



SHARED FUTURES

Summary Report

London

2021

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Foreword - Tony Hamilton

I am pleased to present this summary report of Celtic FC Foundation's 'Shared Futures' project, delivered in London with support from Comic Relief and the Mayor of London from 2019-2021. Our projects in London are a key part of the Foundation's portfolio of work and represents both the legacy of the founders of Celtic FC, and a commitment to the future through our support of young people.

Shared Futures is a youth leadership and community cohesion programme delivered in Tower Hamlets that has sought to make a tangible and lasting difference to young people as a driver of social change. This mission has been driven primarily through the delivery of sports and physical activity as culturally familiar. Delivered in safe and supervised environments by coaches and youth workers to engage young people where they live. Participants have then been supported to deliver social action projects that bring people together through sport and into progression pathways through training and community cohesion focused events and workshops.

Over a two-year period, with significant disruption to delivery due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the project has worked with almost 300 young people from across Tower Hamlets from different geographies, ethnicities and backgrounds and supported 90 young people into training and leadership roles within their own communities. Furthermore, the project has contributed to creating inclusivity and overcoming barriers between groups of young people, with 97% of participants involved in the evaluation reporting that the project was very effective in bringing people together and building friendships from different backgrounds.

This report is a summary of the approach of the project, its impact on participants and what has worked effectively. Carried out by external consultants from Tactic Connect, it also makes recommendations for future Celtic FC Foundation programming in London, based on the experiences of the young people involved in the project.

As we look to the next steps for the Foundation, Shared Futures has brought together a Youth Advisory Group for Celtic FC Foundation in London, and we look forward to ensuring a youth informed and youth-led approach for future programming in the city.

Tony Hamilton
Chief Executive

Celtic FC Foundation London

Celtic FC Foundation have a historical connection to London, and the East End in particular, that dates to the end of the nineteenth century and continues to the present day.

Celtic FC was founded in 1888 by an Irish priest, Brother Walfrid, to raise funds and food for the poor and the needy in the East End of Glasgow. Some five years later Brother Walfrid relocated to the East End of London and founded a church and school that still stand today, working with the poor and needy in that area – including organising football matches for children. Brother Walfrid died in 1915 but the historic links between Celtic FC in Glasgow and communities in the city of London have endured, with the club and its charitable arm raising funds and supporting charitable causes in the city over the subsequent century and more.



In 2013 Celtic FC formalised its charitable and community activities as part of the 125-year anniversary of the club by establishing Celtic FC Foundation, with a mission to create opportunities for society's most vulnerable and marginalised groups - principally by addressing root causes of poverty by equipping individuals with the tools and means to reverse inequality.

As a part of those 125-year anniversary celebrations the club sought to establish a consistent presence in London delivering programmes to young people and families alongside its more familiar fundraising and support for homeless causes and hostels in the city.

Celtic FC Foundation have now operated consistently since 2013 in various parts of London, but principally centred on Tower Hamlets and the East End. Foundation projects have focused on delivering football and sports activities to engage young people at key times, personal development and training programmes to enhance education and life skills, targeted projects to create community cohesion. All our projects are underpinned by a commitment to tackling inequality and poverty by creating pathways into further education, training and employment.

From 2021, and in response to the challenges presented by the Covid-19 pandemic, the Foundation is scaling up its work in London to support the rebuilding of social networks, tackle loneliness, enhance mental health and wellbeing, and support young people into education and employability.



Shared Futures and Covid-19

This report has been written with input from a total of 76 young people aged 13 – 19 years who have participated in Shared Futures, primarily those who have undertaken personal and social development training or have been a part of the leadership group and stayed in contact with the programme throughout the restrictions imposed by Covid-19. The evaluation and reporting process has been undertaken from January – March 2021 by externally commissioned consultants from Tactic Connect.



The evaluation process was undertaken at a time when Covid-19 restrictions were still in place so engagement of a wider group of more casual participants to inform recommendations was not possible. This report therefore draws on a questionnaire exercise, online facilitated workshops with young people and staff and a series of individual interviews with young people to understand the impact of the programme, and to inform recommendations for future development of services by Celtic FC Foundation in Tower Hamlets.

