



Age UK Project Evaluation Report

Sporting Equals

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Age UK Project Report

Phase 3 Cascade Training

1. Background

Age UK was awarded £15.1 million under the Big Lottery Wellbeing Programme to deliver the **fit as a fiddle** portfolio across nine English regions supporting older people aged over 55 to lead active and healthier lifestyles. Sporting Equals is one of the five national partners to the Age UK fit as a fiddle cascade training programme and was commissioned in 2009 to deliver the faith and community strand.

The aim of the project was to devise and develop a tailor made training package for BME and faith communities to enable opportunities for physical activity and wellbeing through supported interventions. The project worked with local partner organisations to deliver a bespoke training programme for volunteers and a package of activities to support those over the age of 55. Phase 1 was used primarily to develop the training material, volunteer resources and was supported by 39 delivery partners who helped run training and deliver roadshows as part of the wider messaging.

Phase 2 was supported through extension funding which enabled Sporting Equals to work in partnership with Eastern Lives (Age UK Lancashire), Polish Senior Citizen Group (Midlands) and Chinese Community Centre (Midlands) and Chinese Mental Health Association (London). Three bespoke modules were designed to help support organisations working with South Asian, Chinese and Polish older people over the age of 55. The modules were developed to sit alongside the national training pack, which were developed to act as supplementary resources for organisations working with these target groups.

The final phase (3) took place in 2014/15 which was aimed at cascading training to delivery partners enabling them to independently deliver training using the national training packs.

	Output	Year	Delivery Partners	Volunteers	Older Beneficiaries	Total Reach
Phase 1	Training & Roadshows	2009-12	54	289	5,243	5,532
Phase 2	Bespoke Modules	2012-13	4	137	379	516
Phase 3	Cascade	2014-15	28	247	998	1,245
TOTAL NUMBER OF PEOPLE ENGAGED						7,293

2. Aims and Objectives

This report provides a brief end of project evaluation of the final element (phase 3) of the cascade faith and community strand with a particular emphasis on how the project has made an impact and a difference to volunteers and the lives of older peoples. The findings are intended to complement the findings of the wider evaluation being undertaken by CIRCLE.

The report has been compiled using a mixture of feedback collecting during the course of the project through face to face and telephone interviews with volunteers, older people, project reports and case study material received from delivery partners.

3. Project Delivery

In total 30 delivery partners were engaged in the cascade training across the country which was delivered to groups of 4-8 volunteers with the agreed output that at least one member of the group who attended the training workshop would cascade the training to another group of volunteers. The cascade approach was developed to help support learning and ensure long term use of the training packs which were given out to volunteers attending the training. Alongside the cascade it was agreed that each volunteer would support 4 older people each in the capacity of a 'mentor' or 'activity coordinator'¹ enabling older people to lead active and healthier lifestyles. In total 998 older beneficiaries were engaged and phase three reached over 1,200 people.

Organisation	Training sessions	Total no. volunteers/ staff	Older people reached (per vol)	Total no. older people supported
Age UK Plymouth	2	8	4	32
Age UK Sutton	3	27	4	108
B-Active	2	10	5	50
Bodies in Motion	2	7	4	28
Black Elderly Group Southwark	1	5	4	20
BME Network	2	9	4	36
British Asian Rugby Association	4	20	4	80
Caribbean Health and Wellbeing Group	2	10	4	40
Chinese Community Centre Birmingham	2	10	4	40
Ekta Sangat Ladies Group	2	9	4	36
Hadhari Centre Derby	2	8	4	32
Halesowen Asian Elderly Association	2	10	4	40
Hamara Healthy Living Centre	2	10	4	40
Karmand Community Centre	2	7	4	28
Local Women's Association	2	9	4	36
London Chinese Community Centre	1	5	4	20

¹ Moving Moments Mentor and Moving Moments Activity Coordinator are roles for volunteers which are explained in the national training pack

Mary Magdalene's Church	2	10	4	40
Moreland Trust Health and Social Care	2	8	4	32
Muslim Women's Council	2	10	4	40
Nishkam Civic Association	1	5	4	20
Ready Steady Active	1	4	4	16
Revensthorpe Community Centre	2	7	4	28
Saheli Hub	1	6	Not Reported ²	
Sri Hemkunt Children's Society	1	5	4	20
Stratton Street CC	2	10	4	40
Sunderland Bangladesh International Centre	1	4	4	16
UK Asian Women's Centre	2	9	4	36
Warwickshire Race Equality Partnership	1	3	4	12
West End Befrienders	2	8	4	32
TOTAL	52	253	113	998

A significant amount of time was spent on marketing to help promote the project, followed by identifying and screening organisations to ensure they had the capacity and volunteer infrastructure to enable them to deliver the project outputs.

