Right to the Streets, Season Two, Episode Seven: Local Partnerships in Action

**Introduction**

**Adil:** There's so many other organisations that are, it's my pet peeve, really about this gatekeeping that we need to move away from and really working in partnership with each other to support the people who are the most in need.

**Eve:** Hello, I'm Eve Holt, Strategic Director for Greater Manchester Moving.

Welcome to series two of the Right to the Streets Edition of the GM Moving Podcast. There are things that we can all do to create safe, joyful and welcoming streets, parks and public spaces where all women and girls feel they belong and are invited to be active. Together with GM Moving and colleagues, I've been working with people and partners in Trafford, Greater Manchester to do just this.

(Three, two, one, action! We live here, our families are here and we want this to be a safe space for our children to grow up as well.)

**Eve:** You'll hear from lots of the people and partners involved, including local citizens, community leaders, politicians, commissioners, sports organisations, artists, comms experts, facilitators, performers, and many others, who've all been playing an active role as part of a whole system approach to women's safety, shifting the dial from fear to freedom.

In this episode, we're going to explore the strength of working with, investing in, and growing local partnerships in a neighbourhood. We'll explore the value of their insight, their relationships and trust on the ground, and how key they are to inspiring and enabling community-led action. Authentically reaching, involving, and delivering with and for the people you're looking to serve through your work.

Partnership working was the very backbone to the whole Right to the Streets initiative from the very start. Partnerships between cross sector and cross discipline organisations, groups and more informal social networks. The initial funding bid to the Home Office's Safer Streets Fund was in fact a collective effort between GM Moving as a national charity, Trafford Council as a local authority and Open Data Manchester, a local community interest company.

This continued through to the delivery of the Right to the Streets campaign. From podcasts to public campaigns, art trails, walking and cycling maps, flowerbeds, football matches, parades and performances, all were powered through local partnerships. Partnerships which grew and deepened to include over seventy five, yes, seventy five different partners in just one year.

So coming up in this episode, let's hear from some of those local Right to the Streets partners and see how these partnerships worked in action. Firstly, we're going to head to sunny Gorse Hill for Party in the Park, an event run by Gorse Hill Studios that animated Gorse Hill Park with a day of music, art, workshops and performances.

**Eve:** So why does this activity today here, what difference does that make?

**Anthea:**I feel like it's, without saying it out loud, we're here visually saying that it's our space and it's for everybody.

Then later we'll hear from Adil, CEO and Artistic Director of Alchemy The team at Alchemy Arts delivered Artful Paths, a series of photography and poetry workshops that provided a safe space for young women to artistically express themselves on the theme of Right to the Streets.

**Adil:** As the young people got talking about themselves, they suddenly found that they were talking in a group of people that they hadn't done before. And that really improved their confidence, self esteem, and it built a really good trust between different ages of young girls that they wouldn't normally be connected to.

**Eve:** But before that, I want to share a little bit more about why local partnerships are so important to the Right to the Streets movement. Local groups and organisations have a really significant role to play in the way that people feel about their place and community and in influencing people's behaviours.

Schools, colleges, health care centres, shops, community groups, services, workplaces and faith organisations are just some of the many trusted sources of both formal and informal information and communication and provide influential hubs where people convene, learn and act together. Finding ways to work with and to invest in the local groups and organisations that play an important anchor in the area and are important assets was absolutely critical to our approach.

None of us can tackle societal issues like inactivity or street harassment and violence or misogyny on our own. It will take all of us. And each partner brings different expertise, insight, skills and relationships. Different groups are trusted by different sections of the community. So only by working, learning, and leading together can we really deliver sustained change in place, at depth, and at scale.

This is the magic that we've witnessed. Partnerships are growing collective learning, wisdom, joy, accountability, support, and energy. As human beings, we are motivated by the sense of collective action, by being part of something bigger, by seeing and hearing others that care too, and seeing the difference that we can make together. So let's hear some action, shall we?

One of the brilliant local Right to the Streets partners is Gorse Hill Studios. They're a youth development charity based right in the heart of North Trafford. They provide tons of classes and projects that young people from the community to get involved with, like cooking sessions, a youth club for special educational needs young adults, and arts and music classes.

Their venue also plays host to lots of local clubs and projects. They approached us with the idea to animate the local park for a day with arts, performances, workshops and stalls, all designed and led by their young people. The idea is to bring the community together for a day, provide a safe space for expression, and to showcase some of the fabulous initiatives and young people from Gorse Hill Studios and across North Trafford.