From the outset we should note that as Shared Futures was delivered during a period of significant societal upheaval, as the impact of lockdowns not only restricted the interaction of staff with young people, but also created new issues and concerns for young people as social networks, schools and support services were restricted or closed.

The communities Celtic FC Foundation work within Tower Hamlets are some of the most adversely affected by the Covid-19 pandemic – from a health perspective people from low-income households and those from African, Caribbean and Asian communities are all disproportionately represented in negative national statistics, and the impact on education and immediate and future impact on economic prospects is likely to impact on those employed in less secure and lower paid jobs. Young people in particular are likely to face an uncertain future in the short term at least in terms of employment and career opportunities. These inequalities have created significant concerns within the community that were evident, but less stark, at the outset of the Shared Futures programme.

Celtic FC Foundation programmes were disrupted and cancelled for up to 10 months of the project lifetime in line with government restrictions, and several key staff members were furloughed. As a result, interaction with young people was limited to online support via social media and Zoom for the majority of that period, which has severely impacted overall participation numbers and the delivery of community events, and throughput on the project overall.

The impact of Covid-19 on the mental health of young people and communities is well documented in the mainstream press – the disruption of social networks, increased anxiety and stress and uncertainty regarding future prospects have all been reported extensively in early 2021 as a result of the pandemic. These themes were reflected by young people in the evaluation and reporting process and so are referenced in the report, despite not being a projected outcome at the start of the project. The response of staff and flexibility by funders at Comic Relief has allowed Celtic FC Foundation to respond to these issues in project delivery.

Shared Futures and Covid-19



During the research phase for this summary report, we have consulted young people on the impact of Covid-19 on their own health and wellbeing as it became a common theme in feedback. This was done via a questionnaire and in interviews with the following self-reported responses indicative of the overall impact:

- 77% of respondents to the participants survey reported that Covid-19 regulations had a 'very negative' impact on their physical fitness.
- 44% of respondents reported that they felt their personal mental and emotional health and wellbeing had been negatively impacted during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 47% of respondents reported that they felt their personal confidence has been negatively impacted during the Covid-19 pandemic

"It (the pandemic) has had a huge impact mentally and physically. It is depressing to be sitting at home and nothing to look forward on the weekend..."

(Project Participant, February 2021)

"It (the pandemic) affected my body image and physical performance. Have put on some weight during quarantine which decreased my self-confidence...now I look at myself and I am not happy with my body."

(Project Participant, February 2021)

Despite these challenges however, what has emerged through the evaluation and reporting process is the positive impact the project has had on those engaged fully in the Shared Futures project and the opportunities to enhance the work of Celtic FC Foundation that will be shared later in this report.

Similarly programme participants also identified new issues during the reporting process that had not been as obvious at the outset of the programme – concerns around physical and mental health and wellbeing, education and employment / social mobility were all identified by participants during the reporting process. This report takes into account these emerging concerns to inform recommendations for future programming.

Summary Report - Delivery Methodology

The Shared Futures project utilises a delivery framework built on a model Celtic FC Foundation methodology developed through previous experience of 'what works' in London. Principally this framework contained 6 key stages that young people would progress through over the lifetime of the programme:



i) Outreach programmes to engage young people in their own environment and where they socialise – this includes engaging young people after schools, on the streets and in the informal gathering spaces where young people meet, such as parks and multi-use games areas.

ii) Detached youth work activities in targeted neighbourhoods, utilising free access community facilities such as multi-use games areas, parks and free school / youth facilities from partner agencies. These sessions are built around sports participation activities (football, basketball) delivered by qualified coaches, supported by youth work practitioners who engaged and built relationships with young people and encouraged them to attend.

iii) Cross community events with young people from different neighbourhoods, including challenge matches, tournaments and structured coaching sessions utilising 'neutral' spaces. Much of this work is delivered at the Mile End Community Stadium which a sporting focal point for Tower Hamlets.

iv) Personal development projects delivered in a groupwork setting with young people covering communication and leadership skills, equality and inclusion. These projects were delivered in community facilities (estate-based youth clubs and school facilities) and encourage young people to explore challenges and solutions through communication and teamwork.

v) Accredited training to build the skills of young people and raise their confidence. These training courses prioritised the Community Sports Leaders Award (accredited by Sports Leaders UK) and the Youth Leadership Award (accredited by the Open College Network).

vi) Social action programmes to encourage young people to utilise their skills to benefit the community. In the case of Shared Futures this means planning and delivering community projects to build cohesion, friendships and understanding across Tower Hamlets.