Once Delivery Organisations were accepted onto the programme they were provided with a number of resources, including three information packs, a USB stick containing information and resources to help run the training sessions (such as template for activities, diary log etc). Each delivery partner was provided with £500 for delivery and a further £500 if they were able to commit to cascade the training to another group of volunteers. Alongside this Sporting Equals provided 14 hours of consultancy support to help support projects and trainers.

All the Delivery Organisations observed one workshop run by Sporting Equals trainers for volunteers/staff and were then support either by a further supported session or outreach support to help meet the outputs agreed by the organisation.

4. The Model

The cascade training was based on the existing national training model with the emphasis on 2 key objectives:

- Volunteers cascading information to older people to enable them to lead active and healthier lifestyles across the three key strands of physical activity, healthy eating and mental wellbeing;
- Training organisations to continue independently deliver the training using the cascade packs and the trainer support resources;

The second objective which linked to the longer term sustainability of the project was fairly challenging in light of the expectation that organisations would commit to cascading the training to a further group of volunteers.

² Due to a change in management structure the Saheli Hub was unable to commit to the project following the training and did not report outputs

'I never thought I could get up in front of a group of people and present, the training has given me the confidence to do this and has allowed me to develop new skills', Moving Moments Volunteer

Variations existed between groups in relation to capability to deliver training for example most people in the Halesowen group were able to deliver independently however the Chinese groups did not have the confidence or basic presentation skills to carry out a second delivery and therefore required more support. Some volunteers were more keen than others to take part in the second delivery which was often dependent on the skills, confidence and capability of volunteers.

Additional support was provided to West End Befrienders and the Chinese Centre, Birmingham who were both experiencing difficulty cascading the training due to language difficulties. To overcome this, additional supported sessions were provided with interpreters and we now have trained South Asian and Chinese speaking volunteers supporting older people who don't speak English.

Alongside this a Chinese summary training resource was produced which has also helped support volunteers at the Chinese Centre, Birmingham and West End Befrienders.

Apart from language barriers the 'train the trainer' model has worked well with most organisations cascading the training through a second delivery. Many organisations have confirmed that they will continue to use the training packs usually as a support resource for volunteers or will be using aspects of the resource to either help support volunteers or to continue providing information to support older people.

5. Activities

A wide range of activities were undertaken through project which ranged from walking groups (which was probably the most popular form of activity), swimming, exercise through to playing board games with older people to help stimulate mental wellbeing.

Through the healthy eating training information and advice was given by volunteers to older about healthier diets alongside providing information to families to enable them to change eating and cooking habits.

For a lot of projects group activities like seated exercise, yoga, swimming worked well in getting groups of sedentary individuals involved in something they could do with other people which also helped develop social skills and helped reduce isolation. Mental activity helped older people acquire new skills such as using the internet and also helped reduce mental illnesses such as anxiety and depression.

"There seems to be a slight stigma attached for some of the ladies to be active and attend sessions and through the project it seems they have understood the value of physical activity", Moving Moments Volunteer

Some projects have adapted activities to enable older people to take part for example, the British Asian Rugby Association put on touch rugby session for older members and adapted

the sport to make it less physically demanding whilst Ready Steady Active put on low impact cardio, circuits and boxercise. This enabled older people to take part in new activities they would not normally not have considered and opened up new and interesting experiences.

Physical Activity	Healthy Eating	Mental Wellbeing
Walking groups	Individual nutritional plans	Mental games such as cludo, spelling, draughts, carom board etc.
Dance and falls prevention exercise	Identifying recipes for cooking	Dance sessions
Seated 'keep fit' sessions	Group cooking activities with healthy ingredients	Mind stimulating group games
Rookie Golf	Gardening projects	IT development skills – how to use a computer, skype and radio broadcasting
Chair based exercise	Healthy cooking sessions	Flower arranging
Tai Chi, Gentle, Exercise,	Healthy eating talks	Reading
Yoga Class	Specialist organisations to talk about nutrition	Using internet
Swimming	Putting together menus and healthy recipes	Using phone apps to access information
Gym, Aerobics, Flex & Stretch Class	Trying new foods and vegetables	Knitting and sewing activities
Low impact cardio, circuits and boxercise	Replacing butter with low fat oil	Puzzles and crosswords

“The impact has been on the healthy mind, healthy body, older people are taking more interest in community events, have more social contact with peer groups and the project has help manage some with emotions in a more effective way”, Chinese Community Centre, Birmingham

6. Impact on older people

The benefits specified by organisations were numerous however some of the key benefits identified through end of project reporting included:

Improved balance – projects reported that exercise helped older people improve muscle tone and strength which helps reduce the risks of falls. Alongside this exercise has helped with the way people carry themselves, helping to improve general mobility and coordination.