**Interview 1**

So, that's where you'll find us now. On a gloriously sunny day in Gorse Hill, we're surrounded by a main stage, several tents that are hosting various workshops, and stalls staffed by local organisations, and an art trail.

(Cool, we're ready for the show. Everybody make your way to the front and make some noise for Energy Dance School.)

Just seen the brilliant Energy Dance Group on the stage, they're absolutely fantastic. I heard a kid next to me say, they were great, and start dancing. So we're going to go and see if we can talk to some of them about, yeah, dancing and dancing in parks.

**Child 1:** What we have been doing is very important because we all love dancing and we all love using our energy and that's why it's called energy because we're very strong and powerful and we've been to loads of competitions now.

**Child 2:** I love dance because you get to express yourself and I think my favourite thing to do in dance is the competitions.

**Eve:** Wow, what an excited and talented bunch of young dancers. They were so buzzing to have performed in public and in their local park. It was absolute joy to watch and to listen to. Next, we bump into a local councillor, a youth council member and a chair of Lostock Park Friends Group, which is another Trafford park just down the road from where we are. I'm dying to find out what they make of all that's happening today.

**Maureen:** I'm Maureen Riley. I'm the chair of Lostock Partnership and Friends of Lostock Park. So, I work with a large amount of people.

**Fiona:** My name's Fiona Hornby. I'm one of the Labour councillors for Gorsill and Cornbrook, the ward we're in today. We have lots of amazing parks in the area, and absolutely wonderful community groups and I do my best to try and work with them, and bring people together to achieve what they want to achieve.

**Jack:** Hi, my name is Jack Henry and I'm a member of the Trafford Youth Cabinet and I'm heavily involved in the community around Stretford and Trafford.

**Eve:** I start off by asking them why they think it matters to do things like this in parks and public spaces.

**Fiona:** I think events like this need to happen because without people in the park, a park's just a bit of grass, some trees and some metal frames. It's people that really make a park and bringing people together at something like this is so special. And if you can give someone even just one good day, that's going to enhance their lifestyle and they'll be more encouraged to come back and meet new people and enjoy new things.

**Maureen:** It matters because we need to bring younger people and older people together and to encourage the respect between those two groups, which is something I've worked on since 2006.

**Jack:** Since the rise of social media, both young people and old people have become more split apart. Young people have become less social, and events like this. More or less build up in a community.

**Eve:** And I know all three of you do lots of work to make sure that we hear kind of the voice of young people and the voice of people across their life course really.

And we know, we've heard through the Be Well survey for example in Greater Manchester, how important open green spaces are for young people and everybody to come together, to gather, to be together, to support each other and to feel happy and well. So, let's make the most of those assets. So any thoughts on, what do we need to do more of to make sure that we hear from, you know, some people who may be less likely to engage in our council consultations, that may go, this isn't a place for me, so they might not initially engage in those conversations.

And how do we lift imaginations around actually, what could we do for parks that would make them spaces that everyone does feel that they can interact together and feel like they can be active and joyful?

**Fiona:** Yeah, so I think as a council, because councils look after so many. Residents like usually hundreds of thousands of residents, we tend to do things in very formal ways like consultations, things like that, and they wouldn't work for someone like Jack or a young person because they're not engaging.

They don't know where to find them. The wording might be complex, I think there's such big value in just those soft moments, going to things like this, speaking to people, being very informal, being in the spaces where they are, getting their feedback. And I know that's not necessarily as tangible as some results from a consultation, but when you listen to what people want in their own space like that, you're more likely to come to a way of communicating with them in the best way for them.

**Jack:** A lot of people, more or less, that are just, let's say, the average person you'll get from young people, they won't really know about many events such as this one today going on in the park.

So, you absolutely need to work on promotion. If you can possibly reach out to younger people, they'll know about it. Whatever you use, if you use it and then people can start interaction in a local area, then perhaps they can, feel a lot more safe and comfortable around community.

**Maureen:** You've got to be out there. You've got to go and speak to young people. Not step back and go, Oh, young people, they're scary. You were a young person once. I was a young person once.

**Eve:** I know that there's quite a lot of research you might know about that makes space for girls around how parks often don't end up, being spaces that women and girls in particular feel that are for them.

