

Girlz into Community Leadership Report

1. Date

14th, 15th and 16th February 2017

2. Venue

Marsden Heights Community College, Brierfield

3. Facilitation Team and Participants

Coordinating team

Yasmeen Ali
Paul Wilkinson

Facilitation team

Jo Wood
Vicky Kelly
Tara Weightman
Daawood Hussain

Marsden Heights Community College

Mashuq Hussain
Jennifer Begum

Participants

17 girls from year 9 attending MHCC
7 girls from year 10 attending MHCC
5 girls from year 11 attending MHCC
10 women from the MHCC Mum2Mums group

The facilitating team arrived at the venue two hours' prior in order to meet for fine tuning of the agenda and coordination of facilitation.

4. Conference Structure

Both, the co-ordinators and facilitating team met prior to the Girlz into Community Leadership conference to create an agenda for the 3 days. The main focus was to challenge the views and opinions of the delegates but most importantly identify solutions to issues they would face on a daily basis. Furthermore, the conference raised awareness regarding education and the benefits to both themselves and the community they are part of.

Day1

Arrival	Arrival / Registration / Tea - Coffee
General Session	Introduction Boom Chicka Boom Human Bingo
Small Group	Expectations and Agreements
	Personal Shield
	Decision Making
	Who are your Leaders?
General Session	Ideal Leader
General Session	Yes No Maybe
Small Groups	What is a Community (Brainstorming)
	Define a community
	Identify what community you belong to
	Ideal Community
	Present Ideal Community



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Girlz into Community Leadership Conference was opened with a quick energiser to break down any barriers that sometimes exist between the staff team and the participants. This allows any future discussions and dialogue to take place in a flexible and creative manner. This was quickly followed by an icebreaker to allow the participants and the facilitation team to get to know each other slightly better. This is a vital part of the conference as not many of the delegates, although they attend the same school, will not have had the chance to interact in this way before. This enables them with the confidence to approach someone they would not normally approach and get to know an interesting fact about them. Offering them this opportunity will help break down barriers and result in being able to engage in dialogue throughout the conference.

The small group session that followed was an opportunity for the delegates to begin the process of bonding as well as create an environment where the delegates felt safe and free to share their thoughts and opinions. Activities such as personal shield gave the delegates the opportunity to open up and share their values and beliefs without the feeling of being judged. Decision making on the other hand enabled the participants to identify their own thought process as well as justify their decision. Sharing this with the other members of the group also allowed them to think about other people's opinions and whether their views had an impact on their decisions.

The next stage involved the participants discussing who were their leaders and what characteristics attribute to a good leader. This increased interaction and sharing of ideas within the group and built common ground among group members. As well as exploring qualities of a leader, it gave facilitators a better understanding of who the participants aspire to be and their reasons why.



The session that generated the most amount of dialogue was the activity YES/NO/MAYBE. This involved questions that would create controversy with each participant as well as listening and understanding each participant's views and opinions. The statements enabled the participants to really think about their views and justify their stance on that particular statement.

Following on from YES/NO/MAYBE, the participants began working on their project by discussing what is a community and identifying what communities they belong to? Participants were able to think deeply about the different forms of communities and analyse the positives and negatives of each community.

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The participants were then asked to create an ideal community and share it with the rest of the group. This enabled the group members to question aspects of their ideal community, resulting in the creator considering policies and procedures as well as what barriers could be in place.

Day2

Arrival	Arrival / Registration / Tea - Coffee
General Session	Energiser
Small Group	Conflict Resolution
General Session	Win as Much as You Can Community Organisations

Day two again started with an energizer in order to ensure that participants felt relaxed and comfortable. The fact that the participants were more engaged and joined in with the energiser showed that they were feeling more relaxed and any barriers from day one were beginning to break down. This allowed the facilitators to push the boundaries slightly by introducing activities which would push them out of their comfort zone.

The activity, conflict resolution identified how individuals come to understand particular beliefs and attitudes and how these beliefs and attitudes can affect how we react and act when a conflict occurs. The participants were able to discuss the positive and negative responses to a conflict highlighting the need to ensure a 'win, win' situation is aimed for.

This was closely followed by an activity called Win as Much as You Can. The teams were split into four groups to imitate a divide between the groups. The purpose of the activity was for the teams to work together to win as much as they could collectively. However due to the divide between each group they began competing with each other, resulting them wanting to win as much as they could for their own group. This then created conflict and the facilitators were able to reflect back on the previous session and highlight that putting it into practice what they learnt from the previous session would have helped resolve the conflict that occurred.

The afternoon session consisted of a community organisation called Access Alpha (Shaheen Badshah and Fatima Shah) to come along and share with the group the barriers South Asian women face when accessing higher education. They discussed the barriers and prejudices they faced throughout their life and how they were able to overcome these barriers.

This allowed participants to engage in dialogue about barriers they are currently facing and ways and means of how they can overcome them.

Day3

Arrival	Arrival / Registration / Tea - Coffee
General Session	Energiser Magic Carpet
Small Group	Tools for Reaching an Agreement
	Project Plan
	Project Action Plan
General Session	Closure/ Awards



Similar to the other days, the day started with an energiser and by day 3 it was clear that they felt comfortable and relaxed as they began to suggest which energiser should be used.

The afternoon session was planned so the participant could work together on their projects however it was felt in order to ensure team work a team building activity was included prior to the planning. This activity, Magic Carpet, challenged the communication skills of the participants as they needed to develop a strategy and then carry out that strategy in silence. How they communicated when things were not going to plan was the biggest challenge for most of the participants

As well as ensuring that the correct project as was chosen it was also vital that all the participants were in agreement. This was done through the activity, Tools for Reaching an Agreement. The facilitators led a discussion through three stages in order to ensure everyone was in agreement of the decision made. Step 1 included the generation of as many ideas as possible which were narrowed down and organised in step 2. The final step was a voting process which allowed each member to vote on the ideas generated and the idea with most votes was what they would work on. Adopting this method enabled participant to use the necessary tools and techniques to reach a democratic decision which involved all participants the opportunity to have input.

Once the groups had an understanding regarding Tools for Reaching an Agreement they then took part in the next stage which involved project planning. Within their groups they discussed the project they will be delivering and ways in which to organise and structure the project. Participants started off with a vision and then set out tasks needed to reach this vision.

They were able to identify both individual and group roles as well as the resources needed and obstacles they may face. The final stage looked at timelines and how long it would take to complete the project. This enabled the groups to work together on what is needed with the resources they have as well as collectively contributing with ideas and suggestions.

5. Outcomes of the Girlz into Community Leadership Programme

The Girlz into Community Leadership Conference provided everyone with an opportunity to get to know one another better, as well as developing their leadership skills.

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It also established a correlation between people's motives for participation in the conference. For example, the majority of participants faced similar barriers in gaining access to both education and higher education due to their cultural backgrounds.

Although participants entered the conference with varied levels of knowledge regarding their communities and projects they are involved with, once the conference had been delivered, it was clear that all participants had a good understanding around the communities they are a part of as well as barriers people face and how they can implement this in future projects. The conference helped participants get to know each other, the program and how to plan community projects quickly and efficiently. The conference established the competency and underpinning knowledge necessary for them to engage, empower and enable the communities they live and work in.

Adjustments to the conference were made in accordance to dialogue being created, which enhanced the conference as it allowed participants to think collectively about certain issues and barriers within their communities, which in turn allowed them to think critically.

Yasmeen Ali and Paul Wilkinson

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University of Central Lancashire, 2017.