

MMEC 6 Month Report (Nov '20 – Apr '21)

A narrative on learning and impact from the Move More Empowered Communities work

The aim of the Move More Empowered Communities project is to work with communities across Sheffield to understand what works to enable physical activity at a local level, what factors affect this, and to ultimately enable more people to do physical activity where they live. To do this in a strength-based way by identifying and building on existing community assets and empowering communities to deliver the work themselves. It is being coordinated by the health and wellbeing team at Voluntary Action Sheffield, working closely with Sport England, NCSEM, and Move More partners.

Over the last 6 months, we made good progress on understanding and testing a mechanism through which we can realise these aims in an impactful way. This report will cover the progress we have made against these aims, the challenges, opportunities, and what we hope to test in the next 6 months.

Context surrounding this work during the last 6 months

The 6 months prior to this period saw the start of Covid in Sheffield. This was a tough time for citizens and organisations. The last six months have also been tough, and it's important to have this context in mind when looking back and forward.

Although we have experienced shifts back to reopening and more face to face activity, this has been an unstable and unpredictable trend with lockdowns returning periodically. Many organisations are still exploring options for safe and timely reopenings, but very few have got there, so Covid restrictions are still very much affecting the ability to enable active lifestyles.

When it comes to the people of Sheffield, there is body of evidence that suggests whilst there may be easing in other contexts, there will be "cliff edges" approaching for the poorest communities in Sheffield.

"These communities face a "cliff edge" into poverty and in some cases destitution and homelessness as temporary support and protections are removed. Whilst the budget did signal limited extensions to some of the protections, the insecurity and fear of the future is an intolerable weight for many and the unresolved problems are building. Many people impacted by the cliff edge will turn to VCF organisations for help and advice at the same time as we are already struggling to meet demand and need" Shelter and Citizens Advice Sheffield

Therefore, over the last 6 months, we have been seeing value in keeping people active and well, as well as supporting new people to be active.

Project Progress - Key achievements in the last 6 months

The following are, what I believe to be, the key achievements that have been important in progressing towards our aims in the Move More communities work.

- 'Graduated' the two community hubs we were working with in the initial part of MMEC1;

Darnall Wellbeing and **Manor and Castle Development Trust**. These organisations have now received investment to protect staff time to deliver, inform, or develop local physical activity. We will continue to work with the officers in post to further and share our understanding of 'what works', and aim to support development of opportunities as they emerge.

- We have developed, tested, and refined the 'graduating process' whereby we can outline assumptions and expectations of working together, explore hopes and desires, identify need, discuss possible resources, and identify how local work will fit with the evaluation. This has been a rocky road, but some important lessons have been learned about **what conversations need to happen at the start to ensure we are properly working together in our respective roles** (evaluator, community hub, project lead) and avoid setting up a transactional relationship.
- Through the 'Expression of Interest' process, we have **developed and tested an effective way to seek and bring in new community partners** (new to us, but some are very established) and pull out ideas of 'what might work', together. Starting from a blank slate, and **not pushing predetermined solutions**. This process can now be refined and replicated for future use.
- This has led to **recruiting another 15 'community partners'**, who are working in the heart of the most marginalised communities across Sheffield, to work with us in a similar, but not identical, way to the above hubs. These partners are fully on board with the Move More aims, and want to enable more people to be active.
- We have tested ways of working in which we can **work together with organisations to identify, understand, and then utilise community assets and experience**. Then to spot ways to develop and grow these (harnessing, connecting, or nurturing).

This has been the **first real opportunity to actually start from scratch and employ the principles we have long talked about**, and that Sport England have highlighted in their most recent Community of Learning report (prioritising building trust etc.). This felt like a radical action.

