

Young people breakdown barriers



Through the pages of Awaaz readers may be following the progress of the Pakistani Youth Forum (PYF) project based in the Crosland Moor ward of Huddersfield.

We have been particularly covering the difference which PYF's residential have played in the community especially the positive breakthrough with 'Female only' residentials, now an annual activity for the Forum, says Project Coordinator,

Sofia Buncy.

In February of this year the PYF went one step further when 4 Pakistani youngsters (15 - 17 yrs old), unhappy with the racial, cultural and territorial divide in the Crosland Moor ward organised and facilitated a residential to the Lake District.

The difference was instead of this being with their friends from their own area this was done with youngsters they did not know and from a

different ethnic group to themselves. The group which attended were youngsters from an African-Caribbean and white background from a Sports Group in Walpole called 'Crosland Moor All Stars'.

The aim of the residential was a crucial and hot topic: Why are youngsters in the ward divided? What can we do to start addressing this?

Peer facilitator Idris Ali remarked: "The residential was a big change for us as young people. Normally we are involved in the planning but youth workers deliver the workshops. This time we had to plan and deliver! It was a big confidence boost for all the peer facilitators and something we would like to do again. The residential was also a great way of breaking down barriers between youths."

Sofia also emphasised: "This was a fantastic opportunity for young people from PYF to pass on their skills and what they have learnt in previous residentials to their peers. It was a big change for young people to step into the shoes of a youth worker, where they are directly planning and delivering workshops to their peers. We would like to thank Community Support Services for supporting this crucial venture. Unfortunately segregation exists in most communities, whether this is due to tradition, culture, ethnicity or territory. We are not claiming to have solved the problem but we have made a start!"

Since returning from the residential youngsters have been more active in using the resources in each others areas. They are currently looking at setting up a programme of joint activities.

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