



The idea for Get Fit Feel Inspired came from extensive youth engagement as part of our Communities Driving Change programme in Tower Hamlets. To date, The Young Foundation spent 18 months working alongside young people of Chicksand Estate in Bethnal Green – mostly Bengali young men aged 19-29 – understanding their needs and ideas for community-led change.

They find it challenging to imagine a healthy and prosperous future for themselves, and feel let down by the schemes offered to them as young people previously; apprenticeships not leading to employment, youth workers which come and go, and feeling like just another statistic.

One of the young volunteers described how sport is a powerful remedy for life on the estate;

“From my personal experience as an unemployed young adult, I suffer from depression and sport is the only thing which keeps me off it [drug-taking/selling]. I want to support other young people to see how being active can better their lives and steer them away from ASB. I am dedicated to my community and believe young people must take the lead to make it better for everyone.”

The group of young people on the estate then developed the idea for Get Fit Feel Inspired. They felt that by creating an opportunity for young men to access a space other than just the street corner, where they could exercise and also hear from inspirational people, then they might have found a youth-led solution for all of the issues they face. They found football is the one thing which excites all of the young men they hang out with,

and that there was a lot of interest in the project idea. We supported them to develop a prototype for the idea, to ensure it was informed by a wide range of young men on the estate and surrounding area.

Get Fit Feel Inspired looks to fill the gap in provision within the local community. If this gap in provision is not filled, then the risk of these young people falling into youth violence and gangs will be heightened, especially during the summer holidays.

Get Fit Feel Inspired will look to make a direct difference to the lives of inactive local young men on the Chicksand Estate. Not only will their physical and mental health be improved through taking part in the weekly fitness training session with a competitive game of football making them generally more active, but we hope they will begin to see their worth and capabilities by being exposed to inspirational people they otherwise would not have the chance to meet. This exposure of inspirational role models will help to create next generation inspirational role models within the community.

As part of the pitch-side talks from inspirational speakers, the project also focuses on key themes such as knife crime and gang-related violence. In summary, this community sport programme will be giving these young men something positive and constructive to do, somewhere safe and secure to go, and someone relevant and inspirational to talk to.

Because GFFI is designed and led by young people, it will have a wider social impact by showing what young people are capable of and dismantling some of the negative narratives surrounding them.