“Apart from the common benefits of exercise the project has helped with weight control, improving muscle tone, and helped to reduce illness”, Patricia Cunha, Centre Manager, Elim Community Association

Better sleep patterns – some projects reported that older people felt more alert with exercise and as a result they were more likely to get a better nights sleep if they had been active during the day.

“The older people have been attending regular walking sessions with the Hamara Centre and some have also become walk leaders. The centre has set up floor based sessions which are well attended”, Project Worker, Hamara Centre

Mental health – projects reported that exercise helped keep the older persons mind more alert and as a result helped with depression and the social element helped prevent isolation.

Weight loss – projects reported that some older people had lost weight due to regular exercise and changes in diet, many volunteers also noticed changes in themselves.

Improved confidence – many older people have built confidence due to the increased social interaction with other people and as a result affects like anxiety and depression have decreased.

“The sessions have allowed people to increase their physical activity levels, build on their skills such as teamwork and leadership, increase confidence to make new friends and socialise outside the family”, Project Worker British Asian Rugby Association

Removal of Isolation – the volunteers of the project have removed the isolation barrier of many older people who stay at home and who are now more confident to come out of the house and make new friends. Many BME elders face language difficulties and as a result experience isolation and loneliness as a result of the project the volunteers have managed to support vulnerable people.

“Our participants are elderly from 70 years of age to the oldest being over 85 years. The Yoga classes have been supportive in keeping them active both physically and mentally and as a source of meeting other people”, Kanwaljit Kaur, Sir Hemkunt Society

Skills – some older people learnt new skills such as the internet/ mobile app with the support of volunteers which has enabled them to access information on healthy diets whilst others have had the support of younger volunteers to help develop radio broadcasting skills which has enabled health messaging to the wider community.

“Our volunteers have worked together collaboratively to train in radio broadcasting to enable the wider health messaging to reach the wider local community in a form they can relate to,”
Idrees Rashid, Middleborough BME Network

Healthier Diets – many older people have advised that they have removed fatty foods and high salty foods from their diets and many had been introduced to new foods and vegetables.

7. Impact Volunteers

Volunteers engaged across the projects were from a diversity of backgrounds – some organisations recruited younger volunteers to help develop an inter-generational focus whilst other preferred older volunteers which enabled more empathy and constructive dialogue. Volunteers were not always from the same ethnic groups and the training helped support awareness around religious and cultural issues.

Tasks undertaken by the volunteers were varied and ranged from supporting older people with exercise sessions, through to leading discussion groups and helping older people use the internet. Most organisations used the volunteer role descriptions as a framework to help support volunteers.

Feedback from partner organisations suggested that the volunteers had been given an opportunity to develop their own knowledge, including that around the needs of older people and differences between cultures. It was also felt that volunteers had been able to meet new people and build skills and positive experience for their CVs, as well as softer skills such as self-confidence and self-esteem. Many saw the project as a way as ‘giving something back to the community’, and other were interested as older relatives were involved in the project.

The volunteers have been actively making changes to their own lifestyles and to those of their families and acting as wider ‘community ambassadors’. One partner organisation stated that volunteers have been sharing their skills even more widely than their own families and that they have been disseminating information amongst the wider community, emphasising the long term impact of the project.

“I have changed my own diet as a result of the project which has helped me to reduce weight and also changed the diet of my family members, my son has also lost weight and we have started eating alot healthier”, Moving Moments Volunteer, BME Network Middleborough

Volunteers gained many benefits from taking part in the project and also provided benefits for their wider communities and for the organisations they worked with. Their commitment to delivering the project and to developing their skills and knowledge base has meant that the organisations now have a pool of volunteers to draw from, and in some cases this means a continuation of sustainability of the project. On a personal level, volunteers reported that they have gained in self-esteem and self-confidence, and have applied learning from their training to their own lives and those around them.

8. Impact Delivery Partners

The impacts of participating in the project for the partner organisations themselves were generally very positive, with a number expressing that the training and experience gained through involvement in the project had contributed to increased organisational capacity. Several organisations expressed that they now have a pool of skilled volunteers to draw from for future delivery, which could enable them to increase the range of services available to the community.

Projects reported positive changes in behaviour as a result of information and activities on the benefits of healthy eating, physical exercise and overall mental wellbeing. They also highlight the type of support older people wanted in order to be able to make changes. Activities offered by partner organisations were tailored to the needs of the individuals taking part to allow for different ability levels. For example Ready Steady Active put on low impact cardio and boxercise which would otherwise not have been accessible to older groups of people.

