

Case Study

Community Screening of the "Blacks Can't Swim REWIND" Documentary for Nottinghamshire Police at Trent Bridge Cricket Ground



Introduction

On 20 October 2023, Trent Bridge Cricket Ground hosted a significant screening of the "Blacks Can't Swim REWIND" documentary, aimed at addressing the racial stereotypes surrounding swimming and the alarming statistics regarding swimming proficiency among African, Caribbean, and Asian communities. The event was organised in collaboration with Nottinghamshire Police as part of a series of activities celebrating Black culture during Black History Month. Notably, this documentary has contributed to winning an award for its impactful exploration of these critical issues.

Objectives and Goals

The casting of predominantly young adults in the "Blacks Can't Swim REWIND" documentary serves a crucial purpose, particularly in the context of the screening hosted by Nottinghamshire Police. Many of these young individuals, who have been identified as being at risk of falling into negative influences or the wrong crowd, find themselves in a unique position to engage positively within their community. The need for this screening was underscored by concerning statistics indicating a disproportionate number of individuals from African, Caribbean, and Asian communities who are unable to swim, leading to an increased risk of drowning. Racial stereotypes often contribute to these disparities, perpetuating a cycle of fear and exclusion from aquatic activities.

Significantly, the documentary goes beyond simply addressing swimming proficiency; it delves into broader issues and attitudes ingrained within these communities. It explores the cultural narratives that shape how young people perceive water and swimming, but it also confronts the wider societal attitudes that affect their self-image, aspirations, and interactions with broader societal structures, including law enforcement. By highlighting the connections between parental attitudes, community perceptions, and the overall outlook on life skills like swimming, the documentary encourages a holistic discussion about empowerment and inclusion.

This multifaceted approach brings numerous benefits to both the young participants and the police force. For the youth, the event creates opportunities to interact with police officers in a supportive environment, helping to dispel any preconceived notions they may have about law enforcement. This positive engagement fosters trust and

understanding, making it more likely that young people will feel comfortable reaching out to the police in the future, whether for support or to report concerns. Moreover, being part of such an initiative empowers these young individuals, allowing them to take ownership of their narratives and challenge negative stereotypes surrounding their communities.

For Nottinghamshire Police, hosting an event that emphasises youth empowerment and community engagement reflects their commitment to building safer neighbourhoods. By actively working with at-risk youth, the police can help shape positive outcomes and reduce crime rates in the long term. The insights gained from engaging with these young adults can inform future outreach and educational initiatives tailored to their interests and needs. Overall, this collaboration fosters a sense of community, bridging gaps between the police and youth, and promoting a culture of understanding and cooperation that benefits both sides.

The Shocking Facts (Current Key Statistics)

According to a survey conducted in 2024 by **Sport England**, **97% of Black adults and 82% of Black children in England do not swim. 96% of Asian adults and 79% of Asian children in England do not swim.** (Sports England Active Lives Survey 2024)

Black Children are seven times more likely to die from drowning than their White peers, prompting experts to encourage them to learn how to swim. Children from African and Caribbean backgrounds have been held back from learning the life skill because of fears about water, hair protection and financial means which has left them at a greater risk.

The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that, on average, 236,000 people drown globally every year, with 90% of these deaths occurring in low- to middle-income countries. Africa has the highest drowning rate, while Asia experiences the highest number of drowning incidents.

Benefits to Nottinghamshire Police and Community Engagement

The partnership between Nottinghamshire Police and the "Blacks Can't Swim REWIND" screening provides significant benefits, especially in building youth relationships and enhancing community engagement. By organising such events, the police demonstrate their commitment to fostering positive relationships with younger members of the community. Engaging with youth through culturally relevant programming creates a supportive environment where they can interact with police officers in a non-confrontational setting, helping to break down barriers and build trust. This proactive approach not only enhances the police's reputation within diverse communities but also encourages young people to view law enforcement as allies rather than adversaries.

In addition to fostering positive youth-police relationships, the screening acts as a vital educational platform that empowers both young attendees and their families. Participants learn about the historical and cultural barriers surrounding swimming within African, Caribbean, and Asian communities, fostering an understanding that can lead to more informed conversations about water safety and personal well-being. Through this engagement, Nottinghamshire Police can identify community leaders and advocates who can facilitate discussions around swimming and water safety, encouraging a collaborative effort to improve these critical life skills. Furthermore, by involving Black officers in community activities, the police can serve as role models, demonstrating that diversity within their ranks is not only valued but actively promoted.

Overall, the screening positions Nottinghamshire Police as a proactive force within the community, focused on social responsibility and inclusivity. By celebrating Black culture and championing water safety, the police can contribute to a healthier, safer community while simultaneously working to dispel stereotypes and promote understanding. Such initiatives pave the way for future collaborations that can encompass other areas of community concern, thereby reinforcing the police's role as a vital partner in enhancing public safety and well-being.

Event Structure and Agenda

The event commenced with an introduction by a representative from Nottinghamshire Police, who emphasised the documentary's significance and its relevance to the community. This set the stage for the screening of "Blacks Can't Swim REWIND," a powerful film that merges real interview footage with dramatised stories to delve into the barriers faced by African, Caribbean, and Asian individuals in accessing swimming education. Attendees gained insights into these challenges and subsequently participated in an engaging hour-long Q&A session with Ed Accura, offering a platform for deeper discussion and reflection.