- Most importantly, good stuff is happening that people are benefiting from. Activity is being delivered **with communities who stand to benefit massively from the activity**. I will give some examples of this later.
- **We held our first 'Community of Learning' event in January this year**. The aim was to pull together experience and knowledge from community physical activity across the city, so we can have the best chance at using evidence of 'what works' to influence the development of ideas and investment across the city (outcomes of this shared later). We had a very good number of attendees, and good conversations, but have failed to get momentum behind the concept. We haven't really got underneath why this is. We also offered out a paid co-chair role which unfortunately didn't attract interest.
- **Asset mapping workshops were held with community partners and their volunteers** (A number PKW leads specifically) to run through different techniques for identifying and mapping community assets.
- To inform the work this year, we held a workshop with new community partners to discuss the question **"What needs to happen to make sure that money, resources and opportunities assist more marginalised and underrepresented people and communities to be healthier through physical activity?"**. I will share the outcomes of this later.

- We have, on a number of occasions, **shared the learning from the above with other projects or pieces of work across Sheffield** with the aim to influence how this work pans out.

Who are we working with? What are we working on? Why?

“The Roma community are a very marginalised community and have very little involvement in mainstream statutory services. There are growing health problems within adults and children due to the lack of physical activity and nutritional awareness around food. With the funding that Move More is providing us we want to address and tackle some of the issues that lead to problems such as obesity, diabetes and high blood pressure. We want to encourage the community to take fitness seriously and build it into their daily lives. It is great that they have been able to fund an activity worker that can not only work with communities but also provide one to one support, guidance and motivation.” Saima Ahmed - Firvale Community Hub

We previously explained the thinking behind our shift to working in a more proactive way with new (to us) groups and organisations. Groups and organisations who work with groups of people that we typically don't support as much as we could. Groups of people that are underrepresented, marginalised, and feel the impact of health inequalities more than other groups. We tested the expression of interest process to reach out to potential community partners who might be interested in working with us. The process brought in a diverse range of new partners, and the snapshot below gives you an idea of we are working together with and what we are working on

Community Partners	Which community we are working with...	What we are working together on...
Manor and Castle Development Trust (Not part of EOI)	Manor/Arbourthorne ward	Using increased community development capacity to allow the staff members more time to grab onto opportunities they would have otherwise missed. Specifically, connecting to new partners in the area, doing more tailored physical activity work with specific groups of people (e.g. isolated men), supporting volunteers to develop capabilities and confidence, among other stuff.
DWB (Not part of EOI)	Darnall and Tinsley ward	Resource part time physical activity worker to allow increased delivery of physical activity, appraise current physical activity offer and codesign new provision where possible, welcome people back after covid, connect up assets locally, and volunteer development.
Sheffield Womens Aid	Women/children who are homeless due to domestic abuse and living in temporary (refuge) accommodation	Harnessing the assets of the 'safe space' and trusted staff and sensitively building in physical activity to this. Using a taster session programme to explore what women and families enjoy, then connecting other provision/support to refuge and looking for opportunities to upskill staff to deliver in house.
SACHMA	African Caribbean men	Harnessing the trust, connections, and knowledge of designing culturally appropriate activity to establish a black men's social group which includes physical activity.
Firvale Community Hub	Roma	Upskilling local roma leaders by identifying and nurturing volunteers and leaders. Codesign some provision with Roma community. Integrate Roma communities into existing offerings for other communities. Assist members of the Roma community to

