in Barking & Dagenham.

- After his presentation he ran a Q&A session to stimulate discussion and debate, in which the young people were able to share their views about living in the area, the significance of the BNP, and the gap between their own ideas and those of older members of their families.

From the project worker's record:

"In December I did two sessions with Sixth-Form students at a Comprehensive in Dagenham where I was very pleasantly surprised by the feedback. Because I was telling my own story, about growing up on a council estate etc, etc, I felt they could relate to the story as well as shock them a little about the amount of violence I had seen or taken part in when I was around their age. I realised that for may of these young people the idea of the BNP, for instance, was an anathema. They (the BNP) represented the disillusionment that young people felt with Barking & Dagenham and not their own aspirations. Some expressed an emotional detachment from the area itself while others expressed opinions that the rise of the BNP was as a result of a different generation of people within the community. They quite openly talked about racism in their homes or within older members of their extended families, but they were quite clear that they felt detached from those ideas. Almost all of them had for instance, seen Nick Griffin of the BNP on Question Time and for some of them his appearance reinforced what they already felt or suspected, while a sizeable amount of them conceded there had been some disappointment from older members of their families in Griffin's performance."

Comments from the young people:

"When people use violence like you've described, they have lost the argument."

"If I could vote them (BNP) out, I would."

"When I see their leaflets come through the door, I feel sick."

2. The School's Perspective & Assessment

The school's view is that the activities run by the project worker have been successful, and have helped the school to address issues around racism and community cohesion both internally and in its relations with the wider community. The school is operating in a very multi-ethnic social environment, and this is reflected in its student intake. Dealing proactively with issues around racism and identity is therefore an

important responsibility for the school, and this approach – rather then responding to specific incidents or problems reactively – has been the rationale for the school's interest in drawing on the resources and cooperation offered by SET. The school feels that SET's input has added to the contribution that it has been able to make to promoting community cohesion in the local area, particularly through their partnership in organising the 'community open day' in early 2008, and has helped to provide valuable publicity for the school's commitment to combat racism and promote multi-cultural awareness and integration. It has also assisted the school to include racism as one of several issues, including sexuality and gang-related issues, in the personal development education programme undertaken by the school's referral unit. As an indicator of success the Assistant Head pointed to the fact that the young people attending his sessions, many of whom were referred by truancy, continued to attend and engaged in them with enthusiasm.

Despite this positive assessment, SET's work with the school consists only of 3 specific interventions over the three-year period and does not constitute an ongoing or strategic programme of work with the school. This seems not to be for want of trying on SET's part, but due to the difficulty in setting up an ongoing commitment of this kind with local schools – even with a school such as Dagenham Park which appears to have a positive attitude to engaging with issues around racism and community cohesion.

Overall assessment

SET originally started out with an ambitious plan for developing a wide-ranging programme for sports and training activities in the borough that would be a vehicle for anti-racist work with young people. It was clearly and directly oriented towards the prevention of racist violence, and involved working not only with young people but also at the level of the wider community – i.e. both the levels specified in the overall objectives of the PRV Initiative. On assessing the situation on the ground, however, SET modified and scaled down this plan. By placing a staff member in a community development role on a local estate, they were able to engage more directly with young people and the local community, while still organising sporting activities as originally planned.

SET's borough-wide football-related initiatives drew praise from many quarters, even though there was political opposition from some with connections with the extreme right. There is strong anecdotal evidence of the impact of these activities, and their anti-racist dimension, particularly on young people – both from comments from them and from local professionals, and also maybe (though this is difficult to assess) from the local election results in 2010 where the BNP were politically eliminated from the borough. Although SET was less successful in their attempts to develop other sports for the same purpose, their use of football was undoubtedly an example of good practice in combating racism among young people at the local level, and worthy of replication elsewhere.

SET's face-to-face work with young people at estate level was more limited, and the project worker, who was working part-time and was not formally trained in youth or community work, faced some challenges in engaging and maintaining contact with them. However, with the support of local community activists and managers, he developed good relationships with some of the groups of young people, and his personal style of engaging with them on a very open basis of sharing opinions and experiences proved successful in raising awareness and shifting some of their attitudes. Nonetheless, the vulnerability of an isolated and professionally untrained worker who was dependent on a single local community manager was demonstrated when the latter changed her post and left the estate, and this component of his work was effectively terminated.

Over most of the period, SET was only able to work with a single school, and this work was intermittent. The school was very positive about the project worker's input, but it is not clear whether it will be sustained, or precisely what kind of impact it has had on the young people. In in area such as Barking & Dagenham, issues around racism are seen as very sensitive by schools, and they may be reluctant to overtly address them or to take the risk of involving outsiders in for this purpose.

One of the key features of SET's approach is that it is explicitly anti-racist. Their experience therefore highlights some of the advantages and disadvantages of the overtly anti-racist approach. On the one hand, this (and the reputation of the organisation that went before them) clearly aroused some political opposition and sensitivity among potential partners. Also, the project worker felt initially that he needed to play down this aspect, given the extensive denial of racism as a feature of the local area, in order to initially win the acceptance of young people and adults for his work. However, it also acted as a strength, especially where other partners shared this commitment, and it helped to ensure a clarity and focus for his ongoing work. Also, most of the young people were ready to condemn overt racism (at least as they understood it), and the fact that he became known as 'the anti-racist man' became a sign of friendship and respect, and a 'brand' that could work in his favour. Here too, therefore, there are useful lessons for others who may be considering the pros and cons of adopting an explicitly anti-racist approach in their work.

Key Lessons from SET's Project

1 An explicitly anti-racist approach to preventive work with young people can bring both strengths and vulnerabilities

2 Sport is a potentially important vehicle for working on anti-racism with young people

3 Local sports competitions can help to bring young people together across areas/ groups

4 It is important to find ways to widen sports-based work beyond football alone

5 Not all young people are into sports & football: it is also important to find other vehicles for bringing them together too!

6 When building up work on sensitive issues such as racism, it is important to establish strong & enduring personal alliances with key partners and sponsors

7 Although it is desirable to work strategically, it is also important to adapt plans to circumstances & take opportunities

8 There can be benefits from anti-racist work with young people being undertaken independently of the youth service

9 There are both benefits and limitations of using untrained workers in face-to-face work with young people on issues around racism

10 Untrained workers may be able to bring relevant personal experience & 'a story to tell' that can be shared with young people in order to challenge existing attitudes

11 Professional youth workers can use and learn from the personal experience of untrained resource persons, and can benefit from working jointly or in cooperation with them

12 Anti-racist work with young people needs to be supported by corresponding work at community level also

13 Local trade unions can provide valuable political and resource support for anti-racist work with young people

14 Political support from the local council can open up opportunities for preventive work, but political sensitivities around racism can also be an obstacle

15 Cooperation with local community police can provide support and access for preventive work with young people

16 Securing sustained strategic cooperation for work with schools can be a challenge, especially in areas where racism is a sensitive issue

17 Video is a valuable tool for monitoring, reflection and evaluation when undertaking preventive work with young people

18 The local mass media and the internet may be useful for getting anti-racist messages across at community level

19 The branding of an anti-racist image can help to impact and attract young people

6. Key issues, lessons learnt & policy implications

This concluding chapter draws out the key issues, lessons learnt and policy implications that that have emerged out of the experience of the three action projects that together constitute the initiative on 'Preventing Racist Violence among Young People', funded by the Trust for London. The schedule of key issues set out below also draws on the original Runnymede Trust report on 'Preventing Racist Violence', and on the experience of the Bede Anti-Racist Project which was the pioneer of work in this field.