Projects reported how the cascade training fitted well within the ethos of the participating organisation complementing existing provision and providing the organisation with an opportunity to focus in particular on health issues for BME communities. Delivery of the cascade has often led to an increased number of service users as word spread to family and friends. This demonstrates the popularity of the activities and an appetite for similar projects in the future.

“The best thing we have learned from the projects is that people have the capacity to do a lot more than we give them credit for, although they may need practical support to get there the project has opened up opportunities”, Delivery Partner

9. Case Studies

Project Case Study – Ekta Sangat Ladies Group

Following the training Ekta Sangat group started a walking group with four volunteers which encouraged the older women to take part in regular walking sessions. Alongside this the groups have brought some board games to help develop social interaction and add a fun element to the group. The group now also runs regular exercise and yoga sessions with the help of the moving moments volunteers.

The impact the project has made to Members:

- They feel more confident in their daily lives and feel more strong both physically or mentally
- Those with arthritis have noticed definite improvements in their strength and mobility
- Most feel less stressed in their lives generally and were able to think more clearly and creatively as a result.
- Many noticed that they are suffering from less minor illnesses and ailments due to the boosting effects of exercise and healthy eating on the immune system and also because of improved mental health as a result of forming friendships and support networks within the group.
- Most feel that they have a more positive outlook on life and feel happier and more contented. This can be attributed to the release of natural endorphins from exercise but also due to social interaction that the group provides.
- Nearly all were sleeping more and getting a better quality of sleep which they put down to the benefits of regular exercise.
- Most feel better able to control their weight
- Many feel that they look better as a result of the exercise which has improved their self- esteem.
- All feel less isolated because of the contact they have with the group.

The project worker has advised since the Exercise & Yoga classes have commenced, many of the members now regularly go for walks as small groups around the local community to build upon the increased fitness that the classes have enabled. Some feedback from members include:

“I feel more confident than before,” Mrs Kaur

“I made new friends after start these exercise session,” Mrs Bhanu Modi

“I feel more active, healthy now,” Mrs Vidya

The project worker believes the educational and health benefits will assist individuals to maintain their independence and health for a longer period of time. This will relieve pressure on local care and health services and on the families linked to the individuals concerned, both of which will benefit the wider community.

As part of wider links the group has become a member of Diabetes Care; members attend their events and help share information about diabetes with their contacts raising awareness of diabetes within the community. They have also linked with the carer support service who

have increased awareness of support available to family caring for an elderly relative – this benefits the wider family system as well as individual members of the group.

The success of the group has encouraged people from other community groups to join the project helping to break down barriers within the community.

Project Case Study – BME Network, Middlesborough

Following the training the centre has started regular walking groups for more active individuals and chair based exercise for older people with limited mobility. Information was provided to older members about healthier diets and the volunteers delivered smoothie sessions as a way to introduce older people to fruits, particularly as some older people had problems chewing. As part of the wider mental wellbeing strategy older people were given the opportunity to learn IT skills, carry out research and use the centre for social interaction. Trips were put on to encourage people to regularly attend the centre which enabled volunteers to help raise awareness of the need for older people to be physically active.

The training motivated in particular the older female volunteers to take part in a regular radio broadcasting programme which helped share wider health and wellbeing messaging with the community. The volunteers carried out additional research into sharing health tips, healthier cooking as well as using the information from the training packs to provide general advice. The intergenerational aspect of volunteers enabled the younger volunteers to support the older volunteers with developing the IT and broadcasting skills.

The impact the project has made to Members:

- As a result of the project more older people are active and feel better physically and mentally.
- Intergenerational volunteers have enabled the younger volunteers to support the older volunteers to develop IT and broadcasting skills.
- The volunteers have worked collectively to creatively drive health messaging to the wider community through radio broadcasting and as a result have developed new skills.
- Many older people taking part in the project have felt less socially isolated and feel less depressed as a result of the project.
- Fun ways have been used through trips and smoothie sessions to drive health messaging.
- Volunteers are more aware of the need to healthier lifestyle and have passed this messaging on to older people, family members and the wider community.
- Most older people and volunteers have a more positive outlook on life and are forming new friendships and support networks through the group.

The project coordinator has advised that most older people now regularly go for walks, have changed diets so they are eating healthier and some have gained new skills. Some direct feedback demonstrates this;

“Tariq was inactive and suffering from a number of health conditions. The activities have helped Tariq to stop thinking about his ailments and raised aspirations. Tariq now wants to drive and is using the centre to prepare for his driving theory with the help from staff and volunteers,” BME Network Project Coordinator

“I use to sit at home watching TV and feeling depressed, I now regularly attend the centre and with the help of staff I am learning new skills. I also feel better now I am walking regularly,” Mr Tariq

“I came from Iraq and found myself very isolated, although I am well qualified the language has caused me barriers in this country, the project has helped me become active, make friends and learn new skills” Mr Malik

The centre has advised that the packs have been helpful in giving the volunteers structured roles and have enabled volunteers/staff to develop a greater understanding of the importance of health and wellbeing. The centre is looking to utilise the packs in the future and in particular the volunteer information.

