

Lessons from West Bowling Youth Initiative

Then, now and the future

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with the WBYI

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This report focuses on identifying ‘what works’ in engaging young British Muslim Pakistani men.

There is a great deal of media and policy attention given to Muslim communities in Britain. Yet the debates about community cohesion, citizenship and belonging within policy often fail to address the complexities of male Muslim identities and their everyday experiences. *Lessons from West Bowling Youth Initiative* addresses this, through an in-depth exploration of the work of one grassroots organisation located in West Bowling, Bradford.

The report highlights:

- the impact made by the WBYI in building social capital, developing active citizenship, encouraging participation in neighbourhood life and increasing awareness;
- the need for sustainability and flexibility in effective engagement with young British Muslim Pakistani men;
- the importance of building trusting relationships with local communities;
- the effectiveness of capitalising on local talent and local networks for meeting community needs;
- the potential of creative arts informed project work.

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Contents

Executive summary	5
1 Introduction	8
2 Methodology	14
3 The WBYI story	16
4 Developing project work at the WBYI	35
5 What works	45
6 The WBYI: the future?	50
Appendix: Project structure	52
References	53
Acknowledgements	55
About the author	57



Executive summary

This report reflects a collaborative project between West Bowling Youth Initiative (WBYI), the local young people of West Bowling and the Centre for the Study of Ethnicity and Culture at the University of Birmingham. The WBYI is in the heart of residential West Bowling, close to Bradford city centre. It works primarily with ‘hard to reach’ young British Muslim Pakistani men, who experience high levels of social and economic exclusion. The WBYI aims to provide a positive space for young people to express their identities and to strengthen their attachment and participation in community life, as well as to support them in the development of key skills. A crucial element of its work aims to encourage participation in community life, to widen young people’s perspectives and to foster cohesion through everyday project work.

Through its extensive experience of working with young people at risk of social exclusion, the WBYI constitutes an important example of ‘what works’ in engaging young British Muslim Pakistani men that can be disseminated to other contexts. The project has also sought to develop project work at the WBYI, particularly through the use of creative arts and media, alongside the promotion of cultural engagement between different groups of young people.

This report is of relevance to policy makers and practitioners involved in community cohesion, youth work, citizenship and communities and neighbourhood life.

Methodology

Qualitative research methods have been used to enable a rich understanding of the way that WBYI works and to explore its impact on young people’s lives. The research methods have included in-depth interviews, real-time discussions, focus group interviews, visual data production and analysis (video interviews, photographic images) and ethnographic research at the WBYI. Former users of the WBYI, current users of the WBYI, practitioners and members of the local community have participated in this project.

The WBYI story

The WBYI is a grassroots voluntary sector organisation, that was established through local community and practitioner intervention in order to provide a space for young Asian men, partly in response to rising levels of offending. Now, the WBYI is firmly embedded within the everyday culture of life in West Bowling, having extensive local knowledge, strong partnerships and social networks. Many of the current staff members and volunteers are from the local area and local young people describe feeling a strong sense of ownership and connection with the project. Part of the WBYI’s success in engaging young British Muslim Pakistani men is related to the respect it is given by the local community. While the WBYI is largely accessed by young men from the local British Muslim Pakistani community, its approach nevertheless contributes to community cohesion through raising awareness and promoting meaningful interaction between its primary users and those from different backgrounds.

Developing project work at the WBYI

A series of innovative and creative arts and community initiatives has been developed as part of this project. These have particularly engaged with the Joseph Rowntree Foundation theme of ‘culture makes communities’, focusing on celebrating the positive aspects of neighbourhood life and the promotion of cultural engagement between different groups of young people, alongside enhancing the skills and capacities of young people through the use of creative arts. These included:

- a community festival which aimed to bring people together from diverse backgrounds;
- a former users’ event which brought young people, project workers, local residents and practitioners together to share food, memories and experiences relating to the role of the WBYI within Bradford;

- a photography project using mobile phone cameras which sought to encourage creativity and the development of new skills, while also providing a rich portrait of the lives of young British Muslim Pakistani men in West Bowling;
- a photography exhibition exhibiting young people's work and a launch event which brought participants together with the wider public and provided a valuable space for interaction;
- training for project workers, volunteers, young people and community members on film and photography techniques; and
- an event bringing young people from Bradford together with young people from the US to discuss issues of citizenship, cohesion, identity and belonging.

The project work highlights the complexities of negotiating identity, community and belonging from the perspectives of the young people and their everyday lives, for example in relation to issues of faith and cohesion. Their stories reveal the importance of the WBYI in facilitating activities, which aim to develop young people's skills and capacities while also promoting engagement and interaction between people from different backgrounds. It also pointed to the value (and difficulties) of using creative methods and cultural pursuits (photography in particular) to support these aims.

What works at the WBYI?

'What works' at the WBYI is underpinned by project workers having a detailed understanding of the local British Muslim Pakistani community in West Bowling in all its complexity. This understanding relates to the history of the WBYI, its location, its project workers and volunteers, and its social networks, partnerships and reputation.

Creating a sense of belonging and encouraging participation in community life is central to the way the WBYI works. This is achieved through project work and by the organisation, with its strong social networks, history and connections being embedded within the local neighbourhood.

Such strong social networks and a strong sense of community can encourage a greater sense of social responsibility and active citizenship.

The WBYI has developed particular strengths in engaging young men from British Muslim Pakistani backgrounds through an approach which seeks to provide a safe space for young British Muslim Pakistani men to express their complex identities (including faith, gender and ethnicity), without being a faith-based organisation. While faith is an important aspect of young people's lives, other aspects of identity – such as being an artist or sportsman, a teenager or younger brother – also intersect with being a Muslim, being British, Pakistani and/or Asian.

The project has also successfully capitalised on local knowledge and local talent by employing project workers from West Bowling. The project workers are seen by the young people using the WBYI as both mentors and positive role models. Factors such as shared ethnicity, faith and gender as well as being a part of the local community are regarded as important in enabling project workers to convey a genuine empathy with the young people and their experiences.

Successful engagement requires building long-term relationships with young people and the wider community, something that short-term funding limits. Despite this, the WBYI has sought to develop a style of practice over the past 15 years that focuses on building long-term and personalised relationships with 'hard to reach' young people in an effort to build their capacities and to challenge social exclusion. It utilises what has been described as a 'tough love' approach, and is regarded by many young people as a 'big brother'. In the context of the WBYI, this method of engagement works.

The WBYI seek to play a crucial role in promoting awareness and building community cohesion through everyday project work. Its informal drop-in space – 'the hub' – also provides a valuable space for interaction and dialogue between British Muslim Pakistani men and those from different backgrounds, including new migrants. According to the Commission on Integration and Cohesion (COIC, 2007), such shared spaces are important for building community cohesion. This also challenges the assumption that organisations working primarily

with a single faith/ethnic group are an obstacle to community cohesion.

The WBYI is seen as a vital and trusted resource among the local British Muslim Pakistani community. This has taken time to develop and has required striking a delicate balance between meeting the needs of parents and those of young people. The complex interrelationship between gender, faith and ethnicity in this context means that the WBYI does much of its one-to-one personal development work solely with young men. This allows it to work effectively with this group while maintaining the trust and respect of parents and the local community. Nevertheless, the challenging of gender inequalities is embedded in its everyday work with young men.

Indeed, partnership work at the WBYI is central to its effectiveness. The WBYI is recognised among local practitioners as playing a crucial role in linking external agencies with local grassroots activity, and is positioned in many ways as a community anchor. It has established effective local partnerships with groups such as the local cricket club (BOLCC), which helps to encourage interaction between people from different backgrounds and further contributes to the everyday culture of neighbourhood life in West Bowling.

The WBYI: the future?

The WBYI has responded positively to the project findings and work developed during this project. It is engaged in the process of further developing effective engagement with young British Muslim Pakistani men and the wider communities of West Bowling, Bradford. It stresses that its approach is one which is community led, rather than driven by government agendas, and this will continue to be its guiding principle.

The WBYI agrees that successful engagement is made possible by being at the heart of the local community, and it recognises the need to continue to celebrate the everyday culture of life in West Bowling, pointing to the value of community festivals, BOLCC and social events in encouraging a celebration of community life and bringing communities together in meaningful ways.

Its aim is to develop the use of new technologies as a means for young people to communicate and express their creativity. Alongside this, the WBYI

is keen to further develop its focus on supporting young people as individuals, and as Bradfordians, from West Bowling, continuing a story of good practice that stretches over 15 years.

1 Introduction

'This project, it has helped me find some sort of ground ... I've spent most of my childhood playing around this centre ... I've seen staff changes, I've seen agenda changes ... I don't think I've been anywhere with my family apart from going places with these lot ... they don't generalise anybody. It's not after targets and numbers. You won't see that in black and white, on paper, that they've done this much, you actually see the development in a person. On paper, they may run a job club on Wednesdays, but man on man, turn up on a daily basis and they do whatever they can do ... I've done work experience here, I've volunteered here, if it weren't for this project I wouldn't have been anywhere really....' (former user)

This narrative reflects what the West Bowling Youth Initiative (WBYI) means to some of the young people of West Bowling in Bradford. This report addresses the need to try to 'put on paper' exactly what the WBYI has done for the young people and local communities of West Bowling, particularly in relation to issues of neighbourhood and community life, culture and social capital, and identity and community cohesion.

Background

This project is a collaboration between the WBYI, the young people of West Bowling and the Centre for the Study of Ethnicity and Culture (CSEC) at the University of Birmingham, funded as part of the Bradford communities programme under the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) themes of 'faith and cohesion in communities' and 'culture makes communities'. The project builds on previous research with 'hard-to-reach' young people in Bradford (see, for example, Katz, 2002; Darlow et al, 2005), in order to capture current 'best practice', influence policy and support the WBYI in its everyday project work, while enhancing the skills and capacities of young people through the use of creative project work and activities that

promote cultural engagement between groups of young people (identified by Darlow et al, 2005, as an important area for future research). Through its extensive experience of working with young people at risk of social exclusion, the WBYI constitutes an important example of 'best practice' that can be usefully researched and disseminated to other contexts.

Bradford: a place of transition

Despite media representations and political attention on Bradford as a racially polarised city (Alam and Husband, 2006), it has a long history of diverse migration. The early part of the 19th century saw European migration from Germany, Ireland, Italy, Poland and the Ukraine. Post-war migration saw the arrival of Hindu, Indian and Sikh groups (mainly men) seeking employment in the booming textiles, manufacturing and transport industries. This was followed by substantial Muslim Pakistani migration in the 1960s and 1970s. Families followed later, settling in different areas of Bradford (Singh, 1994). More recent times have seen the rapid in-migration of people from Central and Eastern Europe, due to the expansion of the European Union. West Bowling is one of the key areas of new migrant settlement.

West Bowling Youth Initiative (WBYI), West Bowling, Bradford

'... it's about what affects people's lives that live here.' (community member)

The WBYI was established in 1991 and has played a prominent role in the voluntary sector within Bradford. The WBYI primarily works with 'hard-to-reach' young men of Pakistani heritage, who experience high levels of social and economic exclusion (DfEE, 1999, cited in Barn, 2001, p 41). It does this through the provision of sports and leisure programmes; training and employment schemes; the provision of information technology (IT) support;

generic informal support and guidance; and citizenship and community projects. The young people themselves play a key role in deciding the direction of the WBYI's activities.

The WBYI is based in West Bowling, which until recently was located within the wards of Little Horton, Odsal and Bowling. As a result of the Bradford ward boundary changes in 2004, most of the users of the WBYI come from the area now identified as the Little Horton ward. The area suffers from high levels of poverty and deprivation; Little Horton was ranked as the 42nd poorest ward in England and Wales (IMD, 2000). Based on the 2001 Census, over half of the housing stock is terraced and over 15% of households are characterised as overcrowded. In terms of health, 43% of households have one or more person with a long-term illness. Unemployment points to further inequalities and deprivation in the area, with approximately only 50% of those of working age (16-74) being economically active (working or seeking work). Nearly 15% of those economically active are unemployed. Of those unemployed, 37% are long-term unemployed, over 16% have never worked and nearly 33% are aged 16-24 (CBMDC, 2007).

The decline of old industry in the area has led to high levels of deprivation, unemployment and crime. As a result the area received New Deal for Communities (NDC) funding in 2000. Trident, a regeneration company with extensive community involvement, has received £50 million from the NDC fund for a 10-year regeneration strategy in the area. The organisation has established a range of different projects with extensive spending on the areas of 'housing, youth, education and community' and 'jobs and business' (Trident, 2007).

Little Horton is one of the most ethnically mixed areas in Bradford; with just under 50% of the population defining themselves as White, the rest of the multicultural mix includes individuals defined as Pakistani (37.8%), Indian (4.3%), Black or Black British (3.7%) and 3.6% of mixed origin (categories as defined by CBMDC, 2007). These groups include different faiths, ethnicities and castes. Little Horton also houses important religious institutions including churches, mosques and temples.

Locating the WBYI

The WBYI is based in a small office on Parkside Road, West Bowling, Bradford. It is situated within the same complex as West Bowling People's Partnership (a multi-agency organisation providing services to the communities of West Bowling including Parkside Sports Centre and a hall for football, basketball and badminton). The WBYI occupies two areas of the building: a small office where day-to-day activities in terms of project management, administration, support for young people and networking takes place, and a computer room for users. The office is a busy space, with several desks and chairs, photographs, wall charts and posters. Outside the centre, a lock-up stores sports equipment and other materials used by project workers. This has been decorated with graffiti art.

The WBYI is in the heart of residential West Bowling. Rows of large stone built terraced housing typical of the area (many with larger dormer extensions to accommodate extended families) are directly opposite. Occasionally, a horse can be found grazing on the wasteland in between the WBYI and the renowned Kolos Ukrainian Bakery. The Woodroyd neighbourhood centre (with a pharmacy, doctors' surgeries, meeting rooms and offices for hire, a café and a crèche) is five minutes away, as is a local park with a children's play area, skateboard park, climbing rock and sports area. Bowling Old Lane Cricket Club (BOLCC) (one of the oldest cricket clubs in Bradford) is also nearby, as are local grocery shops, haberdashery shops, newsagents and a snooker centre. Bradford City Centre is approximately 20 minutes walk from the WBYI, with public transport available on Parkside Road and the busy Manchester Road (A641) arterial route to the city centre also nearby.

