



East Midlands Black & Minority Ethnic (BME) Sports Project

Annual Report (August 2001 - August 2002)

Introduction

The Government's Policy Action Team 10 report (PAT 10) on the role of sport in tackling social exclusion and influencing community development highlighted that black and minority ethnic (BME) communities as being one of the main groups at risk of being socially excluded.

A national survey by Sport England found that BME groups are under represented in sports participation. The Sport England East Midlands regional office also commissioned a study that discovered that Sport England, its programmes and funding had made a limited impact on the BME communities in Derby, Leicester and Nottingham. Additionally, Sporting Equals, the national project funded by Sport England in partnership with the Commission for Race Equality, has identified the need to establish regional Black and Ethnic Minority Forums in each region. Sporting Equals works at a strategic level with governing bodies, key sports organisations and sports policy –makers and is dedicated to achieving racial equality in sport and integrating race equality into the management, delivery and development of sport.

In response to these research findings the regional office at Sport England identified a number of specific measures for its future work priorities. This included the development of this project, the Regional Black and Minority Ethnic Sports Project, with VOICE East Midlands.

VOICE East Midlands was formed to enable the East Midlands BME voluntary and community sector take full part in decisions which affect their development and growth and gain more benefit from regional initiatives. It was launched in January 2000 with the support of BME voluntary and community organisations in the East Midlands but became operational in August 2001 following the recruitment of staff. Based in Nottingham, the strategic objectives of VOICE East Midlands are:

- **To be an informed voice of the BME voluntary and community sector and promote its interests at a regional level.**
- **To increase the effectiveness of the sector through capacity building support**
- **To unlock funding for the sector at a regional level**

It was decided that the Regional Black and Minority Ethnic Sports Project would be based within VOICE East Midlands as BME networks and groups would be more readily accessible.

Regional Black & Minority Ethnic Sports Project's Strategic Objectives

- **Raise the level of awareness about Sport England resources within BME communities**
- **To build more effective links between the BME communities and the local sports development functions and other sports organisations e.g. Regional Governing Bodies of Sport, Sport England, County Sports Partnerships, East Midlands Sport, Active Sports Programmes, local authorities in the East Midlands**
- **Link into the national Sporting Equals network to share good practice**
- **Develop a support network to guide the project and work towards sustainability**

The period between August and December in 2001 was used by the Project Manager for networking and induction purposes.

From the above priorities a more specific Action Plan that covered the period January 2002 to December 2002 was drawn up. This report will use these priorities as a means of reporting the work of the East Midlands Black & Minority Ethnic Sports Project.

Raising the level of awareness about Sport England resources within BME communities

Database

It was felt that in order to raise the awareness of Sport England programmes to BME communities, it would be useful to have a clearer picture of the number and details of sports clubs that were BME led and the number of BME voluntary/community groups that provided sport and physical activity services in the East Midlands.

This project is therefore establishing a database to illustrate this. Information collected thus far has been gathered through a variety of means:

- Word of mouth (whilst networking)
- Linking in with VOICE East Midlands' mapping exercise (questionnaire)
- Information from local authorities
- Information from CVS's
- Sports Governing Bodies
- Sports partnerships

Currently, there are approximately 150 BME groups on the database. However, this is a live database with new clubs and groups being added as the project becomes aware of them. It is being used to disseminate information about funding, events, courses, training opportunities etc.

Awards For All

The number of applications made by BME groups to this fund has historically been relatively, and in some parts of the region, markedly low. Through VOICE East Midlands' networks, several organisations have approached this project requesting support to complete application forms. Whilst support was given, such support could not be sustained over a longer period due to the strategic nature of this project. As such, work has been undertaken to develop a mechanism to encourage applications from BME communities to access this fund whilst also empowering them.

Facilitators have been identified from around the region that will work with BME groups through workshops and follow-up one-to-one sessions to help them to compile a quality application. The Facilitators have been carefully selected so as to ensure that groups worked with will also be sign-posted to other sources of funding where relevant. The regional office of Sport England, through their Regional Lotteries Manager, has helped to fund this initiative.