Following the projects success the BME Network is looking to run volleyball for older males who have expressed an interest in this sport and they are actively encouraging mosques to put on activities for older people. Longer term the centre is keen to continue running activities for older people with the support of volunteers and is investigating other opportunities with agencies in the area to help develop similar initiatives in the future.

Case Studies – Older People

Mrs T is a 69 year old Indian female who lives on her own. Due to cultural upbringings she hasn't really interacted with the rest of the community. After consultation the volunteer encouraged her to take part in walking and seated exercise and swimming. Mrs T has lost weight which has improved her confidence and she has starting thinking more about herself. She use to swim in India and the project has enabled her to renew her interest in swimming gain.

Mrs X is a 62year out Bangladeshi female who has spends most of her time looking after her large family. She doesn't have time to eat fruits as she doesn't like them and therefore snacks on sugary foods. Due to cultural and family pressures she does not exercise and spends all her time indoor catering around family. It was difficult to encourage Mrs X to get involved however the volunteer has enabled her to start thinking more about herself. She has got involved with walking, swimming and seated exercise, as she does not like fruit she is trying more exotic fruits to help reduce the intake of sugary snacks. Mrs X has become more health conscious and is making attempts to reduce her weight through regular walking and swimming.

Mr X is a 66 year old Bangladeshi male with arthritis. He lives in a large family and works as a cook in a restaurant. He spends his night at the restaurant and days sleeping and does no exercise or physical activity. He has no control over his diet as the women of the house buy the food and cook it. He did start noticing that his clothes were becoming tighter and it made him conscious of his weight. Through the project the volunteer provided advice to him and his family which enabled him to gain confidence to take part in activities and allowed his family to think about healthier alternatives for family meals.

Mrs G is a 90 year old Pakistani female who over the years was active but due to her stroke has been left bound to a wheelchair and Zimmer frame. Her diet is good but due to lack of physical activity she is overweight, housebound and very unhappy. Through the project the volunteer has supported the older lady to get walk more around the house using the zimmer frame, get involved in seated exercise classes which has enabled her to get out of the house and meet new people. As a result Mrs G is feeling better, looks forward to her days out and is a lot more happier.

Mr R is 64 year old Pakistani male who spent most of his life running a family business. He had no control over family food preparation and ate what was cooked, and as a result started to get signs for Type 2 Diabetes. As a result of volunteer support Mr R goes for regular walks in the evening with his wife and they have both make changes to his diet, cutting out fried foods and butter and introducing more steam and oven foods with reduced salt. Since losing weight and introducing walking, swimming and changes to his diet Mr R is now managing his diabetes and has lost weight along with his wife.

Rama is a 68 year old Indian female with little knowledge the benefits of eating healthier or regular exercise. From her BME she is considered obese. Rama has little intake fruit or vegetables, and has an appetite for traditional Asian savouries often cooked/fried in ghee or oil. Due to her weight and arthritis Rama has slight mobility issues and low levels of confidence. She is concerned about her weight and through the project has started exercising, walking regularly and has changed her eating habits cutting out sugary/fried food, reducing her salt intake and eating more fruit and vegetables. She has also joined the radio programming course with support from volunteers to help develop her self confidence.

Due to changes implemented to her eating habits and being more active, Rama has lost 2 kg in weight. The radio broadcasting project has helped deal with her confidence issues and given her a social activity which she thoroughly enjoys.

Case Study Volunteer

Barbara is a moving moments volunteer for Age UK Sutton. Through the cascade project Barbara has supported her aunt and her neighbour. Barbara has been walking with her aunt once or twice a week and encourages her aunt to make changes to her diet offering her advice on healthier meals. With her neighbour she also takes her walking a few times a week, her neighbour has caring responsibility for her husband, and the walks allows her get out of her routine and enjoy a break alongside having someone else to talk to.

Barbara also used the information from the training to show her sister healthier ways of cooking favourite dishes and has encouraged her to take up more social activities and volunteering. Barbara feel that emotional support is needed alongside diet and exercise advice as feeling low at home makes it difficult to maintain healthier lifestyles.

Barbara states, *"its good to know that I can help people so that they know someone is there, so they don't feel alone as some people have nobody. My family always helped each other so I think I get it from them"*.