A typical day at the WBYI

The project manager usually opens the office (the 'hub') at around 10am. The first part of the day is relatively quiet, and a time for the core project team to carry out routine administration and management tasks, alongside partnership working (attending meetings etc) and completing funding applications. During this time, the hub remains open for young people to access, although more

formalised contact with young people and the local community tends to begin at noon.

From 1pm until around 6pm, the hub becomes busy, with young people, community members, partner organisations, and supplementary project workers (who are employed to deliver specific areas of project work, including IT, study skills and sports coaching) filtering in and out of the office. During this time, young people and community members may come in to use office amenities (the internet or photocopying), access support and guidance from project workers or to meet with other people. At most times, the hub is occupied by British Muslim Pakistani men, and this has implications in terms of gender, cohesion and faith, which will be discussed later in the report. However, partner organisations, members of BOLCC and, more recently, new migrants from Eastern Europe may also drop in to the hub, creating a vibrant and dynamic space for interactions. On particular days, project work may involve working with specific groups of young people such as around youth offending and behaviour management. In cases where project work caters for men and women, larger groups or events, the nearby BOLCC is used.

Project aims

This collaborative project between the WBYI, CSEC at the University of Birmingham and the JRF had several interrelated aims. First, it aimed to capture ‘best practice’ in the work of the WBYI, by identifying ‘what works’ in terms of the WBYI approach. This is necessary in order to extend our understanding of current issues affecting the lives of young men of British Muslim Pakistani backgrounds; and to provide important data with which to influence policy/practice. Second, the project aimed to develop current and new project work at the WBYI that enhances the skills and capacities of young people, particularly through the use of creative project work; alongside the promotion of cultural engagement between different groups of young people, informed by JRF themes of ‘culture makes communities’ and ‘faith and cohesion in communities’. New arts-based project work has been extensively supported by JRF funding. Yet throughout this project we have interpreted the concept of ‘culture’ in its broadest

sense, relating not just to the arts and community celebrations, but also to the way we live our *everyday* lives, evoking ideas of cultural heritage, memory, practice and tradition (VAN, 1999). The faith and cohesion element similarly relates to broad notions of faith and cohesion, linking with the ‘culture makes communities’ theme through an emphasis on *everyday* interactions and the promotion of understanding and dialogue through an exploration of the day-to-day project work of the WBYI.

Policy and practice relevance

The project is of relevance to policy makers (for example with regard to strategies around community cohesion, communities and neighbourhood life, youth work, social inclusion and citizenship) and practitioners (especially in relation to youth and community work), yet it has also sought to make ‘make a difference’ to the day-to-day work of the WBYI. The project has achieved this through the following methods:

- supporting the WBYI in creating a positive impact on the local communities of Bradford, particularly with ‘at-risk’ young people from disadvantaged communities;
- developing ‘new’ and existing project work that has engaged with creating dialogue and cultural expressions;
- further building the capacity of the young people involved in the WBYI by encouraging their contributions to the overall project;
- producing outputs using the arts (for example, photography exhibitions, a DVD and radio broadcasts) in relation to the research findings and the development of new project work at the WBYI; and
- producing a practitioner-focused evaluation report of the WBYI concentrating on identifying ‘what works’ and ‘best practice’, informed by the narratives of the young people concerned.

Wider context

The wider context shaping young men's engagement with the WBYI is important in understanding the role of the organisation and its approach. Since the Bradford riots in 2001 and the London terrorist attacks in July 2005 there has been increasing attention on young men of British Muslim Pakistani background. In particular, questions have been raised regarding issues of identity, faith, citizenship, belonging and integration. This has resulted in a plethora of discourses, government reports and initiatives aimed at promoting cohesion between communities (see, for example, Home Office, 2001), fostering a stronger sense of Britishness (see, for example, CRE, 2005), building active citizens (see, for example, Goldsmith, 2008), challenging extremism (DCLG, 2007a, 2008) and encouraging a sense of 'shared futures' (COIC, 2007).

In this context, it is especially important that policy makers and practitioners find the appropriate balance between an overemphasis on the role of faith within Muslim communities, while also recognising that being a Muslim is important for many young British Muslim Pakistani men (see later sections of this report). The WBYI offers a useful example of how to effectively strike this balance. The organisation aims to provide an inclusive space where young British Muslim Pakistani men feel safe to express their identities, faiths and beliefs without ridicule or discrimination, and in a context where project workers and volunteers have respect and understanding.

'Because of them lot being Muslim; it is easier for them lot to know what we can do and what we can't do ... it does help to have Muslim workers around, because sometimes if we were to do bad things, they probably would say to you, "would you do that if your mum and dad was here?" ... they understand what our religion is like, they know our restrictions ... they wouldn't judge us ... like if we didn't go to mosque.' (current user)

The WBYI therefore seeks to provide a valuable space for young Muslim men to express their complex identities (including faith, gender, ethnicity,

etc), without being a faith-based organisation. At the same time, it is important to recognise that the provision of this space (while largely accessed by young men from the local British Muslim Pakistani communities) does not preclude bridging with individuals from other communities. Rather, the approach of the WBYI, as will emerge later in this report, seeks to first build the capacities, knowledge and awareness of its users (mainly young British Muslim Pakistani men) through its *everyday* project work and individual support, with the aim of enabling young people to have the confidence and skills to participate in wider community engagement, active citizenship and community cohesion. This is also about challenging wider structural inequalities and factors of social exclusion, which can be easily forgotten with the current emphasis on security and cohesion.

Identity, gender, community and belonging

The themes of identity, gender, community and belonging underlie this report. As will become clear later on, in many ways, the WBYI aims to provide the young men of West Bowling with a positive space to express their identities, strengthen their attachment to community and deepen their sense of belonging, as well as supporting them in the development of key skills. These concepts require some explanation. The concept of 'identity' is highly complex, and best understood as contextual and relational positionings (Hall, 1992) that are articulated across different spaces and at particular moments. Such identifications are not fixed or complete, but always 'in process' (Hall, 1992; Skeggs, 1997; Dwyer, 1999; see also Alam and Husband's, 2006, work on Muslim men in Bradford). It is also important to note that recognising 'gender' is as much about the study of men and masculinity as it is about looking at women's experiences (McClintock 1995; Mac An Ghail and Haywood, 2007). Thus, gender (and masculinity) intersects with race, ethnicity and faith in complex ways; 'played out' or performed within particular social contexts, such as with peers, at mosque, at home or through sports.

Recognising the complex nature of identities is especially important when exploring issues of ethnicity to avoid homogenisation and oversimplification. Therefore, throughout this

report, racial/ethnic/faith categorisations are used with an awareness of their contested nature and multiplicity of meaning. Similarly, the concept of community is equally problematic, being highly ambiguous and hard to define (see, for example, Alleyne, 2002; Delanty, 2003). Definitions of 'community' often relate to links between people with a common residence, common interests, common attachments or other shared experiences that generate a sense of belonging (Crow and Allan, 1994). In this report, participants' own definitions are used in order to identify their views and experiences. These shifting narratives illustrate the ambiguous nature of community, and highlight that the processes, practices and social groups that constitute community do not necessarily correlate with the more fixed construction of community often apparent in policy discourses.

The terms 'British Muslim Pakistani' men and 'British Muslim men of Pakistani origin' have been used throughout this report, following discussion with young people at WBYI, community members and practitioners. There are huge limitations and difficulties inherent in using such categorisations, as processes of identity and identification are complex and diverse.



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2 Methodology

Research background

Qualitative research methods have been used in this project to provide a rich understanding of the way that the WBYI works and to explore its impact on young people's lives. The research methods included an innovative combination of individual in-depth interviews, real-time discussions, focus groups, visual data production and analysis (video interviews, photographic images) and participant observation at the WBYI. The project has been guided by the voices of the young people, the local community and practitioners at the WBYI; something often omitted in research with young people from black and minority ethnic communities (Barn, 2001). Ethnographic methods enabled the researcher to become closely involved with the WBYI and the young people using the project. Consequently, close ties and networks of trust were established over the course of the research period between the researcher and the WBYI project team, members of the local community and the young men who use the project now and those who accessed it in the past. Establishing trust through day-to-day contact was necessary in order to facilitate participants to tell their stories, and to enable participants to have greater input into the research process.

Research sample

Ongoing participant observations and project work activity took place for approximately 18 months. This involved informal discussions with WBYI users, partners and members of the local community, resulting in over 50 fieldnote entries. In addition, the more formal interview sample consisted of:

- 30 past users (including community members) (focus groups and individual interviews);
- 7 project workers (past, current and placement staff) (individual interviews);

- 20 current users (focus groups and individual interviews);
- 33 additional current users and visitors (for example, American students, cricketers) through real-time recordings of the WBYI project work;
- 10 partner organisations (individual interviews).

All the names of those involved in the research element of this project have been changed to protect the anonymity of the participants. Further details of the project structure are given in the Appendix.

Analysis of data

Interview and focus group data were analysed using thematic analysis, while the visual data were analysed using the principles of visual sociology and anthropology (Banks, 2001). Several thematic categories for coding the data were established at the beginning of research, based on information about the WBYI provided by young people and project workers. These coding categories were developed in relation to the narratives of the participants as the research progressed. The validity of the research was ensured through the use of qualitative methods that centralise the participants' own narrative/visual accounts of their lives. Their accounts provide a rich and detailed insight into their lived experiences, their interpretations and their truths, rather than presenting an over-assertion of the researcher's own perspective and opinions.

Researching the WBYI

The following chapters are derived from the ethnographic research and project work conducted over 18 months at the WBYI. Participants' narratives and photographic images are included in order to centralise young people's role in the project over the last 15 years.



3 The WBYI story

This chapter aims to tell the story of the WBYI from the perspectives of those involved both in the past and in the present. The story is reflected through participants' narratives and also photographic images. Alongside this, case studies are used to demonstrate the impact that the WBYI has had on individual lives.

Once upon a time in West Bowling... A brief story on how the WBYI started

The Rushdie affair in the late 1980s resulted in increasing attention on British Muslim communities. At the local level, Bradford became an epicentre for the symbolic 'book burning', amplified in the national media (Alexander, 2000). This period was also significant in disrupting the category 'Asian' with more of an emphasis on religious distinction, for example as Muslims (see, for example, Modood, 1992). At this time, labels of fanaticism and fundamentalism began to be attached to this group. This association was also gendered, as it was Muslim men who were conceptualised as possessing a type of deviant masculinity; one that easily endorsed Islamic fundamentalism, along with other perceived negative traits such as aggression, propensity for violence, and controlling women's behaviour (Alexander, 2000; Alam and Husband, 2006; Mac an Ghail, 1994). These representations also stood parallel with more effeminate conceptualisations of Asian masculinities (see Willis, 1977; see Gill, 2005). Alongside this, a globalised 'Islamic' form of identification also became apparent (Samad, 1997). For Bradfordians, this period also coincided with an increase in far right activity and racial attacks. This was certainly the case in West Bowling. In 1989 the area was targeted by far right activists from outside the area, resulting in small-scale civil disturbances:

'At that time [there was] quite a major disturbance ... you got some white youths in the area that were smashing windows,

that were related to Bradford Ointment gang ... before you know it there was 100-odd youth on the street and the police.' (former WBYI project worker)

With increased hostility and a rise in the number of young Asian men entering the criminal justice system, Bradford council appointed a youth worker to work alongside the newly established West Bowling Youth Association (WBYA) located in the centre of West Bowling. WBYA also aimed to provide a space for young Asians in West Bowling, as it was generally felt that the existing services in the area did not address 'the cultural needs of Asian youth' (community activist). This focus on 'Asian' youth (as opposed to the current popular emphasis on ethno-religious distinctions, for example 'Muslim') was reflective of the wider anti-racist agenda of the time. This was also demanded by local community members and local practitioners who were involved in the WBYA from the beginning:

The West Bowling Youth Association was established as a necessary mouthpiece and co-ordinating body with the Asian youth of the Donisthorpe/Ryan street specifically in mind. This does not thereby mean that the association is an Asian only movement. Far from it, the WBYA is primarily a multicultural organisation whose aim is to integrate and eradicate the worst excesses of ignorance and prejudice. (WBYA, undated, p 6)

Therefore, the WBYA (and the later WBYI) was about making a space for young Asians in West Bowling, although it was never established exclusively for them. The success of the WBYA, with some breakthroughs in diverting key individuals away from offending, was important in developing a positive relationship with the local communities of West Bowling. A funding application was made to the Prince's Trust, which

was successful and, following a visit from Prince Charles, the WBYI was born.

The WBYI was the first of its kind. From 1991 to the late 1990s, its main focus was on diverting local young men away from criminal activity and challenging social exclusion through international youth exchanges, sports and community activities, as well as providing support for key skills around education and employment. Today, the WBYI is recognised as a grassroots voluntary sector organisation at the heart of the West Bowling community. Many of the current staff members and volunteers are young men from the local area. The project work is overlooked by an experienced multi-agency management committee with individuals from across the voluntary and statutory sector, including representatives from local schools, young people and members of the local community. The WBYI now focuses more directly on providing support for education and employment skills, including working with young people at risk of school exclusion and those not in education, employment or training. A key element of its work aims to encourage participation in community life, widen perspectives and foster cohesion through everyday project work, with the aim of building a strong cultural identity.

Jimmy's story – the WBYI then

Background

Jimmy was local to West Bowling and had become involved in criminal activity, influenced by his peer group. He approached WBYI for support.

WBYI project intervention

Jimmy began to participate in a range of voluntary activities under the supervision of the WBYI project worker, who was well respected in the local community and by Jimmy's parents. The same project worker represented Jimmy in court and this made a huge difference in his life. Jimmy described having a good relationship with the project worker as fundamental:

'I think it boils down to having a good relationship with that person, who can be your role model and you could trust as well. My trust with [former project worker] was when he stood up in court for me, that said it all for me. There was no one out there to do that. He did a character reference and quoted everything he supervised me on, on my development, on me changing, in front of the judge's eyes. It was scary.'