And particularly teenage girls, often feel that there's nothing designed really for them to just be and to hang out together. Anything that you would, yeah, want to add around things you're trying to do or ways that you're listening more to women and girls in particular in that sphere.

**Fiona:** I think from my perspective, I don't like to try and do things for them because they should be the people leading it. They, and that's not to put it back on them, but that's because they're the right people to tell us what they need. When we're working with community groups, I think that's really key to reaching out to them and Maureen is a great example of someone who does that and really is part of the community and doesn't do what she wants to do within a community, she asks and develops from there but I know a lot of park groups are ran by people who do do what they want to do and I think it's about trying to flip that and what part of being involved with those park groups can I be part of to help change their perceptions of what's right and what's wrong and challenge that behaviour as well. Challenge things that may not be bringing young people at the forefront of it.

**Eve:** So I know that this event today was very much to be designed by young people locally doing things they want to do. So in fact, the idea, the concept of the Part in the Park came from young people through Gorse Hill Studios who said in response to the what would you like to do locally that would help to promote kind of people's right to the park and to streets and they came up with this concept and we're very lucky it's a gorgeous sunny day in September and I guess that always poses a question doesn't it because it's quite different when it's cold, when it's wet, when it's dark and I know there's lots of activity to think about how we create that space and reclaim the night as well.

**Maureen:** We do need an indoor space for young people at night We had one youth club and it was taken away from us and we got it back, and all that says to young people is, you're not worthy. And it's the wrong message to send out to young people. It's the wrong message to send to everybody. We're all worthy. And I think we really need to listen.

I mean, just going back to your other point about safety in parks. Two young girls have approached us. They want all the bushes cutting back at the entrances to our park. Yeah, why? Because if you're in there at night watching the skate bowls, some boys have tried to pull us into the bushes, but we ran away.

Well that’s good that you got away, but that's wrong that that's happening. So I'm battling it now with councillors not to wait till next spring. This needs doing now. And if young girls don't feel safe, we've taken another place away from them to go to. So, council need to really pay attention to young people.

**Fiona:** I think it's really, really important that we act on things like that quickly as well. You know, if we have intelligence like that, it can't just be the case that we have to wait till next year. We need to have systems where we can be proactive about things like that and change them quite quickly.

Especially when they are quite relatively small things to change. We're not having to build a new building, or anything like that. We're having to maintain something that's there. And, yeah, I think that's really important. And we need more indoor spaces in places, as well as outdoor places.

So, for example, in the park here, we have a gorgeous entrance to the park, which is a really large gate with two side buildings. Unfortunately, those side buildings have been closed for decades. And the entrance is listed as well, so it's quite hard to get funding and to get something that's fit for a listed building.

But if we could have a cafe in there or even just rooms that the community can use, that would really help bring people to the park when they wouldn't normally be here. So when it's raining. People can still go in there. Also something that we don't talk about enough is public toilets, so a lot of the time, public toilets are not open anymore.

That means that a lot of people can't go to parks if you've got a medical problem or you just need the toilet like everyone does several times a day. Bringing things like that back is so important to making our spaces accessible for people.

**Eve:** There's been lots of conversations about the importance of the physical environment, having amenities, having our loos, having cafes and things present in places, and being able to have, that visibility, so that places aren't hidden.

One of the things that's come out of this is going, it's not just that, it's also that being able to address the culture and speak to men and boys, so in your example, that yes, helping trim back bushes, can be one response, but that ultimately doesn't address the core issue, does it, which that men and boys shouldn't be acting in that way.

**Maureen:** It is a learning curve and it's really, really hard as a teenager. To go through puberty and to have to learn all these other social skills as well.

But it is learning to respect and I think at the bottom of everything is that respect for each other.

**Eve:** And having those authority figures like you who create the space and the conditions there for those young people to lead, for them to learn, for them to act is so important. So thank you to the three of you. Thank you very much. I'm going to take you away from the fun and activity. But yeah, cheers.

**Interview 2:**

The event is really starting to fill up now, and as we're walking around we can see people of all ages, backgrounds and ethnicities strolling or wheeling through the park, getting involved in the workshops, watching the performances and generally having a good time.

And that is just the beauty of a park when it's at its best. It's a place that everyone feels they belong. And that's the strength of our public spaces. One of the workshops on offer today is strength training. Yes, strength training. Not only am I keen to have a go, but I'm so interested to hear the connection between physical activity and all women and girls having a right to the street.