Nine key issues relating to this field of work have been identified, as follows:

1 How to understand disposing factors to racist violence among young people?

2 How in practice to identify 'potential perpetrators'?

3 How to access & relate to young people identified as potential perpetrators?

4 What are appropriate/effective practical methods for changing racist attitudes/ behaviour among young people?

5 How to cooperate with established youth & other relevant services?

6 How can the effectiveness of preventive work be monitored & evaluated?

7 How can effective methods be sustained & integrated into mainstream services?

8 What are the policy implications for central/local government & youth-work agencies?

9 What are the lessons for funders arising from the initiative?

The following sections address each of these key issues, identifying sub-issues, and drawing out lessons learnt during the initiative.

1. How to understand disposing factors to racist violence among young people?

- *The importance of community contexts & impact of social, economic & demographic factors.* In all three projects, the local community context was a major factor influencing young people's attitudes, which reflected the local culture in which they had grown up. Particularly 'at-risk communities' were those in areas experiencing social disruption and economic deprivation, where residents feel 'under siege', disempowered, and patronised by agencies & outside interventions. Where these have been ethnically homogeneous but now experience newcomers from visible minorities moving into the area, the context is ripe for racialised perceptions to flourish and for support for extreme right parties to increase. With that in mind, it is not a coincidence that the three projects chose to focus their interventions in Barking & Dagenham, Bexley and Thamesmead (see the local context outlines in the chapters on each of the three projects).

- *The impact of family & peer group influences on young people as individuals.* The most immediate impact on young people's attitudes and behaviour comes from their families and peer groups. In such areas there may be considerable disjunction between these two, with young people growing up in ethnically mixed schools and with mixed friendships among their own age-group there, yet returning home daily to families whose attitudes reflect those of ethnically divided communities. Work on racism, identity and conflict prevention requires sensitivity to these pressures, and the imparting of skills for them to handle personal development in these contexts.

  – These issues were particularly apparent in the WWM project where the project worker was engaging with many young people on a 1-1 basis, and it was evident in Searchlight's project in Barking also.

  – Leap's project in Bexley highlighted the fact that youth workers were often local residents and thus part of these communities, and parents to young people growing up in them.

  – However, none of the projects worked directly with the young people's families on a routine basis. The value of such an approach was emphasised in the report of the Bede House Anti-Racist Youth Work Project, and could be a direction for follow-up work in one or more of the present projects.

- *What is the relation between personal attitudes & behaviour: how do attitudes get translated into action (or not)?* WWM's project highlighted the need to distinguish between young people holding racist attitudes, and their actually engaging in racist behaviour. Racist attitudes, usually in the form of negative stereotypical images of other ethnic groups, were normal among young people in the local area. However, for these to be translated into action required some kind of 'trigger' incident giving rise to conflict, in which the racial dimension might or might not become salient and explicit.

- *The essential need to audit/understand the specifics of each local area, through local research and consultations.* In all projects an initial audit was considered essential, although the form this took varied between the projects.

  – Leap routinely conducts such audits at the outset of its work in any area, and the results of its audit in Bexley, which highlighted key aspects of racism, territorialism and other community perceptions around class etc, helped to determine the way their subsequent training courses were framed.

  – In WWM's project, the audit also included consultations with local professionals and other agencies, and this not only gave an additional dimension to the portrait of the local area, but began the process of establishing important links that would prove crucial for the successful implementation of the project (e.g. with schools).

  – The results of the audits also helped to determine the approach to be adopted: for example, in Barking & Dagenham where the existence of racism was widely accepted the issue could be addressed directly and at community level, whereas in Bexley a more indirect approach proved necessary.

- *The need to recognise racism among young people as one dimension of anti-social behaviour generally.* Where an element of racism was present in the attitudes and behaviour of young people, it was not normally an isolated characteristic, but rather an integral part of a broader package of anti-social behaviour. This was particularly notable in the work in Thamesmead, where WWM's project worker was engaging with young people who were threatened with exclusion, or had already been excluded, from school for a range of behavioural problems, and also with young people who were to varying degrees involved with gangs. Inter-racial conflict between groups of young people could potentially emerge in a variety of contexts, particularly between gangs with territorial rivalries, and over use of social

and educational facilities (e.g. the tensions in the college canteen in Greenwich). Preventing racist violence needs to be approached therefore as part of a strategy for preventing anti-social behaviour generally, and in a range of contexts.

2. How in practice to identify 'potential perpetrators'?

Given that the aim of the initiative has been to work with potential perpetrators, a key issue is how in practice such persons can be identified. In exploring this issue, the following sub-issues & lessons from the project have emerged:

- *Can those who are 'potential perpetrators' be distinguished from those who are not, or are all young people (maybe in some areas) potential perpetrators?* As noted in the Introduction, the view shared by all the projects is that in the kinds of area they have been working in, predominantly white and where racist attitudes may be deeply entrenched in the local culture, all young people are potential perpetrators, and preventive work therefore needs to be undertaken generally with this group.

- *How can specifically at-risk groups or individuals be identified, without – at the same time – stigmatising them?* The experience of WWM's project demonstrates how, if a worker builds up strong relations with young people over time, and wins their trust and confidence, then it is possible to address sensitive issues such as racism directly, and the young people will share confidences as to their attitudes and behaviours. In this way the project worker was able to assess certain individuals and groups as being particularly at risk (and some admitted already having engaged in racist violence), and as a result was able to engage in preventive work with them directly.

- *The need to focus on young people's sense of identity: feelings of isolation, not belonging, and confusion as vulnerability factors.* A direct focus on racist attitudes and behaviour without consideration of disposing factors and of wider issues around identity may lead to a narrow and ineffective approach to preventing racist violence with young people. Work at the personal and group level needs to take account of wider social influences, and personality factors, as causes of racist attitudes, and these too need to be addressed in preventive work. All the projects have found that working around issues of identity with young people has been productive, including exploring with them the roots of identity, how it is formed, how it influences their lives, how it is perceived and constructed, and its relations with issues such as class, territorialism and nationalism as well as racism. This allows young people to increase their awareness of their feelings around these issues, and how they may influence their behaviour.