Clearly the Covid-19 pandemic seriously affected several stages of this methodology in the second year of the Shared Futures project (2020-21). The staff at Celtic FC Foundation responded to the challenges presented – including the furlough of key staff – by moving sessions online where possible (fitness sessions and mentoring/workshops with former footballers and business ambassadors), maintaining contact through social media messages, online accredited training and the formation of a youth advisory group to take part in the Shared Futures evaluation process , and planning for the future activities of the Foundation in London.

Summary Report - Outputs and Outcomes

Over the two-year lifetime of the Shared Futures project Celtic FC Foundation delivered the following outputs:

- 305 young people engaged in positive activities.
- 90 young people engaged in personal and social development training and projects.
- 56 young people undertaking accredited training in leadership and coaching.
- 40 young people involved in volunteering and social action.
- 76 young people involved in project evaluation and reporting.
- 20 young people forming a youth advisory board to support programme growth in the future.

In delivering these numbers, and with the support frameworks and programme content highlighted in the programme delivery section of this report, the Shared Futures project has successfully delivered the following outcomes over the lifetime of delivery:

- Shared Futures has created a framework of activity, built around sports participation and personal development, that works with young people who are disengaged from other providers. Furthermore, this delivery is now embedded within the local community and provides a platform for future growth for the Foundation.
- Through that delivery framework the project has supported community cohesion by engaging young people from very different backgrounds from across Tower Hamlets, breaking down cultural and geographical boundaries, creating greater understanding and building new friendships that have withstood the test of Covid-19.
- The project has created a culture of social activism among its cohort of young people, creating a trained cohort of peer mentors who want to deliver and drive local strategies and projects with their peers and with Celtic FC Foundation.
- Shared Futures has broadened the horizons and raised the aspirations of young people involved in the project, who are seeking to undertake careers in coaching and youth work that they would not previously have considered.

'The Shared Futures project has had a transformative effect on the young people we are working with. These kids ... in their local area see all these nice facilities around them, but they cannot afford to play in them ... so having a program like this one is providing an opportunity come out and play (sports) in a safe environment. But it also gives them an opportunity to build confidence and friendships and skills they might never otherwise have. It gives them a reason to come out...'

(Osman, Celtic FC Foundation staff, February 2021)

Summary Report - Engagement



The Shared Futures project targeted particular areas of Tower Hamlets where a lack of other similar youth provision had been identified – with the bulk of delivery focused on Mile End and Bromley by Bow. The project undertook significant programmes of outreach work throughout the two-year period of the project to ensure staff connected with young people who were not (or were less) engaged with mainstream youth or sports providers. In adopting this pro-active approach, Celtic FC Foundation built a local profile with young people and the wider community, and more importantly built individual relationships with young people to engage in project activity.

“To be honest I didn’t even know Celtic (Foundation) were even working in the area ‘til I met the coaches on the street ... they seemed like nice people, so we just started to show up to sessions...”

(Project Participant, February 2021)

This personal engagement with the young people was clearly an advantage in the effectiveness of the of the Shared Futures programme, coupled with the engagement and local knowledge of the staff employed by Celtic FC Foundation. That connection with the community also allowed the engagement with young people and families, creating a ‘word of mouth’ approach that brought significant numbers into the project.

During our evaluation and reporting workshops with young people the connectivity of the programme and staff was a significant factor in engaging young people in the project, with key feedback for the Foundation being summarised as follows:

- i) Having a coach/youth worker from the same area is a huge advantage in engaging with young people. Familiarity with the area, understanding the challenges young people face and being a recognisable member of the community makes young people feel safe and enabled to participate in project activity.
- ii) Young people consistently fed back that they felt Celtic FC Foundation staff were very approachable , and that they felt staff were likely to be more supportive because they can relate to local issues.
- iii) In terms of community relationships, anecdotal feedback from the wider community and by young people indicated that parents felt more comfortable knowing that the staff members were known in the local area and were therefore more supportive of the project and young people attending.