**Anthea:** I'm Anthea Cribbin, I'm a freelancer at Gorse Hill Studios.

**Olivia:** I'm Olivia and I am also a freelancer at Gorse Hill Studios.

**Eve:** So can you tell us briefly what you're doing here today in Gorse Hill Park?

**Anthea:** We've taken part in Party in the Park for Gorse Hill Studios and we've also took the opportunity to host a stall where a couple of our projects that we've synthesised together, which are strength training and girls growing great, which involves clearing spaces and growing spaces and using all the same muscle groups as we do for strength training at our local site.

**Olivia:** We are also doing a little raffle and selling organic veg and like guess the weight of a pumpkin which also goes back to strength training because you're picking it up and yeah.

**Eve:** I haven't picked up the pumpkin yet. I will do, but I have signed up for the strength training because I have to say, Olivia, you do a very good job of convincing me why this is really important for me, and growing stronger and fit for life, really.

So in terms of what's going on here, why is it, why does this matter? I know we've talked before about. parks and how we make them spaces that feel safe and welcoming and active and joyful really for all, including women and girls. So why does this activity today here, what difference does that make?

**Anthea:** I feel like it's, without saying it out loud, we're here visually saying that, it's our space and it's for everybody, even though there's a big onus.

We're very female heavy on the staff front, which is nice. The allotments is run by three women as well. And as you know, we're literally in the shadow of Manchester United. So there's a massive presence of men and fans that will use our areas. for want of a better expression.

They do some, just how the toilet is. It can make a lot of women and girls feel unsettled and the rubbish they leave behind is like almost saying we don't care about your spaces. They don't move out the way when you're on the pavement coming out of Tesco's. So I was thinking about this. So I realised I'm of the camp of, I'm quite confident when there's a group of men and I'll go about my business.

But then the other day I was actually food for thought. I thought. It's because I actually feel physically strong and mentally strong. But then at the same time, I do recognise my heart rate goes up when I do see large groups of men. So if I'm feeling like that and I do consider myself a confident woman, then what are other girls and women in the area feeling?

So I suppose it's like, it sounds a little bit egotistical, but Olivia here is like my mini me. We're quite confident in how strong we are, and we just want to celebrate it and encourage other. young people and old people and our youngest was twelve in the strength training and our eldest was

**Olivia:** Ninety two.

**Anthea:** She's one of the strongest as well. So we've got like the anomalies and they're there representing for everything and everyone else in between really.

**Eve:** Right, so you're here, you're visible.

**Anthea:** Yeah.

**Eve:** So go on then, tell us a bit about this strength based training, tell us what you've been doing and why that matters.

**Olivia:** So a big thing for me is, as someone who considers themselves as quite a confident and strong person, and I do come across like that to quite a lot of people that I meet, I just love to share that with girls because there's so many times where, even with our young people that we work with, we'll ask them, Do you want to do this today? Or do you want to do that? And they just can't tell you. They'll shrug their shoulders. They're nervous. They're not confident in saying, I want to do this. And it's trying to bring that out in young girls, and a lot of women. To use your voice, and say no, or, say how you feel, and what do you want to do.

So for me, a massive part of the strength training is, it really builds your confidence. It's amazing for your body. You're endorphins you release, you just can't beat it. Like, there's no better feeling after a session when you know you've pushed yourself. And it's just sharing that emotion, sharing that feeling, building that confidence.

And I just love to be a part of women and young girls fitness journeys. A massive part of why this is important to me is The same taking up space. We are here. We are strong. We're together. Yeah ready to get empowered, you know!

**Eve:** Fantastic and when you talk about the strength training So I think of it's all what places and spaces here that often feel very male dominated And often if you go to the gym, it's another space and place isn't it like parts quite often can feel that tends to be very male dominated. So what is it about the conditions that you create in the sessions that you run that helps all women, it sounds like, of all ages, step in possibly for the first time doing strength training and actually feel like it's a place that they belong?

**Olivia:** I think for me, it's just having that open, friendly environment. Where everyone's pretty much a beginner at these classes. Everyone is equal in terms of respect. We all respect each other. And it is a lovely environment to be in at Gorse Studios as well. Because it's quite a nice room that we have in the studios.

And um, going back to what you were saying about the male dominated spaces in the gym. I completely agree with you. It can be very daunting. I found it quite intimidating. I didn't go in the weight section for months. But you know, when I did, I just absolutely loved it, and, you love it so much you don't even, like, pay notice to anyone else.