- *How far is it possible to work through youth-work/schools & other agencies to identify 'at risk' individuals or groups?* Youth agencies and schools provide the opportunity to reach directly and quickly out to a wide range of young people. Insofar as all young people are seen as 'at risk', programmes that address racism, identity and conflict-resolution with the full range of young people will be potentially beneficial. Both schools and youth agencies will also have information about young people who have been involved in conflict and anti-social behaviour, and may be aware of the presence of a racial dimension in some cases. This provides an opportunity for more immediately 'at risk' young people to be identified, as well as a potential organisational context within which work with them may be developed. Other agencies such as the police and probation service may also have relevant information about young people particularly 'at risk' in this regard, and police through their neighbourhood teams and youth initiatives may also be able to address these issues directly. However, independent workers need to consider carefully the benefits and disadvantages of being seen to be cooperating with the police closely on these issues, as the perceptions of young people regarding association with the

police may obstruct the worker's access to such young people and their willingness to cooperate and be open about attitudes and behaviour.

– For example, it was undoubtedly the independence of WWM's project worker from the established authorities in Thamesmead that helped him to build such a strong rapport with various groups of young people.

– On the other hand, in SET's project, there was successful cooperation with police in sports-based initiatives with an explicitly anti-racist approach.

• *How can outreach work with young people & in communities be used to build up intelligence about 'at-risk' groups?* Outreach work allows young people who do not access clubs and other organised groups to be accessed independently of the school system. Many such young people may be involved in anti-social behaviour of various kinds, and maybe on the periphery or even active members of organised 'gangs'. Especially where such gangs are organised on a racial basis, such young people may be particularly at risk of involvement in racist violence. Outreach work may therefore be of particular importance in identifying potential perpetrators. In areas where there is evidence that young people are influenced or active in this way, the investment of time and resources in outreach work will be essential, and such work needs to be targeted specifically at the dimension of racism.

3. How to access & relate to young people identified as potential perpetrators?

• *The crucial need is to avoid labelling, use sensitivity, and build trust/confidence to open up issues and give young people their voice.* All the projects have had to address these issues in accessing and relating to young people. Methods that embody these principles have the potential to be successful, otherwise they surely will not. All projects have found that working in this way requires time, patience, and skill. Also that listening to young people is a pre-requisite for understanding them and then working with them on sensitive issues such as racism.

– Leap's method of working not only with but also through young people, as in their peer-education and peer-mentoring programmes, takes this approach one step further. It is premised on the principle that young people can and should take responsibility for their own attitudes and actions, and they themselves can be the most effective influences on their peers. Leap's theory of change is based on the belief that offering training to young people is often not enough to effect genuine long-term change. For this to happen, young people need to be given the opportunity and support to practise the skills they have developed so that they become deeply embedded.

• *The merits of the traditional outreach youth-work method: it may take time, it needs skill/persistence, but it has the greatest potential to build personal trust/confidence.* This was demonstrated particularly by the work undertaken in WWM's project. Although the project worker had a base at and was linked with youth clubs, he operated independently, and was very successful in building up strong and enduring relationships that then allowed him to explore the sensitive issue of racism. In this respect, WWM's work replicates and further develops the approaches pioneered in the Bede Anti-Racist Project in the 1990s.

• *What are the advantages & disadvantages of working with/through schools/other agencies, ie. within their existing framework of relationships with/between young people?* All three projects found that schools could be valuable partners in enabling them to reach and work productively with young people. Schools could provide a 'captive audience' and enable projects to reach a large number of young people, and using the 'peer education' model this could be multiplied much further. Schools could also identify young people who were potential perpetrators (or had already been perpetrators), and deliver them for preventive work. On the other hand, not all schools proved willing to work on these issues, and opportunities may be

constrained by what schools are willing to offer, and by the strength or otherwise of the institutional support offered for such work. Where they do, however, as in the case of Bexleyheath School for example, they can obtain clear benefits from addressing the issues using these kinds of approaches.

- *The importance of sport/leisure activities for accessing young people, building confidence, and bringing different groups together.* The projects of WWM and SET showed strongly the potential of sporting and other leisure/cultural activities for engaging successfully with young people for educational and personal development purposes, including for addressing issues such as racism. Such activities have the potential to breakdown territorial and ethnic barriers, by bringing different groups into contact and cooperation with each other and taking them to different geographical areas.

- *The option of using a structured 'peer education' approach, to equip young people to work directly with peers who may be 'potential perpetrators'.* The Leap project demonstrated the potential for working with schools and youth agencies to establish initiatives led by the young people themselves, using models such as 'peer education' and 'peer mediation'. These approaches are appropriate and effective for working with young people generally, and may require special support for ensuring that they address sensitive issues of racism effectively.

- *A key challenge: how to maintain/sustain contact with young people as they change interests, switch friendships, grow up, etc.* Projects reported several instances of young people disappearing or losing interest after an initially successful initiative had been established. This underlines the importance to providing regular contact, and continuity of personnel, as well as being able to respond to or stimulate young people's interests as they shift, and also as they change due to their getting older. Leap's peer-educator approach is a potentially beneficial one as it allows for peer support that can be more long-term.

- *Worker identity as a potential factor affecting access/relations: the impact of the identity of the youth worker.* Generally speaking, the experience of the projects has been that the impact of the worker has been primarily dependent on the worker's approach and skills. However, the racial identity of the worker has also had an impact on the work, not only because of the experience the worker brings, but also because of the perceptions of the young people and of others involved with the work, such as colleagues.

  - In the case of WWM's project, where the black project worker engaging mainly with young white people, the issue of racism and racial identity was always potentially present and he had to be ready to respond at any moment to take opportunities for challenging attitudes and raising awareness. But he could use common interests and the fact that he had also grown up as a 'Londoner' as a basis for shared identification and cooperation with the young white people, whereas in his work with young black people there was a racial basis for shared identity and understanding from the start.

  - Likewise, SET's white project worker was able to use his experience of growing up on similar estates to the young people as a resource and element of shared identity.

  - In Leap's project, a decision was made to withdraw a less experienced black worker, and replace him with one who had more experience of addressing issues around racial identity with young people. Leap's lead white trainer was also able to use a 'hidden' element of minority identity in his background to address anti-semitism. The important factors here are the self-awareness and skills of the workers to handle the issues personally.Leap's project also suggests that the lack of such awareness and skill among many locally-recruited youth workers may

prevent them from being able to 'stand outside' the local context and address attitudes effectively.

4. What are appropriate/effective practical methods for changing racist attitudes/behaviour among young people?

- *There is a wide repertoire of potential methods: workers need to select ones appropriate to the group & context, and have skills to use them effectively.* Both across and within the projects, a wide variety of methods have been used, partly reflecting the different approaches the projects have brought to the initiative, and partly reflecting the choices that have been made by project workers with regard to the character and size of the groups they are working with, their ages and circumstances, the contexts, and their specific objectives and the stage of development of their relations with them.

  – Examples of methods for awareness-raising & focusing on identity/conflict have included exercises, group discussions, specific projects, and 1-1 sessions.