Presentations

Sport England resources (e.g. Active Communities Development Fund, Active Sports) have been promoted through delivering presentations at events held locally that have been arranged by “umbrella” BME networks such as the Council For Ethnic Minority Communities in Northampton, Voluntary Action Leicester, and an event organised by the project and Nottingham City Council’s Sports Development Unit.

Building links between BME communities and local sports development functions and other sports organisations e.g. East Midlands Sport, local authorities, County Sports Partnerships, Active Sports, Governing Bodies

East Midlands Sport – Sport and Racial Equality Group

East Midlands Sport provides an independent voice to promote the interests of sport and recreation in the East Midlands. A key element of its action plan is to preserve and develop sport for all in the East Midlands. As such, a Sport and Racial Equality Group was established to ensure that black and minority ethnic communities play a full part in the development of sport in the region and the benefits it brings.

Throughout the past year, VOICE East Midlands’ Regional Black & Minority Ethnic Sports Project has been co-ordinating this group, and has been responsible for recruiting its members, drafting reports, conducting consultation, collecting information and administration.

Members have been drawn from a broad range of sectors and the group’s initial work has involved interviewing a wide range of stakeholders including voluntary sector organisations, local authorities and sports governing bodies. It is compiling information on issues such as good practice, opportunities for effective partnership working, and training and support needs (of providers and the community). The group will also look at issues such as community cohesion.

The findings and recommendations will be shared with providers and stakeholders and will help to inform future initiatives such as Sport Action Zones, ACDF, Active Sports, the Regional Sports Strategy etc.

BME Sports Network

The Regional Black and Minority Ethnic Sports Project organised a networking event in March 2002 at the National Water Sports Centre for officers specifically working with BME communities in the region. Officers from Derbyshire, Lincolnshire and Leicestershire attended. As it was the first meeting of this network, the event focused on agreeing its purpose and what its role could be. At this event, the following terms of reference were agreed and potential outcomes were discussed.

- To identify good racial equality practice in sport in the region (effective methods of engaging BME communities, particularly women, disabled and those living in rural areas, to become involved in sport as participants, coaches, planners etc).
- To enable officers working with black and minority ethnic communities and sport to provide a clear and consistent message to stakeholders (local authorities, governing bodies, Sport England, sports clubs, the community).
- To enable public, private and voluntary sector providers of sport in the East Midlands region to develop partnerships and plans that promote racial equality.
- To provide a mutual support network for officers working in the field of racial equality/sports development and BME communities.
- To promote and increase awareness of Sporting Equals' "Achieving Racial Equality: A Standard For Sport" (re Governing Bodies, and Local authorities) as well as the Charter.
- To identify effective methods of promoting BME participation in existing Sport England programmes (ACDF, A4A, Community Capital Projects Fund, Active programmes etc).

Potential outcomes include:

- Empowerment of BME communities
- Sports Partnerships that have a better understanding and knowledge of BME communities and issues relating to increasing participation and involvement in planning and delivery.
- A better understanding and knowledge of BME communities and issues relating to increasing participation and involvement in planning and delivery for SDO's.
- An increase in the number of organisations/partnerships signing up to the Racial Equality Charter for Sport.
- Increase in number of applications to A4A, ACDF, Community Capital Projects by BME groups.

Though the network has not met again, it was felt that it would be useful in future for information exchange, influencing change and identification of training needs. It was also expressed that this network should feed into existing structures e.g. East Midlands Sport's "Sport and Racial Equality Group". It is hoped to hold another event in December 2002, with more people being invited from around the region.

Active Sports Nottinghamshire

During the past year the Regional Black and Minority Ethnic Sports Project has also been involved in the Management Group that oversaw a research project that formed part of the Active Sports programme in Nottinghamshire. The aim of the research was to maximise a sustained involvement by the different ethnic minority communities as participants, deliverers and planners in the Active Sports programme.

The final report produced by the team of consultants undertaking this action research includes key recommendations around areas such as club development, coach education and development, cultural awareness, differences by sport and by culture. The Regional Black and Minority Ethnic Sports Project will look at ways in which this piece of work can be shared with other Active Sports partnerships in the East Midlands.

