

OLD TRAFFORD INSPIRING LEADERS PROGRAMME ~ BENEFITS & OUTCOMES

Purpose

The Old Trafford Inspiring Leaders programme came about to give passionate local people a chance to learn more about themselves; to develop greater confidence in their leadership abilities; and to learn how to lead and work more effectively with others across different cultural communities. The intention was for Old Trafford Neighbourhood Management to leave an enduring legacy within the people of the area which would be a catalyst for positive, lasting change.

History

Trafford is one of the most affluent boroughs in the country yet Old Trafford suffers significant deprivation. For health and worklessness it remains in the worst 2% in the country. The area is vibrant with an ethnically diverse population mostly from the Caribbean, northern India and Pakistan - although people from all around the world live here and many community languages are commonly spoken. The area has very active faith communities with 5 churches (Catholic, Church of England and Gospel), 5 mosques, Buddhist temple, Sikh gurdwara and Jehovah Witness Hall serving the 12,000 population.

The area received Safer Stronger Communities (Neighbourhood Element) funding to improve quality of life through participation and empowered local people.

The first two years of the programme concentrated on delivering large capital projects and testing new ways of working with statutory services. Whilst the investment was welcomed, in some ways it was a distraction from the real focus of the programme which was to test whether 'engagement and participation' – local people stepping forward to identify need, to shape future services, and to play their part in decision making and governance - would really make a difference to peoples' lives.

Commissioning 'Inspiring Leaders' was a courageous step forward for the Old Trafford Neighbourhood Management Board which, following a period of intensive work on the vision and purpose of the overall programme, had identified an urgent need to build community leadership capacity.

Old Trafford Inspiring Leaders (OTIL)

'Inspiring Leaders' was originally designed by Potent 6 (pioneers of effective, fit-for-purpose community engagement and leadership programmes) whilst working with senior leaders within Trafford Council. The inaugural delivery of the Inspiring Leaders Programme was delivered to 3 cohorts of the top manager band within the Council. The foundations that were established as a result of the achievements of this programme with senior leaders led to the opportunity being cascaded into this local community.

OTIL was adapted to serve the needs of a local community. It was co-delivered in Old Trafford by Louie Gardiner and Jo Birch, Neighbourhood Manager as the lead facilitators and coaches; supported by coaches, Lewis Shand-Smith and Carolyn Hirst. We recruited 19 people who lived and/or worked in Old Trafford who then embarked on a series of four 2 day workshops, 6 coaching sessions and subsequent facilitated action learning groups in year two.

The recruitment process made sure every corner of the neighbourhood was targeted, every section of the community, both employed and unemployed people. Participants ultimately were selected for their passion and a desire to take action within their community to create positive change. They were a lively and dynamic group from diverse backgrounds which included people with long term illness, unemployed people, volunteers and activists, and local workers. Our final participant mix included a third each of Asian Muslim, African-Caribbean and white English residents with slightly more women than men.

The leadership programme was a challenging journey with enormous rewards. It was based around three core modules focussing on personal mastery (adaptive capacity), relationship building and delivery of projects within the community.

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Each participant agreed their own unique learning journey - enabling the group to include community members embarking on conscious leadership for the first time, through to senior managers working locally.

Each participant came up with a relevant local project and engaged at least 5 other local people to work with and to pass on their learning. No-one could have predicted the range of projects or the tangible differences they have continue to make.

A co-created Celebration

In addition, the group as a whole had to undertake a shared project – which for this cohort, was creating and organising their Final Celebration/ Graduation event. International athlete Diane Modahl – who grew up in the area - and millionaire entrepreneur, Bill Liao took to the stage to commend and celebrate the achievements of our 19 graduates.

It was an astonishingly profound occasion with many, many people in the audience moved to tears as they bore witness to the transformation that had taken place in each Inspiring Leader. Cllr Mary Murphy, commented: *‘Never before in my life have I been to an event which brings together spiritual, emotional, social and political values, with such a diverse mix of people from every walk of life; every level of educational and institutional experience; differences in class, ethnicity, religion and gender I don’t know how you have done it but this has been the most amazing, moving experience’.*



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Headline Benefits to the neighbourhood

Peace – Joe Malaika

Engaging dozens of children in lantern making, and 400 people participating in the first ever Old Trafford Peace March as a response to gun and gang problems in the area.

Domestic Violence – Asifa Ahmed

A new relationship between the Neighbourhood Policing Team and Asian women increased understanding and encouraged women to report incidents. 4 new Asian volunteers recruited to the Police. Strategically this responds to a 'red flag' which came about after two tragic domestic-violence-related murders in the Borough both involving Asian families.

Local Democracy – Khalida Choudary with Asifa Ahmed

Asian women visiting their MP and Houses of Parliament to better understand the democratic process and become more involved. 2 women both from BME backgrounds are now exploring routes to becoming elected members. This neighbourhood has experienced low voter turnout.