Through this intensive support and project work, Jimmy began to develop an interest in youth and community work. Voluntary work organised through the project helped to develop his confidence and he became active in organising events and activities himself. He also participated in international youth exchanges where he represented local young people and also spoke to funding organisations. He then decided that he wanted to 'make a difference' in young people's lives and 'keep them off the streets', which has shaped his future career choices. However, Jimmy also described how it remained hard to keep away from offending, as many of his peers were still engaged in criminal activity: 'I was hanging around with a lot of criminals, shall I say, and it was hard for me to pull away ... it was a vicious circle ... but if they got involved in criminal activity, I walked away'.

Outcomes

Jimmy is now working with young people who have had similar experiences to himself and has returned to education as a mature student. With the help of the WBYI, Jimmy developed other interests, particularly in relation to working with young people. The WBYI provided a platform to build social capital, in terms of opportunities and social networks, which led to a greater sense of commitment to community.

It's our WBYI

From the beginning, the WBYI has had a strong and positive connection with the local communities of West Bowling. As with the JRF's theme of 'culture makes communities', the WBYI is seen as positive in promoting a 'cultural agenda' in its broadest sense relating to 'how we live, work, cooperate and communicate together' (VAN, 1999, p 2) through the process of bringing communities, groups and individuals together, and ultimately contributing to neighbourhood life. This continues today, and is one way in which young people become involved with the WBYI. In addition, young people access the WBYI through various routes including school, other youth centres, advice centres or sports such as cricket, all of which act as an anchor to the WBYI.

'School sent me on a course ... I'd heard of it before, I used to go and watch cricket.' (current user)

'I knew people that were older than me, that were actually working here.' (former user)

Many of the young people, both past and present, have indicated that they were aware of the WBYI before they accessed its services; 'it was always there' (former user). Indeed, the WBYI is a well-networked organisation, known to both the local community (young and old) and practitioners across Bradford. In many ways, the WBYI can be described as a 'community anchor', due to its ability to 'play a unique role, recognised within communities and by external agencies ... able to act as an intermediary between these agencies and grassroots activity' (DCLG, 2007b, p 43). The fieldwork also suggests that young people feel a sense of ownership of the WBYI, and regard it as part of the very fabric of West Bowling; evidence further of the way in which the WBYI acts as a community anchor with 'its roots in their communities' (Home Office, 2004a, p 14).

Indeed, the local community regards the WBYI as a useful 'resource' (former user). On one level this relates to the very real resources it houses, for example providing access to computers, photocopiers, etc. However, more importantly,

the WBYI is seen as a community space, and a resource that the community can rely on, particularly parents:

'In the early days it was really appreciated amongst the parents the work that we was doing ... not just developmental work ... like on a Wednesday we used to have a project called the Job Club ... which used to target people who were unemployed or wanted to go into FE [further education], HE [higher education], to actually help them progress, so that had something positive coming out. They also used to come to us to use the phone, use the photocopier, some of the basic stuff ... so they saw us as a community resource that they could use.' (former worker)

As the WBYI is based within the geography of West Bowling, parents have valued seeing what services have been provided for their young people at a local level. Trust is a fundamental aspect of this relationship between the WBYI and the local West Bowling community. The research suggests that the local community trusts that the WBYI will deliver quality interventions, and most importantly, over the years it has developed a good reputation and earned the respect of the local community: 'the community see them as very respectable people, for what they have done and what they have brought to the community' (former user).

Having a good reputation and the trust of a community is highlighted in *Youth Matters* (DfES, 2005) as one of the key challenges that services need to deliver on. Similarly, a recent report by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG, 2007c) has indicated that grassroots organisations that have been successful in engaging young people are those that have the trust of local people as well as service users.

While government reports and policies – for example, *Every Child Matters* (HM Treasury, 2003); *Youth Matters* (DfES, 2005) – may take a more generic view of working with young people, gender matters, and in the case of the WBYI, the relationship between gender, faith and ethnicity is hugely important. The WBYI has established strong networks of trust with the local communities (particularly British Muslim Pakistani communities)

of West Bowling and it is recognised as providing a valuable project working largely with local young men. While there is a need to promote positive engagement between young men and women, the WBYI takes a particular approach to this due to the complex interrelationship between gender, faith and ethnicity within British Muslim Pakistani communities, which are adopted in varying ways by individuals, families and groups (Brah, 1996; Hennink et al, 1999; Alam and Husband, 2006).

'Mixing of young Asians (Muslim, Sikh and Hindu) at college; that affects their work then, like with white and black people, they go to college to learn and they've got their social time after hours and they go to parties. But with Asian people, they go to college – it's their social time ... so they get their social and domestic pleasures at college time and they can't go anywhere because they have to be at home ... especially with the girls, they have to be at home after college hours, so they get their dirty work done in college hours.' (current user)

The WBYI does work with women and has had female staff for particular projects, but rather than engage in mixed gender work, its core work is focused on young men, particularly those who are disengaged and hard to reach. This is because of the need to respect local cultural and religious sensibilities, and maintain the strong networks of trust established over the last 15 years. This is not to suggest that British Muslim Pakistani young men and women are in some way locating a fixed gendered/ethnicised identity, but rather highlights the very real ways in which British Muslim Pakistani young men and women are engaged in creating 'gendered spaces'; directly related to and produced through their being 'Bradfordian Muslims' in the present context (Alam and Husband, 2006, p 11).

At the same time, participants in this project have talked of the need for the WBYI to provide more provision for women in their work. Meeting this need, alongside maintaining the trust and respect of the local Muslim Pakistani community, is a continuing challenge for the WBYI, and something that is continually being 'thought out' in day-to-day project work. The present model offers one method of practice.

Volunteering and participation in community life

Various reports have highlighted the importance of volunteering and participation in community life in fostering active citizenship, civic renewal and more cohesive communities (see, for example, Blunkett, 2003; Home Office, 2004b). Moreover, voluntary activity and 'community involvement are necessary conditions of civil society and democracy' (Crick, 1998, p 10). The role of voluntary sector organisations in encouraging such processes is fundamental (Jochum et al, 2005). The WBYI, past and present, provides evidence of how such participation can be encouraged and fostered through grassroots organisations, which in turn can help foster greater cohesion within communities.

The WBYI has a good record of encouraging young men to get involved in their local community through volunteering (for example as volunteers at the WBYI), partly because it is well respected by the local community. While building a stronger sense of active citizenship and contributing to the development of useful skills, volunteering can also posit young people as 'role models' and provide them with status and respect within their community.

'It's good fun. Also you know your role when you're volunteering, you're helping, you're a role model, people look up to, they know he's there to help.... They're asking "where's this?", "where's that?", "how do I do this?", "what's going on?" ... stuff like that ... it gave us a lot of responsibility.' (former user)

'And you see the kids around you, because, I'm quite fortunate because I have ... extensive range of contacts with all age groups of the kids, because obviously I'm in education, I've gone on, so they come up for advice. Oh "what's happening here?", "what can we do for here?", and even the ones that are not into education. You try I guess to push them.' (former user)

Former WBYI volunteers often maintain ties with the initiative, and these volunteers can be seen to form a social network that continues to support the work of the initiative (especially evident during the social event held as part of this project). Similarly,

this social network extends to many of the former users of the WBYI who maintain contact at a social level and also through the occasional use of its services. This provides further evidence of how the WBYI is embedded within the local West Bowling community and is helping build social capital through supporting the maintenance of local networks, identified as an important feature of the JRF's 'culture makes communities' theme.

Volunteering and participating in community activities with the WBYI is therefore also tied up with young people feeling a sense of belonging to the WBYI:

'So the volunteering bit was, it was just a natural process, being in that environment, hearing, seeing things, so that's what it emerged from ... it seemed like just a logical progression. In a way as well, there was a sense of duty as well, because we were benefiting from the project. Almost anything we wanted, to pop in, it was open. Its like we almost had ownership, we've got a stake in it. Now we can use the printer, the internet, you know, whatever it was, sit down, have a cup of coffee, sit around, chit chat. It was our own space. In them days, how often could people say, "it's our own little space"?' (former user)

This narrative reflects how the WBYI helps young people to develop a sense of social commitment to the wider community of West Bowling that bridges faith boundaries. For young people, the culture of 'WBYI' becomes a part of everyday routines and practices. This focuses on 'community' as an inclusive, area-based categorisation, while not ignoring the diversity within it. This is important in a number of ways, not just in terms of encouraging a sense of active citizenship, but also in relation to developing the skills and capacities of local young people. Indeed, the *Youth Matters Green Paper* (DfES, 2005) further highlights the importance of such participation in community life for the development of young people's skills and the wider community:

Volunteering, being actively involved in a community and taking or being given responsibility in an organisation broadens

horizons, improves confidence and builds skills. That is the case for all of us but especially so for young people. Evidence shows that volunteering can make teenagers more employable by improving skills such as communication and team working. (DfES, 2005, p 21)

Both former and current users have identified how the WBYI helps young people, particularly those (young men) from British Muslim Pakistani communities, to develop a sense of belonging and connection to the local community. The organisation of the WBYI aims to encourage young people to play an active role in project development, which in turn gives young people a sense of ownership. Consequently, the desire to 'put something back' into 'their' initiative was expressed by a number of former and current users:

'Now it's about me, it's about my own capacity. I have my own job. I have my own position, anything I can put back in this project, whether it's networks, whether it's funding.' (former user)

'You can't forget your roots, how you got there, you've got to put something back in.' (former user)

The WBYI aims therefore to enable young people, particularly in this case young men, to establish a strong sense of belonging to the local community, which in turn can encourage a sense of active citizenship, build social capital and celebrate the everyday culture of life in West Bowling.

Government policies aimed at disengaged and disenfranchised Muslim youth, particularly young men, need to recognise that projects such as the WBYI play an important role in encouraging young British Muslim Pakistani men to become actively involved in community life; ultimately building a strong sense of citizenship. This is their home, they are here to stay:

'West Bowling has the potential to be up there with the best, but a lot of people abuse their area. If I could change the area I would ... this area is my life, it is where I've been brought up, my mum and dad have been brought up,

my younger brothers are growing up here, hopefully my kids will grow up here ... it's a really nice community, everyone goes to mosque, you see everyone at mosque, you see everyone at the cricket pitch, it's a really good community, a minority spoil it.... A lot of guys have been helped get off the street by the West Bowling Youth Initiative.' (former user)

The WBYI therefore supports wider participation in community life, seen as part of 'everyday' culture for young people within West Bowling – everyday culture that can encompass faith, cricket, family ties and social networks.

The *Power to the People* (Power Inquiry, 2006) report found that community participation is still prevalent in contemporary British society, despite commonly held assumptions of apathy and the WBYI is one site where such participation occurs at a day-to-day level, for example in gardening projects, community clear-ups or community celebration events. In addition, such activities that do not define 'community' narrowly in terms of faith are important, as they enable young men of British Muslim Pakistani origin to challenge reductionist constructions of their identities that view them as 'Muslim' first and foremost.

The significance of community involvement at the WBYI also blurs the understanding of the organisation as simply a youth group. While not all of the current and former users of the WBYI have been officially engaged in volunteering, many young people do get involved in community work. Such engagement has made a positive impact on young people's lives:

'They [the WBYI] take a chunk of the credit of where I am now ... obviously I've always had an interest in ... studying myself ... that's how the desire was maintained ... the things I do on the side as well ... without these guys I wouldn't be doing a lot of stuff I'm doing now ... around working with kids, helping out with the kids, doing events ... local community events ... without the project, without these guys I wouldn't be the rounded person that I am.' (former user)

Indeed, the research suggests that the WBYI is meeting two of the key reforms suggested in *Youth Matters* (DfES, 2005, p 19) so that young people can achieve the *Every Child Matters* outcomes of engaging more young people in positive activities, empowering them to shape the services they receive and encouraging more young people to volunteer and become involved in their communities.

However, encouraging young people to participate in volunteering is not always straightforward and can be a challenge:

'They think that volunteering is like a swear word ... They don't understand the benefits of volunteering you know in its purest form. They're learning skills and they're giving back the community something and then the communities [are] benefiting from their skills.... Unfortunately we're in a generation that if they give their time they want paying for it....' (WBYI project worker)

Clearly, project workers face difficulties in encouraging young people, particularly young men, to participate in voluntary activities. As the previous examples highlight, allowing young people to develop a sense of ownership of project work and involving them in voluntary activities that they enjoy also helps. Providing young people with an awareness of the advantages of volunteering in terms of skills as well as improving their community also helps to encourage a greater sense of altruism, reflected in former users' narratives.

Volunteering is also encouraged by the WBYI having a prominent role in local social networks. It has a long history of being actively involved with a range of organisations and groups – further evidence of their position as a community anchor. This role is not only one of consultation, but also provides young people with a positive example of belonging to a community and participating in community life: 'They get involved in things' (local practitioner). Through such activities, the WBYI has become embedded within the community and its everyday culture, with a focus on improving the locality and building community ties. Such wide-ranging activities allow the WBYI to become a 'mouthpiece' for the local community. One partner

suggested that the WBYI's consultation capacity could be developed for income generation, thus allowing the WBYI to build more of a social enterprise model:

'Part of their funding regime is reliance on grants, reliance on service provision ... there could be a social enterprise business model where they actually run a service and charge people for that, which might be community consultation or something like that.' (practitioner)

The creation of social enterprise is recognised as an important aspect of challenging social exclusion within the JRF 'culture makes communities' theme and is one area that the WBYI could develop further through future project work. Indeed, the present Labour government recognises the importance of community anchor organisations for encouraging participation in community and neighbourhood life and 'stimulating opportunities, attracting resources and supporting community sector organisation at a neighborhood level' (DCLG, 2007b, p 10).

WBYI: building a sense of community

The research also indicates that the WBYI has helped young men to develop a strong sense of collective identity during their time at the WBYI – a collective identity based on being local young men using the WBYI, rather than one based purely on faith, ethnicity or gender:

'They're a community in itself.' (former user)

'A generation together.' (former user)

'Partners in crime.' (former user)

'Unified, a team.' (former user)

During the transition to adulthood, former users highlighted how the WBYI had provided a safe space for interactions with other young people of a similar age, gender and often shared faith and ethnicity. Older youth workers being the same gender was also identified as important in

the formation of positive relationships. As these narratives suggest, collective spaces where cultural, sports or leisure activities are carried out are extremely important for both present and former users.

