

Citadel Youth Centre Inclusion Project

Introduction

Citadel Youth Centre provides social, educational and recreational opportunities for children and young people aged 5 to 21 years old in the Leith area of Edinburgh, with a particular focus on those who are experiencing some form of disadvantage. We do this through a variety of universal and targeted services, including open access youth clubs for all ages from 6 to 18 and 1:1 support for young people referred by schools and social workers as being at risk at home, at school or in their community.

Citadel recognised that there were low numbers of BME children and young people accessing their youth work services, in contrast to the number of BME individuals who reside in Leith and surrounding areas.

As a result, an inclusion project for children aged 8-11 years old from Leith was delivered from August 2017-June 2018. We delivered this in two ways:- firstly, through an Inclusion Group, which introduced children from BME backgrounds living in Leith to the Citadel's services; and secondly, by developing training, policies and activities to make the youth clubs themselves more inclusive for children from BME backgrounds.

This report has been designed to be a resource for good practice for practitioners wishing to increase their awareness and implement cultural inclusiveness in their practice. It will provide a background on what the project involved, including activities delivered in the Inclusion Project. The impact the project has had on the individuals involved in the project and on the overall organisation will be explained. It will conclude by providing feedback from individuals and a list of guidelines for culturally inclusive practice.



Project Aims

1. The Inclusion Group aimed to work with socially isolated BME children to increase their social confidence, skills and interaction with peers outside school.
2. The Citadel planned to create a more inclusive environment in our youth provision better reflecting the ethnic and cultural diversity in Leith.

Inclusion Group Programme

The group consisted of 9 children aged 8-11 years old from a range of different ethnic minority backgrounds who participated in 16 sessions across October 2017-March 2018.

For the first term, the Inclusion Group was delivered in partnership with staff from Multi-Cultural Family Base (MCFB) 's Footprints Project, who brought their experience of culturally sensitive group work. The activities delivered in the group explored different countries and activities that promote diversity and learning about others cultures. For instance, the group looked at anti bullying, equality and learnt how to play African drums.

In the second term some of the activities were similar to what is delivered in the mainstream youth clubs, which increased their awareness of activities they could choose to partake in.



Mainstream Youth Club Activities

Across Citadel Youth Centre’s mainstream youth club provision there were 18 inclusion and diversity themed evenings which incorporated 51 different activities and workshops. In the Junior Club (for 6-9 year olds), we looked at world map connections and what countries they, their family or friends were connected to. For instance, one child’s school was connected to Tanzania and another friend’s mother is from Brazil. Following this activity, we took the club on a ‘world tour’ in term two, delivering art, cooking and games from a different country each week.

Activities in the Inter Club (for 10-12 year olds) tended to have a more explicit anti-racist message. For example, children in the Inter Club participated in a diversity quiz and designed equality posters whereby they wrote messages on treating people fairly and had discussions on the meaning of equality. They also took part in a refugee and migrant workshop delivered by the British Red Cross which challenged stereotypes and raised awareness of the topic in an informative and interactive way.

The table below provides some examples of activities delivered in the youth club programme:

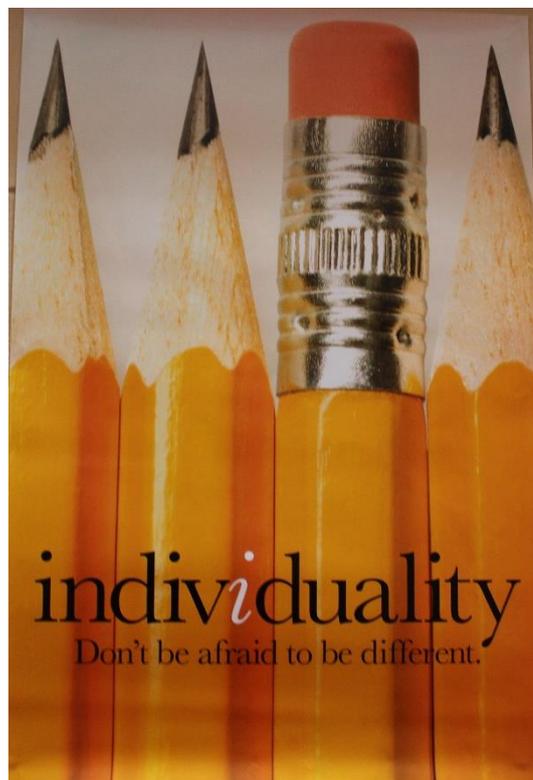
Theme	Activity
Stigma towards refugees, migrants & Asylum seekers	Refugee & Migrant workshop by British Red Cross
India	Curry, henna arts and crafts, India Quiz
Scotland	Scotland quiz, shortbread, haggis, make your own art haggis
Diversity	Chinese cooking, henna, diversity quiz, equality posters, rainbow biscuits
Ramadan	Eid cookies, Ramadan/Eid quiz, Ramadan art
Mexico	Nachos, Fan art dresses, Mexican Quiz, Quesadillas, Nacho Libre Masks, Make your own sombrero
Scotland	Shortbread, kilts, Scotland quiz, world connections
Poland	Cultural masks, Nalesniki crepes , Pisanki Easter egg decorating, Polish words musical game
America	Statue of liberty hats, American Quiz, chocolate chip muffins
Sudan	Mancala game, Kahk cookies, Sudanese Quiz
Thailand	Thai boxing circuits, elephant art, tropical smoothies, Thailand quiz