Connections – Rafeeq Chaudhry

Enhancing the neighbourhoods' ability to connect and engage local people by a new blog and twitter. The new Youth and Community worker is engaging young people in posting their views and experiences. A new Social Media Centre (social enterprise) is being created.

Inspiring Leaders Foundation – a new social business, Jo Birch, Louie Gardiner, Pauline Holland

Since the Old Trafford programme, a new not-for-profit organisation called Inspiring Leaders Foundation has been established to take forward future Inspiring Leaders programmes to support our mission of '*transforming our communities and co-creating worldwide Civic Wealth*¹'. In future community-based programmes, our ambition is to have previous ILP graduates become mentors, coaches and longer-term to be our future trainers.

And there have been many more benefits...

Known benefits so far to civic society and to individual participants

- ✿ Inspiring Leaders group of 19 contributed an equivalent of £120,000 per annum in volunteering time
- ✿ 200 other people involved in many different ways with the programme
- ✿ One new social enterprise
- ✿ New social media centre being created
- ✿ 3 new small businesses were set up
- ✿ Clare returned to university following a prolonged period of mental health challenges
- ✿ Graham and Rafeeq were promoted at work
- ✿ Robina undertook two new leadership roles within the trade union movement
- ✿ Chris and Steve both found employment - in a local business and as a youth worker respectively
- ✿ Dorretta completed several short training courses and is now a mature undergraduate student at University. She has returned to track events as a veteran; has obtained further qualifications in coaching young people; has inspired parents to participate; is coaching in schools and has set up her own business.
- ✿ Graham, Joe, Robina and Jo undertook further personal and skills development
- ✿ Joe and Asifa are working towards standing as elected members

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- ✿ Joe commenced and is about to complete training as an inter-faith minister (2012)
- ✿ Awards nominations: Regional Justice Awards finalists (Joe & Asifa); Unsung Hero finalist (Asifa)
- ✿ 4 young Asian volunteers applied to the Police
- ✿ Steve, Dorretta and Asifa linked Safer Trafford Commissioner for further projects for the first time ever
- ✿ OT IL's (Jo Birch, Graham Bedford, Dee Maynard) voted 'best speakers' at Capita Economic Development Conference
- ✿ ILs (Jo Birch, Joe Malaika, Robina Sheikh) guest speakers at Common Purpose 'The Know' cascading the success of OT across Greater Manchester

Changer and the Changed

Our participants were not the only learners. The four of us on the delivery team came to realise that so many of the assumptions we had as professional consultants working within organisations and institutions did not apply in this community context. We found we had to adjust to the reality of the behaviours and patterns that emerged amongst the participants. At times we were deeply frustrated and challenged by how little formal power we held – recognising how much more predictable it can be to work with people in organisations, who by virtue of their psychological and economic contract with their employers, are more socially conformist.

In working with this amazing group of leaders from Old Trafford, we developed a much deeper personal capacity to influence and inspire beyond formal authority. Arguably, we learned as much if not more than our participants; in creating a context for change and growth we too were changed.

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Delivery Team: Louie Gardiner (Project Lead), Jo Birch, Lewis Shand-Smith, Carolyn Hirst

¹ Defining Civic Wealth

In choosing the term, 'Civic Wealth', we are referring to something that is more than 'money and material possessions'. To achieve civic wealth, requires moving beyond being driven to 'get' more and more for oneself (often at the expense of others), towards embracing a concern for the wellbeing of our neighbours. This in turn, means respecting, taking care of, and having pride in, our neighbourhoods in ways that are sustainable; creating the spaces and places in which we all love to spend our time – whether at work, play, learning, relaxing or moving from place to place.

Civic Wealth could be defined as 'all that contributes to lives that are meaningful, fulfilling and joyful; coupled with all that contributes to a quality of life for all that is healthy, inspiring and sustainable for current and future generations'. This includes not only what we do, but why we do it, who it is for, and how we do it; it is also about who is in our lives, the quality of those relationships and how we conduct ourselves in the world, what we value and what meaning we make about our contributions in life. Co-creating Civic Wealth demands of us, an appreciation of all dimensions of human development: social, physical, intellectual, creative, emotional and spiritual. It demands of us, a willingness to work in community, with the 'whole' and not simply the parts.

Civic Wealth becomes possible when empowered individuals and communities, in addition to being able to meet their own basic needs, are meaningfully participating in democratic decision-making that affects their lives; where they are engaging in purposeful activity together which addresses shared issues of concern, hopes and aspirations; and in the process of all this, they come to create a sense of community and togetherness. Civic Wealth would have at its heart, a community of people leading enriching lives, interconnected with each other in a myriad of ways, expressing their individual passions, faiths and cultures whilst also having a common purpose or shared intent for making their 'part of the world' a better place for all.