The WBYI provides young people with a space for social interaction, which overlaps and connects with other familiar spaces of interaction/service provision within the local area, such as the local mosque and school. This 'everyday' culture of life in West Bowling for young Muslim men, combined with the 'community' tasks they undertake at the WBYI, work together to enable young men to develop a closer tie and sense of belonging to West Bowling. At the same time, the sense of community fostered at the WBYI encourages young people to feel secure in their local community and thus encourages a sense of well-being. The WBYI's role in developing strong social networks, which can be of family, kin, geographical space, faith, etc, also helps young people develop a greater level of trust and social capital (Putnam, 2000).

The 'hub'

A sense of community and belonging is developed further through the office space at the WBYI (named 'the hub'), which provides a forum not just for individuals to gain support, but also for social interactions, everyday activities and building social networks. It is also a space where people can come in to talk about their daily concerns (for example policing) as well as a space for dialogue and debate.

The WBYI operates an open door policy and the hub enables young people from all backgrounds to 'drop in' and gain access to information and support. It also provides a space to come together and socialise, extending and developing their existing social networks: 'The atmosphere ... you can have a little joke and a laugh ... it's a relaxed atmosphere and you see all walks of life come in' (former user).

While this can be challenging at times for project workers trying to manage a heavy workload/administrative tasks, for young people it is invaluable:

'[W]hen I applied for a job, he [project worker] helped me fill in the application form, he was never one of those workers that I had experience of in other organisations, where you go in and make an appointment, you need to do this ... when you're young yeah, you have spare time and you want to fill it ... you make some calls and you say you might as well go down there, but then your mates ring you and you're off. So that kind of flexibility, that [project worker] allows you to pop in and he gives you that time there and then ... there and then he gives you that time, that's good ... I think the main time is that if you go in he's not going to say 'come back in two weeks or come back tomorrow', it's about yeah lets see what we can do now.' (local resident)

Therefore, flexibility is also important when working with young people and the wider community.

The open door policy and the hub is recognised by other partners as being a key strength of the WBYI, not just in terms of developing networks for young people, but also networks with other agencies:

'An important feature of the WBYI office is the open door policy, just open the door and say hello, put the kettle on. I've come in for meetings and you end up staying for two hours and the meeting only took 20 minutes. You end up chatting to everybody, to me that's networking.' (practitioner)

The hub also helps in encouraging bridging across communities, ages and ethnicities. For example, practitioners from various agencies, people involved in the cricket club, community members, new migrants and young people frequently used the hub during the course of the research, creating a dynamic and exciting space for informal interactions across gender, ethnic, age and professional boundaries. Yet there are also limitations and unwritten boundaries at work, relating to the fact that most of the users are British Muslim Pakistani young men. This limits the extent to which young women from the local British Muslim Pakistani community would access this resource:

'You know what it is, I think it's a bit sexist, but I've never seen any women go in there or any young women that's going off the rails. All the time I see ... Asian lads from here... They're a bit, what is it, intimidated, because there's loads of Asian lads.' (former user)

This highlights the importance of project work with partner agencies and in different spaces. The complex interrelationship between gender, faith and ethnicity within contemporary British Muslim Pakistani communities means that in reality the hub can be viewed as an 'Asian male' space. Nevertheless, the drop-in space provides a valuable point for informal everyday interactions between young British Muslim Pakistani young men and people from different backgrounds, and thus contributes to building community cohesion. It also helps strengthen existing social networks and build social capital (both bonding and bridging), by strengthening social ties. Such strong social networks and a strong sense of community can encourage a greater sense of social responsibility (see, for example, Putnam, 2000; Nash and Christee, 2003), while also encouraging involvement in civic duties and altruism (Nash and Christee, 2003). In doing so it supports the suggestions for practical action recommended by the Commission on Integration and Cohesion (COIC, 2007). While many young people who are involved in the WBYI know each other through existing social networks (for example, school and/or mosque), even if this is not the case, or where the level of interactions may be weak, spaces such as the hub and other activities at the WBYI allow for *meaningful* interactions to take place.

Project work, partnerships and social networks

Practitioners (from both the voluntary and statutory sector) spoke highly of the WBYI. As one practitioner suggested, it has a 'never say no attitude'. This is testament to its good reputation and realistic aims: 'They are well thought of in the Bradford voluntary sector because they know what they can do...'. (practitioner). Since its inception, and well before joined-up working was the norm, the WBYI has sought to adopt a multi-agency

approach. Over time, the initiative has developed strong networks and delivered numerous projects through partnership. This has been important for its survival and successful partnership working is seen as one of its key strengths. For example, during the period of this project, informal partnerships with local schools developed into a more formalised partnership agreement working with a local school with young men of British Muslim Pakistani background who are at risk of school exclusion. This partnership work was also put into practice in the youth festival developed through the JRF work at the WBYI.

Partner organisations also regard the WBYI as an extremely valuable vehicle for engaging the communities of West Bowling, for example for community consultation, recruitment in events, raising awareness and communication. This is a reflection of how the WBYI is embedded in the community of West Bowling. For one practitioner, this success relates to the fact that most of the project workers are local young men, who are seen as being well integrated into the local community: 'because all of the lads, most of them, are from the West Bowling community, that's where their strength lies ... they usually know what works and what doesn't' (practitioner).

Maintaining a prominent position in local practitioner networks is also vital for the continuation of grassroots organisations such as the WBYI:

'Networks are different from consortium and alliances [which can be unequal]. Strong networks that are built over years of hard work and on the back of a good reputation, those networks are invaluable, because those networks essentially open new doors, bring in revenue, bring in new projects, bring in stress sometimes as well!' (WBYI staff member)

This is further evidence of how the WBYI can be described as a community anchor organisation that has constructive and effective relationships with partners locally. These bring revenue and benefits, but can also create problems. Organisations can become dependent on each other and it can mean, as is the case with WBYI with their 'never say no

attitude', that they can become thinly spread and stretched.

The WBYI: building community cohesion

From the start, and well before discourses of community cohesion were in fashion, the WBYI has sought to play an important role in bringing people together from different backgrounds (see Worley, 2005). Early in its history, the aim was to create opportunities for young people and to help widen their perspectives:

'[In the early days] ... 3,000 young people were piling in there a month ... and there were Indians coming in, doing their thing, there were Sikhs coming in ... Yorkshire County Cricket were coming in ... Bradford City Football Club were coming in, then they were getting free tickets to go and watch Bradford City. They didn't have any of these chances before, ever....' (former worker)

The above list should also include a visit by Prince Charles, which many of the former users remember as a highly significant event: 'suit boot' (former user, referring to the first time they had worn a suit). The process of bridging social networks and mixing people from different ethnicities, faiths and ages in shared spaces began early in the life of WBYI: 'we've become more approachable, we've become more welcoming ... we've understood people, their backgrounds, their cultures, no matter what religion they are, we've understood them, we've respected them ... it's coming from here....' (former user).

From its early days, the WBYI had a strong emphasis on inclusion, and this continues today. Therefore, even though the main client group now is young men of British Muslim Pakistani origin, this is not exclusive. However, because many of the users are from one faith community, targeted effort is made to provide a platform for interactions. Furthermore, young people from various different backgrounds continue to participate in a range of its activities (a key example is the skateboard park, funded by Barclays Bank). Similarly, the WBYI's strong ties with the BOLCC brings together individuals from different ages and ethnicities.

In the context of cricket, the shared platform is the love of the sport, rather than differences of background. The WBYI has played a pivotal role in the regeneration of the cricket club, transforming the site into a community resource while maintaining its centrality as a competitive cricket club. The club has a long history and therefore such social interactions allow for memories of the past to be made available to the new generation. While maintaining a separate identity, the cricket club is now a key part of the WBYI:

'The sports arm of the WBYI is the cricket club, [name], [name], [name], these old fellas run the cricket club. So they've got a relationship with our kids. So the kids have got us and they've got them, they're a part of the community. They come in and out.... All this nonsense about cohesion, within our community we've got white old pensioners who are comfortable with our kids in the community and life goes on. And sometimes to me, policy makers, and people in council chambers, offices, they're trying to force things to happen, like what's already going on. For me, that's like, hang on, why keep saying it! ... and they're talking about parallel lives, what Cantle said, what Ouseley said ... I keep saying there's a lot of good work going on in our communities with kids from all over ... yeah we've got a cricket club in the middle of community, but we've come to realise if it wasn't there this community would suffer.' (WBYI project worker)

Central to this is the way in which organisations such as the WBYI can play an important role in encouraging community cohesion through everyday activities. As the WBYI project worker states in the above narrative, people in the local area of West Bowling are busy getting on with their lives and dealing with diversity through informal interactions such as those fostered through the local cricket club and partnership work with organisations such as the McMillan Adventure Playground Association (MAPA), enabling 'getting along' and 'getting by' (see also Amin, 2005; Worley, 2006).

The WBYI and project work with MAPA Community Centre, West Bowling

As one of the main youth centres in BD5, MAPA has a long history of working in partnership with the WBYI on collaborative projects and funding bids, particularly around building community cohesion (for example 'Positive Citizenship in Multi-Cultural Communities' in 2000). This partnership has developed over time and through mutual trust.

Established in 1972, MAPA is a voluntary sector organisation that provides recreational, leisure and educational provision to young people and adults in Bradford. MAPA was set up by local residents to cater for the needs of young people, mainly from the African Caribbean community. Since then, MAPA has developed to meet the changing needs of the local community. It caters for a multicultural group of users, including new migrants from Central and Eastern Europe.

MAPA hosts a number of events to promote and celebrate the cultural heritage of the local community (Unity Day and People's Day) as well as providing educational and employment support (for example, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes, IT). It also has a strong arts focus and provides access to dance classes and a music studio. Bradford Foyer is located next door and in partnership provides multi-media facilities.

Developing understanding and awareness among young people is a central aim of the WBYI. Throughout the fieldwork, participants recollected various projects that have tried to encourage young people from different groups to mix, and these were seen as important in developing their understanding and awareness.

'I had youth workers, Asian youth workers, black youth workers ... that used to say "[name] you can go down this road or you can go down that road"... I listened to the right people ... I got a lot of guidance ... other mates, half of them are dead, the others are on heroin or they're in prison ... I listened, I got guidance ... there were two main youth clubs in West Bowling. There were the youth initiative and there was a place called MAPA ... youth initiative got a lot of the Asian kids and MAPA got a lot of the Afro-Caribbeans and maybe a little bit more of the white kids with Afro-Caribbean. They've both done well. They both worked in partnership. They all knew each other and they've done stuff like residentials where they did joint things, mingled ... it's like breaking barriers down.' (former user)

'My incentive was my reward and my incentive was my first exchange away in Germany. Which [WBYI staff] said "I want you to go" ... I had to go down there, introduce myself to the German group, tell them who I were, then I took them and I had to introduce them to our group ... you know, that's what we're all about, breaking that barrier down and I did that!' (former user)

Many of the former and current users talked enthusiastically about their experiences of travelling abroad with the WBYI. Breaking down barriers between young people was a key feature of their comments. Opportunities to travel were often presented as rewards for good work, volunteering and skills development. Travelling abroad also brought with it new opportunities and experiences: 'Getting to meet new people, getting new opportunities ... it's where we live as well ... it's like a tiny bit of the light coming through at the end of the tunnel ... there's something else outside West Bowling' (former user).

These experiences have also helped strengthen relationships between the young people using the centre, as team building is an important feature of such residential and outward-bound activities. More recently, WBYI partnership work with 'Bigger Picture' (an anti-racist, intercultural project) has brought workers and young people together from Bulgaria, Hungary, Ireland and Malta. In

this context, young men from the WBYI become representative of England, not just West Bowling and the British Pakistani/Muslim community:

'We did a few workshops about ourselves ... being British ... so we were basically opening doors to how people live in the world ... beat some stereotypes.' (current user)

'It's about race, religion, and all that ... but when you're actually there, you don't take notice of that, you take notice of getting to know the people.' (current user)

'[T]he people there ... automatically think, young white English people, instead they met two Pakis and a black guy ... they met us and they were like shocked! ... they were just asking questions and stuff ... they're curious aren't they? About Muslims?' (current user)

'[P]lus when we went to Auschwitz and that, I learnt a lot from there. Plus they've made it into a bit of a museum, but you could still feel it, what people went through....' (current user)

'... like the other group that took up fasting for a day. So they were experiencing what we were experiencing.' (current user)

'We learnt a lot about Polish culture.' (current user)

In the current social context, with increasing diversity through new migration, and rising Islamophobia, developing an awareness and understanding of other cultures, faiths and so on through informal interaction is seen as vital. These opportunities also help develop young people's wider skills, yet they are also part of a wider more intensive programme of one-to-one support.

As previously mentioned, WBYI project workers share the same faith background as most of the young people accessing the WBYI and this is regarded by young people positively. Indeed, faith is an important part of everyday life for many, although not all, of the young people using the WBYI:

'Religion is really important to me, it's important that I follow it. It's played a big part in my life. Plus we've been brought up to follow it, so it's important that I should follow it, it's my own belief ... we're worshipping Allah, we read namaz, we go to mosque, we take time to worship Allah, it takes a big time in our lives ... we don't want to displease Allah ... it's important what we do and how we act.' (current user)

'[I]f I'm a Muslim, I'm probably more likely to get on with other Muslims. It's more likely that I choose to be mates with them. To think about it, if they were Christian, they probably think about you being a Muslim because in Islam that say that we're all Muslim brothers and sisters, so trying to make friends with a Muslim person would be much easier, it is in the religion and we know that we should be brothers and sisters....' (current user)

'[W]ith me I've got loads of multicoloured friends ... it don't matter what religion you are, it's what sort of person you are, even if a person was a good Muslim, if he was a bad person I would not get on with him, because he was a bad person. I can't get on with some Muslims that drink and stuff so, basically for me ... it's the sort of person he is and it don't matter if they're Christian, Muslim or whatever.' (current user)

For other young people, faith can be less significant, but what is important for the WBYI is that it maintains the right balance and develops strategies to deal with individuals whether or not they have strong religious identifications.

