Commonwealth Games Impact: José de Matos Sharps and Adam Patten

Bio

Name & Type: José de Matos Sharps and Adam Patten (SGOs) working with local primary schools in the area
Location: Wye Valley & Marlow, Buckinghamshire
Impact Award Category: Commonwealth Games Impact
Term: Autumn

Summary of Activity

The School Games Organisers José de Matos Sharps and Adam Patten wanted to address the fact that due to the pandemic, young people in their area had not been able to attend face to face sporting events.

Therefore, they created the virtual county Commonwealth Games Cup, aimed at using the excitement of Birmingham 2022 to promote the benefits of the physical activity.

The Cup was open to pupils in years one to six and consisted of a series of weekly challenges aimed at each age group. These were provided to primary schools in the area in order to allow all children to have the same opportunity.

Challenges were set on the Friday before the week began, giving teachers time to prepare and hold the activities on site during the week which were then scored. Teachers were provided with video and other resources, all with clear instruction of how to carry out the activity.

The challenges ranged from sports including T20 cricket, netball, volleyball, hockey, and more over the space of 12 weeks. Inclusive adaptations were made for pupils with special education needs and disability requirements.

At the end of the period, trophies were awarded for the top three schools in the county, as well as the top three in each of the SGO's area.

Impact on Young People

Around 4,000 pupils from 31 schools across the county took park, making the Cup a truly county-wide experience for the children, thanks to channelling the excitement of a multi-sport competition like the Commonwealth Games.

The activity also benefitted children in schools who were unable to attend face to face School Games events, giving them access to positive experience of competition.

As each school received instructional resources for each challenge, there is the opportunity for them to continue to implement the activity even though the Cup has finished.

Coupled with the upskilling received by teachers as a result of resources provided, young people in the county are able to benefit from a consistent increase in opportunities to participate in physical activity.

Key Learnings

José and Adam said their main challenges were meeting the deadlines involved with hosting a new challenge weekly for 12 weeks, as well as giving teachers enough time to understand the resources.

They recommend spacing the activities out to be bi-weekly to give schools more time and sharing all resources with schools at once with an indication of dates, providing a more achievable timescale.

In terms of top tips, José and Adam report that the video tutorials were very beneficial for teachers to understand what was expected from them quickly, rather than spending time solely understanding a document.

How this could be replicated across the network

Although this activity was in direct response to the pandemic restricting in-person events, it can still be replicated today. The use of a virtual competition is a great way to encourage schools and students to undertake regular physical activity thanks to the competition element.

Also, linking the Cup, or specific physical activity to the Commonwealth Games and its sports within the event is a good way to inspire children and young people to remain regularly active.

José and Adam, said: "I did not fully take in the impact of our work until we applied for the impact awards, to take a step back and recognise your own impact along with being recognised through being shortlisted is very humbling!"