  – All project workers have brought substantial skills and experience to the project, but have also been challenged by some of the situations they have faced and have had to develop strategies specifically for addressing sensitive issues around racism.

- *Methods for building inter-group understanding and cooperation: the importance of joint activities around a common interest, eg. sport, dance, adventure trips*. All projects have to varying degrees made use of sporting and other cultural activities, and residential events, as creating opportunities for awareness-raising and building cooperation and mutual understanding among participants in the group. This has been done both with member of specific ethnic groups on their own, and with mixed groups with the intention of breaking down ethnic and territorial barriers.

  – SET's project has been strongly focused on using these methods, especially in the area of football, and also around anti-racist campaigning activities linked to the 'Hope Not Hate' campaign.

  – WWM's project made very successful use of football as a vehicle for bringing young white people from Thamesmead into relations with young black people from neighbouring areas.

  The initiative as a whole has been able to demonstrate very positive outcomes from activities of these kinds in the direction of changing attitudes of young people around racism and identity.

- *The opportunities created by use of film & other media for personal and group awareness-raising.* Both WWM and SET have used filming of sessions to be valuable in a number of ways: as a tool for cooperative relationship-building within a group, as a method of record-keeping and as a resource for later discussion with the young people involved. WWM has found the latter particularly valuable, as the worker could use it to return to and focus on specific attitudes and opinions expressed previously, as well as explore with young people how and why their opinions on issues around racism and identity have changed.

- *The issue of how, when and in what contexts to raise explicitly/directly the issue of 'racism'.* All projects have needed to address this issue, and in the early stages it was a frequent topic of debate across the projects. The issue arose differently in different projects.

  – In Leap's work, which focuses more broadly on issues of identity and conflict-resolution, the issue has been how to work a focus on racism into work with peer

educators, so that it is an integral component rather than a separate topic that could create barriers and cause defensiveness.

– In WWM's project, the worker has always tried to build up relations of trust with young people before directly addressing the topic of racism.

– In Searchlight's project the main concern has been how to play down the issue in the work with young people given Searchlight's main approach and reputation as an anti-racist campaigning organisation. The worker has therefore consistently sought to work with young people on a broader range of related issues, but this did not prevent him becoming known as 'the anti-racist man', and he has had to work with this perception and turn it to his advantage.

• *For challenging racist attitudes, workers need skills/methods for initiating 'dangerous conversations' in 'safe spaces'.* A major challenge faced by all projects has been how to create the opportunities and contexts to address sensitive issues such as racism.

– WWM's project worker has particularly used the approach of building up personal relations over time, devoting a lot of time to listening to young people and responding in a non-judgemental way, and in this manner creating contexts in which young people can share confidences with him and with others.

– Leap, especially in their work with young peer educators, have formalised their approach to the issue in terms of the need have the skills & techniques to create 'safe spaces', which may be in formal training sessions or informal conversations, to initiate and hold 'dangerous conversations', which may of course be around a variety of issues and not only racism.

• *To what extent are the above methods different from general youth work practice?* Youth work practice has moved towards a zero-tolerance policy with regard to manifestations of racism, which has tended to result in a condemnatory or punitive response by youth workers to such incidents. There have also been tendencies for workers to avoid responding to such incidents, when of a less serious nature, as they may feel that they do not have the necessary skills or may exacerbate the problem by doing so. This initiative highlights both the need for and the feasibility of an educational response to racism, cast within a preventive framework, and one which approaches racism among young people within the broader context of identity and personal development issues. The methods demonstrated in the initiative need to be incorporated into mainstream youth service practice and training, so that the prevention of racist violence among young people can be addressed routinely within youth work. The initiatives of WWM's project worker in Thamesmead, and the current plans for mainstreaming this through production of guidance materials and training courses, provide an example of the appropriate way forward.

5. How to cooperate with established youth & other relevant services?

• *Which services are relevant? Youth work, schools, what other*? In this initiative, projects cooperated principally with youth work agencies, schools and community centres. All three can provide access to a wide range of young people, as well as being able to provide intelligence as to potentially 'at risk' groups and individuals. Projects have had relatively limited contact with police and criminal justice agencies, which are less concerned with preventive work. The experience of the projects shows that cooperation is likely to be more forthcoming where agencies can see that the approach adopted has benefits for their own work, including on related issues such as preventing anti-social behaviour more generally (e.g. in the community, and as in WWM's and SET's work with young people in referral units in schools). This encourages a joined-up approach to tackling social problems, and

the cooperation provides a basis for building up mutual trust and understanding between the partners.

- *The problems of denial of racism, and organisational/cultural resistance, must be addressed and overcome.* Public services and other organisations, despite overt policies on racism and related issues, may for various reasons ignore, downplay or deny the relevance or presence of racism in their spheres of activity or responsibility.

  – One reason may the lack of skills or confidence on the part of staff to address these issues, and another may be concern about the adverse influence on their reputation that acknowledgement of such incidents may cause (e.g. in schools).

  – In addition, agency staff may themselves be part of the local community & may collude in local community perceptions, e.g. general community denial of racism in the locality, as encountered in white working-class areas of Bexley by Leap during its project.

  – Voluntary & faith-based organisations may be more willing to acknowledge issues around racism and to challenge the dominant view in the community and in agencies, as was found by WWM in its work in Greenwich/Thamesmead.

- *There is a need to win explicit agency acknowledgement that the problem exists/ needs to be addressed.* Without such acknowledgement at senior levels of the organisation, attempts to secure partnership arrangements to address issues around racism will not be able to develop in a secure and strategic manner. Agreements and alliances with lower-level staff may enable specific short-term initiatives to be set up, but these are likely to struggle to be sustained, resourced, multiplied and supported by other staff.

  – Some of the initiatives of WWM's project worker in Thamesmead have been vulnerable in this way, and he has stated that on reflection, were he to start the work again, he would have tried to be more strategic in his approach.

  – Leap's initiative at Bexleyheath School, on the other hand, provides a good example of the strength that can be gained from making an alliance with a senior manager who acknowledges the need and is in a position to lead on the development of appropriate organisational responses.

  – SET's partnerships over sporting activities with the local council in Barking & Dagenham were based on a shared and explicit commitment to combat racism that was also strongly supported by local trade unions.

- *There is a need to have key internal allies & a 'champion' at senior level. In order to have effecti*ve and secure cooperation and partnership, it is necessary to build up relations with key staff at middle management level who can on the one hand sponsor specific activities, and on the other make or support representations to senior management level for these to become part of a strategic response of the organisation to racial issues (including their prevention).

  – Most organisations are likely to have an explicit policy commitment to address racial issues and a senior manager designated with responsibility for it. Despite this, many may not have a currently active plan for this purpose, and this may need to be mobilised with the designated senior manager acting as 'champion'.

  – External organisations, such as community groups, may also be able to exert pressure for this to happen (and also offer support).

  – Other external factors, such as – in the case of Bexleyheath school in this initiative – inspection reports may put pressure on organisations to address issues of racism, and this may also present a leverage opportunity.