		train as fitness instructors and in sports leadership. Support this work by resourcing protected time for a physical activity worker at Firvale Community Hub.
Bens Centre and Target Housing	People with drug or alcohol problems, usually homeless	Codesigning a programme of peer led, staff supported physical activity sessions that are harnessing the day centre and the 'bens centres way of working' as an asset by building physical activity into this. Also looking to empower clients through co-leading and creating (arts and crafts/gardening).
ISRAAC	Somali, but others too	Aiming to connect assets across the area, spot development opps for vols and leaders, harness social assets (conversations cafe etc) and building activity into these to support Somali women to be more active. Resourcing with funds to buy in a mix of sessional instructor time (for chairobics) and support in house capacity for other delivery and coordination. Further plans to upskill in house too.
Fresh Start	Women in recovery	Potential to connect existing funded provision (e.g football projects with money to deliver sessions, professionals delivering talks, workshops or courses etc.) to the fresh start service/clients. Some other bits too - e.g. sessional activity, harnessing assets.
Aspiring Communities Together	Women from different black, or minority ethnic communities	Upskilling volunteers/outreach workers - supporting with funding for training which will allow volunteers to embed physical activity into the work they do. Training to be determined by org.
African Voices Platform	African women	Connecting assets - supporting connection to allotments, small fund to help with expenses etc, and aiming to connect to health walks - nurturing an established social group (90% non english speaking) to connect up to grow what they do
Thalassemia South Yorkshire	South Asian Women	Harnessing and nurturing - VAS dev team supporting org to become more structurally sound. Move More supporting to harness a couple of social groups that are interested in zumba sessions (sessional initially)..
Roshni	Bangladeshi Women and men	Harnessing social groups to build in health and wellbeing/PA opps, also connecting assets by supporting capacity for known workers to connect people to provision (mainstream or VCS)
Saalik Youth Project/Burngreave Training Hub	Pakistani community - young people and families	Nurturing the engagement programme delivered by Saalik, resourced with money to continue and expand sessions. Built in mentoring/spotting leaders/nurturing enthusiasm with some informal and formal courses. Connecting assets too through supporting a local training 'hub' which builds skills/capabilities/capacity locally in known and trusted instructors.
Chocolate Box	Female sex workers	Nurturing assets through a small 2 staff org who provide health walks for vulnerable groups of women. Supporting by resourcing additional staff time to protect time for walks. Potential to support other peer lead activities such as gardening.
Reach Up	Somali women	Empowerment and developmental training specifically designed for Somali and Yemeni women. Aiming to bring women together to socialise, talk about health and wellbeing, and raise aspirations about what they believe they are capable or 'allowed' to do. Being active will be part of this. We hope that this results in women connecting to other provisions in the area, or walking more with peers.
Shipshape	Range of BAME communities	Codesigned prog of activity. Lead by local communities who have lived experience. Pool of community partners to support. Resources through protected staff time to support and deliver locally.
SAPAG	Autistic	Harnessing existing social groups and trusted/experienced staff to sympathetically build in provision, but also to support connection to other provision through phased

		introductions and confidence building support Also, looking to support co-leading and peer leading activities.
Our Mel & Mulembas D’Africa	Women from the Black African community	The project will harness the connections of Our Mel/Mulembas D’Africa and deliver activity that will work with groups of women on body positivity workshops creating body awareness, support social cohesions, and facilitating self empowerment.
Level Up	Black African and caribbean communities, specifically younger people	Nurturing the youth work they offer to families and young people, and aiming to harness the collectives they have with other churches to try and embed physical activity.
Action Collective	African diaspora in Sheffield	Harness the social events/programmes Action Collective offer and introduce new family orientated physical activity.

Impact

It's hard to directly attribute what impact our work has had, but we believe the below to be a fair interpretation of what impact we have seen, heard about through anecdotal impact, or heard from partners.

Direct impact on individuals

I think it's important that whilst we are often thinking about what we have achieved in terms of 'system change', we must not forget that physical activity opportunities we support have direct impact on individuals. There have been a number of partners in the above list who have made physical activity available to groups they work with and seen first hand how much this has impacted the people they work with. For example, Sheffield Womens Aid ran their programme of activity in their refuges, and shared with us the positive impact these activities have had on mood, emotional wellbeing, and how they have had an inspirational effect on the young children too.

“In my walking group an 80 year old woman came for a walk in our conversation, she told me how hard it was for her to be in isolation. She has developed stress and depression due to being locked indoors. I cannot explain how happy she was when she was walking, I felt her happiness through her movement and face expression” Saima Rehman - ISRAAC Community Association

Expanding our understand and reach

It is clear that from the list of new partners, we have considerably expanded the reach we have to the more marginalised communities in sheffield. Those furthest away from activity. This feels like a positive impact on the potential for Move More to better understand (as we are doing already) and work directly with communities we haven't done before on this project.

Bringing groups into the conversation

We have proactively tried to bring organisations into the conversations that are happening around planning, commissioning, and other similar contexts. The expression of interest process, and initial investment and trust building, has allowed us to understand the ambitions of different groups. We have then been able to look at the spaces and conversations we have access to, and welcome new faces in. This allows organisations to raise their profile and make their own connections, broadens

the reach of the networks we have introduced them to, and helps paint a broader picture of community physical activity barriers and opportunities for all. We have done this with at least half a dozen organisations so far, and there is a lot of potential to do more.