Summary Report - Engagement

This engagement phase of the programme built a platform of trust and an understanding of the needs of young people for the staff, and conversely allowed young people to understand the approach of the programme and what it sought to achieve. This 'two way' approach built a platform for the successful delivery of other elements of the Shared Futures programme.

It was also very evident that once participants understood that Celtic FC were associated with Shared Futures the credibility and kudos of the project was greatly enhanced. Participants were not always immediately aware of the link between the project and the Celtic FC brand as the project was promoted in its own right rather than highlighting the club/Foundation involvement – indeed one group of participants were only aware that the Foundation was associated with the club when their picture appeared on social media from the official Celtic FC Foundation account – but once the link was established it raised the profile for those in attendance:

"The Celtic FC name attracts attention and invites you in. Also, having coaches, players, and employees wearing Celtic FC kit and being friendly and inviting draws you in and makes you want to stay as well ..."

(Project Participant, February 2021)



Summary Report - Participation and Positive Activities

Participation numbers in the Shared Futures project were high at the outset of the project, with football and basketball activity creating an environment that young people wanted to engage with, and although overall attendance/participation figures declined in year two due to Covid-19, overall numbers remained high. Utilising key activities that young people wanted to be a part of was a key critical to the success of the programme.



Evaluation sessions with participants also highlighted other factors in the high participation numbers for the project. Combined with the choice of sports that were vital to driving engagement, these other factors can be summarised as follows:

- The activities were free to participants. Many local facilities are out of bounds financially for young people, and sports club subscriptions were also highlighted as barriers to participation by participants. Free provision in local facilities made the programme accessible to young people from all backgrounds.
- Venues were accessible and located in the community. Celtic FC Foundation deliberately utilised local facilities that were rooted in the neighbourhoods that young people live and socialise in, taking away the need to travel or face concerns around 'postcode rivalry'. Where Sharing Futures brought communities together the project utilised venues that would be seen as neutral and/or aspirational (such as the Mile End Community Stadium). By using multi-use games areas, parks and school facilities in the first instance the project was both visible and accessible for young people.
- Activities were delivered at key times for young people – including Friday nights and at weekends – ensuring that the project was delivered in line with the needs of young people and when they were likely to have 'empty' time. Participants reported that this was key for them as often youth provisions are closed during the weekend period when they are needed most.
- Activities were delivered regularly and in a fun and friendly manner that encouraged participation regardless of ability. Sessions were inclusive and the staff were welcoming to new participants. Young people reported that this was a major contributing factor for wanting to engage and remain involved with the programme – concerns on kit, ability and rigidity of some sports sessions were considered prohibitive factors for engagement, and Shared Futures offered an alternative approach.
- Participants from different communities and backgrounds played sport and undertook training in mixed groups and teams that helped develop ongoing relationships and communication for a shared purpose. This in turn created conversations and personal relationships beyond the pitch.

Summary Report - Participation and Positive Activities



In workshops and one to one feedback with young people, the two factors that were regularly referenced in encouraging ongoing engagement with the programme were the local knowledge and welcoming approach of the staff and the accessibility of the project through use of local venues and free participation:

"The whole environment from an outsider's perspective was very inviting. There was no shouting, no screaming, no arguments. I didn't feel scared, I didn't feel restricted to go in and ask if I can join in..."

(Project Participant, February 2021)

Shared Futures set out to engage young people who were less connected to youth providers to ensure the project had the desired impact in shaping attitudes and behaviours. Many young people reported that the project was their main organised extra-curricular activity, and in some cases, Shared Futures was the only youth programme they participated in:

"Celtic FC (Foundation's) programme is the only project in Tower of Hamlets that we go regularly..."

(Project Participant, February 2021)



Summary Report - Personal Development and Support

The Shared Futures project utilised a participatory programme of sports and youth work as a platform to develop and deliver personal development pathways to build inclusivity and positive lifestyle choices. This personal development approach was embedded in the programme through informal conversations between staff and individual young people at sessions, and more formally through workshops and group work sessions that were delivered throughout the programme by trained staff and external partners, focusing on the following:

- Promoting inclusivity and understanding other cultures.
- Building confidence and communication skills.
- Exploring issues within the community.