And then when you do actually get to know a lot of the people there, they're all very friendly. They might look big and scary, but they're all actually really nice guys, and I think that's also coming from, having that confidence within themselves. And, knowing who they are. And I think that's what so many women need to do. They need to have that confidence within themselves and be sure of who they are. And then you can go into the spaces with your head held high.

**Eve:** So both, whether you're in the gym or you're in the park. There's something in what you've said about a sense of community, and you feel that you can bump into people you've never met before and strike up a conversation, which is, I guess, part of today, because you've created this, like, by animating it, like bringing people here with nice activities, like hopefully loads of people will meet each other who haven't met.

**Olivia:** A lot of the time, women join the gym to lose a bit of fat and they find love in strength training and their whole body image completely changes. A lot of women join the gym to be smaller and then they're like, Oh! But look at that muscle. Oh, but look at that definition and I just think that is so amazing.

**Anthea:** There's one particular lady I'm thinking of and you've had to adapt the program for her because she's going to have a hip replacement, isn't she? And she's already tailored this program that she could do it from a chair. So we're saying things like you can do it in the adverts when you're watching the soap.

So everything she does there, she can take home.

You can see the endorphins are just like oozing out of her. She's transformed, so not, obviously not physically, she's only done a few sessions, but just mentally, and this is what we're saying what it's about as well, because a lot of these women, they'll get to a certain age, there's certain things they think they can't wear anymore, they can't do anymore.

Not speak up the same way and it's like just reminding them that, it is women It is girls who run the world whether we like on it just always feel like that But it's kind of like we have to remember who we are and you know

**Olivia:** And it's reminding them they have a space and this is you can own this space You have the right to own this space doesn't matter if you've put a few pounds on after having a baby, or you're getting into your older years.

**Anthea:** Or you're reaching menopause.

**Olivia:** Yeah I was just about to say that one.

**Anthea:** You can’t get rid of that middle band of belly, so it is, it's for everybody and I'm actually quite proud that we didn't set out to get, well we did set out to get like all ages, but we didn't think it'd be that disparate between having twelve year olds to ninety two year olds.

**Olivia:** Yeah it's amazing.

**Anthea:** So we've demonstrated through actually engaging with Right To The Streets. There is a need for girls and women only spaces still, as much as we all think we're so progressive and we all should be able to work out in gyms, there's still some women that don't feel comfortable. There's sadly still some men that think they know it all.

**Olivia:** Yeah, it is all about body composition.

**Eve:** So you're creating active tissue, active people. Active spaces, active places.

**Anthea:** Endorphins.

**Olivia:** Good vibes.

**Eve:** Good vibes, a sense of agency, a sense of power, I mean, awesome. Thank you both, absolutely brilliant.

**Anthea:** Thank you for having us and getting us started.

**Olivia:** I don't know about you, Anthea, but this whole working with women and getting them in and seeing the need is really like lit a fire under my bum.

**Anthea:** She's now officially a freelancer. So she's set up now with her own little limited company and she's going to carry on after. So it's not like something that's just a flash in the pan. She's going to continue it and she's making a career out of it. And as you've heard from her, she's brilliant. And she's only just turned seventeen.

So, she's a role model and inspiration, not just to her own peer group, but to everybody above it. She definitely is to me. So thank you.

**Eve:** Absolutely amazing. Thank you guys. What a fabulous example of creating the conditions for women and girls to be visible, to take up space and have ownership of that place, whilst at the same time, building our own individual feeling of physical strength and confidence and how we then engage others around us.

Absolutely brilliant stuff. That really was such a fun day. It's been really interesting to come back to Gorse Hill Park on such a sunny day when it's so animated and see the contrast from Gorse Hill Park on a wet and cold winter day. Just as it was when we recorded episode one, the crime episode, of the right to the street podcast, which is a conversation between myself, Grace and collaborative women and Ruth from Gorgeous Gorse Hill.

And we mused on all things about parks and open spaces when it comes to safety of women and girls and active lives for all. It also takes me back to our conversation with the women from St. John's Centre in episode four, the public health one, where they talked about the many social benefits of holding events just like this in parks and other public spaces.

It talked about bringing people together, offering space for expression and creating those lasting memories. All achieved through local partnerships in action.