“You’ve connected us with many other organisations; like Shipshape and Helen Sims [on the Healthy Holidays work] and it’s really broadened our horizons as an organisation. It gives us an idea of what others are doing, but also reinforces that the work we are doing [at Saalik Youth Project] is really good. We’ve been able to extend our services and work with others, like Street Games and the Burgreave training hub. And the young people have been out, enjoyed themselves, and are really happy to be doing something again” Imran Ali - Saalik Youth Project

Feedback from orgs on what’s going

Noticing the shift in the system to work with VCS organisations

This, of course, can’t be attributed directly to one piece of work, but we have aimed to use the Move More work as an opportunity to contribute to ongoing conversations about ‘what works’ to support communities, and we are noticing a shift.

As a result of the evidence of the impact of the VCS during COVID and the understanding of the unique contribution that community embedded organisations have, there is a building consensus in the statutory Health and Care system in Sheffield, that the preventative wellbeing activities, like those being delivered through MM are a fundamental part of the partnership approach to addressing the strategic health and care priorities for Sheffield’s population. The VCS are now seen as equal partners on the Accountable Care Partnership and are being factored into the future place based arrangements for commissioning that will replace CCGs, when statutory commissioning responsibilities are moved to Integrated Care Systems. The current discussions that are shaping how decisions about commissioning health and care support in future will be made, include the VCS as an essential partner with building parity to influence the decision making processes. This is reflected in public statements of intent supporting a recognition of the role of the VCS by the Accountable Care Partnership and the Sheffield Health and Wellbeing Board. The evidence of impact from the EC evaluation will be key in directing funding decisions and adding to the growing evidence base for securing commitment to more sustainable funding for VCS organisations. This is valuable in converting public statements about VCS commissioning, into tangible investment actions.

The approach taken through the second phase of Engaging Communities activity has shown the potential of moving ways of working to connect with those organisations that were previously considered difficult for statutory organisations to reach.

This is being recognised both in terms of the value to addressing health inequalities and also the impact on rebalancing the influence and profile of people from BAME communities.

What have we learned over the last 6 months?

Below is some of the key learning we have gathered from discussions with organisations, self reflection and experience ‘on the job’, and anecdotal input from team mates.

‘Community partner workshop’ - December 2020

As part of the expression of interest process, we held a workshop to discuss ‘what does good look like’ in the context of this work. We hoped this would enable us to jointly draw up some principles that would guide our work. The discussion involved 20+ organisations working with a diverse range of communities across Sheffield. The majority of the discussion was framed with the question

“What needs to happen to make sure that money, resources and opportunities assist more marginalised and underrepresented people and communities to be healthier through physical activity?”

The group agreed the following principles were the most crucial for success;

<p>Inclusion of Organisations Embedded within Communities - for the overall objective to be achieved, it is important that those organisations that are deeply embedded within communities are included in all aspects of planning, design, delivery and evaluation.</p>	<p>Building Effective Partnerships (inc. Peer Support) - The need to build effective partnerships across the landscape was an important factor to programme success. The role of peer-support was mentioned as a way of sharing resources, best practice and in helping to overcome individual challenges.</p>
<p>Direct Consultation with Beneficiaries - It was suggested that in order to achieve the best possible outcomes, that direct beneficiaries should be consulted with so that activities and approaches could be designed to meet their individual/specific community needs.</p>	<p>Remuneration - Building on the theme above, workshop participants felt that anyone involved in the process of programme planning, design, delivery and evaluation should be remunerated for their time and input.</p>
<p>Equity and Trust - In addition to the call for building effective partnerships, participants felt that relationships should be equitable and fair. They felt that this would be a way of gaining trust across the partnership, where each organisation would feel respected and valued.</p>	<p>Improved Communication - For the overall aim to be achieved, the group stated that communication should be timely and concise. It should also be mindful of accessibility needs.</p>
<p>Build Upon Community Assets - It was suggested that there are many community assets that exist. Therefore, consideration should be given to how they can be best included within programme planning and delivery.</p>	<p>Valuing Diversity - There were many different viewpoints during the workshop, and it was shown to add value to the discussions. Where possible, this should be replicated throughout the duration of the programme & be sensitive to language, culture and religion.</p>
<p>Flexible Funding - Participants talked about the importance of having flexibility with regards to funding arrangements. This is demonstrable by the availability of funding to meet operational requirements and leadership development needs.</p>	<p>Simplified Monitoring Processes - It was noted by smaller organisations that having simple monitoring processes would help to manage programme delivery and reporting expectations. In addition, they type, and frequency of monitoring should also be considered, especially as certain outcomes may take longer to achieve.</p>