Participants were encouraged to work together in an informal setting to explore common issues and goals for them personally and as a group. Through this approach staff then supported young people to identify personal and group ambitions, training and skills programmes that young people would like to undertake and projects that would help promote inclusion and cohesion in the local community.

In terms of impact on participants in building confidence and friendships, it was clear to the team that the workshops opened up an opportunity to take initial interactions that began on the pitch and develop more meaningful conversations and relationships. Evaluation sessions with young people underlined this:

"I have ...gained confidence to approach and meet new people and carry out friendships outside of the program."

(Project Participant, February 2021)

"It (Shared Futures)... has given me the confidence to be around unfamiliar people, especially going to new place and feeling confident to approach new faces."

(Project Participant, February 2021)



Summary Report - Personal Development and Support

In terms of emerging mental health and wellbeing concerns, it was clear the Shared Futures project had an important role to play in supporting participants through the restrictions imposed through the pandemic. The evaluation process noted that the importance of regular communication with Shared Futures staff, online fitness sessions and remote training courses all had a positive impact on participants in terms of positive attitudes and maintaining confidence in the future.



In questionnaires, 95% of respondents reported that Celtic FC Foundation's programme was 'Very Effective' or 'Effective' in supporting their mental and emotional health and wellbeing. In one-to-one interviews participants also said the programme has helped in keeping motivation high – especially through engagement with coaches and mentors, and in helping them respond to the relaxing of restrictions:

“Bringing athletes and mentors has given us more motivation ... I believe motivation in times like these is low for us ...and sports mainly is a mental game which helps motivation and mental health”

“Especially during Covid-19 keeping fit has been important and going to sessions has helped our well-being and shaped positive attitude towards returning back to 'normal' life”

The success of and long-term impact of this element of the Shared Futures project is related to the following core principles:

- Workshops were better received when delivered away from the sports pitch, so participants didn't feel like it encroached on playing time or felt like it was a condition of playing.
- All personal development sessions were delivered in a fun and interactive environment and in smaller groups, so participants did not feel pressured and felt part of a group.
- Young people themselves helped shape the content and themes of sessions, and so had 'ownership' of their own development.
- Staff re-enforced messaging through their own behaviours and challenging language and behaviours where appropriate.



Summary Report - Youth leadership and Social Action

Shared futures sought to develop a culture of social action and volunteering among participants – and in doing so create strong relationships and networks across groups of young people that would lead to sustainable cohesion in the wider community.

Critical to this process of social action was the building of skills to plan and deliver projects and the confidence engage and work with peers, local stakeholders and the wider community.

In delivering the Shared Futures project, Celtic FC Foundation delivered the following training courses to 56 young people, building the skills and confidence of young people:

- Level 1 Community Sports Leaders Award (CSLA – accredited by Sports Leaders UK), emphasising skills that promote equality of access, inclusivity in participation and fun in playing sport.
- Open College Network Level 1 Award in Youth Leadership – emphasizing leadership skills, communication, teamwork and project planning.

Initial projects undertaken by this group were to create an integrated Celtic FC Foundation team from Tower Hamlets and to plan matches against other youth teams from Lambeth and Southwark. In planning and delivering these courses young people learnt to work as team, book facilities and plan logistics at the Mile End Community Stadium and to talk and work with youth groups from across London. This last activity was noted as an area of particular impact on the young people involved by project staff:

"It was fantastic to see participants getting excited about playing in a team that represented their area, and to be playing young people from elsewhere in London. You got the sense that meeting other teams who travelled to play gave an enormous sense of achievement..."

(Gary, Celtic FC Foundation staff, February 2021)

"Young people getting to know each other and people from different boroughs was a huge positive for the young people, as they wouldn't normally move outside their immediate area. It built confidence and to a degree it made people feel safer moving across areas. Its activities like this that show the project itself is giving young people an opportunity that they wouldn't have otherwise..."

(Osman, Celtic FC Foundation staff, February 2021)

From these activities Celtic FC Foundation developed a Youth Advisory Group to support their ambitions, plan further social action projects and to help inform future project activities. Participants themselves were keen to follow up on the football matches with two community events at Mile End and Bromley by Bow that would engage a wider participation from young people and adults across Tower Hamlets. Both events were in the planning process for 2020 before the Covid-19 restrictions meant they had to be cancelled. Young people in the evaluation process were keen for these community events to be replicated in the future:

"I would love to see some charity events or tournaments as they bring the community together as one, and it (the planning process) also benefits us in building confidence which will help us in future circumstances."