Building awareness: the role of project workers

Project workers at the WBYI also have a key role in raising the awareness of young people:

'[T]here was a war going on then in Bosnia and I remember saying at the time, the Serbs that were being bombed on, they deserved everything they got. They were trying to wipe out the Muslims, so they deserve it. I remember saying "I don't frankly care if all Serbs were wiped out". And I was quite hardcore about

that ... but what was brought to my attention by [a WBYI project worker] that, could it not be the case that there are a lot of innocent people on the Serb side who have no intent on harming Muslims, it's just that they've got dragged into it? From having that sort of racist attitude of "Serbs are this" ... the sorts of conversations I had with one of the workers sort of brought it to light that, that's not necessarily the case at all. It made me think. It actually planted a seed.' (former user)

The WBYI project workers are in a key position to influence the opinions of young people, partly due to the respect that they hold within the West Bowling community. Working within the context of prejudiced attitudes around gender roles and towards other faiths and communities is an ongoing challenge for the WBYI. Yet, the approach adopted by the WBYI is useful and can be replicated in other settings. Central to its work is the belief that particular groups, such as young men of British Muslim Pakistani background (the main user group of the WBYI) should be worked with prior to any attempt to bridge with other groups. The WBYI has 15 years' experience of working with young men of British Muslim Pakistani backgrounds and therefore can apply its skills and knowledge to help challenge prejudicial attitudes before they are placed on any shared platform. The evidence collected through this project indicates that ideally this work needs to be ongoing, consistent and not simply 'one-offs'. This sustained effort with young people over a long period of time allows for positive relationships to develop:

'They're good, they're not, get to know you once and don't talk to you again ... they always keep in contact.' (former user)

'... final year at primary school, first year at upper school and staying with them. That's the bit I like about the initiative, I don't see that in other agencies in Bradford.' (practitioner)

West Bowling has a mix of different ethnicities, yet social interactions are not always mixed. Project work may help develop an awareness of other faiths and cultures, but the role of the project

worker is crucial in sustaining and encouraging future interactions. One member of the WBYI team described how a ‘tough love’ approach was effective in engaging the user group; an approach that had been developed through 15 years’ experience. Former users also talked about how the WBYI adopted a tough stance with them; for example, being told that they were going away on a trip (rather than being asked) or being ‘kicked up the arse’ (former user). This method is about being critical and encouraging self-reflection, while at the same time being supportive or ‘massaging egos’; helping others to help themselves. Many viewed this as the role of an older brother, or being parental:

‘They come across as very good parents, because of that discipline with young people. They might ban them from the office or keep them off trips.... But explain to them why that’s happened ... it’s only for a short amount of time ... like with a child you might send them to their bedroom. Then they bring them back in, they don’t give up on them.’ (practitioner)

The use of discipline in this way, or ‘tough love’, has spanned the life of the initiative. As one former project worker described:

‘Each individual was given a job to do and something that they could have ownership of and develop. Then they get the buzz feeling that they have done something, and it was always the case ‘listen, learn and do’. And it was like, can you do something, do it, don’t say no you can’t, because you’re gonna carry on through your life and say you can’t and you’ll destroy yourself. You’ll destroy your future family as well. There was a lot of that push going on and those that responded have done extremely well and those that haven’t, they’re still in it.’ (former user)

This approach is also about giving young people, particularly young men, the freedom to express themselves as well as placing boundaries on what they are allowed to do. When comparing differences between their experiences of school (while being a space where activities are not influenced by religious and cultural practices) and

the WBYI, current users talked about the WBYI as providing the space to ‘chill out’, and not be judged or ‘treated as a special case’ (current user). Yet at the same time, young people are aware that they have to get things done and behave: ‘[WBYI project worker] is the main man’ (current user). Taking this approach is one way in which a respectful relationship can develop between young people and the WBYI project. This sense of respect is seen as one reason why the WBYI has continued to be successful in making a difference.

‘As a person I respect [staff member] ... and you have to earn that respect, you don’t just get it like that, I think respect is what he’s earned ... If they want any help, for example why I am doing this interview for you for, I don’t know you from Adam ... the thing is, the only reason I’m doing this is for [project worker] ... he’s asked me to do summert.’ (former user)

‘You’re treated like an adult, equally.’ (current user)

‘One skill I’ve learnt from the initiative was if you take time to explain why you was doing something, the way you was doing it. They gave you respect.’ (practitioner)

Positive role models and local heroes

One of the significant findings of this research has been the importance that young men, both former and current users, gave to the project workers at the WBYI. Throughout, WBYI workers have been characterised by young men as being both positive role models and mentors. They become ‘significant others’ who young people identify with and whose actions, ideas and perspectives are often adopted and imitated. The fact that many of the people working at the WBYI already hold a level of respect and trust within the local West Bowling community is significant in enabling this.

‘[T]hen I became trusting of them, yeah actually they have my interest. They tell me yeah, “do this, you can do this”. So that’s where in the early stages when I started to see them as mentors, because they did those things for

me. They opened the project up to me, printing at no cost. In my eyes they were trustworthy. They were credible. They walk the talk so to speak. They didn't just use words to inspire me, like "get an education". They actually sacrificed bits of their time, their money and stuff. That's when I started seeing them as mentors. As time went on they become mentors in other ways....' (former user)

'[T]hat picture with [the WBYI staff] ... you can see his six pack ... he is like an older brother....' (current user)

'Support, somebody to talk to, a bit of guidance ... obviously your parents are the main support ... but ... people that have been there, done it and explained it ... friendship, activities, all this to focus on, someone to tell you what's good and what's bad ... a career path, all that guidance ... it sort of guides you.' (former user)

While this may not always be the case, there is clear evidence from the narratives that for many, the WBYI has acted as positive role models/mentors. This has been consistent for nearly two decades at the WBYI. Through personal reflection, participants described what the individual workers brought to their lives, the local area and WBYI:

'He used to give me little jobs to do, a bit of this, a bit of that, and that basically got me keen.' (former user)

'The way they were had a big bearing on me ... one was an intellectual, very academic person, so full of facts and knowledge, so confident ... always massaging our ego ... we wanted a piece of that! ... wanted to learn more! ... just inspired us ... the other, sort of a very practical person, a click of finger would be able to get us in the minibus and take us off somewhere ... that spontaneity ... the two complemented each other.' (former user)

'[T]hat's the thing ... you feel you want to do something good, because of his [WBYI worker] attitude towards people and work ... other people say "forget it, four o'clock, lets

go home", he stays longer, even if he's got other commitments ... if he like tells you that he'll help you, he'll help you....' (former user)

'[WBYI staff member] [is] a wicked person! ... he puts his heart and soul into the community ... community is first and foremost ... without those guys I wouldn't be where I am now....' (former user)

'[B]ut you know [WBYI staff] and them lot, all these lot, helped me get into college ... once I left school I didn't have anything ... or I did have my GCSEs ... but I'm not one of these people that likes reading and writing and stuff ... getting a placement ... he [WBYI worker] helped me a lot, nobody would have done that much for me....' (former user)

The WBYI has earned the respect of both current and former users. Staff members are seen as hard workers, as individuals committed to the local community and the young people, which is important for project work designed to contribute to community cohesion and widening young people's perspectives. The level of commitment by the project workers has been commended by many of those who participated in this research, and is regarded as encouraging young people to become more committed to community life themselves and even pursue careers in youth work or sports coaching.

There are a number of points of shared identification and commonality between young people using the WBYI and the WBYI staff team. These factors also appear to help in building a positive relationship between young people and the youth workers. Shared faith, ethnicity and gender have been identified by some young people as important, but another (and in some way related) aspect is that many of the young people are already familiar with the WBYI team as they may have been involved with the workers through other groups such as the cricket club, or via older brothers, cousins etc. In this respect, the WBYI is part of the everyday culture of life for young British Muslim Pakistani men in West Bowling.

'We used to be small [young] and we used to know about the sports centre ... because we knew [staff member] and there was another lad working here [staff member] ... plus they're from the area innit, ... we know these lot from the cricket club, so that's how we found out about this place, we just used to be around and we just used to come in ... [when we were] about seven or eight.' (former user)

As the above comment highlights, the fact that many of the project workers are from the local area of West Bowling is important:

'[T]hey've always been the community people... Take, for example, [project worker], he works like anyone else, but he's approachable any time you want to because he's in the area ... so we've always had people that are committed and understand what they are doing ... it's not for the big pay packet, it's for the community.' (former user)

'Everyone that works here are local, they're well known anyway ... families, we know each other ... that connection was always there...' (former user)

For others, a shared ethnic, cultural and gender identity also contributes to a sense of identification. This is not to deny the complexity of identities, indeed, it would be wrong to assume that shared points of identification such as faith and culture will automatically occur between 'Muslim men' for example. Differences of caste, geographical area, class, doctrine of faith (Shiite/Sunni) and generation are all important factors (see also Alam and Husband, 2006). Further complexities relate to individual subjectivities, in terms of the significance of faith, culture, ethnicity and family in their everyday lives. Caution is also needed in order to avoid ethnic absolutism, as the primacy of ethnicity or faith cannot be automatically assumed (Gunaratnam, 2003). Similarly, this is not to suggest that positive relationships between young people and WBYI project workers from different gender/ethnic backgrounds is problematic. Indeed, previous workers have been white, and there have also been women project workers. However, at the same

time, many of the young people value that project workers may have faced similar experiences and as a result are viewed as non-judgemental: 'We're on the same level, we're on the same playing field' (former user).

The *Reach* Report (DCLG, 2007c) has highlighted the need for national schemes that set up mentoring for young back men to provide them with positive, local role models. The WBYI can be seen as doing this informally for young men of British Muslim Pakistani backgrounds by having volunteers and project workers acting as positive role models. Indeed, those voluntary and community groups that have had a made a difference to the lives of young black men and boys are grassroots organisations that are embedded in the local communities. Such groups have the trust of the local community and most importantly the young people themselves, which also helps groups to tailor services (DCLG, 2007c). Tailored service provision is particularly necessary to address the complexities of contemporary life for young British Muslim Pakistani men in West Bowling as they are engaged in the day-to-day negotiation of their identities.

Developing key skills to challenge social exclusion

Research evidence suggests the realities of social exclusion that face young men of British Muslim Pakistani background. For example, Pakistani and Bangladeshi pupils are more likely than other groups to live in households where the head of household has never worked or is long-term unemployed. Indeed, unemployment rates for Pakistani men are around twice the rates for white British men (National Statistics, 2004). For those who are employed, the earnings of Pakistani men are significantly less than for the white population (ESRC, 2007). There are also important differences within the Pakistani population, with evidence indicating that the proportion of Kashmiri and Mirpuri Pakistani pupils achieving five or more A*-C grades at GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education) level in 2005 was less than the average for all pupils of Pakistani background and less than the average for pupils overall (DfES, 2006, p 20). Yet, research also suggests that young people of Pakistani background are more likely to have high

educational aspirations than pupils of white British backgrounds (Strand, 2007).

Faced with these facts, early in the life of the WBYI, projects like job shop were created to support young people in developing key skills to challenge social exclusion and divert young people away from offending. Yet, former users and practitioners have also observed that in more recent years, the WBYI has increasingly focused attention on developing the skills of local young people, particularly through partnership work with other agencies (for example Connexions). This has resulted in more project work centred around education and employment needs, often at a practical level: 'They recognise the important priorities. It's all around you, your education, employment, helping them find a job, applications, references, writing a CV, doing an application form' (practitioner).

As the above partner points out, the employment and education focus of the WBYI is 'all around you'. Individuals visit the hub on a daily basis to gain information and support relating to employment, for example to update their CVs or ask for help in completing application forms. Those seeking such support span different ages and ethnicities, which has led the WBYI to redefine its mission statement and incorporate the mid-twenties age range in its employment and skills work.

Personal development

Personal development is the linchpin of the WBYI approach and has been an ongoing element of its work. This process involves working with individuals around their needs and is present in many aspects of the project. Through this focus on personal development, WBYI project workers go beyond so-called 'hard' targets (that is, gaining employment, qualifications or registering on a college course) by focusing on 'soft' targets such as working on skills such as confidence, communication and attitude. This is made possible through the development of a positive and sustained relationship with the young people. As the following former user points out: 'At the start it's about confidence, capacity building ... then it gets on to applying for jobs ... interviews ... I think all they way they've had some input ... in me

getting a job ... that's fair to say ... *I think they're the RAC of finding jobs....*'

The development of skills such as confidence and self-esteem is gained through project work and everyday social interactions. For example, communication skills and confidence may be encouraged through public speaking, which might then be rewarded with a trip away or a chance to play sport. Similarly, opportunities are given to talk to people from different backgrounds or participate in mock interviews. Participants have also suggested that young people are given constructive comments by WBYI project workers to improve themselves and their life chances. Team building opportunities through outward-bound trips, residential trips, everyday project work such as a visit by young people from the US developed as part of this project, and sports, also play a part in building confidence. The project also assigns particular tasks and responsibilities to young people, such as setting up a disco or snooker competition, in an effort to increase their skills and capacities. There are therefore a variety of ways in which the WBYI supports young people in developing their skills and opportunities, meeting both 'hard' and 'soft' targets:

'They give you that confidence to do what you couldn't do before. Like I did that exhibition, I wasn't talking to no one ... then I started talking ... then I was talking to loads of people!' (current user)

'Say for instance you need a CV, then these guys will help you out.' (current user)

'Since I was about 15 ... first of all playing a bit of football, then doing a bit of voluntary work ... then going on with some trips with them ... I was getting enriched by the West Bowling Youth initiative ... they capacity builded me.... What it is, they helped me achieve basic skills, in confidence building, in team building ... you obviously develop them anyway, but with the West Bowling Youth Initiative they develop it more ... life skills ... they got me involved ... they helped raise my aspirations.' (former user)

'In those days, if somebody said what does leadership, organisation or communication, navigation or orientation mean, none of that meant anything to a young person like myself in those days. They were always emphasising how to build those skills as well ... it was reflected in the whole sort of approach. That's where the outward bounds, day trips, the camping, walks, you know whatever we did, was sort of building us as ... individuals ... even the sort of stuff that didn't mean anything to us then ... now when we reflect back, they meant everything, it developed me as a person. It gave me everything I needed, confidence ... it gave me ability to talk ... to approach people ... you know, it helped us grow.' (former user)

These narratives highlight some of the ways in which the WBYI has met young people's diverse needs in relation to skills for education and work. In project work, skills such as team work and leadership are further encouraged. The strong social networks fostered by the WBYI also results in project workers being able to signpost, guide and refer young people to relevant people and places within the local area.