We have been aiming to adopt the above principles as much as we can and use them to steer the work. This has felt positive.

For example, we have done the following in an effort to adopt the above principles into our work;

- The driving theory of our work is all based on building on existing community assets, so we were adopting this prior to the workshop, but it was good to hear it backed up by partners.
- Involved organisations in planning by ensuring conversations are equitable and use the organisation's experience and local knowledge to form ideas. Not pushing solutions. However, we have introduced our own experience of what is working in other projects to this too, but not demanded this must be followed.

- We have supported the building of effective partnerships by bringing some leaders/organisations into the VCS network meetings, linking them with other support within VAS, and making introductions to other organisations with whom they may be able to ‘compare notes’ and learn (E.g. Shipshape has been linked with Saalik Youth Project to discuss training offers).
- We offered a paid co-chair role for the Community of Learning (however, this wasn't taken up).
- We have been transparent about all aspects of the project with partners. For example, we have shared budget info, who we are working with, challenges etc. in an effort to remove unproductive power dynamics and build trust. And have communicated progress of the project throughout to keep partners up to date (although, we have not always done this as timely as we could have).
- We have started monitoring and evaluation conversations by asking what organisations do already, then reaching an agreement on how this can support the minimal needs we have for our evaluation. Removing unnecessary monitoring wherever we can if it doesn't feel purposeful.
- We have jointly created ‘agreements’ with partners to show what we are planning to work on and what the investment will support. These have been done to outline what we hope to achieve, and not outline deliverables. We can then reflect back on hopes and desire, and analyse what has worked and what hasn't. Organisations have responded very well to this, and it gives a good degree of flexibility and trust.

‘Community of learning’ workshop - January 2021

As mentioned previously, we held the first community of learning workshop in January 2021. It had a good turnout, and attracted a diverse range of organisations. The aim of the first session was to co-design future sessions, and share some learning between peers. People who attended the meeting said it is important that the Community of Learning;

Is equal, takes care to address power imbalances, and talks transparently.	Focuses on action and what can be achieved beyond our conversations.	Brings people together from diverse backgrounds, and makes efforts to be understanding of cultural differences.
Encourages working together and networking, and avoids competition.	Gives people a chance to share, reflect, and learn.	Does not dictate
Talks about plans for the future, bounces ideas around, and allows advice seeking.	.Does not demand change without resourcing efforts to achieve it.	Celebrates the achievements: big or small. And raises the profile of this work to wider audiences in Sheffield and beyond.
Focuses on the needs of communities, and not funding needs or targets.	Is a safe and inclusive space for new voices to be heard, people listen respectfully, and reduce barriers to joining the conversation.	Looks around and considers, ‘who isn't here and why might this be’?

The hopes/desires/expectations from this group for the Community of Learning was too;

Share learning on what has worked well in the past.	Share responsibility and accountability among the group.
Allow attendees to spot partnership opportunities and network.	Seek specialist advice.

Explore ideas of 'what might work' as a group.	Explore ways to overcome barriers for the most marginalised communities.
Explore how to link into other conversations about physical activity across the city.	Share opportunities to join forces and pool resources.
Identify gaps in skills and knowledge and support this.	Be intentional - to act when we say we will.

We have yet to hold the second community of learning, but are discussing how we could make this a more manageable format.