**Interview 3:**

Next, let's hear from Alchemy Arts, they're an arts and media social enterprise that uses imagination and innovation as catalysts for social change. They work with underrepresented people, including young people, those with special educational needs, mental health, dementia, and addiction. They were one of a number of local organisations that were awarded a pot of funding through the Right to the Streets community grants.

Their project for young people. Artful paths exemplifies the power of partnerships to really develop strong relationships, create safe spaces, and to work with people from different cultures to help change cultural norms. So let's hear how it all went with Adil. My

**Adil:** My name's Adil Mohamed Javid. I am the CEO and artistic director of Alchemy Arts.

We led on a project called Artful Paths, creative workshops around photography and poetry. I'm born and bred in Old Trafford. I've lived here all my life and it was a great opportunity for me to say, well, actually let's bring a creative project back to Old Trafford. So Artful Paths, we had a tagline that said creative interventions for active lives.

Now, I'm from the BAME community, from the Pakistani community specifically, and there's a reluctance on engaging in any sort of exercise. It's so difficult to get people excited about exercise from our community, especially the elderly community. And it's because, our communities are from rural areas, the Punjab, Mirpur, places like this.

And their way of life was very much around, yes, horticultural environments and working in the gardens and communities and things like this, but it was very much about labor and they wouldn't go out to luxury and, enjoy a nice walk in the park if they didn't need to. So, because they were doing that in their lifestyle.

So, yeah, for me, it was really important to get them active. And I wanted to use arts for, for that delivery. And I chose photography and poetry because I know our communities are very visual and very expressive. It's a very oral culture. We pass on stories through speaking about it.

**Eve:** So I came to one of the photography workshops, which was with a group of young women and saw them, they were at the time doing some sketches and then they were doing some fantastic, like setting, creating a scene and taking photographs.

(So today I'll actually go through some basic theories so you guys can like, you know, implement that mainly on shadows, lighting and framing. We're going to get you guys acting out a scenario, but now you have to take a photo and frame it. So when we're framing, we want to get it, this is what you call, like the photo grids. Rule of thirds, you want it to line up with this corner, this corner, somewhere around there.)

**Eve:** I was quite blown away actually at how effective, in a really short amount of time, they were able to capture and I guess engage with issues around their sense of the right to the streets, and, and how the streets look and feel to them.

**Adil:** At the start, we had conversations about safety and how they feel as young girls, and they talked a lot about their parents being overprotective because they are visually representing their faith. So they might be wearing the hijab or dressing a certain way, and they were very conscious about transport and traveling through Trafford or other areas and feeling as though they might get picked on.

So we had discussions about that and they were talking about how their parents would be reluctant to allow them to go on public transport. One of them spoke about having a tag on her key ring because her parents would keep track of her because they were afraid that something might happen, god forbid.

And then we spoke about what does a safe space look like? That was the idea around the sketches really that they were doing. They were drawing what would an ideal place, if money was no object, if policies were all followed, and all the dreams came true, what it would look like. And then the idea was that we would walk around the local areas, especially around Gorse Hill, around Stretford, to see what places are closer to their imagination and their sketches, really.

So that was the idea around them drawing their kind of Elysium or their beautiful heaven of traveling and being active around Trafford.

**Eve:** Can you describe some of the things that you heard from young women when they then started drawing, their dreams, streets and spaces?

**Adil:** They spoke about places that were well lit. they said that, spaces that were well lit felt safe. And especially when the winter season kicks in and it gets dark earlier, they would like open spaces, spaces where it wouldn't be as crowded of people. If they're waiting on bus stops and things like this, they feel sometime intimidated, especially as you know, around, around Manchester during match days, Eve, it's really busy.

It's really huge population. And sometimes they. People can get crowded on, on public transport, especially the buses. Yeah, there was quite universal in terms of what they spoke about in that terms, but they were really conscious about who they were as well. Our workshops, although it was open to all young girls, the large community that came to the workshops were from the South Asian Muslim and Pakistani community.

It was quite a mix, but yes, they were majority Muslim. And that's probably because one of the things that we noticed was our marketing went to the homeschooling community and they were just so active, really passionate parents about their young people. And it spread like wildfire and they passed it through to all the communities that they can represent and or work with.

**Eve:** And that was I guess one of the real strengths of the work was just, again, around those trusted relationships and understanding, really, of, as you say, within the South Asian community locally, already having those relationships in place, people being able to come into a space, talk about stuff that can be quite tricky.

