

## Case Study

Equity focused  
- women

# Saheli Adventure Hub

### What were our objectives?

To provide a women only health and fitness facility run by women, for women in Balsall Heath.



#### Project description

Sport England awarded the Saheli Women's Group £218,200 capital funding and £159,000 revenue funding through the Active England programme. The Active England grant helped them to convert a section of the Cannon Hill Education and Training Centre in partnership with South Birmingham College into a fully functioning gym. Revenue funding paid for a full time outreach worker. The total project cost £487,000. The project started in April 2005 and finished in April 2008.

#### Project origin

The Balsall Heath Forum formed the Saheli's Women's group after recognising that Asian women were not involved in local resident activities. A feasibility study identified the need for a Women's Centre in Balsall Heath, providing fitness and sporting activities.

The Saheli Adventure Hub was a vision the Saheli Women's Group had in 1998 after a consultation with local women. A significant number of women wanted to see a "women's centre" in Balsall Heath "run by women, for women". The gym allows young women to access physical activity. The community programme gives young women individual sessions across a range of activities including rock climbing, canoeing, horse riding, quad biking, abseiling and biking. It also offers multi-sport activity camps over the school holidays.

#### Project activities

The Hub offers all the local women regardless of race, age and background, the opportunity to get fit and healthy, build their confidence, take up new adventures to develop and grow into confident and inspired women.

#### Project performance

The Adventure Hub engaged with over 600 participants and had 120 health referrals. Programmes such as 'Wellness Programme' and 'Size Down Clinic' resulted in an improved overall health of women within the community. As a result of a partnership with the local college, the college changed its status to a women only college and extended its courses to include fitness and healthy living type courses.

On average over 50 women attend a day for the women-only sessions on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday. The facility became so popular that men started asking to use it, so Wednesdays became a 'men only day'. Fridays are a mixed session day. This proves that where appropriate 'gender specific and culturally appropriate services' for a community can and does work.

#### Lessons learned

- Know the community you serve;
- Know and understand their history, culture, religion and their needs;
- Employ local people where you can;
- Build local and citywide partnerships; and
- Deliver what the community wants, not what you think it needs.

#### Future

The project secured Reaching Communities funding – this will cover funding for a minibus, a full-time Project Manager and more sporting and engagement work.

The project worked with the City and Sporting Strategy Partnership to disseminate lessons learnt. In the future the project aims to open more hubs in the inner city of Birmingham – where they are needed.



To get active visit  
<http://saheliwg.org.uk/>

For more information:  
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