What challenges have we been facing and what are we worried about?

Here is a summary of the key challenges and worries that have popped up over the last six months. A number of them are interlinked, but I've done my best to unpack them individually.

Share learning, influence, and generate system actions - With time ticking away on this project, the pressure is on to share learning, influence other work where we can, and generate actions for others in the system. We have stated to community partners that this is part of hopes and desires, and it is also part the desire of other stakeholders, but with the current approach it is a hard task.

We want the good stuff we learn to be taken on by others, so they don't repeat the process we have been through and so they can build on good stuff. For this to happen though, we need to win over others in the system and encourage an enthusiasm to engage with this way of working. Also, we need to be realistic about what we can do in the remaining time on the project.

Learning from other work (thanks to Katie and Ben) suggests that the way to overcome this may be to experiment with different ways of sharing learning. Whilst reports and the like have a place, they are not always the best option. It's important to consider how the learning might best be received. Other projects have suggested small, trusted safe spaces, and supported experiential learning are the way to go. If we can create or nurture spaces to do this with community partners and other stakeholders, this would be great. In the spirit of ABCD, it may be that we need to identify an existing network/asset, and see how we can nurture this (if the network will have us!) to avoid placing more demand on community partners.

'Investments don't make an impact/embed longterm change before the money runs out' - This worry is related to the above. We are spotting opportunities to embed physical activity, and we are identifying local solutions to enabling people to be active.

Some long term change can happen through 'embedding physical activity', and I hope we can act on these as they may secure impact after we have finished (for example, supporting staff members to build capabilities to deliver activity in house as part of their wellbeing support). But, these are the minority. All of the organisations we work with value physical activity, and try to use it where they can. There is sometimes an element of exploring ways to embed it without needing more money, and using learning from other projects to try to dismantle limiting assumptions. However, they often are not doing more physical activity because they don't have the time or resources to prioritise it or protect staff time to deliver it. I struggle to see how we can get around this without committed long term funding for the community partners that is invested directly in capacity and skills in house.

Identifying need, and connecting it to resources and opportunity - There is the issue mentioned above, of struggling to connect learning (and opportunities to learn) to others in the city. This does come from the project being isolated. Other things come from this situation too.

We believe this is a crucial part of the success of the project, but we struggle to connect

organisations with other resources in the city. We are working well with organisations who are connected to priority groups, we are understanding what the need is (to a certain extent), coming up with ideas on appropriate resources or opportunities for those organisations, but then struggling to match this with opportunities in the city.

It's probably worth noting, we have had success in doing this (as mentioned above with Saalik Youth Project and a number of other orgs), however, this success has always felt like a result of us 'pushing against the flow' of the system. Where we have had to look above our convenient networks and structures. It has not been the default. We should aim for the default to be the position where we prioritise the need, then coordinate resources around it.

I think there are a number of factors that could be causing this, but I am not sure how accurate these are (others may be able back this up or refute);

- **It's hard to have a good knowledge of all the provisions and resources in the city.** There are a number of projects that I know of (Beat the Streets, SUFC community foundation, Womens FA etc.) that are funded, have resources to connect to communities, but don't have the people. I only know a small number of these. There are also training courses that I stumble across by happenstance. There must be more of both out there, waiting for us to connect to (although it is possible that there isn't), but it's hard to keep on top of this as there isn't a neat mechanism (or I don't know of it if there is).
- **Time to do this is limited.** It could easily be a full time job. I feel resistant to suggest increasing capacity to do this as it does not feel like the right solution.
- Other infrastructure or physical activity organisations are in a similar position. They seem like they are **unable to give time/resources to the organisations I'm working with because these resources/time are already spoken for** (assigned to a project or area etc) or because they are stretched also. Probably both.
- We are **working at odds with other organisations/institutions.** We are identifying needs within priority groups, then sourcing it/connecting it. This clashes with the more common approach of identifying a 'solution' and a fund then finding people that fit the parameters of this.

