

# SY-NC/REACH UP YOUTH RESEARCH PROJECT SUMMARY

## BACKGROUND



The South Yorkshire Neighbourhoods and Communities (SY-NC) project launched in 2023. It takes a community-focused approach, funding activities and supporting Area Hubs in three Sheffield communities to reduce exploitation and build stronger connections between and within communities.



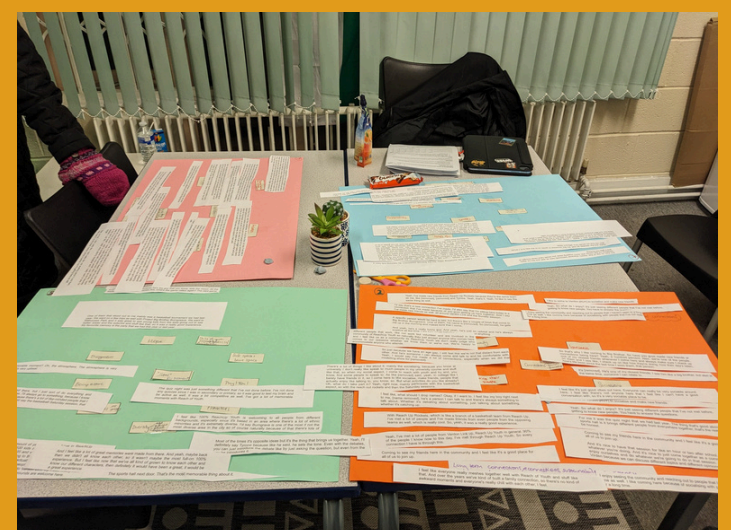
Reach Up Youth (RUY) is a community organisation established by Safiya Saeed in the Burngreave area in 2013. They build bridges between the community, residents, youth, and services. They engage at-risk young people from the local area in sport, physical activity, day trips and skill building sessions, reducing the risk of them becoming involved in crime.

## RESEARCH PROJECT

The Reach Up Youth research project was developed to address three key outcomes from the SY-NC project.

These were to:

- engage young people and community members in the co-production of meaningful and relevant projects and activities
- carry out participatory action research to evaluate and measure the impact of activities
- Provide training and development to the community-based workforce and young people involved in the project



## RESEARCH TEAM and PROJECT AIMS

The research team consisted of seven young researchers who attend RUY, a project consultant and a research consultant.

Through two focus groups we aimed to:

- Explore the impact of RUY on young people attending activities
- Evaluate the effectiveness of RUY's activities, identifying successes and areas for improvement

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**KEY FINDING 1:** RUY, as a community-imagined and developed initiative, stands as a powerful and emancipatory example of community empowerment. Support for these initiatives, whether from neighbours, organisations, or statutory services, is crucial for their continued success.

*“I had social anxiety but now that I've been doing this [coming to RUY] for over a year, I feel like it's definitely turned down a bit and I can go in public and just talk to people if I want to.”*

**KEY FINDING 2:** Places like RUY make young people feel valued, cared for and loved. This can reduce social isolation, which is linked to gang involvement (Public Health England, 2015). Social support and confidence building are crucial for protecting young people from exploitation.

*“I feel like everyone really meshes together well with Reach Up Youth and stuff like that. And over the years we've kind of built a family connection”*

**KEY FINDING 3:** Youth organisations require increased and sustainable funding that empowers locally-based organisations to develop comprehensive, dependable activities that young people can rely on year after year (Institute for Voluntary Action Research, 2024).

## PROJECT OUTPUTS

We have shared our findings via:

Our project report

Poems written by Shareen Baghdadi and Shaden Abdullah

An end of project event

A presentation at the University of Sheffield

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