- The work undertaken by WWM at Greenwich College also illustrates how internal problems around racism and ethnic tension can create a leverage opportunity, which has then been resulted in the issues being brought into more mainstream work by supportive managers.

- *How is it possible to work externally with an agency on the issue, and not be marginalized/excluded?* Building strong partnerships, with support at senior management level, and strong allies at middle management level who can help to implement initiatives, are (as indicated above) the two elements that can ensure effective cooperation. Regular contact, openness about agendas, mutual understanding and respect, and readiness to share concerns and to address problems jointly – all these are the essential ingredients for effectiveness in working externally with an agency, and for preventing an initially promising project from becoming marginalized or eventually excluded. Leap's experience of its cooperation with Bexley Youth Service in developing programmes and overcoming difficulties provides a clear example of this from the initiative.

- *There is a need to provide training and support so that other agencies can discuss and challenge racism more confidently and effectively.* Work around racism and identity issues had not featured strongly in most of the partner agencies of projects in this initiative, and even if it was valued there was often not the time or resources to address it effectively. In this situation there is an important need for guidance and training to be provided for staff in these agencies around the issues, including how to prevent and respond to incidents of racist violence. Where the necessary expertise exists internally, it can be drawn on for this purpose, but agencies will often need to engage external expertise, as has been provided by all three projects in this initiative to agencies in their respective boroughs. Materials are also need to support this, and the projects that form part of the initiative have already been developing these and have valuable experience to make a major contribution here.

6. How can the impact and effectiveness of preventive work be monitored & evaluated?

- *Monitoring and evaluation should form part of a strategic approach to implementation and development of work on prevention.* This will enable initiatives to be documented, and their outcomes identified and assessed, so that lessons can be learnt, the effectiveness of interventions measured, and policies and practices to be reviewed and developed in the light this.

- *Prevention needs to be an integral but identifiable component of regular youth-work activities.* If preventive work focusing around issues of identity and racism is to be mainstreamed as an integral component of youth work, then in order to monitor its implementation and evaluate its effectiveness, it needs to be a component that is also identifiable for these purposes. If it remains vaguely defined or loses its specific identity, then monitoring and evaluation of this element will not be possible.

- *Monitoring and evaluation processes should be set up at the planning stage of a prevention project.* Unless these are set up at the planning and design stage, it may be difficult to introduce them while the implementation is in process. Objectives may be unclear, there may be resistance by staff to their introduction, sufficient resources may not be available, and valuable base-line data may be lost or not recorded.

- *Currently youth workers don't always appreciate the importance of monitoring and evaluation, or may not have the skills.* Monitoring and evaluation do not always appear to be an integral part of youth workers' agendas, or to be fully embedded in youth work culture. They may not be routinely part of the job requirement, and some youth workers do not appear to have received training on these issues. As a result, they appear not to value such activities nor see the purpose in them, but rather operate on a 'craft' model of work in which intuitive judgement and assessment

of experience is the norm. It is understood that formal youth work training now addresses the need for monitoring and reflection, and there are obligations on agencies under the 'Every Child Matters' agenda. However, it seems that even where such data are collected, there may often be little or no analysis undertaken, and a lack of use of such data for systematic evaluation. This lack of appreciation of monitoring and evaluation, and how it can benefit policy and practice in fields such as the prevention of racist violence, needs to be addressed and overcome, if lessons are to be learnt from experience and good and effective practice identified. There is also a need to ensure that time and resources are available to undertake such work. Managers should therefore require routine use of monitoring and evaluation by youth work staff, and provide necessary guidance, supervision and support.

- *Relatively simple methods that can be implemented by workers should be devised, disseminated and used, and training and guidance provided*. Within the project, a variety of simple techniques were developed and used by projects, including regular note-taking, video-recording, writing weekly reports, and use of questionnaires with young people. However, these were often not used systematically or in a structured way, and more analysis could have been made of the data for evaluation purposes.

- *'Soft'/anecdotal qualitative data will probably need to be relied on to a substantial extent.* Due to the nature of much youth work, which is usually small-scale informal, personal, unstructured, responsive and often opportunistic, it will be difficult to plan systematic evaluation in detail, and even more difficult to obtain quantitative statistical data on a regular basis.

  – Anecdotal data relating to racism and identity issues, especially based on incidents and conversations with young people, will have to be relied on to a substantial extent, and interpreted and assessed for consistency, so that patterns and sequences can be established, from which conclusions can be drawn.

  – Workers therefore need to keep detailed/regular records of their activities, incidents & the responses of the young people, so that these can be analysed in order to assess outcomes.

  – As shown in SET's and WWM's projects, video recording can also be a useful tool for monitoring and evaluation, and young people themselves can be directly involved in the making of such videos as well as using them as a resource for discussion and debate.

- *Workers need to involve young people themselves in the monitoring and evaluation of their work.* In this way young people will be able to demonstrate its impact in an engaging and powerful way, for example through keeping written or video diaries. Often it will be sufficient to use focus-group style of discussions to review progress. Alternatively, simple questionnaires can be administered, the results of which can subsequently be used as the basis for discussion sessions. Young people can run sessions of this kind themselves. Where, as in Leap's project, the young people – as peer educators, are running sessions and activities themselves, they will have sole responsibility for monitoring and evaluation, and will need training, guidance and materials to equip them for this task.

- *Evaluation should focus on the outcomes and effectiveness of different approaches*. Policy-makers and professionals should ensure that mechanisms are developed to assess the different approaches to working on racism and identity issues with young people, and their impact on attitudes and behaviour, especially in relation to the prevention of racist violence. Based on the results of these analyses and evaluations, there should be reviews of policy & practice, and events to identify & share of good practice, and the results should be fed into youth work training focusing on these issues & other professional development mechanisms.

7. How can effective methods be sustained & integrated into mainstream services?

This issue has not been directly addressed in the individual projects, so solutions cannot be elaborated here by drawing upon experience from the initiative. However, in the light of the experiences of the projects in working in partnership with mainstream agencies, the following needs can be highlighted:

- Management commitment is crucial: there needs to be positive leadership, and action to combat resistance to addressing issues of racism among young people

- Staff need ownership and understanding of the issue, and the confidence & skills to address it: this requires effective training and management supervision/support

- There is a need to build tackling racism explicitly into core job descriptions & everyday work

- Youth work and other agencies need access to specialist advice and support, which can either be accessed or engaged externally, or obtained by internal recruitment

- Work on prevention needs to be integrated with wider policy fields: crime reduction, tackling anti-social behaviour, community cohesion, etc

- Mainstream services need to recognise that prevention is long-term work, and must plan accordingly

- Multi-agency cooperation is essential, and should involve the voluntary sector as well as statutory agencies

8. What are the policy implications for central/local government & youth-work agencies?

A range of policy implications for government and service-agencies working with young people have already been identified in the original Runnymede Report on 'Preventing Racist Violence'. In the light of the experience of the three projects in the current initiative, the following key policy implications can be drawn out and emphasised:

- There needs to be an explicit recognition by governmental and youth agencies (including schools) of the need for preventive work, and a commitment to ensure this is undertaken

- The policy commitment to undertake such work needs to be embedded in wider policy agendas, e.g. relating to community cohesion, citizenship education, the Prevent Agenda, community safety, and anti-social behaviour. There is a need to ensure a specific focus on race and identity issues, including the prevention of racist violence, within these agendas.

