

Case Study

Private Screening of "Blacks Can't Swim REWIND" Documentary for the British Council



Introduction

As part of on-going efforts to address long-standing cultural stereotypes and promote inclusion, the British Council hosted a private screening with a bespoke Q&A of Ed Accura's documentary, "Blacks Can't Swim REWIND." This event highlighted the urgent need for increased participation in swimming among ethnically diverse communities and aligned with the British Council's commitment to diversity and inclusion in its efforts to engage communities through educational and cultural exchanges. By fostering an environment where dialogue around such critical issues can flourish, the British Council reinforces its role as a leader in advocating for social change and equitable access to opportunities.

The unique context of this screening for UK and global staff further highlights its significance. The British Council, as an organisation dedicated to fostering international understanding and collaboration, recognises the importance of addressing local community issues that resonate on a global scale. Swimming is not just a recreational activity; it is a vital life skill that can save lives. With sobering statistics that reveal staggering swimming participation gaps among Black and Asian communities in England, this event serves as an urgent call for action. The documentary's message resonates with the British Council's mission to promote educational equity and social inclusion, making it particularly relevant to its UK and global staff, who are encouraged to embody and advocate for these values in their own communities.

The documentary presents shocking facts: According to a survey conducted in 2024 by Sport England, 97% of Black adults and 82% of Black children, alongside 96% of Asian adults and 79% of Asian children in England, do not swim. These statistics highlight a disturbing reality where Black children are seven times more likely to die from drowning than their White peers. Factors such as fears surrounding water, hair care, and financial constraints have historically been barriers preventing children from African and Caribbean backgrounds from accessing swimming education, leaving them at greater risk.

Ed Accura, co-founder of The Black Swimming Association (BSA), stresses the documentary's pivotal role in advocating for swimming as a life-saving skill essential for all communities. By focusing on education about water safety, drowning prevention, and the benefits of aquatics, the BSA's mission aligns seamlessly with the British Council's goals of fostering inclusive societies and championing equitable access to opportunities.

Through this screening, the British Council not only facilitated a deeper understanding of the barriers to swimming participation but also inspired collective action among its UK and global staff and the broader community. It vividly illustrated how cultural institutions can harness the power of storytelling and education to drive social change and awareness.

Benefits to the British Council

1. **Raising Awareness:** The documentary shed light on the barriers faced by Black and Asian communities regarding swimming and water safety, fostering understanding among all attendees.
2. **Supporting Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR):** By hosting this screening, the organisation demonstrated their commitment to social equity and community health, aligning with their CSR objectives.
3. **Engaging Employees:** The film's content encouraged reflection and dialogue about inclusion and diversity, allowing employees to connect over shared learning experiences.
4. **Inspiring Action:** Participants were motivated to advocate for more inclusive swimming programs and improve accessibility for all.

Audience Benefits

Regardless of their background, attendees stood to gain significantly from the screening:

1. **Increased Awareness:** Many expressed gratitude for the insights presented in the documentary, illustrating its impact on awareness of barriers to swimming.
2. **Inspiration for Advocacy:** Audience feedback reflected a desire to advocate for more inclusive swimming programs and support local swimming charities.
3. **Focus on Mental Well-being:** The documentary's emphasis on mental health and overcoming fears struck a chord with viewers, prompting personal reflections on their own swimming journeys.
4. **Community Bonds:** Attendees appreciated the sense of community portrayed, recognising the importance of family support as showcased in the film.

Audience Feedback

The audience feedback on the documentary highlights a wide range of positive impacts and reflections. Many viewers expressed gratitude for the insights shared by the participants and felt that the film increased their awareness of the barriers to swimming, particularly among marginalised communities. This newfound understanding has inspired some to advocate for more inclusive swimming programmes and support local swimming charities, indicating a strong motivation to act based on the documentary's message.

Additionally, the film's focus on mental health and overcoming fears was appreciated by viewers, encouraging them to explore their swimming journeys and reflect on personal experiences with water. The sense of community and stories of resilience portrayed in the documentary left a lasting impression, highlighting the importance of family support and social inclusion. Overall, the documentary was seen as both informative and inspiring, leaving audiences excited about its potential impact on future swimming initiatives and fostering a new appreciation for swimming as a vital life skill.

Conclusion

The screening of "Blacks Can't Swim REWIND" was a significant step towards fostering a more inclusive environment in swimming and beyond. By engaging with Ed Accura and the Black Swimming Association (BSA), organisations like the British Council can catalyse broader conversations about diversity, inclusion, and community

support in aquatics. This initiative aligns with the British Council's commitment to using education and cultural relations as tools for social change, illustrating how cultural institutions can play a pivotal role in addressing local community issues that resonate globally.

The event not only raised awareness of the critical statistics and barriers faced by Black and Asian communities regarding swimming, but it also inspired collective action among attendees. Participants left motivated to advocate for more inclusive swimming programmes and support local initiatives aimed at improving access to aquatic education. Through thoughtful discussions and shared learning experiences, the screening provided a platform for UK and global staff to connect their work with the British Council's mission of promoting social equity and community engagement.

Ed Accura has expressed enthusiasm for further collaborations, including potential future screenings and educational modules that could serve both national and international audiences. This collaboration represents a vital opportunity for the BSA to expand its reach and impact, addressing the needs of ethnically diverse communities both locally and globally—an endeavour that the British Council wholeheartedly supports.

As we look ahead, we invite organisations interested in hosting similar screenings to consider private packages that include a Q&A session, further advancing the documentary's mission to raise awareness and advocate for accessibility and equity in swimming. Let's come together to confront these issues head-on, reinforcing our collective commitment to fostering inclusion in swimming and beyond.

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