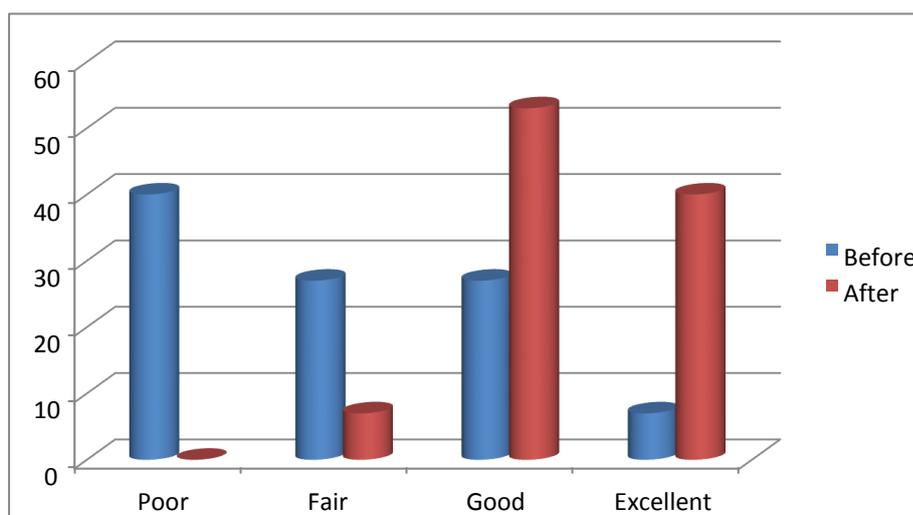
10. Conference³

As part of the wider dissemination of learning a best practice, Sporting Equals worked in partnership with Age UK to deliver a National Conference which took place on Wednesday 17 June 2015 at Coventry University Technology Park. The conference showcased the broader impact of the projects delivered by all National Partners followed by interactive workshops. Sporting Equals delivered three workshops during the course of the day drawing out key learning around how organisations could support health and wellbeing for black and minority ethnic older people through volunteer and staff training. The Ekta Sangat Group was used as a case study example which enabled participants to gain first hand insight into the experiences of volunteers and older people.

Evaluation from conference;

How would you rate your understanding of the Cascade Programme's aims and objectives	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
<u>before</u> the event	40%	27%	27%	7%
<u>after</u> the event	0%	7%	53%	40%

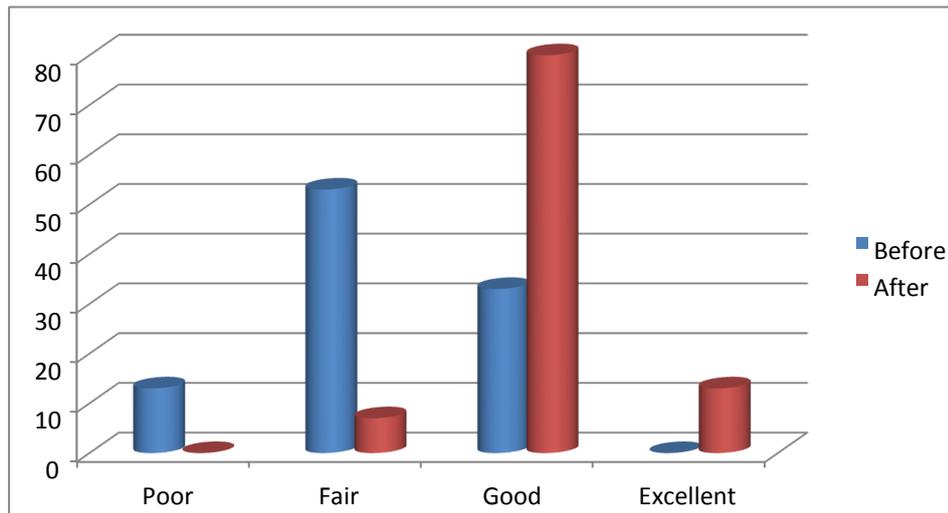
Most peoples understanding the Cascade Programmes aims had significantly increased to good/excellent following the conference.



How would you rate your knowledge of volunteer development and training	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
<u>before</u> the event	13%	53%	33%	0%
<u>after</u> the event	0%	7%	80%	13%

Most peoples knowledge of volunteer training and development had significantly improved following the conference.