From my experience, it feels like this is the crux of it all. Flipping the process on its head where we can would allow solutions to be better crafted first time, cut out headaches of trying to connect to people, would support more community assets to build strong foundations and connections, and would save time for all involved. I know this is a stubborn (and highly political) issue, but it is a headache for all involved, feels massively illogical, and very inefficient.

- It feels like we are maxed out on forums and networks in the sector. Setting up one would normally be a solution to this (although a duct tape solution, rather than a proper one), but I am loath to add another meeting to people's calendars.

Things are taking a long time! - My expectations of how long it would take to get new partner orgs to a position where we are in agreement on what we will work together on, and what our ongoing relationship would look like, were over ambitious. We're now playing catch up with these expectations, although I believe this is the right way to work. To get this project done properly, we will really need more time. Or, the better solution would be to have this as a permanent post with no timescales.

Getting momentum behind the Community of Learning forum - We hoped that this process could initiate a 'live conversations' between the different orgs, to be able to spot opps as they come up, and connect assets, among other things. We are doing this through one to one conversations with community partners, and this will only increase as more work starts being delivered by orgs, but it has yet taken off between peers. The first session of the Community of Learning was productive, but did not gather momentum. A feedback survey sent out after didn't get any responses, and between VAS, YSF, and SHU a second Community of Learning meeting was never arranged. Although, there wasn't a demand from community orgs to host another meeting. I believe the concept is a good one though, just needs some refining!

What we want to test going forward, and where are the opportunities?

Building on the new connections and activity with community partners

The approach taken to engaging with and investing in the organisations that are most embedded and trusted by the people who have previously been considered as "hard to reach", is influencing ways of working across a number of programmes being managed with the statutory health and care system. It is hoped that the evidence of the impact of this type of investment will reinforce the case for more sustainable funding in organisations rather than for time bound project based activities. This report demonstrates inter-connections between wellbeing, wider determinants of health and physical activity. For some people the trusted relationship is the most influential element of engaging with support and having access to the means to manage wellbeing through that single relationship provides access to a wider range of support that has longer term impacts. Working through those organisations that are engaged in the EC programme provides an accessible interface to sustain activity and manage the wider wellbeing of their service users across a range of ambitions and priorities

Establishing more connections to smaller VCS organisations and providing them with direct funding relationships is raising the profile of those organisations to access further funding opportunities. The evidence and demonstrable impact builds on the ability of those organisations to sustain action enabled through this initial seed funding.

There are a number of other opportunities we want to explore and ideas we want to test. The reason we see these as being opportunities to pursue, is because they currently feel like barriers to achieving what we want to achieve;

- To double down on good ideas! Invest more where it's working, or connect to other partners in the city who can support by resourcing activity that is having an impact.
- We want to see how we can develop mechanisms (or persist to have conversations that allow us to) pool resources, knowledge, skills, opps etc from other orgs (e.g. YSF, Streetgames, Healthy Holidays) to better support marginalised communities (e.g. by offering training, connecting to upcoming funds, getting new direct relationships with funders, raise profile of org). Aiming to do this at the start of pieces of work. Better connecting 'the system to itself'.
- To do more to connect orgs and their leaders directly to planning, strategy, and commissioning conversations. Like we have detailed above (with Saalik youth project and others). There is plenty more opportunity to do this and help create a more representative conversation about physical activity in the city.
- Doing the learning stuff better. To test ways to create smaller networks of peers to share learning in a safe and supportive environment. As opposed to the larger community of learning approach (with 20+ orgs).

- We are working with a lot of organisations. In hindsight, there are probably too many to give detailed support. We want to explore ways of giving 'one to many' offers of support, or scale the model. For example, workshops where we discuss as a group how best to embed physical activity, what issues there are, and what resources can help. Rather than doing this one to one with each organisation. If we can hold this conversation with the organisations, and the other institutions in the city who can 'open doors' (e.g. SCC) or provide resource, then this will help reduce the number of hurdles we need to jump, and prevent possible bottlenecks of opportunity/learning etc with MMEC.

Thanks for reading, if you want to discuss anything in this report, or other work we might be delivering in the team, feel free to contact Adam Batty on a.batty@vas.org.uk and I'd be happy to chat.

Thanks,

Adam Batty

