The CWG Ambassadors: Ensuring a lasting Birmingham 2022 legacy in Gloucestershire

Overview:
Lisi Cottam, Active Children Lead from Active Gloucestershire, worked with local SGOs to develop the Commonwealth Games (CWG) Ambassador programme, a county-wide collaboration created to ensure a lasting legacy from the Games in their region.

Selected Y5/Y6 students took part in leadership workshops empowering them to stage CWG festivals at their schools to use the Games excitement to re-engage the less active students in physical activity. The programme helped the Ambassadors build their employment skills through leadership, volunteering and co-creation opportunities.

The CWG Ambassadors

Objectives

- Build the selected Ambassadors' confidence in delivering, promoting and connecting their schools to Birmingham 2022
- Give the Ambassadors the experieince of delivering events, providing new skills to aid future employability
- Create a legacy of leadership in Gloucestershire following Birmingham 2022

Who was the target audience and how were they engaged?

The Ambassador programme focused on students who were inactive, those who disengaged with PE, physical activity or school generally, those with special educational needs and disabilities, and those with low esteem or self-confidence. Depending on the school, it also involved BAME children and girls needing help transitioning into secondary school. The activities the Ambassadors designed varied, but the programme involved the Ambassadors researching and communicating their peers' preferences on activity. This meant that the School Games were able to put on activities reflecting youth voice as opposed to making assumptions about what would be of interest.

Why was the activity unique?

As a leadership development initiative the Ambassador programme stood out for its focus on new and different CYP candidates for training, giving them valuable experience and confidence for their lives after school. In the workshops the Ambassadors learnt how to reach out to their peers and find what cultural and activity-based opportunities they wanted the Festival to include in their area. One example included a Festival in Cheltenham focused on providing opportunity for CYP who do not usually represent their school in sport. Following insight gathered by the Ambassadors, the target audience was identified as Year 5/6 SEND and BAME audiences and included Kurling, Boccia and a wellbeing session.

What was the impact felt in schools and by CYP?

The positive leadership experience of the Ambassador programme boosted self-confidence, resilience and relationship skills of the young people involved.

The insight gathering process fostered a new spirit among these students and their similarly disengaged peers, by making them feel they were being listened to. The impact will be felt after the programme and Birmingham 2022, opening the door for further dialogue between School Games and disengaged students. It is believed that the increased involvement felt by the young people will ultimately lead to them becoming more physically active at school.

Why is this an example of School Games best practice?

The Ambassador Programme is a great example of co-creation with CYP, as well as having a clear focus on targeting previously unengaged CYP. Empowering less active pupils via a place on the Ambassador programme will result in future engagement from them with the School Games and physical activity in general. Plus by focusing on pupil voice, and identifying what activities the Ambassadors' peers want to see meant that the final festivals were set-up for success in directly engaging and exciting the CYP at the individual schools.

For more information please contact the entrant on LisiCottam@activegloucestershire.org