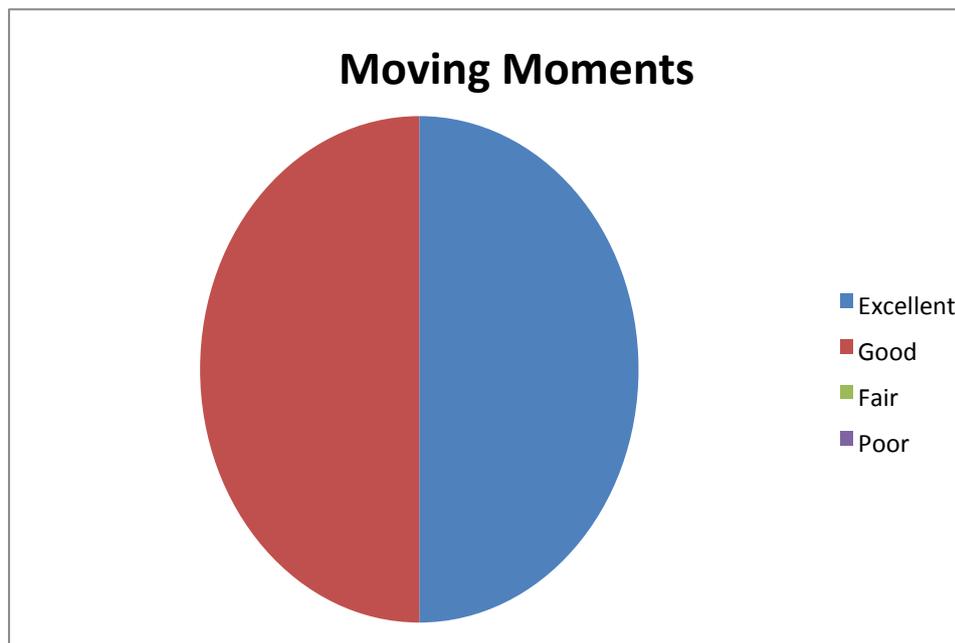
³³ Information obtained from Age UK Conference Evaluation Report, June 2015



Moving Moments Workshop

Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
0%	0%	50%	50%

Most people rated the moving moments workshop as either good or excellent.



“Nice to have individuals from the actual groups in their local areas attending/commenting.”

“Liked the ‘real life’ case study with actual people giving their story on the day.”

“The ‘case studies’ were fantastic for helping to explain the cultural differences that needed to be understood and particularly not just making assumptions, no matter how well-based.”

“Very informative and covered areas I’m not so informed on. Lovely to hear from people who had been involved.”

“Really interesting- enjoyed hearing from the ladies from the activities group. Very inspiring.”

“Great to hear from Ekta Sangat – good focus on cascade rather than the organisation.”

Most people identified that overall the conference was:

‘excellent, informative, interesting, engaging, well organised’

Participants identified that benefits of the conference would enable them to:

- Take some learning and incorporate into my new role
- Create some learning and best practice for volunteer induction/training
- Cascade to other members of team and share learning
- Become a volunteer
- Continue to use packs from cascade training – excellent resource to have post-project
- Read the evaluations and toolkits and use them to inform future projects
- Will help to better deliver services I deliver

The conference has since generated a number of requests for moving moments information packs. Overall the conference has raised awareness of the cascade training and has been a good opportunity for the sharing of information and good practice.

11. Partnerships and Sustainability

The majority of partner organisations have stated that they would be continuing some activities after the project had ended. Most advised that the support provided from volunteers would help them continue with activities, particularly low cost activities such as walking and gardening. There was general enthusiasm for keeping project activities going and to develop them further into other areas of work. Projects found that the programme had raised interest amongst beneficiaries who are keen to continue their involvement.

Although many projects struggle with covering costs of venue hire and staffing, many partners felt that they had an improved, stronger volunteer base to help support longer term activities. Some organisations were charging nominal costs to cover overheads. A number of centres have trained volunteers to become walk leaders such as Magdalene Church, Hamara and Sangat groups - longer term this will allow low cost activities to continue like walking once the project has ended.

Feedback was consistently positive about the training received. The partner organisations reported that the training and experience generally gained by the volunteers had made a positive impact, providing them with a pool of culturally sensitive, skilled volunteer workforce. The project has enabled behaviour change in staff, volunteers and older people enabling a more proactive approach to be taken by organisations helping them to sustain active lifestyles.

Some partner organisations sought links with other agencies to help them sustain and expand capacity particularly in relation to greater health and wellbeing. The impact of partnership links stated by organisations included stronger working relationships, referral links, befriending services, staff awareness of user needs and agencies which could help, along with increasing networks with partners. It would however have been useful to offer additional support in this area to try and capacity build project to independently source funding and other support to continue similar initiatives in the future.