The screening was part of a larger series of events celebrating Black culture, enriching the experience with a holistic approach to engagement and education. This celebratory context was further enhanced by music performances from local youth groups, creating a vibrant and inclusive atmosphere. The integration of cultural elements not only highlighted the importance of fostering inclusion in swimming but also celebrated the diversity and richness of the community. By combining the film's powerful messages with cultural celebrations, the event fostered a sense of unity and encouraged continued advocacy for accessibility and equity in swimming.

The screening illuminated several important themes

1. **Cultural Stigmas:** The film addressed the cultural narratives and stereotypes that deter African, Caribbean, and Asian individuals from swimming, emphasising the need for open discussions to challenge these views. The youth engagement during the event facilitated conversations about how these stigmas can be dismantled collectively, empowering attendees to voice their experiences and share their perspectives.
2. **Parental Influence:** The relationship between parents and water was a central theme, highlighting how parental attitudes can shape children's experiences and willingness to engage with swimming. Young participants were encouraged to reflect on their own backgrounds and the impact of familial attitudes towards water, which stimulated discussions around fostering a more positive environment for learning to swim.
3. **Call for Action:** The event encouraged participants to consider actionable steps that could be taken to promote swimming education and water safety within their communities, fostering a sense of responsibility among attendees. The enthusiasm of the youth highlighted their desire to contribute to these initiatives, generating ideas on how they can lead programmes and engage their peers in aquatic education.
4. **Strengthening Community Relations:** The event served as a platform for Nottinghamshire Police to engage positively with the community, reinforcing their role as partners in promoting public safety and well-being. The interaction between police officers and young attendees facilitated trust-building and dialogue, highlighting the importance of collaboration in addressing community concerns, including safety and the accessibility of swimming education.

Some of the audience feedback after the event

The audience feedback from the screening of the documentary highlights the profound impact it had on viewers, opening their eyes to the significance of swimming within their community. Many expressed a newfound inspiration to learn how to swim and felt a strong sense of relatability with the stories shared, seeing their own experiences reflected in those portrayed. Engaging dialogues with the police changed perceptions for some, making them realise the positive potential of collaboration in addressing community issues. The focus on youth and their pivotal role in changing the narrative was particularly appreciated, as it highlighted the importance of involving younger generations in fostering an inclusive culture around swimming.

Viewers also commented on the powerful representation in the documentary, which made many feel included and appreciated the collaborative approach taken to address this issue. The shocking statistics presented in the film were seen as necessary to hear, motivating parents to encourage their children to engage with swimming. This sense of empowerment extended beyond individual actions, as many felt motivated to initiate conversations about swimming within their communities and even explore further involvement in aquatic sports. Overall, the film successfully sparked a broader interest and dialogue about the importance of swimming and inspired actions towards greater inclusivity and participation.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the screening of "Blacks Can't Swim REWIND" at Trent Bridge Cricket Ground served as a pivotal platform for addressing not only the critical issue of swimming proficiency in African, Caribbean, and Asian communities but also the broader societal attitudes and cultural narratives that shape young people's experiences. Many of the youth expressed their excitement about watching the documentary at such a prestigious venue, which added to the significance of the event and fostered a sense of pride within the community. By exploring the intersections of racial stereotypes, parental influence, and community perceptions, the documentary fosters important discussions about empowerment, identity, and the value of life skills like swimming.

The collaboration between Nottinghamshire Police and community members highlights the potential for positive engagement, particularly with at-risk youth. By breaking down barriers and promoting understanding, the police are

not only reinforcing their commitment to creating safer neighbourhoods but also championing inclusivity and social responsibility. This initiative showcases how addressing the complexities of community issues can lead to powerful transformations, encouraging young individuals to challenge negative stereotypes and seize opportunities for growth. Ultimately, the event at Trent Bridge sets a precedent for future collaborations that can further enhance community relations, promote water safety, and inspire inclusive dialogues across diverse backgrounds.

About the Documentaries

The **Blacks Can't Swim** and **Changing the Narrative** documentaries have provided crucial insights into why a disproportionate number of people of African, Caribbean, and Asian heritage do not swim. These documentaries offer valuable perspectives through the lived experiences shared in the films.

These documentaries are essential for anyone who would like to better understand how a lack of diversity and inclusion in aquatics has impacted individuals within ethnically diverse communities. By participating in these screenings, viewers will gain insight into the complex barriers to aquatic engagement, the opportunities and benefits that being able to swim can provide, and how participation can be promoted within African, Caribbean, and Asian communities.

The screenings offer a comfortable and safe environment for individuals to reflect on their views and address these issues. Additionally, the documentaries delve into important topics beyond swimming, exploring mental health, physical health, dietary choices, and other areas that can benefit from aquatic activities.

For organisations or communities aiming to align with their strategic priorities and focus on reducing inequalities, especially those with a diverse workforce, these screenings offer an opportunity to engage with important societal issues and encourage positive change. By fostering discussions around inclusivity and water safety, organisations can contribute to enhancing community well-being and collectively work towards changing the narrative surrounding swimming participation.

If you are interested in hosting your screening, private packages including a Q&A session are available via the details below, furthering the documentary's mission to raise awareness and advocate for inclusion in aquatics regardless of ethnicity.

Contact info@changingthenarrative.film to initiate change in your workplace and community.

Together, we can foster a culture of understanding, safety, and empowerment for all.

For more information, interested parties can visit www.changingthenarrative.film