Impact

Seven of the nine children from the Inclusion group have joined mainstream youth clubs at Citadel. In addition, 4 siblings and 4 members of their extended family have also joined the Junior or Inter Club. The barriers the children may have previously faced to accessing mainstream services were reduced, since participating and completing the Inclusion Group. The children from the Inclusion Group told their friends, some who are from BME backgrounds, about the Citadel groups and clubs thus increasing the awareness and knowledge of the centre's services.

There was a noticeable difference in several of the children's confidence and interpersonal skills when reflecting upon their behaviour and communication in the group setting at the beginning and end of the project. From attending the group, the children have also developed friendships, participated in new activities and been able to develop their ability to talk about their feelings.

Citadel Youth Centre collects ethnic monitoring data for each service user who attends a group or club. Overall, during the period of the Inclusion project, BME representation trebled from 8% to 23.5%, within our three main youth clubs. The biggest increase is in Junior Club, which has increased from 14% BME to 31% BME, and Inter Club, which has increased from 5% BME to 22% BME.



Feedback and Evaluation

Receiving feedback from Inclusion Group members, youth club members and other stakeholders was important at the end of the Inclusion Project. In order to continue good inclusive practice, we were interested in perspectives internally and externally of the organisation of what we were currently doing well and what could be improved upon.

Children in the Inclusion group were consulted on how to promote inclusiveness and diversity within the Citadel. The majority agreed during the activity that posters and displays should include other languages on them in addition to English, such as Arabic, Chinese and Polish. They gave feedback on why they feel welcome and comfortable coming to a group at Citadel they stated: *“because it’s amazing”, “it’s a fun place to go “and “it makes our lives happier”*. A child attending the junior club suggested *“when someone’s new we could sit in a circle and learn words from their language”*, to be more inclusive.

We received 16 online survey responses from Citadel Youth Centre stakeholders. Some feedback received is highlighted below:

“I love the work the people in charge put in to helping marginalised minorities within the community. The Citadel is an institution in Leith and is well known for the good work it does. I hope it keeps on doing it!”

“Great place great staff and they understand the youth of today.”

87.5% of respondents believe that Citadel promotes and celebrates diversity within the centre either extremely well or very well. 87.5% would also be very likely or likely to suggest Citadel youth services to people from different backgrounds in Leith.



Guidelines for Culturally Inclusive Practice

- Provide activities that support the identity of young people such as BME and Gypsy/Traveller/Roma communities, e.g. cooking cultural cuisines.
- Ensure the space and environment is welcoming for children and young people from BME and marginalised groups.
- Celebrate different traditions and holidays to raise cultural awareness and promote diversity and inclusion.
- Being knowledgeable of welcoming activities and events migrant and refugee individuals are accessing can help newcomers to the community feel settled and encourage locals to accept differences.
- Use social media, newsletters and your website to tell the public, your own staff and service users about your practice and highlight your inclusive ethos. Use visuals that are inclusive but not tokenistic.
- Incorporate aspects of inclusion into training such as child protection, food and hygiene etc. to incorporate it into all your work.
- When recruiting volunteers or promoting services to young people advertise in diverse spaces for instance religious buildings of faith or community centres which a variety of individuals' access.
- Alleviate any staff and volunteer worries or gaps in cultural awareness with appropriate training, support and reassuring staff that positive inclusive practice encompasses applying good youth work practice.

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