These are pretty heavy emotional subjects, actually, and when you're both somebody of visible faith and a woman and there's all that intersect around both culture, your own identities, a teenage girl. There's a lot there that can, understandably, you can see why people go, ah, this is not what I want to do on a Saturday or Sunday.

So the way that you brought photography and brought poetry and brought, I guess, those trusted relationships and spaces that created, yeah, the conditions, didn't they, to, to engage in those subjects in a way that seemed to bring depth, but also joy and fun.

**Karena:** I'm Karena and I'm Twenty. It's my first time here, so it'll be fun to see what happens.

**Rashaney:** I'm Rashaney, I'm twenty. A lot of women, like, our experiences are not always heard, and the way that we see the world has to be represented, and I think photography is a great way to show that. I think photography is good because it's quite accessible compared to things like painting. Photography doesn't take as much time.

You can change things on the spot, and especially because, like, for me, I take a lot of inspiration from film. So it's quite easy to You know, take ideas from film and photography and translate emotion through it very quickly. So, I was just thinking, because we're doing Rule of Thirds, so it was more about framing.

So I just began with a figure in a corner, looking over his shoulder towards a road. And just to help me, like, think of how to frame it, I thought about what kinds of scenes I've seen in movies and stuff and how they would do it. And, yeah, I'm not sure if I would do this, like, take an actual picture of this.

But for a drawing exercise, it was really good. It's easy to just walk around, but if you're paying attention to what you're doing, as if you would pay attention when taking a photo, I think that's a good thing. There is that classic advice of, keep your phone handy, or stay on the phone, but if we're translating it to photography, maybe instead of having to constantly be on the phone, we could be attentive and taking pictures of whatever we're interested in instead.

**Adil:** My fundamental goal for this was allowing those young people to have fun, but also express themselves. Our workshops are different because they're interactive. We're influenced a lot by, Augusto Boal and Paulo Freire Theatre, and that's around liberation theatre. It's all about being expressive and creating social change through theatre, right?

So to empower those young girls or any young girls, even regardless of them being South Asian or from a specific community, any young people, if they feel as though they're getting thrown into a theatre environment, they suddenly just think, oh no, I don't want to do this. So it was about having creative conversations.

So I said to Ali as well, Ali was our photographer, professional photographer. He didn't have a lot of experience in delivering workshops, but he was a professional photographer. And I said to him, I don't want to have a professional facilitator come in and do this. I want you to have conversations with these young people and build a relationship with them.

Ask them about their lives. And that's what was really interesting because slowly, slowly, as the young people got talking about themselves, they suddenly found that they were talking in a group of people that they hadn't done before. And that really improved their confidence, self esteem, and it built a really good trust between different ages of young girls that they wouldn't normally be connected to. And they were getting a chance to be creative and use DSLRs and use their camera phones and be creative.

**Eve:** I also took the opportunity whilst at the photography workshop to chat to Ali. He's been working with the young women all afternoon as a facilitator for this session.

**Ali:** My name's Ali. The project is, Safer for Streets. So it's looking at our community and looking and saying the streets aren't always safe around our communities. They've got their safe spots and their not so safe spots. So we wanted to give, especially young girls, a place where they can be safe, get out of the house. Work on something that they can take out of the house.

So photography and we're going to use that medium to show where the improvements need to be around here, maybe there's not enough lighting in certain streets. It's not safe for girls to be walking home at night and it shouldn't be that way But we're giving them their own medium where they can show that to the community And yeah, just have a voice to be heard.

And at the end hopefully we'll have an exhibition of them showing their photographs.

**Eve:** Great. So what are the young women doing today?

**Ali:** Today we're working on framing. We'll be taking them on a little photo walk later on to show the, the area. We want to make them comfortable and it's still to be fun for them.

But giving them those skills, drip feeding at them, so that whatever level of photography they're currently at, they can try and take what they can from it and use it to tell a story.

**Eve:** Any particular kind of stories that are emerging at the moment, or what sort of things are you seeing and hearing through the work they've done so far?

**Ali:** Right now, it's really, it's really all over the place. So, we're just letting them learn however they want. Then we're going to be pushing them into the streets, telling them, show us your area, what do you like about it, what do you not like about it. What makes you feel safe, show us your commute home. But yeah, it's just developing those skills so they can use it to tell stories.

**Adil:** I think the poetry I was blown away by, because it had so much depth and there was a young girl called Aya. And Aya is an Arabic word that means verse in the Quran. She was lovely. She was a eleven year old girl. And I thought she was a right little feisty little young woman.