Clearly, shared faith, ethnicity, gender and locality have played a part in allowing young men to identify with project workers. Several practitioners have identified the WBYI as having particularly strong skills in working with young men at high risk of offending and social exclusion. These young men receive support around issues of discipline, attitude and anger management. These specialist skills have been recognised and formalised recently through partnership work between the WBYI and local schools. In this work, the WBYI has acted as mediators between parents and school staff, provided support for young people around anger management and taken small groups of young men out of school for regular alternative education sessions. As well as helping to support vulnerable young people, in doing these activities, the WBYI contributes towards strengthening the relationship between schools and the local community. This is important. One of the recommendations made by the *Reach* report (DCLG, 2007c) for improving opportunities for young black men is the need for schools to have closer ties with African Caribbean

parents and overcome the barriers and perceptions that have historically weakened relationships. The same is true for young men of British Muslim Pakistani background. Over the 15 years it has been running, the WBYI has developed the necessary specialist skills for working with young people at risk of offending. Yet at the same time, the organisation also successfully supports less vulnerable young people, for example those with good educational achievements and aspirations to become youth workers, teachers and other professional occupations. The project also seeks to support young men who are underachieving at school and require some vocational support:

'One-to-one work with those ... often it is adolescent problems, often it's to do with behaviour. Not finding direction, not sure what they want to do, might not be academic achievers ... but looking at vocational areas of work and courses and I think in that respect I think this organisation has been brilliant.' (practitioner)

'Because you get very young people coming in who are just starting off at secondary school where teachers or support staff are finding some of them are pushing the boundaries too far. So they contact the initiative and try to get something in place for an individual young man, that's more than the traditional secondary school education.' (practitioner)

Benny's story – the WBYI now by Kamran Siddique (WBYI)

Background

Benny was attending a local school and studying for his GCSEs. His overall educational expectations were low, having felt that he did not have the capability to pass his GCSEs and continue onto Sixth Form. Benny's behaviour was also a concern at school and his family had apprehensions about his peer group.

WBYI project intervention

Benny started with the WBYI through regular drop-in sessions and usually came with friends. Initially he spoke about feeling intimidated by the presence of older young men at the project. However, during the Summer Sports Programme held at the WBYI, Benny volunteered in sessions by assisting the sports coach and this is where his relationship with the WBYI was formed and developed. Benny became involved in Study Support sessions at the WBYI in which he established a good relationship with a college placement student and the external tutor. This was a key factor in his regular attendance at the sessions. Over time, Benny began to build his aspirations, with a renewed hope regarding his education and possible achievements. He

continued his volunteering with the WBYI through the BMX sessions that took place at Parkside Park. As part of the JRF project at the WBYI, Benny also got involved in the Mobile Memories photography project, exploring issues of identity and life in West Bowling. Benny then had the opportunity to present his photographic images in an exhibition at Cartwright Hall, which received a vast amount of interest from the general public. In addition to these activities, Benny also regularly visited the 'hub'. During these drop-in visits, he would bring in part-time job application forms and work on his CV. Benny also participated in a multilateral youth exchange in Ireland. These experiences have helped to develop Benny's understanding of different communities, build his confidence and interest in cultural activities.

Outcomes

Benny has developed considerably during his time at the WBYI and shows continued progression in his personal development. He is now studying for A levels at the local Sixth Form and doing well. Benny has also worked hard looking for part-time work to support him while he is studying. After completing a number of job application forms and his CV at the project, he is now working part time at a local hotel.

Answers
Handwritten notes on a separate sheet of paper.



NA
BAD
FOODGRILL
FRIENDS
RELIGION
FOOD - M...
RELIGION - PICTURE of COIN
OR BOYS
- TAKING A PICTURE
BALL -
FRIENDS -
FOOD -

4 Developing project work at the WBYI

Background to JRF project work at the WBYI

Throughout this project we have been concerned with an exploration of the day-to-day project work of the WBYI, in terms of its everyday role in the day-to-day culture and community life of West Bowling. The project work element funded by the JRF has engaged more explicitly with the JRF themes of 'faith and cohesion in communities' and 'culture makes communities'. The project work was facilitated by Kamran Siddique, employed as a project support worker at the WBYI, working alongside the research fellow and the wider WBYI project team. This resulted in a series of projects relating to both of the JRF themes (details listed below), yet JRF funding has also supported the WBYI in its wider generic work with the local communities of West Bowling, particularly with 'at-risk' young people from disadvantaged communities. Taken together, this phase of the WBYI's work has been about further developing project work that brings people together from different perspectives, communities and backgrounds in the everyday culture and community life of West Bowling.

This project work has highlighted the complexities of negotiating identity, community and belonging from the perspectives of the young people and their everyday lives; for example in relation to issues of faith and cohesion. Their stories and accounts reveal the importance of the WBYI in facilitating activities that both develop their skills and capacities, while also promoting engagement and interaction between different communities. The new project work also points to the value of using creative methods and cultural pursuits (photography in particular) to support these aims.

The participants' stories drawn from WBYI activities convey the realities of life in inner-city Bradford today and over the past 15 years, highlighting both continuity and change. Moreover,

they point to the complex nature of identities, communities and ways of belonging, particularly in relation to issues of faith, ethnicity and gender in the lives of young people. Photographs from both 'then and now' provide a rich and detailed insight into the lives of young people from West Bowling and help to illustrate the impact of the WBYI. Limitations of space place a restriction on the extent to which these individual stories can be told in this report. On the one hand, the stories told through photographs and narrative accounts throughout this research portray the realities of deprivation and social exclusion, with issues such as crime, territorialism, conflicts and family breakdown being exposed. Yet, on the other hand, another story also emerges, which reveals a strong sense of belonging and stability, and a sense of confidence and pride in themselves and their locality, reflected through images and narratives of family, cricket, local shops and places, faith, friendships and social networks. At the same time, despite widespread national concern around issues of community cohesion, the stories told through the WBYI reveal an alternative story. While the changing nature of local communities and issues of diversity do present challenges, these are often negotiated as a normal part of everyday life. Focusing on what works and what matters within a small organisation has allowed us to make connections between the everyday culture of life for young people in West Bowling with wider issues and concerns relating to community, culture, faith, ethnicity and gender.

Supporting everyday project work at the WBYI

'I want a good decent job, getting decent money ... you know, personally, you know, what I want to be, even though I don't know that much about it, one of those, what do you call it? when you go to a new building and you check it out, what's it called?...

You make sure it's all ok ... quantity surveyor, I want to be that.' (current user)

As well as funding new project work, the JRF has supported wider aspects of everyday work at the WBYI as it supports the young people and communities of West Bowling. As the narratives in the previous chapters have illustrated, the WBYI is not simply a youth organisation, rather it has a multiple identity that has to adapt to meet the changing needs of the young people and local communities. This means that the WBYI, 'then' and 'now', has been involved in supporting numerous aspects of community life in order to engage with local young people. As a result, WBYI project workers and volunteers are involved with other local organisations and community activities, for example, cricket coaching and attending community forums. As one practitioner stated about the breadth of the WBYI's current work: 'they're all things to all men....'.

Through JRF support, the WBYI team has been able to increase these activities and target immediate concerns that have arisen within the local communities, for example relating to conflicts among groups of young people. Such project intervention has followed the WBYI's existing model of engagement. While the WBYI works mainly with British Muslim Pakistani young men from West Bowling, these wider activities have involved people from different backgrounds. Supporting wider project work has also enabled the research aspect of this project to document 'what works' as well as documenting contemporary day-to-day issues affecting young men living in a particular social context.

Wider project work and project activities supported by the JRF

Challenging territorialism and conflict

The wider project work supported by the JRF illustrates the wide range of issues facing young British Muslim Pakistani men in the current context of West Bowling, as well as highlighting the project work delivered by the WBYI in its day-to-day activities, which can be drawn on by other projects.

As established throughout this report, the establishment of trust and respect is a key aspect

of the WBYI's work with local young people and local communities. It was precisely these existing relationships that enabled young people to approach the WBYI when tensions arose between groups of young people from different areas in Bradford during the course of this project:

'They go to the same school [name of the school] ... you've got the same identities, they're all Pakistanis [but] obviously coming from BD7 and coming from BD5, it's like gangster, a gangster phase there ... "you listen to us or you're against us", the only way to make up is over a fight ... I heard there was a fight taking place just near my house and my little brother was involved ... they were all Muslim as well, so I thought, being from the same religion they should have some understanding. They all go to the same mosque!' (community member)

This revealing narrative highlights the complex relationship between place, ethnicity, faith and gender in the lives of young British Muslim Pakistani men living in Bradford. In this context, place matters, problematising any simplistic notion of the primacy of shared faith/ethnicity. Indeed, a strong identification with place can lead to tension and rivalry between young men from different neighbourhoods. At times, these tensions have escalated into violent disturbances. The WBYI, in partnership with local schools, young people, community members and the police, has played an important role in resolving such conflicts through its project work, facilitated by the existing positive relationships established with local young people and its particular youth work approach. It is also evident that despite shared faith-based identities, geographical space can become the basis for demarcating boundaries of belonging. Project work that brings young people from different backgrounds together is one way of seeking to challenge this, for example as developed through a visit by young people from the US as part of this project.

New migrants

As well as concerns relating to young people and territorialism, local residents have also suggested that there are tensions between different

ethnic groups in the area, particularly between 'indigenous' communities (British Muslim Pakistani) and new migrants:

'We've got a lot of different cultures coming in now, like we've got Polish, Kosovan people coming in, it's like making sure our young people don't clash. Try to get them to build up a relationship and stuff, try to get them to know each other ... like if a new set of lads come into the youth club ... you don't want people taking over ... like the local lads might come in and say "how come they've just come in and taken over?"' (local resident)

'I don't even understand what they've [new migrants] been through and you get a lot of people in our area that think they're gangsters and will kick off and pull a gun out....' (local resident)

Through JRF support, project workers at the WBYI have been engaged in helping to diffuse such tensions through project work designed to develop positive interactions between different communities. One aspect of this relates to getting young people to work as volunteers at BOLCC, as well as WBYI project workers providing intensive one-to-one support with individuals. Young people at the WBYI have also been active in community celebration events (as discussed later in this chapter).

Encouraging interaction and participation in cultural activities and sports

From its inception, the WBYI has been engaged in delivering projects that would now fall under the discourse of community cohesion. The WBYI project work has brought together young people from different areas to encourage interaction between different groups. Work with young men may be concentrated at the Parkside Road office (the hub), but the WBYI works with a range of different partners on various projects and more recently project work has taken place at BOLCC.

BOLCC was formed in 1863 by local cricket players. During the 1920s and 1930s, BOLCC was very successful and attracted huge crowds (Bradford Cricket League, 2008). In the post-

war period, the club played an important role in encouraging participation from the-then new migrant communities from Pakistan and India. For many of the older residents of the community, the shared passion for cricket became a basis for a sense of collective identification and shared cultural practice, something that the WBYI and BOLCC continue to emphasise today. However, during the 1980s, the social club membership began to decline and by the end of the 1990s the social club had closed down, leaving a derelict building. Cricket continued with growing popularity among the local Muslim Pakistani community and Trident (along with other sources) provided funds to help redevelop the club building. Young people have been actively engaged in the restoration of the club through volunteering, spearheaded by the WBYI:

'[On being involved with the cricket club] You enjoy it first of all, it keeps you off the streets, keeps you away from the bad people. It's just enjoyable.' (current user)

Now, the former social club building also functions as a community space and is used extensively by the WBYI for project work. It is in this context that the building has played an important role in bringing different elements of the West Bowling community together, as a non-religious space for community use. For example, recent community use has included a table-top sale, a new migrant community day and a Neighbourhood Forum community event. BOLCC is also recognised for its partnership work with Bradford council, Sports Action Zone, West Yorkshire Police and local schools. The relationship between the WBYI and BOLCC further helps the WBYI to encourage a positive sense of belonging to West Bowling, as young people are able to recognise the strong cultural heritage of BOLCC within Bradford. This shared cultural heritage crosses faith/ethnic boundaries, and with the newly restored community space, bodes well for building 'shared futures' (COIC, 2007) too. In this way, celebrating the cultural heritage of West Bowling helps 'make communities'.

Our Shared Future (COIC, 2007) also highlighted the need for practical action to encourage community cohesion through 'spheres of interaction' (p 12) including 'sports, culture and

leisure' (p 110) and 'the need for shared public space and community premises' (p 12). The WBYI's project work at BOLCC fulfils both of these agendas. Project work at BOLCC also allows for more flexibility and mixed gender work with women. As a large community space, BOLCC offers more opportunities to engage with activities beyond cricket. It is a secular setting, which provides an alternative cultural space for young British Muslim Pakistani men to engage in positive encounters with people from other faiths, ethnic groups and ages. The regeneration of BOLCC has also helped to celebrate the long history of cricket in the area; providing a space for cultural pursuits to help support personal transformations and stronger communities.

Former users' social event

As part of the JRF project work at the WBYI, a social event for former users was held at a community space linked to the WBYI. This had several purposes. First, it aimed to capture the ways in which the WBYI had impacted on the lives of young people in West Bowling over the past 15 years, in order to help identify issues of best practice and the changing nature of life for young people in West Bowling. Second, it was designed as a celebration of the WBYI's past 15 years, providing a forum for both former and current users and former and current project workers, alongside other partners and community members. Third, through bringing people together in such a way, the event was also about celebrating the culture of the WBYI; both now and in the past, providing a space for sharing memories, experiences and traditions. As part of the JRF 'culture makes communities' theme, photographic images were used to facilitate the retrieval of memories and act as a focal point for the celebration of WBYI histories. A short film using photographic images and music was also played at the event to help structure dialogue between the different generations of users (see also Hurworth, 2003).