- Work in this field should be strategic, with clear aims and objectives, and action plans to achieve these, including specific targets and outcomes

- Training for all staff working with young people should be provided around race and identity issues, including how to deal with incidents of racist violence and ethnic conflict, and job descriptions should include reference to responsibilities in this field.

- Specialist posts or responsibilities should be established in organisations working with young people, so that specialist advice and support can be obtained (including from outside, where necessary) and made available to staff, both on preventive work and in responding to incidents.

- Practical guidance based on experience should be made available, and opportunities created for exchange of experience

- The importance of monitoring and evaluation in youth work needs to be emphasised, not only in policy and training, but also as an integral component of everyday professional practice.

- The experience of this current initiative should be drawn on in all of the above.

- Resources need to be made available to support the above work.

- Progress and experience should be monitored & reviewed, and policy further developed as appropriate

9. What are the lessons for funders arising from the initiative?

- In both this and other social fields, funders can play an important role by funding innovative projects that develop new approaches to solving social problems and meeting social needs when these have not been recognised or responded to adequately by current statutory services and other providers.

- When funding a set of projects to address a particular social issue, funders should ensure there is programme design that draws on an analysis of this issue, the needs arising, and existing responses to this need (as was provided in the present case by the Runnymede Trust report on Preventing Racist Violence which was funded by the Trust for London), so that the selection and design of projects can be matched to this context.

- When selecting projects for funding for work on issues related to racism, funders should ensure that projects have

    A. a clear and relevant understanding of the nature of racism in the particular context and its links with other social issues

    B. the commitment, skills and experience to address this effectively

    C. an appreciation that racism can be a sensitive issue in many social and institutional contexts

    D. an approach that will ensure they can overcome such sensitivities and achieve the initiative objectives successfully.

- When considering applications for funding for projects of these kinds, funders should assess as fully as possible their feasibility in terms of resourcing and support for project workers, especially where the project may be undertaken over a long period by a single worker.

- When funding innovative projects that are independent of mainstream service provision, funders should require them to show at the outset that they have realistic plans for sustaining and mainstreaming what will be achieved, and to show during the course of the project that (subject to any necessary adaptations) these can be implemented.

- Funders should ensure that, for funded projects, a very clear framework is set out at the beginning of the funding period to ensure that monitoring and evaluation is built into a initiative from its inception, and that undertaking monitoring and evaluation is an obligatory requirement for projects.

- The benefits of external evaluation can be enhanced if the external evaluator adopts a 'formative approach' to the evaluation, i.e. by feeding interim or ongoing evaluation results back into the initiative in the course of its implementation, by supporting projects' own self-monitoring and self-evaluation efforts, and by facilitating reflection and exchange of experience among the projects during the course of the initiative.

- When funding innovative projects on sensitive issues such as racism, funders should hold regular steering group meetings, to be attended by representatives of the

funders, projects, evaluators and other key stakeholders and/or expert advisers. The purpose of the meetings should be to monitor progress and provide feedback, to ensure the above points are bring addressed, to exchange experience across the projects and debate relevant issues, and to help to respond to any needs or problems that may arise.

Key themes common to the projects

The idea of targeted work specifically for prevention of racist violence among young people was not present among local policy-makers and professionals.

Denial of, or reluctance to overtly address, racism among young people and in the community by local people and professionals was a common feature in all three areas.

Most young people explicitly condemned racism, but at the same time would articulate negative attitudes and stereotypes relating to specific groups.

The racist attitudes and stereotypes articulated by young people needed to be understood in relation to class, territorial, gender and other factors, as well as in relation to family, community and media influences.

The potential for involvement in racist violence, albeit of a casual and less serious nature, was seen by projects as present for most young people in such areas, and not just for the small number who might hold extreme views.

Engaging with young people for work to address these issues required skill, patience, sensitivity, and the building up of a relationship of trust over a period of time.

Most young people in all three areas had strong territorial attachments and were often unconfident or fearful as regards travelling outside their immediate local area.

Exploring issues initially around identity more generally with young people provided a more effective way into discussions on racism, by contrast with a narrow, direct approach.

Taking young people out of their immediate areas, and providing structured opportunities for them to engage with young people from other areas and social groups, provided valuable opportunities for learning.

Use of peer educators, mediators and mentors are potentially powerful tools for influencing racial attitudes and behaviour among young people.

Engaging with young people in sporting, musical and other kinds of activities of interest to them provided a favourable context in which addressing issues around racism and identity could take place.

Independence from established services gave specialist workers the freedom and opportunity to undertake innovative work, but their isolation presented difficulties such as lack of support and engaging effectively with mainstream agencies.

Success in engaging and establishing partnerships with established agencies usually depended on taking opportunities for leverage, and building personal relationships with key individuals in front-line service management positions.

Key learning points and recommendations for practitioners, policy-makers, funders

Key points for practitioners

Youth workers and teachers in schools have an important role in preventive work

Raising awareness around identity issues, and challenging racist attitudes and stereotypes, can help to prevent involvement of young people in racist violence, especially in areas experiencing economic problems and rapid demographic change

Practitioners themselves need awareness and skill to undertake prevention work effectively, and should obtain training and specialist advice where necessary

A wide range of methods can be used to work with young people, to be selected according to the age of the young people, the context, and the approach of the worker

Issues of racism are often best approached indirectly, and in the context of other identity issues, and after the worker has built up a relation of trust over time

Bringing young people together around common interests, such as sport, can also help to break down barriers and thus prevent racist violence

Training young people themselves to act as peer educators around race and identity issues can make a major contribution to preventive work

Key points for policy-makers

Youth policy needs to include a specific and explicit focus on the need to prevent racist violence

Work on racism should be linked to other relevant agendas, such as personal and social development, anti-social behaviour, and community cohesion

A multi-agency approach is essential, and this should include involvement of community groups

Curricula, programmes and plans need to include activities that will address issues around identity and racism among young people

Youth workers need the support, awareness and skill to address issues around racism and identity in a proactive way. Training and professional guidance need to be provided for this purpose

Specialist advice and support need to be available to agencies working with young people. Resources need to be provided for these purposes

The effectiveness of work on, or related to, the prevention of racist violence among young people needs to be monitored and evaluated

Schools also have an important role to play, alongside youth work and other community agencies

Key points for funders

There is a need to stimulate further work aimed at preventing racist violence among young people.