Active Communities Development Fund - Nottinghamshire BME Sports Project

The past year has also seen the Regional Black and Minority Ethnic Sports Project submit a bid to Sport England's Active Communities Development Fund. Though time-consuming and resource intensive, the process has enabled for a community-led approach to be adopted. It aims to create, develop and sustain opportunities for BME communities to participate in sport and physical activity in Nottinghamshire. Nottingham City Council and Active Sports Nottinghamshire will also be key strategic partners.

If the bid is successful, the project will create a Nottinghamshire BME Community Sports Forum that will be an integral part of this initiative and comprise of members from the target groups to ensure that activities are developed that recognise cultural needs. Expertise will be offered to local projects to assist their development thus creating the conditions for increased participation by the priority groups.

It will provide a 'One Stop' shop approach for BME communities to access sport and leisure opportunities, and provide for the development of these individuals as athletes, coaches, volunteers, and administrators in sport. The proposed project will work with community groups / organisations, established forums and representative bodies for BME communities.

The proposed project will ensure a more co-ordinated approach and develop opportunities in sport for BME communities in local sports clubs, schools, leisure & community venues, at their chosen level of ability by building capacity. It will encourage people from BME communities to undertake sports leadership, coaching, volunteering in sport, and thus provide for role models at a local level and long term sustainability of sport within the local communities. By promoting the social inclusion of BME communities through sport and physical activity this project will also impact positively on community safety, learning and employment.

VOICE East Midlands' Regional Sports Project will build the capacity of the BME voluntary and community sports sector by arranging training and workshop opportunities for those involved in the Nottinghamshire BME community Sports Forum.

This approach, if successful, would be used in other counties.

Linking Into the Sporting Equals Network

Sporting Equals is a national sports development initiative working to promote racial equality in sport throughout England. It aims to develop policies and working practices that promote racial equality by working with the governing bodies of various sports, local authorities and key national umbrella organisations. It is based in the Leeds office of the Commission for Racial Equality and is funded by the CRE and Sport England.

For obvious reasons the Regional Black and Minority Ethnic Sports Project shares similar aims to Sporting Equals, be it on a regional level. As such, it has maintained strong links with Sporting Equals during the past year. It has promoted their Charter and Standard for Achieving Racial Equality in Sport at various events and to sports partnerships.

More specifically it has:

- Jointly-delivered a workshop at a training event organised by Sport England East Midlands and the National Association for Sports Development (East Midlands) for Sports Development Officers in the East Midlands.
- Delivered presentations to local sports partnerships (e.g. Inner City Sports Forum – Derby) and County Sports Partnerships (Northamptonshire, Derbyshire) with Sporting Equals and, on occasions, behalf of them.
- Updated Sporting Equals on the work of the project by attending their team meetings.
- Represented Sporting Equals at events organised for Charter-signing purposes.
- Held regular meetings with Sporting Equals' National Community Development Manager to ensure that best practice is being shared.
- Where appropriate, this project has kept Sporting Equals informed about initiatives carried out by sports governing bodies who are working towards the Standard For Achieving Racial Equality in Sport.

Working Towards Sustainability

The Regional Black and Minority Ethnic Sports Project has a lifespan until August 2006. Therefore, ensuring that initiatives and structures that it creates, or becomes involved in, lead to effective and sustainable links between BME communities and sports programmes, organisations and partnerships is vital.

East Midlands Sport

The gathering in momentum of the regionalisation and devolution agenda indicates that the role and function of Regional Sports Boards will be more significant than ever. The Sport and Racial Equality Group, which the Regional BME Sports Project co-ordinates, will shortly be highlighting key issues and policy recommendations to the Board with respect to BME communities involvement in sport as participants, planners and deliverers. This should form the basis for developing effective, long-term strategies that involve the BME voluntary and community sports sector as partners.

County Sports Partnerships

Regionalisation and subsidiarity will also impact on the way that County Sports Partnerships work in the future and enhance their role. It would be fair to say that the links between the County Sports Partnerships and the BME voluntary and community sector has been relatively weak in the region. This is not only in terms of representation on the partnerships (most partnerships have no BME representative) but also the extent to which they have the necessary knowledge and information as to how these links can be made.

