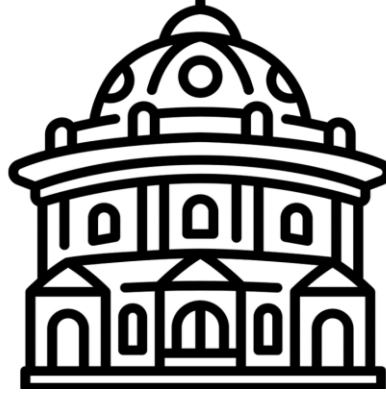


# ReGenerational Commitment: A Town-Gown Partnership

Community perspectives on a long-term partnership between the University of Oxford and its local community  
Research by Sali Adams, Maisie Angus, Eleanor Davies, and Daniyal Vemuri

## Introduction



- Oxford is the UK's second-most unequal city<sup>1</sup>: notably, despite the presence of the world-leading University of Oxford, several local communities rank in the lowest 10% nationally for youth educational attainment<sup>2</sup>
- Our project comprised community engagement research to establish how long-term design and delivery of extracurricular activities by university students in local schools could benefit local students and their communities, alongside running a pilot poetry-based intervention

## Semi-structured interviews



2 x school-based stakeholders

2 x community-based stakeholders

1 x activity provider

- Limitations:**
- Ethics assessment prevented engagement with students
  - Time constraints meant that we could not set up direct engagement with caregivers
  - Non-response bias – stakeholders who agreed to interview likely to already have been sympathetic to the university and/or the project

## Objectives



Uncover the **perceptions** held by various stakeholders in south-east Oxford.

Determine the perceived **needs** of the local community regarding extracurricular activities.

Lay the foundations for effective long-term **university-community collaboration**

## Results

### Perceptions

All interviewees felt that extracurriculars were beneficial to young people in the area, with rationales across three main themes:

#### Safe space

- All interviewees felt extracurriculars were important as a supervised space for students to socialize

"In Blackbird Leys, it would be very easy to meet people who might want to exploit you"



#### Student ownership

- Students should have input on activities and feel a sense of ownership – this encourages long-term attendance
- Especially important for those struggling with/refusing school

#### Social skills and development

- Seen as a key opportunity for young people to build confidence, interacting with each other and with a range of adults

### Needs

#### Staffing and venue

- Finding providers was identified as a challenge, especially given limited teacher time and lack of funding
- Finding a suitable, accessible venue cited as a further challenge



"you've already got two big things, which is the space to do it and the people to do it with"

"it's about habits [...] If you can capture them at primary, you are more likely to then capture them in secondary"



#### Encouraging participation

- There may be cultural or language barriers to participation
- Suggestion of direct contact with caregivers to encourage participation

### Collaboration

#### Commitment

- All interviewees stressed the importance of consistency and long-term provision
- This is especially true for young people who lack a fixed adult presence in their lives

#### Financial support

- Interviewees also expressed that the University should offer greater resourcing support to schools

#### Break stereotypes

- University engagement could help to tackle negative stereotypes surrounding south-east Oxford, and help to break students' 'Oxford bubble'

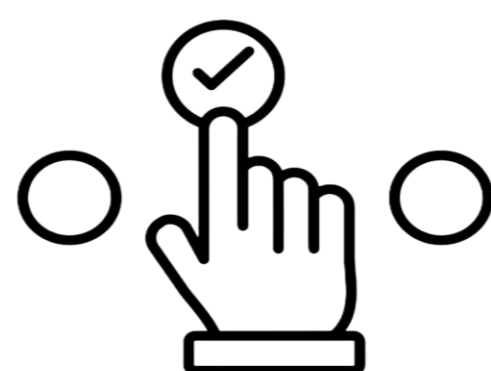


"everyone benefits from more collaboration"

## Conclusion



Overall enthusiasm from respondents for the expansion of the programme - however, more extensive engagement necessary



No overarching preference for one activity type: interviewees emphasised the importance of student ownership and input



Desire for safeguarding training and DBS checks for student facilitators, to ensure that clubs are a safe space for students



Such a programme requires a "generational kind of commitment"