Preventing racism could appropriately be an explicit sub-theme within broader funded programmes addressing policy areas such as youth work, anti-social behaviour, and community cohesion

Innovative approaches in different types of social and institutional context should be encouraged

Initiatives should include provision for multi-agency cooperation, and for ensuring sustainability and mainstreaming subsequently

Evaluation of the effectiveness of the interventions should be an integral part of project and programme design

The lessons learnt should be widely disseminated

Appendix

Monitoring and evaluation methods in the initiative

As has already been noted in the introduction, when Runnymede took on the role of evaluator for the present initiative, they noted that individual projects had their own contractual responsibility to evaluate their work. Runnymede therefore proposed an approach in which it would work alongside projects to support them in this task, so that internally-generated data could provide a core evidence base for the external evaluation.

Runnymede offered a 'formative' approach to the evaluation, whereby the evaluators regularly fed back their observations and assessments to the projects and to the initiative advisory group, so that emerging issues and problems could be addressed on an ongoing basis, and appropriate adjustments and developments made.

Runnymede was well aware of the difficulties involved in evaluating preventive work in this area. This had already been noted in Sarah Isal's original Runnymede Report on *'Preventing Racist Violence'.* While she recommended that evaluation was an important activity that needed to be strengthened, she also recognised that it was unlikely to be feasible to obtain hard, statistical data and that anecdotal, qualitative data were likely to have to play an important role.

Runnymede therefore worked with the projects, to encourage and assist them to keep records that could provide a basis for the evaluation of the impact of their activities. A joint workshop was held in July 2009 to review issues and progress their use of monitoring and evaluation methods, and Aine Woods (formerly Project Officer for the Bede Anti-Racist Project, and currently Course Director for Youth & Community Work at Anglia Ruskin University) subsequently worked with projects individually to provide further support.

Although projects undertook monitoring and evaluation to some degree, the quantity and quality of the work was variable. Runnymede's strategy of working alongside the projects was not as successful as was hoped in generating the kind of systematic data-recording and evaluation process for the initiative as a whole that was originally intended. Although one of the projects already did have its own established evaluation procedures and routinely implemented these, the other two did not seem to have a 'culture' of systematically evaluating their work and their workers tended not to see a benefit in it and to have felt it was a distraction from their work (or even a threat to it). An additional difficulty was that Runnymede was only brought in after the projects had already started, and although the Trust's conditions of grant placed an obligation on projects to evaluate their work, they had not put evaluation schemes of their own in place from the outset.

Establishing a precise and accurate record of the activities that have actually been carried out by the projects has therefore proved to be quite a challenge for the evaluators, let alone obtaining data for their outcomes. This is not to underestimate the efforts that have undoubtedly been made in all the projects to cooperate with Runnymede on this task, and to work with Aine Woods as external consultant on developing their own monitoring and evaluation methods. The final report on the initiative therefore draws on such data as has been documented by these various means, and through external sources and interviews undertaken by Runnymede with key personnel and partners. If more time and resources had been available for the

evaluation, it would no doubt be possible to access or generate more data on the outcomes of the work (e.g. by closer examination of projects' daily and weekly records, and by more extensive interviewing, especially of young people).

Nonetheless, as the following sections indicate, the various monitoring and evaluation activities undertaken by the projects, and their experiences of using these, provide a potentially useful source of guidance for those who those who wish to undertake similar work with young people on the prevention of racist violence. Further relevant material is included in the chapters of the main report covering each project. (It is hoped to produce at a later stage a publication setting out in greater detail the kinds of recording, monitoring and evaluation methods that are appropriate for work in this field, in order to meet the need identified in Runnymede's original report on preventing racist violence among young people.)

Working with Men

The method of working in this project has involved a single experienced youth worker operating often in isolation, sometimes within a planned programme of activities and sometimes reacting in a spontaneous or flexible manner to opportunities that arise for him in his contacts with young people. Such a method of working calls for methods of monitoring and evaluation that are appropriate and feasible for this type of work, and in practice this has meant particular reliance on self-monitoring.

The methods of monitoring used by the worker have primarily involved keeping a diary of his work, and writing notes following each particular session of his activities with young people. These records have then been the basis of quite detailed weekly reports prepared for his manager in WWM, together with summary three-monthly reports which provide a general overview of his work during the period. Keeping records in this way does not of itself, however, constitute evaluation, and some kind of measurement and analysis of outcomes and impact is also required.

The external evaluators have therefore worked with the project to encourage and assist with the development and use of evaluation tools at the level of specific activities. For the most part, this has involved the project worker actively seeking and recording anecdotal feedback from young people with regard to the activities they have undertaken, and of how these may have affected their attitudes to various issues and groups. He has also introduced and encouraged the use of self evaluation methods by the young people themselves, e.g. through questionnaires and video-diaries, during or after various workshops and residential sessions. Returning to these later with the young people enabled him to explore how far they had moved in terms of their attitudes and behavior around the issues.

Use of video and other methods by youth worker to identify changes in attitude and behaviour amongst young people in Thamesmead

During the second year of his work with young people from the West Thamesmead area, the project worker used one his regular football sessions with them to prepare them for the forthcoming football project in which he would bring them together with a group of young black people from a neighbouring area. As a basis for discussion about issues that might arise, he used the video he made with them a year or so earlier in which they had talked about their attitudes and experiences around race and identity issues, and also his record of what they had said to him when he had interviewed them in his consultation exercise at the outset of the project. By this means he was also able to make an assessment of how far their attitudes and behavior had changed over the period he had been working with them.

He summarized their responses in his weekly monitoring report, as follows:

> "They found it interesting looking back. There are a few things that have changed. They said they no longer felt isolated, there are no more issues with gangs and they tend to acknowledge boys/young men from other areas. This may just be a nod but they felt it was enough. They felt that the main reason for change is that they are getting older and starting to move further afield. When I look at a lot of these boys, I have noticed that there are a few black faces amongst their friends. Not in the case of everyone but I have to say the more popular boys certainly do have several black friends. They couldn't believe that they said they felt like they had to hang around in groups or that they felt intimidated by black boys. So it was a good idea to bring out the document and film out again."

This is an example of how very simple techniques can be used by individual youth workers to routinely monitor changes in attitudes and behaviour amongst young people they work with. On the other hand, such measures are far from precise, and usually not capable of quantitative analysis. They must be accepted and valued as qualitative in nature, and as indicative of change rather than conclusive. In addition, as the project worker's notes imply, it may be difficult to ascertain how far his intervention itself caused the changes, as these may have been (at least in part) a result of other factors such as the normal processes of young people 'growing up'.

So far as has been practicable, the external evaluators have used these qualitative records (supplemented by conversations with the project worker and interviews with other key associates and partners) to assess the implementation and outcomes of the various activities undertaken. Where appropriate such data and assessments have been included in the accounts of WWM's activities set out in the relevent chapter in the main report, and further information about the outcomes of monitoring and evaluation in the project can be found there.

