

Feedback Report for ASH Scotland on Producing the 'COOL' DVD

- Final Project Report -

REACH Community Health Project



REACH

COMMUNITY HEALTH PROJECT

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*'It is common sense to take a method and try it. If it fails, admit it frankly and try another.
But above all, try something.'*

Franklin D. Roosevelt

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Introduction

In 2005 REACH Community Health Project received a grant award from Phase 1 of ASH Scotland's Tobacco and Inequalities fund to conduct a research project investigating the prevalence and patterns of tobacco use by BME young people living in the Southside of Glasgow. The findings of this research indicated that there was a need to develop smoking cessation services and smoking prevention resources designed specifically for the BME youth.

In addition to this REACH recently conducted a project on "Actively Preventing Cancer in Gorbals and Govanhill areas of Glasgow". During an information workshop with BME youth, there was particular interest expressed in the information provided by the interactive website on "Quitting Smoking". Engaging youth in projects on health-related issues is a priority for REACH as adolescence is a vulnerable period of transition in which lasting life-style habits are formed.

Upon the basis of this, in 2006 REACH devised a proposal for Phase 2 of ASH Scotland's Tobacco and Inequalities Fund and was successful in securing funding to create audio-visual information (a multi-lingual DVD and radio programme) highlighting the negative effects of smoking with and for 14-18 year old Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) youth in Glasgow.

Tackling the negatives of smoking, the DVD would aim to encourage BME youth to take up a healthier lifestyle by raising awareness of the health harms of tobacco. The DVD would be made available in community languages (Urdu, Punjabi, Bengali) and distributed in schools with high BME populations and played on BME broadcast stations.

Aims of the Project

The 'COOL' DVD Project aims are to build on our present BME community health work by:

1. Encouraging BME youth to take up a healthier, smoke-free lifestyle by raising issues of tobacco health harm, exploring tobacco control issues and options (aids) for quitting smoking.
2. Providing opportunities for BME youth to take part in making media about issues related to their own health.
3. To contribute in discouraging smoking among the BME community, targeting youth at risk.

Methodology

The COOL DVD initiative was a one-year project, which primarily made use of **Participatory Action Methodologies. Consultative Research Methods**, which involved seeking the opinion of both BME youth and health professionals about health needs, cultural barriers and appropriate responses were employed in the prior needs assessment and elaborated as part of the planning stages of the video and radio programme.

REACH advertised the project city-wide, targeting BME radio stations, schools and BME-related projects and groups in the city of Glasgow. The project primarily targeted 14-18 year old BME youth who were either at risk of starting smoking, or who had taken an interest in promoting cessation among their peers. They were recruited through REACH's youth health forum, and from other local youth projects and secondary schools, with whom REACH already had established networks.

A group of BME young people was selected for audition and two BME young people from the group were selected to participate in the creation of the DVD that tackles the issue of smoking cessation/prevention among their peers. The project was guided by a media producer with group work experience, who worked collaboratively with REACH's Youth Health Participation Officer.

The project involved three months of pre-production work, six-months of production work and three months post-production as currently we are working with the Production company (Baby Grand Productions) at forming a radio adaptation of the film script.

Pre-production involved selection of BME young people as actors, developing a script, and running auditions for parts/roles in the production. The young people took part in the project from the planning stages so that the majority of work was carried out with them, in order to endorse a sense of ownership of the project.

Now that the DVD has been completed, the production group will meet again to create a radio adaptation of what they had created. This will ensure that distribution is widespread and will also provide a new starting point for on-going work with the group beyond the one-year initiative.

Activities that contributed to the success of the COOL DVD being produced:

- Consultations with School providers in regards to developing the structure and portraying a relevant health message for BME youth.
- Consultation with BME youth in regards to the content and presentation of the DVD.

- Interviews with BME Youth in order to recruit actors and for the DVD Production

The Outcomes of the Cool DVD

- Increase the understanding and the negative effects of smoking, both physical and psychological caused by tobacco use among young BME people.
- Discourage BME youths from taking up smoking.
- Encourage healthier lifestyle among BME youths, with the option of quitting smoking
- Create an educational resource for health professionals, schools, and organizations dealing with young people including BME young people on preventative health and for promoting smoking cessation among young people

Conclusion

The COOL DVD has achieved its aim of promoting healthier lifestyle among BME young people by highlighting the negative effects of smoking. This initiative has benefited BME young people by giving them an insight into how smoking can affect their health, family and relationships. They now understand the risks to their health like cancer, atherosclerosis, with other physiological changes and dependence caused by nicotine. Also many young people have identified themselves with the scenarios and a positive impact has been made on their minds to quit smoking. This initiative is first of its kind in Glasgow with participation of BME young people. REACH values this as a valuable resource for teachers, health workers, and parents, carers who want this preventative message to be passed to children. The ASH Scotland Tobacco & Inequalities Grant has enabled REACH to produce DVD resource and to build on our work at community level to prioritize smoking cessation and prevention among BME young people.

Discussion

Taking part in a project of this nature has provided learning opportunities for us as an organization, for the staff and indeed for the BME young actors, who were involved in the whole process of the creation of the cool DVD. Moreover, we certainly believe that the production team also benefited from such an innovative project.

The project helped in reflecting the negative effects of smoking, however it wasn't without challenges. Numerous stages of the project had different challenges, which include finding the suitable production team, engaging with the BME youths recruiting actors for the DVD. Stigma attached to smoking in certain BME communities meant barriers for many young people from certain multicultural communities to participate in this project. Furthermore, young people were at school and their availability for filming of the scenes was an issue, we had to film the scenes at different times of the day due to the nature of the project. Most importantly, acting is a skill, which everyone can not perform especially when we did not have time to deliver any training hence accessing and recruiting efficient skilled actors was a huge challenge.

To overcome these challenges and to deliver a good result we carried out a short mapping exercise of drama schools in Glasgow to ascertain BME young people within these schools. From among many schools from our mapping exercise in the city only one was able to provide skilled actors. In addition to this REACH's network and its contacts within the BME communities helped to secure more prospective actors, which finally led to an audition and thereby good actors were recruited. Agreeing to the script was again a challenge, especially due to cultural issues surrounding smoking; this was highlighted and eliminated by piloting the script with a group of BME communities, who advised about the acceptable scripts for a wider BME population.

This initiative by REACH's will benefit in promoting the ill effects of tobacco not just in the BME youth but we hope it will also influence youth in general and indeed parents and teachers. Our initiative aims to decrease the incidence of smoking among BME population and in due course of time the Cool DVD will facilitate this process. Indeed it will depend on the dissemination of the DVD and REACH with its working relationship with many schools in Glasgow and its wider presence within Glasgow and Scotland will ensure this happens.