

Four case studies from Brathay

Tackling Serious Crime - Operation Quadrant

Operation Quadrant was launched by the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) to tackle serious crime within London's Asian Community. "It is not the volume of crime but the serious nature that is the issue here. It has an impact on ordinary lives and businesses run by the Asian community. Many Asian people are targets for commercial blackmail, intimidation (especially restaurants & corner shops), kidnapping and even homicide; predominantly both the victims and the perpetrators are from the same community.

The aim is to focus on crime prevention, gathering intelligence and catching the criminals. However, unless there are long-term solutions to deal with the social and economic deprivation, and the lack of legitimate job opportunities, many of the Asian youths will continue to be fodder for the criminal gangs. It is essential to enlist the help of the whole community - to set up these long-term solutions. The MPS wants to work with the Asian community, and especially the Asian business sector, to set up partnerships around the following:

- To gain the formal support of Operation Quadrant by role models in the Asian business community and to provide training opportunities to build role models of the future
- To encourage businesses to employ young people; the MPS has a list of young people who are actively trying to secure jobs (target 200 within next 12 months)
- To sponsor or help to secure funding for educational packages (drugs, violence reduction and confidence building; these will be delivered by religious organisations and the voluntary sector)
- To set up a 'confidence building' youth project and partnerships with Brathay."

Brathay is an educational trust that inspires people from youth to boardroom to make positive choices about their behaviour, using learning from experience to facilitate personal transformation based on self-awareness and attitude. The aim of the Brathay partnership is to build capacity and confidence within specified vulnerable groups of South Asian young people by providing a positive residential experience in which to address issues of crime within those defined groups.

The programme is not about 'key skills' but about putting a community engagement model into practice - with the overriding objective of crime avoidance. For the young people it's about raising their self-awareness and confidence through adventurous activities, so that they are better able to make choices about the direction of their lives, in particular so that they can deal with the criminal role models and gangs/mafias that surround them. For many of the young people this experience is their first time away from home - to settle into a new community, get to know each other and learn to feel safe are all important components

"The partnership with Brathay I feel will be a particular tour-de-force in terms of crime diversion. The first course of young people, from the Bangladeshi community of Tower Hamlets on this occasion, attended the Brathay programme in May 2005, for confidence building. Many members of this group had never been to the countryside before, let alone seen any farm animals, and having had the benefit of talking to the members of this group recently, I feel some of the hard talking and confidence building we did will have a profound and positive effect on their future development." Tarique Gaffur, Assistant Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service

Quotes to be used:

In answer to the question 'What if anything do you feel more able to do as a result of the course? One young man answered by saying 'To stay out of drugs and not to go into drugs'

Another one said, 'To motivate myself and say 'I can', not I cant'

In answer to your lasting memories, visiting policeman with the group

'The course turned 15 individuals into 1 team who looked out for each other, I would not have believed it if I had not experienced it'

Brixton x-it from weapon use

Problem

- An increasing involvement of young people in gang culture, with regular carrying and occasional use of weapons
- Members followed the directions of gang leaders unquestioningly - 'respect'
- Violence became a first rather than last resort and other criminal activity was increasing

Solution

- Brixton staff, peer educators from the gangs and Brathay staff delivered an experiential learning programme with preliminary and follow up workshops in Brixton
- Young people encouraged to: formulate and voice their own opinions, consider who they should 'respect' and why, and look at their responses to conflict and relationships
- Individuals identified the direction they would like their lives to take in the future

Benefits

- Self esteem - a sense of 'self' as opposed to being 'a gang member'
- They are more able and resilient than they thought
- New experience of authority figures helped to break down prejudices
- Some of the young people voluntarily engaged in conversation with adults, made eye contact with youth workers and police officers for the first time
- Increased self confidence, new-found ability to act and speak independently, self belief
- Recognition of alternatives to gang culture and belief that they can make these happen

Client feedback:

Renee, Senior Youth Worker - 'I have been a successful youth worker for twenty years, but what I have seen the staff do here at Brathay will change the way I work with young people from now on'

Julia, Head of x-it project - 'I have run residential for fifteen years with these sorts of young people, and never seen such dramatic change as this'

Peer educator - 'I want to be the head of youth and play - to go to university to gain more self confidence and self esteem, get a car licence and get a decent job'

Young person - 'I want a good career, money, six kids, to be more disciplined, to stop wasting my intelligence'

Change for Children Partnership Influencing the vision for Children's trust arrangements in Cumbria

The Partnership is the steering group for the development of a Children's Trust approach to children's services across the county.

Problem

- need to develop a shared vision for children's services
- Partnership committed to involving children, young people and families in developing and improving services, in line with DfES/DH requirements
- Partnership needed to engage with young people within a tight timescale and wanted to tap the skills and knowledge of practitioners who demonstrate good practice

Solution

- Brathay selected for its expertise in working both with young people and organisationally across a range of services
- two days' creative discussion with the Partnership to assess and plan how best to achieve the objectives
- key players in a wide range of children's organisations asked "Why are all children important?", answered by young people in a variety of media
- representative group of sixteen young people brought together for a three-day residential, using the gathered data to develop a vision
- presentation of the vision to heads of children's services

Benefits

- independent, expert facilitation ensured no bias in shaping the agenda
- children and young people actively engaged in participation across the county

- personal development for the representative group leading to increased skills and self confidence
- collaboration and working together strengthens the Partnership and models how children's services need to be in future
- powerful messages delivered to keep decision-makers in a public forum
- young people's views enshrined in new services

Feedback

"The real challenge for those of us working in children's services is to significantly improve the well-being of all children and young people in Cumbria"

- *Mike Blakey, Project Officer, Change for Children Partnership*

"The presentation was very thought-provoking for me; we have used the issues raised in developing our plans for the National Service Framework for children, young people and maternity services". - *Anne Ridgway, Director of Young People's Health, Morecombe Bay Primary Care Trust*

"All children matter because they are important and if they did not matter they would feel left out". - *Participant aged 10.*

Womenzone Community Centre, Bradford - Building confidence and self esteem

Womenzone is the only female provision which aims to support local women and children and to offer social inclusion by building their confidence, self esteem and sense of empowerment.

Issue

- young women living in one of the most deprived areas of Bradford belong to a community that suffers from overcrowded housing, low educational attainment and high levels of unemployment
- for the 11-16 age group, most of the young women who attend weekly youth sessions lack confidence and self-esteem
- Womenzone wanted to empower them to grow in these areas.

Solution

- a three-day residential at Brathay for thirteen young women aged 11-16, funded by Children In Need
- an opportunity to work as part of a team, have fun as well as taking part in new and challenging activities taking participants out of their comfort zones
- accredited by NOCN level one in Working with Others through Youthstart

Benefits

Humma Nizami, Womenzone Youth Development Worker - "Through using innovative methods in a female-only environment, the young women can build on their confidence, self esteem and personal skills and experience. The residential was an ideal opportunity for the young participants to face their fears and take part in challenging activities such as ghyll scrambling, climbing the pamper pole and rock climbing organised by Brathay, which not only allowed them to challenge their abilities but also work as a part of a team"

Feedback

"This was a fantastic opportunity for me to make friends and face my fear of heights; all the workers were very encouraging and supportive during the activities and by the end of the three days I felt more confident within myself and around others". *Nazia Zaman, aged 14*

"[Brathay] met all the aims and needs of the group whilst going beyond these as the young women were challenged and pushed to reach their full potential throughout the whole three days".

- *Aminah Bhatti, youth worker*