(Project Participant, February 2021)

Summary Report - Youth leadership and Social Action

Our evaluation questionnaire also underlined the importance of personal development, training and social action to the young people themselves:

- 78% of respondents reported that it is very important that Celtic FC Foundation continue to deliver projects that improve their confidence skills for life and sports.
- 71% of respondents reported it was 'Very Important' and 28% reported its was 'Important' that the Foundation continue to provide projects that improve leadership skills and prepare for employment.
- 69% of respondents reported that it is important the Foundation continue to provide inspirational and motivational opportunities - to allow them to visit employers, sport venues, and talk to professional athletes about their own experiences.



Summary Report - Building Community Cohesion

The primary objective of Celtic FC Foundation's Shared Futures project is to give young people the skills and tools to tackle inequality and enhance community cohesion within their own neighbourhoods and lives.

To achieve this the project the activities of Shared Futures can be outlined in a 6-step pathway that brought young people on a journey through sports to achieve this goal:

Single geography activities that engaged young people in sports activity and personal development in an environment where they are comfortable in a peer group and geography. This is a critical part of the programme as it engaged those young people most disengaged in positive activities, built relationships with staff and introduced concepts of leadership and teamwork in a broader context than the estate or area young people socialise in.

Shared activities that brought young people together in a sporting context through games and tournaments at neutral venues that have a local kudos such as the Mile End Community Stadium. These activities included social events such as food and drink after games and social interaction facilitated by staff who were known to all groups.

Representative activities where Tower Hamlets groups came together to form teams that played a youth projects from other London Boroughs, building a shared identity.

Workshops and training with groups of young people from across the borough to build skills and identify projects that all participants would want to be involved in.

Community Events built around football that brought young people, peers and families together.

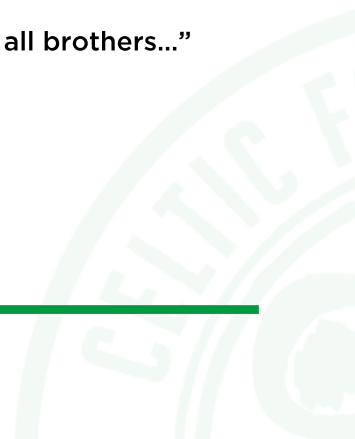
Youth Advisory Group to continue friendships and planning and support young people to become peer role models and influence friends and siblings to work together across boundaries (perceived or real).

This approach provided safe and positive activities for young people to meet, share experiences and build relationships and friendships, and the approach was commented on by young people involved in the evaluative workshops at the end of the initial project in 2021:

“Coaches have made a safe environment for us to communicate with new people and made it feel like we are within our safe bubble”

“Availability to come and play every week and meet new people during sessions... a chance to make friends outside of my local area”

“In this program everyone is equal. It doesn't matter when you join- we are all brothers...”
(Project Participants, February 2021)



Summary Report - Building Community Cohesion

Throughout the evaluation programme it was clear that for those young people who had fully engaged in the project had broadened their friendship groups and networks across postcodes and cultural boundaries. As well as the evidence provided by young people in the focus group evaluations the responses from our questionnaire underlined the effectiveness of the programme in delivering cohesion and integration outcomes:

- 92% of respondents reported that the Shared Futures project was either very effective (55%) or effective (37%) in enabling them to build new friendships and meet new people.
- 97% of respondents reported that Shared Futures was either very effective (71%) or effective (26%) in bringing people together and creating friendships from different backgrounds.



Case Study

Omar (name changed)

Omar is 14 years old and identifies as Somali-British. Omar has lived his whole life in Tower Hamlets and has been involved in Celtic FC Foundation's Shared Futures project since it started in 2019 after meeting project staff through a community outreach session. A regular attendee at sports, personal development and accredited training sessions Omar is now a key member of the Youth Advisory Group.

What have you learned about yourself over the last few years being a part of Celtic Program? How has it changed you?