The event attracted in excess of 30 participants, who shared food, memories, new ideas and dialogue. Memories were evoked through photographs of WBYI project work, displayed on tables to encourage former users to informally recollect their time at the WBYI. Focus groups with

former users (14 participants) also took place in order to capture this more formally. Their narratives revealed the importance of the WBYI in their lives and recollections of growing up in West Bowling:

'The initiative's been a big experience, big part of my life.' (former user)

'Best friends.' (former user)

'Made networks through WBYI.' (former user)

'Learned to talk to women (I was very insular),' (former user)

'Confidence to talk to others.' (former user)

'Helped me get contacts for new jobs.' (community member)

'Using correct terminology.' (former user)

'Talking to people at a different level, the WBYI experience helped me improve how I spoke to others, like not using slang.' (former user)

'Getting over the fear of going away [from Bradford].' (former user)

'They [former users] all did something for the community.' (local practitioner)

'I went on outward bounds with WBYI and a few years later I volunteered to take others on outward bounds.' (former user)

'Cooking together in the kitchen, talking over food, got us together.' (former user)

The participants' narratives focused on the difference the WBYI has made in their personal lives, in the face of the everyday realities of unemployment, school exclusion and so on. The use of photographs revealed that past users felt a sense of solidarity and belonging to their community and the WBYI, and the overall event revitalised a sense of collective identity (see previous chapter). This was the first time that the WBYI had hosted an event to celebrate its

contribution to community and neighbourhood life and was a creative way of engaging former users in the current JRF project.

Photography training for young people, project workers and volunteers

Drawing from the JRF theme of 'culture makes communities', we developed new arts-based project work at the WBYI, which historically focused more on traditional sports and leisure activities. It is recognised that such creative arts-based projects have been successful in creating a sense of cohesive communities, bringing people together and contributing to the regeneration of neighbourhood life (Landry et al, 1996; Shafi, 2005). Arts and culture also have a clear role to play in enabling personal transformations, and ultimately help to challenge social exclusion (Shafi, 2005). Therefore, photography project work was developed at the WBYI. Photography training for current users, project workers and volunteers was held. This consisted of a series of workshops covering the different types of photography (for example, fashion, photojournalism, portrait and everyday photography) focusing particularly on documentary photography and its use to convey social issues in the North of England. The training also covered guidance on creating stories with photography, what makes a good photograph (composition, lighting and focusing), photographic styles and editing.

The trainers (Common-Eye) were experienced in working with young people, and designed practical exercises to encourage skills development. For example, participants were asked to take a photograph using a Polaroid camera. These images were critically explored, with the exercise repeated. Following this, participants were asked to make a story through photography about life in West Bowling, which was then sequenced to make a story. In the subsequent workshop, participants returned with images taken using a 35mm camera or digital camera. These images were based on what they decided to focus on. Images were also placed on disks, which allowed the group to practice techniques such as cropping and editing with photography software. The training materials have since been reused in other project work, and are available for future training.

However, engaging young people in creative project work was challenging. Many of the users of the WBYI said that they were simply not interested in the arts; whereas sport and leisure activities appeared to be more appealing. It was also difficult to encourage young people to use 35mm cameras as they would rather use digital technology, and this led to the 'Mobile Memories' project.

Mobile Memories 1 & 2

Following the photography training, the 'Mobile Memories' project was established, partly in response to some of the problems with recruitment and retention in the previous photography project work and partly because we were aware that young people regularly use their mobile phones in everyday forms of communication and that mobile phone cameras are easy to carry around. The young people who participated in Mobile Memories 1 were already accessing the WBYI for various forms of support, while the Mobile Memories 2 project brought young people from different areas of West Bowling together through creative project work.

As part of the Mobile Memories projects, we repeated the training around documentary photography, cropping and editing photographs, as well as undertaking team-building activities with the group to help develop their skills and confidence. All of the participants were set the task of taking photographic images that documented their lives and what was important to them. This collection of photographs, along with those from Mobile Memories 2 (working with a different group of young people) formed the basis for an exhibition 'Peacocks in West Bowling' held at Cartwright Hall, Bradford, visited by just under 3,000 members of the public in one month. The young people attended the exhibition launch event (attended by 96 people) and interacted with the general public to explain their pieces of work. In addition, the young people participated in a radio interview on the day.

Peacocks in West Bowling

As Landry et al (1996) have argued, the arts can contribute positively to local vitality and urban renewal (cited in McDonagh, 2005). It offers particular outcomes including engaging people's creativity; enabling dialogue between people;

encouraging questioning and the imagining of possible futures; and a space for self-expression, which is important for the construction of active citizens (McDonagh, 2005).

As well as encouraging creativity and the development of new skills and confidence among the participants, young people's photographs also provided a valuable snapshot of the lives of young men of British Muslim Pakistani background living in West Bowling in the current context. Within these forms of expression, various narratives emerged. Faith (images of the mosque and church) and identification with Islam emerged as important for many of the participants. Indeed, their images reveal the complex nature of young people's lives, in relation to issues of identity, faith, ethnicity, segregation and community cohesion as well as the importance of everyday practices like work and travel:

'Multiculturalism is the foundation for why I took this picture, like, you know what I mean? You're like, in a community, like, and we all live together as one....' (Mobile Memories participant)

'That's my hand and that's a black man, shaking hands, innit! But the main thing, look behind it ... you know what I mean by that? Construction, construction means for West Bowling, we've got to live together.... So we're building a relationship here ... everything has to be built, so it's all good, innit?' (Mobile Memories participant)

'Oh there's the peacock that always wanders around in, like, our neighbourhood. I managed to get some pictures of it this time ... it always comes down our street ... beautiful, I took some pictures of it, I like stuff like that ... there's a really good shot that's got a nice side profile.' (Mobile Memories participant)

'Graffiti is a form of communication.' (Mobile Memories participant)

'[The frontline] ... it's where everyone stands, loads of people stand there ... yeah, the big timers.' (Mobile Memories participant)

'That's the mosque ... where I go and read namaz.' (Muslim prayers) (Mobile Memories participant)

'Religion innit, like we follow our religion, the mosque is important to us.' (Mobile Memories participant)

'I want to keep that, that's my mum, innit, she brought me up, innit, so that's important.' (Mobile Memories participant)

'Football's my career.' (Mobile Memories participant)

'There's the sports one, that's really important to us because I like sports a lot.' (Mobile Memories participant)

The Mobile Memories project work also emphasised the value of arts-based project work for encouraging dialogue and understanding. The launch of the 'Peacocks in West Bowling' exhibition at Cartwright Hall in Bradford brought together young British Muslim Pakistani men from West Bowling with the wider public. It was hoped that such a space for social interaction may help challenge stereotypes about young British Muslim Pakistani men and allow them to centralise their own representations of their lives, while developing their skills, capacity and confidence:

'[The exhibition] tells everyone, that's what we do, you know what I mean?' (participant)

'That [pointing at photograph] was at a wedding ... you can see all the different colours and there's a shade where the sun's on it.' (participant)

'That buddi [Punjabi for older woman], she said you Asians are a very hospitable lot ... she said, when she was a little kid, there were Asians that lived there [West Bowling].' (participant)

'Yeah I feel positive, it's encouraging us all to become better people, like communicate with other people. It's gonna help us in the future a lot. Stuff like this, it's really helpful.' (participant)

The 'Peacocks in West Bowling' exhibition is also being hosted in the Woodroyd Centre in West Bowling.

'It's good, all my mates can go and check it out and they can see what we've been involved in. (current user)

However, while there were many positive outcomes, there were also significant challenges with developing creative project work at the WBYI. In part these relate to the 'everyday' challenges practitioners face in engaging disadvantaged young people in a sustained piece of project work; for example maintaining their interest and finding incentives to drive their participation. Partnership work with agencies that have differing perspectives can also create challenges. For example, when planning the exhibition, the photography advisors suggested a vigorous need for selection and a focus on presentation, while for the project workers at the WBYI, their objective was to be inclusive and encourage the representation of all the participants. Ultimately, this was the position that was taken with the exhibition; and therefore the selection of work included images from all of the participants involved in Mobile Memories 1 and 2.

Film training

During the period of developing new project work at the WBYI, new networks were established with a local community film-making organisation (Acorn Videos), resulting in basic camcorder training for project workers and other individuals with links to the WBYI (such as former users and project workers). These skills have been used to develop a DVD on the WBYI: Then, Now and the Future project. The use of film and photography was used to capture WBYI activities, particularly in relation to the project work aimed at widening young people's understanding and bringing young people from different backgrounds together.

Youth Festival

'[At the Youth Festival] I did feel ... proud to be from West Bowling.' (young person)

Our Shared Future (COIC, 2007) emphasises the need for events such as 'street parties' and community celebrations to encourage community cohesion. Community celebrations also relate to the JRF's theme of 'culture makes communities', particularly in relation to community celebrations that enhance neighbourhood life and engage teenage males. Therefore the Youth Festival was developed in partnership with Trident Regeneration scheme, local organisations, community members and local young people. In the past, West Bowling regularly held community events such as community bonfires, carnivals, jumble sales etc, which were 'a really positive way of getting the community together' (WBYI project worker); and as recognised by the Commission on Integration and Cohesion (COIC, 2007). Yet it was apparent that these events had not been taking place in more recent years. Therefore, the idea of the Youth Festival emerged to provide such a community event, which was open to all and aimed to provide a fun way of celebrating community life and the diversity of West Bowling. The festival tied together the JRF themes of 'faith and cohesion' and 'culture makes communities' by bringing together individuals from different communities in West Bowling through a cultural event.

The Youth Festival took place on a warm summer's day, and attracted around 600 people, diverse in age and ethnicities, including those from recent migrant groups.

'See, in a lot of photos, there are a lot of people together, riding bikes, talking, or playing basketball, football, on stalls, ... I thought "take a picture of people you wouldn't usually see together, walking down the street, talking, chit-chatting. White and Asian, black and Asian, the Slovaks, everything"....' (young person)

'In the playground you noticed how many different kids are there, all playing together. It was nice, as if it was just a normal day....' (young person)

The event was supported by volunteers, local partners, former workers and young people who all helped out. The festival hosted a main music stage, featuring local singers and bands, stalls,

information from partner agencies (for example fire safety), sports events and a graffiti board for people to express ideas. The bands were carefully selected from the different ethnic/faith communities, capitalising on local talent within West Bowling. Community sports events such as cricket and basketball were also organised and supervised by WBYI volunteers and staff. Again, the WBYI utilised its wider social networks, particularly young volunteers, in the running of the event. Observations revealed a domino effect of help and support on the day, whereby friends, younger brothers and sisters helped out in setting up stalls, cleaning up and generally helping out.

In the context of the JRF 'culture makes community' theme, a graffiti board was used to allow individuals the opportunity for self-expression and creative activity, and also as a way to capture young people's thoughts on issues such as identity, faith and locality. The graffiti board became a focal point with all ages and ethnicities coming together to doodle, write comments, draw and paint things that interested them:

'This event is good because all the people from different religious cultures get together.' (young person from West Bowling at the Youth Festival)

'He [brother] keeps drawing them [guns] 'cos he's just mad about them.' (young person from West Bowling at the Youth Festival)

'West Bowling is bad [great].' (young person from West Bowling at the Youth Festival)

As an arts-based project, the graffiti board was effective in getting young people, as well their parents, involved in creative expression:

'That was quite cool. I thought that was a good idea, the artwork on the board. I thought that was a really, really good idea ... I think it was good because everyone got a chance to write, as if to say "I'm a part of West Bowling". "This is me, I was here"....' (young person)

The event was captured through photography by young people and others who had participated in the WBYI photography training.

American visit (a visit by young people from the US)

This was a week-long project, part funded by the JRF. The JRF project work focused on exploring issues of identity, cohesion and belonging with the participants. The project brought together Asian young people (male and female) from across Bradford with American young people from different ethnicities. In total, 25 young people participated in a range of different activities designed to encourage informal interactions and socialising (for example, pool, football, surfing the web). Following this informal interaction, ice breakers and discussion groups were formed to undertake activities around the themes of citizenship, nationality and belonging. This culminated in a debating session, revealing young people's views, for example around political representation:

'[T]he word leader, would you consider these people [Tony Blair/George Bush] your leader?' (young person)

'[N]o they don't represent my values at all.' (young person)

'[T]hey don't represent America.' (young person)

The event was captured through photography and film footage, alongside real-time audio recordings of the activities. While the participants did feel that they learnt from each other through this project work, it also pointed to the difficulties and challenges involved in such one-off cohesion activities, as the young people had limited time to interact and develop meaningful relationships:

'They've learnt stuff from us and we've learnt stuff from them.' (young person)

'We came here but, we've had a quick little game of football, [but] us lot do what we want to do, and they're doing what they want to do ... they all sat on one side and didn't make conversation ... it was both sides, we did try to talk to some of them, they did talk a bit, but that's it.' (young person)

Young people from around Bradford who participated in this project had the opportunity to discuss social and political issues that affected them, particularly as young British Muslim Pakistanis:

'If there's a bearded Muslim walking down the street, past Buttershaw [local majority white estate] I'll guarantee people will shout "are you Bin Laden?".' (young man from West Bowling)

'You got a group of Asians, they are all Muslims, you got a group of white people, they can be all Christians. Bring them all together and see how they cope and they're bound to make some friends. But just keeping them in their own areas ... it's not gonna make any friends at all. It's not gonna change you.' (young man from West Bowling)

'I'll chill with whoever, but some them [other Asians] might turn around and say "he chills with all whites and that" ... you don't get influenced by that sort of stuff, you just ignore it.' (young man from West Bowling)

'If an Asian girl's with a white girl, they'll say, "she's trying to be white."' (young woman from West Bowling)

While the project was limited in time, such international events occur regularly at the WBYI. For many of the young people, there was a sense that more could be learnt from such projects.

The JRF funding has supported existing project work at the WBYI, alongside the development of new project work incorporating creative arts work to engage young British Pakistani men and the wider communities of West Bowling. The project work developed through JRF funding at the WBYI supports the JRF themes of 'culture makes communities' and 'faith and cohesion in communities', alongside supporting the suggestions made in *Our Shared Future* (COIC, 2007). Such project work helps the WBYI to develop a personalised relationship with young people, essential for effective intervention, while also enabling young people to build their capacities,

and facilitate greater levels of understanding, social capital and community cohesion.



