

Communities United Report Summary



Department for Levelling Up,
Housing & Communities

The Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper (March 2018) reflects that there are a large number of communities across the country that are divided by race, faith, or socio-economic lines.



A young participant said,

“I was really shy at first, but then I got talking to so many other children and I became more confident to give answers and participate in the group.”

Research indicates that hate crime is more harmful to victims and communities than other types of offending, due to the emotional trauma caused. A lack of education or understanding; transference of prejudice through family generations and feelings of socioeconomic threat have been listed as causes of hate crime. The figures, alongside the reasons for hate crimes, demonstrate the need for education across multiple generations to increase understanding and acceptance, reduce levels of prejudice and bring communities together. This in turn, should reduce the desire to commit faith, race and hate crimes, contributing to a community wide reduction in hate crime activity.

Thanks to funding from Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (now called Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities), the Communities United project focused on providing a programme to families, including at least one adult and a child under 16, to promote social mixing, increase knowledge and tolerance and to create better understanding of different cultures and backgrounds, all to contribute to the reduction in faith, race and hate crimes.

Hate crime has increased in the North West of England particularly, where over 12,500 hate crimes occurred in a single year (2018/2019) – making this the second highest region for hate crime, after London. As a result, 6 of our Club Community Organisations (CCOs) - Blackburn Rovers Community Trust, Bolton Wanderers Community Trust, Oldham Athletic Community Trust, Rochdale AFC Community Trust, Foundation 92 (Salford City FC) and Preston North End Community and Education Trust - planned to work with ten families each who were from different faith communities and ethnic groups and provide them with positive social mixing opportunities as well as increase knowledge and understanding around different cultures. Each CCO was also asked to partner with at least one community organisation representing a specific group within their local area to provide expert knowledge and understanding of specific needs or concerns.

Due to the coronavirus pandemic and the implementation of social distancing measures, the project was transitioned to online delivery.



A community member said,

“ I felt that there was a big divide between cultures but don't feel as strong on this now. I'm more focused on integration and I've learned not to judge people. ”

The EFL Trust developed a [Logic Model](#) to clearly identify our deliverable activities, define specific outputs and establish project outcomes.

We are proud that the project achieved:

- **project participant recruitment aims**, with 73 families engaged across the North West Region with a total of 257 individual participants.
- **diverse participation**, with both males (44%) and females (56%) and included all ages. We ensured social mixing between ethnic backgrounds including White British (47%), Black (20%), Asian (22%), Eastern European (5%), Mixed (2%) and other (4%).
- **social mixing** of individuals based on their religious belief or affiliation, including those identifying as Muslim (25%), Christian (26%), Jewish (12%), Hindu (1%) and as having no religious affiliation (18%).
- **delivery of 92 independent sessions** (21 Social & Heritage, 32 Cultural, 34 Social Action Project sessions and 5 Celebration events).
- **successful delivery a social action project in each area.**

We are also immensely proud of the project's set of wider outcomes.

We employed a pre and post outcomes survey – which included Integrated Communities Strategy Indicators and the 4 ONS wellbeing questions. At the outset of the project, we described aiming to achieve at least 75% of respondents agreeing with statements around social mixing, social cohesion, social trust, social capital, sense of belonging and the development of common values and attitudes at the end of the project. Positively, we found that we achieved these targets for measures of social cohesion (76%), social trust (80%), and social capital (80%), as well as for the development of common values and attitudes (89%). We also anticipated to see that at least 75% of respondents reported agreement that they could input into broader civil society at the end of the project. Our results showed that 78% agreed that they could influence decisions that affect their area when working with others.

Using our surveys, as well as our participant focus group, participant exit survey and CCO reflections, we found that our project had achieved the following participant outcomes:

- An increase in opportunities for individuals to engage in meaningful and positive social mixing.
- Positive attitudinal change in social cohesion, social trust, and social capital.
- Enhanced knowledge and understanding of other cultures and backgrounds.
- The strengthening of common attitudes and/or values around rights and responsibilities in the participant group.
- Participants increase in confidence benefiting broader civil society.
- Maintenance of high levels of wellbeing throughout the programme.





The social action activities emerging from the project included the creation of welcome boxes for refugees and asylum seekers to an area, the creation and distribution of a poem about social mixing experiences in another and supporting local improvements across many of the groups to impact the entire community.

You can read more about best practice for projects like this, the challenges faced and our monitoring and evaluation methodology in the [full report and appendices](#).

Public data clearly shows the importance of valuable and impactful work in this area, where hate crimes are committed at an alarming rate. Furthermore, research indicates the importance of an education piece to support in reducing this type of crime, as well as the delivery of education to both youths and adults. The results of our programme support these claims, where we have found both adults and young people benefited from participating in the project.

Despite Covid-19 restrictions and the transition to a virtual delivery we were able to achieve all our outputs and deliver a range of activities including social, heritage and cultural sessions.

In conclusion, The EFL Trust and the 6 CCO's have successfully used the power of the club badge to engage a diverse group of individuals and promote shared values among people of all backgrounds, through sustainable social integration and meaningful civic participation.

“Meeting other diverse families within our community that we might not otherwise have the opportunity to interact with on a regular basis. It was great to experience and embrace the different cultures, religions and backgrounds within the group!”



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