This is where this project has, and will continue to, concentrate its efforts. As such, work here has centred on liaising with the County Sports Partnerships with a view to developing a working relationship between them and local BME community sports individuals and structures.

For example, this project has been instrumental in linking a BME umbrella organisation in Northamptonshire with N-Sport, the Northamptonshire County Sports Partnership. From this, the BME organisation's representative has been co-opted onto N-Sport and a working group is being developed that will work towards making sport in Northamptonshire more inclusive of BME communities.

Linking in with BME structures

The Regional BME Sports Project will also be aiming to work more closely with the emerging sub-regional BME structures (e.g. Nottinghamshire Black Partnership, Leicestershire Ethnic Minority Partnership, Derby Millennium Network). These sub-regional structures will be working with their respective local strategic partnerships and the aim here is to ensure that the work of the Regional BME Sports Project is fed "through the system" and assist BME voluntary and community groups to meet their needs more effectively as well as influence decision making and input into the wider sports agenda

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Partnership Working

The general lack of external support, coupled with lack of knowledge about where alternative resources can be found, means that BME voluntary and community groups often find themselves working in isolation. There is also a willingness of the BME voluntary and community sports sector to contribute to developing local communities and to improve health, education, employment and improving community safety through sport and recreation. The challenge will be how this can be harnessed to ensure that BME communities can play a full role the development of sport in the community. There is clearly a need for current sporting structures to examine how they can improve the capacity and the co-ordination of the BME voluntary sports sector.

As such, The Regional BME Sports Project has been involved in various networks and meetings with a view to developing structures that will help the BME voluntary and community sector itself in terms of capacity-building but also provide mainstream providers with a consultation facility.

Some of these are sports specific, some more generic. The following are meetings and networks that the Regional BME Sports Project has been involved in, providing either an advisory/information service or having an advocacy role.

Ufi Ltd. East Midlands-Basic Skills Project

The Regional BME Sports Project has, where appropriate, worked with other agencies over the past year to develop initiatives that build the capacity of BME groups. For example, it has linked up with Ufi Ltd. East Midlands to look into encouraging people from BME groups and clubs to take up the Learndirect Basic Skills course. As a pilot initiative, BME groups in Leicester providing sports services, identified by the Regional BME Sports Project, were invited to an event at the Learning and Skills Council to provide them with more information. The incentive for the group or club that chooses to participate in this scheme is that they would receive a free lap-top that could be used to encourage people enrol onto the basic skills course as well for the club's purposes (e.g produce leaflets, newsletters etc.) A presentation is to be made to Ufi Ltd. East Midlands by the Regional BME Sports Project to explore whether this could be rolled out to other parts of the region.

De Montfort University-Volunteering Project

The Regional BME Sports Project has also worked with DeMontfort University to identify opportunities for students who wish to be active in the community. Interested students would be placed with participating organisations. There would be mutual benefits with the volunteer student being able to develop new skills and interests and the organisation benefiting from additional help. The organisation could be a BME voluntary and community sector group that provides or wish to provide sports services. Indeed, BME groups expressed the need for more volunteers in VOICE East Midlands' mapping exercise. It is hoped to duplicate this with other universities in the East Midlands.

BME Voluntary and Community Groups

Though it was not intended for the Regional BME Sports Project to work closely with individual BME voluntary and community groups, it was perhaps inevitable that it would receive requests for assistance from them. This was more often than not related to funding, capital and revenue and may reflect the current lack of infrastructure and support for these groups. Groups worked with include; Project Rahnama, Karibu, Leicester Central Mosque, Nottingham Community College, Somali Youth Northampton, Normanton Sports Association (Derby), Carrington Sports and Recreation Centre, Project Azaadi, Indian Community Centre.

To this end the Regional BME Sports Project is facilitating the development of local BME Sports forums/networks across the region that will include representatives from local sports clubs as well as non-sporting community groups. Such developments are vital to promote greater participation in sport by BME communities.

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