'It has given me courage to go and meet new people. Thanks to Celtic FC Foundation my circle of friends has grown and expanded. This program cares a lot about the youth and the local area. A lot of people look up to our coaches Os and Zak and they are inspiring in the local area and made me think about coaching and volunteering.'

'Independence and feeling comfortable in presenting myself. Relating these skills in school and feeling confidence in what I am doing has been a big help.'

Do you think this program is shaping you as what you want to do for your future career?

'Yes, this program helped me build a better CV and has given me confidence to pursue my ambitions and give back to community.'

How did you use your qualifications?

'After completing my Sports leadership course, I have worked with my local football club and volunteered to help with kids under eight years old. The Leadership courses have definitely helped to build my self- esteem and confidence which allowed me to step outside my comfort zone and volunteer for coaching.'

What would you like to see delivered in the future?

I would like to see progression levels of leadership courses to higher levels, and different badges and levels of coaching. The leadership courses are a great help. The most helpful elements of the leadership courses are teamwork, a lot of group work, and building trust in others. It gives you a sense of working together and investing in your peers.

“Without these sessions a lot of people wouldn't be where they are today”



Recommendations



Throughout the evaluation and reporting process it is clear that Celtic FC Foundation has a key role to play in the delivery of youth and community development in Tower Hamlets and London more generally. In particular the consultancy team highlighted:

- The focus on delivering in the heart of communities and taking projects to where they are needed most, rather than relying on young people to travel to a facility or centre. In undertaking this community focused approach to its services, the project engages with young people who are less likely to engage with mainstream services and youth provisions.
- Celtic FC Foundation embraces partnership working in all elements of its work in London, working with other third sector organisations to maximise resources and utilise community facilities, local authority providers and statutory partners to ensure programmes reflect local strategic priorities and more broadly with the sport and youth networks across London – allowing cross borough relationships to develop through activities and contributing to youth-led campaigns across the capital.
- The association with the Celtic FC brand brings kudos, credibility and curiosity to many participants. Clearly the profile and history of the club means young people are attracted to the status being a part of the project will provide. Curiosity as to why Celtic FC Foundation is working in East London and with young people also provides a platform for staff to engage and talk with young people and partners and initiate relationships and partnerships.
- Celtic FC Foundation projects, including Shared Futures, have a focus on support and progression for young people using football as a pathway for development. This focus on capacity building and supporting young people with skills, experience and networks that can help them to achieve and change their circumstances is key to the success of the Foundation in London. Its is also important that this approach is blended into more fun and engaging activities and that young people can progress at their own pace through the programme rather than being structured over set periods of time. This less formal approach makes it easier for young people who may be disengaged to take part without feeling pressured or excluded.

Recommendations

With these characteristics underpinning the approach of Celtic FC Foundation's work in London, consultations with young people as part of the Shared Futures programme have indicated that the following be integrated into future programming by the Foundation from 2021:

- Youth Leadership and the youth voice are very strong within the work of the Foundation and this has been a key factor in delivering programmes that are both relevant and impactful for young people and communities. Moving forward the establishment and continued support for a Youth Advisory Group to help co-produce projects and proposals and evaluate and revise project delivery will be built into all future work of the Foundation in London from 2021.
- Community cohesion, not just in terms of race, ethnicity and culture but also across geographies and borough boundaries has been a key success for young people. Being exposed to other cultures and other groups of young people, and understanding shared values and interests, has built participant networks – the cross-borough football matches being a case-in-point. Celtic FC Foundation will ensure that community cohesion programmes are embedded in our London project portfolio from 2021. We will also explore other geographies in London to build our reach and networks to embrace the cross-borough recommendations from young people.
- Training and vocational skills initiatives have proved key to building youth confidence throughout the Shared Futures project, and the utilisation of those skills in practice has inspired young people to work together and build practical experience. Feedback from young people has indicated that they would like to see more of these training and development initiatives, but also coupled with opportunities to engage with industry professionals, inspirational individuals and organisations to help raise their aspirations and understand how to achieve in a number of fields. This will be even more important as we move into a post-Covid world where social mobility, youth employment and opportunities are a key focus. From 2021, Celtic FC Foundation will embed training, social action projects and motivational events in our project portfolio in London to enhance this element of our work.





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