About the project

Funding awarded: £558,703  
Duration of funding: 4 years  
Number of beneficiaries: 700 boys aged 11 to 14  
Areas of delivery: London Boroughs of Kensington and Chelsea, and Hammersmith and Fulham

Working With Men is an award-winning charity supporting positive activity in schools and communities by boys and young men. In Realising Ambition, Working With Men delivered the school-based Boy’s Development Programme (BDP) (formerly Conflict Resolution – Uncut), which diverts boys from pathways into offending by teaching them non-violent approaches to resolving conflict.

Lessons learnt

Working With Men’s experience shows that the investment required to prepare a programme for replication can be demanding for small organisations.

Working With Men has developed this wholly-owned programme over a number of cycles of implementation and adaptation. BDP had been subject to formal evaluation prior to Realising Ambition and is well regarded in the London Boroughs of Lewisham and Lambeth where it was originally developed and delivered for several years. Realising Ambition was the first instance of BDP being replicated outside of these areas.

Working With Men has made BDP significantly more replicable during its Realising Ambition delivery. It has produced a suite of robust resources and processes to support replication and strengthened its ability to measure and articulate programme outcomes. It now has a fully tested logic model, a theory of change, tightened referral processes, an implementation handbook and a consistent approach to outcome measurement. These tools helped the organisation to focus on outcomes and reduce variation in delivery between replication sites. Working With Men understands the critical role staff and their relationships with beneficiaries play in the success of BDP and has put in place practice-based supervision and peer review.

Although this replication has good outcomes for an early prevention programme of its type, in that it has maintained stability for participants, Working With Men is having difficulty taking BDP from localised replication to delivery at a larger scale. This is partly because the organisation is small and lacks capacity for growth, and because of the cost of delivering the intervention in its current form. Consequently, Working With Men is exploring a different delivery model for scaling BDP: it is testing whether switching from direct delivery with a practitioner embedded within a school to providing schools with training, support and consultancy to deliver the programme themselves impacts on programme integrity or outcomes. This will potentially allow Working With Men to engage more schools without significantly growing its capacity.

Five key ingredients of successful replication

The Realising Ambition consortium has mapped each project’s journey against our five key ingredients of successful replication. The key points from this follow below. Find out more about these ingredients.

A tightly defined and replicable service: Working With Men has equipped BDP with the key...
characteristics of a tightly defined service (see above) required to give practitioners and commissioners confidence in the programme and its replicability. **That is effectively and faithfully delivered to those that need it:** BDP is a targeted programme, but it is applicable to all schools. Referral criteria within schools has been tightened and, owing to the logic model and associated processes, schools can now be clearer about which students will benefit most from the programme. **Evidence is used to learn and adapt, as required:** Working With Men maintains BDP’s fidelity whilst learning from delivery and adapting to local contexts. Practitioners are skilled at data collection and consistently gather feedback from beneficiaries and from their schools. **There is confidence that outcomes have improved:** Outcomes generally remained stable throughout each delivery of BDP. This is desirable for a non-intensive prevention programme where outcomes may have deteriorated without it. **The service is cost-beneficial and sustainable:** Working With Men is fully engaged in an ongoing developmental journey. So far the organisation has predominantly relied on philanthropic funding for BDP, but it is developing its business strategy for taking the programme to market.

**Outcomes for beneficiaries**

Each organisation has sought to monitor the outcomes of children and young people prior to and after service delivery. Find out more about outcome measurement in Realising Ambition.

Working With Men delivered BDP to 700 young people across the London Boroughs of Kensington and Chelsea, and Hammersmith and Fulham. Questionnaires were administered to 88% of these young people at the outset of service provision, and to 57% at the end of service provision.

Around half of the sample demonstrated commitment to school at the beginning of the programme and this proportion was similar at the end. Although 27% of beneficiaries improved on their levels of aggression and misbehaviour during the course of BDP’s delivery, 40% remained stable. The trend towards stability was likely due to the proportion of young people who demonstrated low levels of risk at pre-test – sitting within the ‘normal’ threshold. They therefore had little or no room for improvement and BDP appears to have kept them on pathways away from offending by maintaining their non-aggressive conduct. This was also the case for peer support, where young people demonstrated high levels throughout the programme.

Whilst the lack of a comparison group means that any improvement and stability in outcomes cannot directly be attributable to BDP, the majority of the young people in receipt of the programme maintained low levels of aggression and misbehaviour and high levels of peer support throughout the course of the programme. This stability is both desirable and realistic for a non-intensive prevention and early intervention programme that targets young people with relatively low risk profiles.

**What next**

Working With Men is dedicated to continuing BDP’s replication and taking it to scale, and is developing its business strategy for the programme. It is thought, however, that BDP will be difficult to sustain on a full-charge basis at the point of delivery. Consequently, a number of delivery and funding options are being explored, such as a mixed funding model incorporating grants and direct purchasing from schools and other commissioners.