5 What works

This chapter brings together key findings from the WBYI: Then, Now and the Future project in order to identify ‘what works’ and issues of best practice, particularly in relation to working with young men from British Muslim Pakistani backgrounds. These areas of best practice have emerged through qualitative fieldwork data collated over the course of the project; with both former and current project workers at the WBYI, former and current users of the WBYI, local practitioners and partners, members of the local West Bowling community and local young people. The outcomes also reflect a broad engagement with the JRF themes of ‘culture makes communities’ and ‘faith and cohesion in communities’. Here, the project sought to consider the *everyday* culture of West Bowling through a focus on the WBYI, particularly as lived out by young men of British Muslim Pakistani backgrounds.

Engaging young British Muslim Pakistani men

The WBYI has particular strengths in engaging young men from British Muslim Pakistani backgrounds, which is itself a heterogeneous category, made up of different ethnic, caste and regional-based communities and identities alongside a shared faith. Moreover, while faith is an important aspect of young people’s lives, other aspects of identity such as being an artist or a sportsperson, being a teenager, or a younger brother, intersect with being a Muslim, being British, being Pakistani and/or being Asian. Indeed, young people’s narratives reveal the complexities involved in defining and marking identities along these lines. The young people are further differentiated in relation to needs: while some of the young people who access the WBYI are defined as NEET (not in education, employment or training), or are at risk of exclusion or offending, others are preparing for a university career. Age is a further variable as the ‘young people’ using the project span a broad age range; this is particularly evident in the project ‘hub’

where local practitioners, partners and community members congregate along with young people. Furthermore, alongside working with young men from British Muslim Pakistani backgrounds, the WBYI also engages young people from different local communities, for example in recent years this has included new migrants from Slovakia. Therefore, while the WBYI primarily works with young men of British Muslim Pakistani backgrounds, this is not exclusive, and moreover, this is in itself a diverse grouping with different needs and experiences.

Given this diversity, it is problematic to assume that any one universal method may exist for successfully engaging young men from British Muslim Pakistani backgrounds. Nevertheless, there are certain practices and ways of working that have proved to be successful with the young people accessing the WBYI. These can offer a useful framework for replication in other projects and in respect of policy.

Being a community resource

Our Shared Future (COIC, 2007) highlighted the importance of community anchor organisations like the WBYI. The WBYI is an integral part of the West Bowling community, regarded by many as a community resource. In more recent years, the WBYI has become responsible for BOLCC, which is used by the project in relation to its sports and leisure work, yet also as a space that can be used and hired by local people (for example for wedding parties). The organisation’s ties with the longstanding cricket club also provide a forum for interaction between young people and other members of the local community, such as older people from white backgrounds. It is also a space that brings people together from different backgrounds in cultural, arts and leisure-based activities, such as cricket or community table-top sales (see also COIC, 2007).

Supporting young people and their diversity

The WBYI does not seek to emphasise faith or religious belief in its everyday project work. Yet, at the same time, the project also acknowledges the importance of faith for many of the young people it works with. In doing so, the project aims to provide a space for both young people who choose to express their faith-based identities (for example in terms of religious practices such as diet, dress, etc) and those who do not. Striking this balance is important, particularly in the current context where there is a need for organisations not to immediately assume the relevance of faith in the lives of young Muslim men, while also providing a safe space for those who do hold strong religious identifications. Creative forms of expression, such as those used in JRF project work at the WBYI, enable young people to explore their own identities in a positive way, and can help to dispel negative media representations. Such project work can also help to facilitate dialogue and discussions between people from different backgrounds (for example, dialogue between young British Muslim Pakistani men with older white British women).

Building trust and respect in the local community

Members of the local West Bowling community played an important role in setting up the WBYI. This local involvement has continued and enables the project to respond to local issues and concerns. Yet these relationships are not instantaneous; they take time to evolve, something that current funding for voluntary sector organisations does not always allow for. Yet the findings from this project indicate how important this is for agencies working with local communities, to allow time for trust and relationships to develop. For the WBYI this trust has developed into respect. Being respected within the community is positive for the organisation and the young people who use the project. Therefore, grassroots organisations such as the WBYI need long-term funding and support to allow them to develop networks and successfully engage local communities. This is particularly important for work aimed at building community cohesion.

Creating a sense of belonging and encouraging participation in community life

Young people, particularly young men, have developed a sense of ownership of the WBYI. This sense of ownership is encouraged through the positive relationships between project workers and the young men, allowing them to feel safe and comfortable. This is also related to the longstanding reputation of the organisation within the wider community, and the sense of belonging that this creates. This also facilitates attracting volunteers. Such voluntary work is important in encouraging wider participation in community life, and developing a sense of belonging and active citizenship. Many of former users of the WBYI developed a sense of altruism through the project, and now speak of 'wanting to give something back'. This is encouraged through the maintenance of social networks that link together current project members with former users, for example through social events such as that organised as part of the JRF project. Events such as jumble sales, former users' events, community festivals, cricket, volunteering in the community and so on, work together to help cement the organisation within the local community of West Bowling, but also enable the WBYI to play a part in celebrating the everyday cultural life of West Bowling; thus helping 'make' communities.

Building a strong sense of citizenship among young people is identified as a key component of the government's community cohesion strategy, and was explored throughout the JRF project work at the WBYI. Creative methods of engagement, such as photography, offer young people the opportunity to consider their own identities and citizenship, as well as providing a forum for dialogue and interaction. Getting young people engaged in volunteering, part of the WBYI's everyday project work, is challenging, yet this is more likely to happen when young people are engaged through activities that interest them, such as cricket. This also offers a valuable space for dialogue between people from different backgrounds.

Providing an informal open space for interaction and dialogue

Providing a space and opportunities for social interactions helps develop a sense of community

and strengthen social capital. Social capital gained through an investment in social ties and networks at the WBYI also provides a sense of security and well-being. A range of WBYI activities allow for this, such as the hub with its open door policy, which brings together British Muslim Pakistani young people, practitioners, other members of the local community and project workers in a dynamic and vibrant 'everyday' space. Creative methods of engagement and sports can also play a significant part in this. A community space such as BOLCC, which provides opportunities for people of different backgrounds to come together informally, is also an important aspect of this work, which is recognised in the government's community cohesion agenda.

Capitalising on local knowledge and local talent

Employing project workers from the local community can help strengthen the relationship between communities and organisations. Local people have played a key role in the establishment of the WBYI, with support from practitioners, and many (but not all) of the former project workers have been 'local lads'. This local knowledge has been useful in allowing the WBYI to develop local networks and ties that support effective working. Strong networks with local communities, parents and organisations are essential to successfully engage with young people. Local knowledge and awareness of local issues affecting young people are also essential and can help project workers and young people develop a shared ground for identification. These factors are regarded as particularly important for project work designed to help increase understanding and help facilitate community cohesion.

Providing mentoring and positive role models

Project workers at the WBYI are well respected in the local community, a position achieved through sustained effort. As such, many of them are seen by young people, particularly by the 'local lads', as both mentors and positive role models. This is achieved through various means, but it is particularly important that project workers convey a sense of commonality and genuine empathy with the young people and their experiences. Shared ethnic and faith identification between project

workers and young people is an important element of this. However, these are complex processes, and having a shared ethnicity/faith will not necessarily lead to shared identifications or more effective engagement. Nevertheless, the shared faith/ethnicity between the project workers with many of the young people using the project is an important aspect of 'what works'.

'Tough love'

Young people mainly from British Muslim Pakistani origin are both rewarded for positive work and given constructive criticism while at the WBYI. Young people are given freedom and a safe space to express themselves, yet they are also given boundaries. This 'firm but fair' approach relies on the notion of respect, already identified as paramount in successfully engaging the local community and young people.

Promoting awareness and building community cohesion through everyday project work

The WBYI has focused on developing the skills and capacities of young people, particularly young men in West Bowling, rather than adhering to political agendas such as community cohesion. However, in supporting young people, the WBYI has also played an important role in encouraging awareness and dialogue through project work and partnership. For example, international and national youth exchanges and outward-bound activities have played an important role in developing understanding and widening young people's perspectives around difference. Such opportunities are best seen as stepping stones, between which intensive one-to-one work occurs with young people. Project workers also play an important role in developing the understanding and awareness of the young people, which is further helped by the foundations of respect, trust and a shared identification. Creative project work also has a role to play in this process but, moreover, this is enabled through the place of the WBYI in the everyday fabric of life for young British Muslim Pakistani men in West Bowling.

Investing in partnership work and local networks

The WBYI works hard to develop and maintain partnership work and positive networks with the local community and other services. This helps to ensure that young people's needs are being met, while also being useful for developing community cohesion and bridging social capital. For example, partnership work with MAPA (a West Bowling youth club with a large number of African Caribbean, Slovakian and White young people) encourages young people from different backgrounds to mix in an informal way, further contributing to community cohesion and helping to increase understanding between young people from different backgrounds in an informal way.

Building long-term relationships with young people and the wider community

Project workers at the WBYI take a holistic approach to young people, providing them with opportunities to develop the skills they will need to access employment or educational pathways, as well as developing their aspirations. These relationships *take time to develop* and are sustained through contact and support, tailored to each individual young person's needs. Agencies working with young people at risk of social exclusion also need to provide flexible skills support and training that is not confined to the 14-19 age range. Having an open door policy such as that at the WBYI also helps in ensuring that young people's needs are met. In terms of personal development, it is equally important to achieve both 'hard' (for example, accessing employment, education and training) and 'soft' targets (for example, increasing confidence, self-esteem and communication skills). However, monitoring the achievement of 'soft' targets is more difficult, which is often required for project funding.

Documenting life stories and project work through audiovisual narratives

The combination of audio recordings and photographic images is useful in documenting the life stories and experiences of young people during their time at a project. This is useful as it both enables young people to further develop their skills and capacities in a creative way, while also offering an innovative and accessible method of conveying

an organisation's work. Photographic records of project work can also facilitate reflective learning about what works.



6 The WBYI: the future?

The WBYI responds

Key elements of best practice have been highlighted as a result of the JRF project, which will be useful in helping to shape the future direction of the WBYI. In particular, we welcome the opportunity to consider the themes of 'faith and cohesion in communities' and 'culture makes communities' in our future work.

Faith and cohesion in communities

As emphasised throughout the report, our approach is community led, rather than driven by government agendas. This will continue to be our approach, and we will aim to respond to the needs of the changing nature of everyday life in West Bowling. The report has highlighted that we have strengths in engaging young men from British Muslim Pakistani backgrounds through our everyday project work and this will continue to be our main focus. However, as also noted, our work also contributes to the promotion of community cohesion. Indeed, we do not view working with one particular faith/ethnic group as contrary to the wider community cohesion agenda. Rather, our approach enables us to help widen and develop the perspectives of young British Muslim Pakistani men, through being trusted and respected by the local community of West Bowling. Our partnership work with agencies such as MAPA, local schools and BOLCC also enables us to bring young people from different communities together in meaningful, yet informal interactions. The hub space in the WBYI premises is a further arena for this to take place.

We recognise that young people have complex identities, and that belonging to communities, faith groups etc is dynamic. Working within the British Muslim Pakistani communities raises particular challenges with regards to gender, and while there is a push towards providing inclusive services for men and women, our approach is more suited to the needs of the local communities we serve. It allows us to do important work around gender

issues with young British Muslim Pakistani men while retaining the trust of the local community. Without this, our efforts to engage disadvantaged young men would be futile. Working through these issues, along with other concerns such as territorialism, prejudice towards new migrant groups etc, will remain central to our practice and, ultimately, our work will be shaped by the needs of the local communities.

Culture makes communities

The report has emphasised the value in supporting the everyday culture of life in West Bowling, pointing to the role of BOLCC, events such as community festivals and social events in celebrating community life and bringing communities together. Our work in helping to celebrate the community life of West Bowling is made possible by our position as a community anchor, and our being at the heart of the local community, with extensive networks of trust.

However, new project work developed through the JRF project has also highlighted the importance of creative forms of engagement such as photography, particularly in allowing young people the opportunity for self-expression, reflection and confidence building and for providing a snapshot of what matters to young British Muslim Pakistani men in West Bowling. Such creative work can also help promote dialogue between young people from different backgrounds. Our intention is also to develop the use of new technologies as a means for young people to communicate and express their creativity. Yet, there have also been challenges in engaging young people in creative project work, and the young people accessing the WBYI generally have a greater interest in sport and leisure activities. In particular, cricket is a valuable method for engaging young British Muslim Pakistani men and can enable similar opportunities for expression, team working and dialogue between people from different backgrounds in a positive way. Our intention is to further develop our focus on the individual – whether developing leadership and

discipline through sports or creativity through arts, the focus will be on supporting them as individuals, and Bradfordians, from West Bowling.

We are also developing film footage of 'what works' in engaging young British Muslim Pakistani men in West Bowling and are in consultation with the British Federation of Film Societies in developing a community cinema project hosted in the BOLCC community space.

Appendix

Project structure

The project comprised four overlapping phases.

Phase 1: the WBYI ‘then’ – qualitative research with former users

In-depth qualitative interviews (both individual and focus groups) were conducted with former users of the WBYI in order to consider its impact and ‘what works’. A ‘social event’ was held to facilitate narratives using visual images of the WBYI’s past work.

Phase 2: the WBYI ‘now’ – qualitative research with young people involved in WBYI projects

This consisted of participant observation of day-to-day project work at the WBYI, in-depth interviews with current users and project workers, focus group interviews and video interviews, alongside visual research methods to capture the current practices of the WBYI and the concerns of local young people. This phase focused on young people’s engagement and reflections of WBYI projects, both new and ongoing. This involved young people capturing their perceptions of Bradford, West Bowling and their everyday lives through photography. In addition, interviews were conducted with partner organisations and members of the local community to further examine the work of the WBYI.

Phase 3: the WBYI – ‘what works?’

This phase of the project was about identifying ‘what works’ to develop guidance on best practice for the WBYI and also for a wider policy/practitioner audience. The images developed by the young people in Phase 2 culminated in photography exhibitions and a short film has also been developed to further convey the work and practices of the WBYI.

Phase 4: the WBYI ‘the future’ – reflection, evaluation and further projects

This phase was ongoing throughout the research, with the researcher, the WBYI project workers and young people at the WBYI involved in developing the WBYI’s existing ‘new’ project work. This included a Youth Festival, two photography projects, photography and video training, cohesion work, a former user/community social event and supporting the wider generic work of the WBYI (see Chapter 4 for more detail on these projects). Funding bids were also developed in an effort to support future project work.

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