Leap Confronting Conflict

Leap is an established training organisation which routinely monitors and internally evaluates its activities, using systematic and well-established methods. Debrief sessions with participants, trainer 'conversation capture forms' and review meetings, and follow-up review sessions with participants at a later date are all techniques that have been used by Leap on the present project.

For the particular purposes of this project, Leap has devised some additional questionnaires and other instruments that are adapted to the specific aims and methods of their interventions, and also included specific questions relating to racism, ethnic identity and other relevant matters.

Leap's main activities in its project have consisted of a series of discrete though linked training interventions, undertaken in partnership with local organisations. Internal evaluation data from the Bexley-wide peer educators' training (conducted with Bexley Youth Service), from the Bexleyheath School training and from the more recent initiative with Charlton Athletic Community Trust have been obtained and analysed by Leap.

- In particular, the 3-day workshop with the Bexley-wide peer educators group has been well documented, and the 'trainer conversation capture forms' are a particularly rich and detailed source of information about the discussions and debates that took place during the sessions and the responses of the young people. They demonstrate vividly the impact of the sessions on the awareness and attitudes of the participants around issues of identity and prejudice on a range of dimensions, including 'race'.

- For the Bexleyheath School and CACT training courses, detailed data from the end-of-course questionnaires provide not only an overall statistical picture of the reception by participants, but also individual comments which provide insight into the positive impact of the course and the principal learning that has resulted.

Example of end-of-course self-rating tool from questionnaire used by Leap in training for peer educators in schools
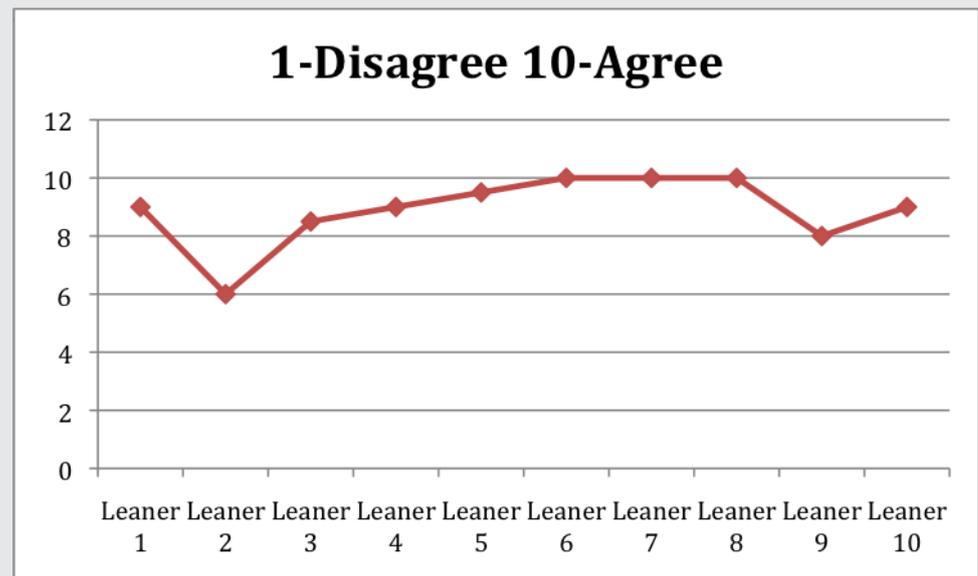
Comments

"I rate 10 because I have been hanging around with different people"

"I have learnt not to call people names without knowing the real reason"

"I have learnt a better way to understand other people"

"I know what to do in a situation"

"I know to deal with it when it happens"

"I have learnt not to be bias"

"I have learnt not to judge on appearance"

"I know how to deal with it and also have the power to sort it. Also I can deal with prejudice and not judge people"

"I have learnt a better way to understand people"

In most cases, Leap has prepared a short summary analysis of the data, covering both quantitative and qualitative data, and drawing out any relevant conclusions. These are then reviewed by Leap's trainers and training managers internally, along with the trainers' own reports.

Data from all of the above sources and methods have been drawn on in the main report above, and further examples of the use and outcomes of Leap's methods are presented there.

Searchlight Educational Trust

Searchlight's project worker had not been professionally trained, and is an experienced activist and campaigner by background. Monitoring and evaluation have not been part of his prior experience and approach. Rather than seeing it as beneficial, he initially tended to see it as something that was being foisted on him, and that could get in the way of or even undermine his work. Nonetheless he made considerable efforts to cooperate with the requirement over the three-year period.

In the event, Searchlight has used a variety of methods for monitoring and evaluating its work. Routine internal monitoring was conducted through the project worker keeping his own records and through regular monthly monitoring meetings between the project worker and an SET steering group, composed of his manager and other Searchlight staff.

Developing simple and usable monitoring and evaluation methods with young people in searchlight's project

For evaluating the sessions conducted with young people on the estate where he was based, SET's project worker – alongside his own notes - initially used some simple questionnaires to be given to the participants at the end of the session. As the work progressed, a more detailed evaluation sheet was developed, which required more thought and reflection from the young people and could be completed on a group basis.

After a while, however, the project worker felt that form-filling was become rather a chore for his regular groups (although still useful for new user groups), and he engaged the services of a videographer so they could interview the young people and to record this. Initially they recorded extracts from the discussion sessions generally, but to provide more focus, they then moved to developing a semi-structured interview procedure. Some of the young people immediately took this seriously, but others played around at first, though after a while things settled and it became normal to 'have the video guy around'. The process soon developed into a peer-led process with young people doing the interviewing themselves, and this fostered a more appropriate style and content for the questions. This in turn led to some of the young people cooperating with staff on holding focus-group discussions, in which they could draw on the interviews and other video material to reflect back on their experiences, and how their views and perceptions might have changed.

The nature of the work and the methods used necessitate reliance for evaluation on qualitative data in the form of comments made by the young people and records of incidents that provide evidence of outcomes and change. A variety of these have been cited in the main report above, to illustrate where particular activities appear to have been impactive for the young people, and where they have been productive of learning and of the stimulation of anti-racist views. Although these by no means add up to a full or systematic evaluation of the work undertaken by the project worker with young people, they are significant indicators of positive results. They also provide further

examples of the kinds of qualitative indicators that are practical and realistic for those engaged in this kind of face-to-face work with young people to use for recording and assessing its impact on a daily and routine basis.

SET also used video for recording and assessing some of the more substantial borough-wide events that they convened or helped to organise.

• Several of these videos have been posted on YouTube, where they can be readily accessed by all concerned. The videos document the various sporting and other activities, and include interviews with participants and partners/stakeholders.

• A good example is the video of the sports-focused residential at Stubbers activity centre, where the football coaches and head of youth services give their perceptions and opinions, alongside those of the young people themselves.

(http://www.youtube.com/user/SearchlightInfo#p/u/22/Ha6PvarMzDI)

As with the other two projects, this material has been drawn on as far as possible in preparing the main report, together with detailed interviews conducted not only with the project worker but also with a number of key partners and stakeholders, covering the council, police, education and voluntary sectors.