



ACTION RESEARCH 2018

PEER LED ACTIVITY

BACKGROUND

Young people have been volunteering at their local doorstep sport projects for many years. They provide support in a variety of ways, including: assisting with sessional delivery, leading a session, mentoring others, providing admin support, helping to promote sessions and activities to their peers either face-to-face or via social media.

Some also provide support at one-off events, tournaments and competitions or help to design youth-led activities.

The key, is that there are a variety of roles to suit the differing wants a motivations of the young person.

PEER LED ACTION RESEARCH

The peer led action research project looked to test and explore how young people look to self-organise activities with peers outside the doorstep sport setting what sorts of activities young people choose to undertake, how they go about it, what elements work well and what were the challenges and barriers they faced.

The primary 'driver' was to explore different ways to help grow 'activity know-how' and support young people to try new activities and go to new or different settings to take part.

Recognising the 'added benefit' that the project may have on the young people who take on the peer leader in terms of their knowledge, skills & confidence.

Doorstep sport organisations were asked to support young people from their local projects to come up with their own ideas and plans for ways in which they could motivate a group of friends/other young people in their area to be active together and put them into practice. So for example they may decide to:



Enter a local sports event (like a Colour Run or 5k Fun Run) and organise regular pre-event group training.



Enter a team into a local 5-a-side football league or tournament and organise running their team /turning up to matches each week



Organise a group of peers to attend a mainstream activity on a regular basis e.g. a fitness class or gym



Organise a group of peers to try new outdoor adventure type activities together as a group.

It was envisaged that within each group one or two of the young people would take on the role of 'peer leader/champion' and take the lead in organising and encouraging their group of friends to take part.

15 ORGANISATIONS FROM ACROSS ENGLAND WERE INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT

ACTIVITIES

Examples of activities delivered as part of this project include:

12 of us will go running at local parks....The runs will progress in length each time leading up to a 5k obstacle Colour rush
[Onside]

To take part in six different activities: Outdoor nature, fishing, football match, bowling, rock climbing, basketball at the beach
[Sunderland CAG]

To do American Football as our activity with the London Blitz at Finsbury Park
[Access To Sport]

To buy fitness memberships and attend a gym and go swimming together
[Silx]

To involve more people into playing badminton at Ramgarhia Badminton club.
[Newham College]

Work with a group of young people with autism and learning disabilities to try a range of different sports
[Dudley Inclusive]

FINDINGS

Peer leaders shared the aspects which they felt had helped their project to succeed. The factors included:

- Agreeing collectively on the activities as a group before they started
- Choosing different / exciting activities i.e. something that disadvantaged young people don't usually get a chance to do (e.g. trampolining) or a celebration event to end, that they wouldn't normally be able to afford to take part in (e.g. The Colour Run);
- Having a large pool of young people to draw on (e.g. via pre-existing friendship groups)
- Providing regular reminders, encouragement and promotion to their peers (e.g. via face-to-face conversations and via the creation of WhatsApp / Facebook groups and Snap Chat messaging)
- Being able to offer rewards and incentives to encourage attendance
- Having support from a volunteer mentor (especially at the start)
- Meeting up as a group before the activities so that they could all travel together to the facility
- Planning social time and refreshments at the end of the sessions as a way of further encouraging group bonding and peer to peer support.

IMPACT

The project has clearly provided young people with the opportunity to try new activities and visit new places independently.

The project has also engaged some young people that have never volunteered before and supported them to develop new skills and confidence

"The group have noticed benefits and appreciate having somewhere to go and develop themselves. The young people have appeared more motivated in employability sessions where one young person used this to develop a healthier daily routine and study sports nutrition as an online course."