12. Conclusion

Since the inception of the project in 2009 the project has engaged over 7,000 people. Through the third phase cascade in 2014/15 Sporting Equals has empowered over 900 BME older people from disadvantaged communities, giving them support through the volunteer networks and enabling these individuals to live healthier, fitter, more informed and less isolated ways of life. Alongside this overall outputs have reach over 1,200 people exceeding expectations.

Feedback was consistently positive about the training received and the use of Sporting Equals consultancy support in helping support the initial training. The partner projects frequently reported that the training and experience gained by the volunteers has had a positive impact on their organisations, providing them with a pool of culturally sensitive, skilled volunteers able to take delivery forward in a time of restricted funding opportunities.

Through the project Sporting Equals have used interpreters to ensure groups with language difficulties are not excluded and can also be supported to help make a difference to older people's lives through the project which has resulted in trained Chinese and South Asian speaking cascade volunteers.

The added value from the project has resulted in some volunteers acting more generally as champions for promoting healthy living in their local communities, meaning the messages from cascade have been disseminated more widely to groups outside the key audience. The Age UK national conference also helped raised awareness of the resources available and helped disseminate learning and good practice.

The project has been well received by the BME older people engaged and there appears to be a clear appetite for the activities delivered. It is clear that without the project these BME communities would otherwise be unable to receive support via mainstream services which are currently not meeting their needs. While on occasion projects reported an initial uncertainty from older people about being involved in new and potentially challenging project activities, enthusiasm has generally increased through the sessions.

Projects reported beneficial impacts on older people who had participated in activities, including improved self-esteem, self-confidence, physical health and mental wellbeing. A number of older people (and volunteers) reported changes in diet and a greater understanding of healthy eating, and some reported immediate benefits from their physical activity sessions. A further key impact was a reported behaviour change outside the project sessions, resulting in greater health awareness and enhanced health outcomes.

Feedback from partner organisations suggested that the volunteers had been given an opportunity to develop their own knowledge, including that around the needs of older people and differences between cultures. It was also felt that volunteers had been able to meet new people and build skills and positive experience for their CVs, as well as softer skills such as self-confidence and self-esteem. Many saw the project as a way as 'giving

something back to the community' and have been actively making changes to their own lifestyles and to those of their families and acting as wider 'community ambassadors'.

Volunteers gained many benefits from taking part in the project and also provided benefits for their wider communities and for the organisations they worked with. Their commitment to delivering the project and to developing their skills and knowledge base has meant that the organisations now have a pool of volunteers to draw from, and in some cases this means a continuation of sustainability of the project.

Some projects have developed wider partnership links and most projects are sustaining low costs activities such as walking groups and gardening which demonstrates the added value and sustained impact of this intervention. Many organisations are continuing to use the resource packs or elements of the pack to continue activities or to help continue to support volunteers.

The project now has a unique product/resource which could be applied to other projects with a similar aims. Some organisations are looking at using the model and working with other partners to explore opportunities and funding for similar initiatives in the future.

13. Recommendations

The evidence gathered by Sporting Equals throughout the project has led to the following recommendations:

- *Clear strategy for marketing and promotion of packs*

Due to tight timescales it took a lot of time and effort to help promote the cascade project. It would have made things easier if a clear marketing and pr strategy was put in place at the outset to try and engage eligible delivery partners.

- *An improved approach to monitoring and evaluation of project*

The project itself (in terms of methodology, evaluation and reporting and monitoring) was focused on the training of volunteers and the cascade of knowledge (which ultimately improved the health and wellbeing of older people), reflected in the monitoring framework. It would have been beneficial to capture more information around the improved health and wellbeing of older people, in a way which wasn't burdensome/off-putting to the project's delivery organisations.

- *More streamline payment process*

As a large organisation, Age UK administrative processes (with payments having to pass through a number of internal teams) were sometimes slow which at times hindered the progress and momentum of smaller community organisations' work. This coupled with delivery organisations' sometimes slow return of relevant paperwork, made the process longer than it needed to be. It would be useful to streamline the finance procedures and look at alternate ways to administer payments.

- *More lead-in time for the partner projects to deliver activities*

Some projects reported that they did not have sufficient lead in time to develop activities as extensively as they would have liked and it would have been useful to have more time.

- *Development of partnerships links*

It would have been useful to allocate additional resources to help develop partnership links to other partner agencies to help improve the long term sustainability and impact of projects. Many organisations do not have the skills or capacity to engage with external partners so any support in this area would have been welcome.

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Hadhari Centre Derby
Halesowen Asian Elderly Association
Hamara Healthy Living Centre
Karmand Community Centre
Local Women's Association
London Chinese Community Centre
Mary Magdalene's Church
Moreland Trust Health and Social Care
Muslim Women's Council
Nishkam Civic Association
Ready Steady Active
Revensthorpe Community Centre
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