She's quite quiet and everything. As you get to know people and I was trying to get to know them a little bit more and speak to them. When we didn't have Lisa in the first workshop, cause Lisa Moore our spoken word artist and, facilitator. She wasn’t available for the first session.

So I had to cover and I just thought I'm losing these girls here a little bit, but when Lisa came on board and things that actually opened up and blossomed, a lot more, and she wrote some of the most amazing poetry. I just thought, wow, what an amazing young girl. And I'm not saying it was our workshops that brought out that within her, but I do hope it played a little bit of a part in that and hopefully on her journey going forward, she'll continue to follow, you know, poetry because she, she kind of captured so many beautiful, deep visuals with, with just her poetry.

**Eve:** I love the reflection between that sense of expression through poetry and through the photography and, the sketching and all the other creativity that went on around that as an expression of yourself and the way that we've talked about the right to the streets building on the right to the city and about actually being able to engage in our streets or public spaces is in itself an expression of us as well. And if you for all the reasons that we know in terms of people being subject to hate crime and misogyny and all those experiences that stop people from being able to express their own individuality, them as a young woman, them as a hijabi young woman, a Muslim young woman, and those faces it just feels like a really important stepping stone to it. I guess what we ultimately want to say is that they could also be doing that they can be effectively performing every day in our spaces as a real act of freedom and liberation.

**Adil:** One of the barriers to engagement that I've been working on across the right to the streets project, but with Alchemy Arts in general, is about breaking down barriers to engagement.

And one of the big things that I've been working on is the access to the arts, the arts has a bit of a taboo in our community because it's seen as, oh, is it permissible? Is it not permissible? Is it Haram? Is it Halal? What I was really pleased about was that the community that came forward and the passion from the mothers that were just saying, Adil, please set up more artistic projects.

We need things like this, and I said, well, are you guys not worried about what the community or the mosque will say? And they're like, no, Adil, we want these artistic projects. And they actually wanted it to be longer, really. And that's one of my takeaways from this is that I think we need like a, a year long engagement with these young people to work with them and really see them grow.

**Eve:** I saw that pride, one of the mums that came along to the event when the photography was being exhibited, and some of the young women came along and it was fantastic seeing them look at their photography, which was then beautifully presented and to your point I suppose around having a professional photographer.

It felt very professional. It felt like that really giving, I guess, doing justice to the arts and to that expression in a real quality, professional way. And, one of the girl's mums just was, it was gorgeous. She was just. oozing with pride, so much pride for seeing her daughter and what her daughter had done and how that just flowed out to the girl's siblings and her dad.

And, they were all wrapped up in this real sense of just joy for, for this creative process. And what was the result of that.

**Adil:** Can you imagine what that does for her, her daughter and the siblings to see how much their parents are proud they are of, of the work that they created.

**Eve:** Fantastic. What else would you like to see happen next?

**Adil:** I think it's really important that we build the momentum that we have the relationships that we built with all these organisations was a beautiful thing. And I want to take this time now to just touch back and reach out with the partners that we make because it must mean about twenty organisations. And I want to build relations with them.

I think a combination of organisations where we can do an artistic intervention, the active bystander training, and having conversations and maybe even a film that we can show as an exhibition would be really good. We should be an example to the funders and to other organisations and what it means to truly work in partnership together.

One of the things I'm really passionate about is sharing resources, not just necessarily money, but contacts and communities and opportunities for our people. I am a young working class. I'm not so young anymore, but working class lad from Old Trafford and arts allowed me the opportunity to have this social mobility to travel the world, meet different people, have different experiences.

And I met so many people who are not from the BAME community that opened up doors for me. And I'm, I'm really passionate about giving back now. And I think we're an example to it because there's so many other organisations that are, and I say this, it's my pet peeve really about this gatekeeping that we need to move away from and really working in partnership with each other to support the people who are the most in need.

**Eve:** I've got goosebumps. So if I was in a room with you, which I'm not, we're both online, I would be, yeah, shaking your hand, probably giving you a hug right now, but at least shaking your hand and say, yes, let's, let's do it. I think just as you said that the opportunities, it feels like the start of those partnerships.

It feels like people have had a glimpse at the different strengths and skills and relationships that you all have to bring and how. Yeah, we can all be more than the sum of our parts and how that can offer so much more to young people, but to people as a whole, really, in the way that they engage with the subject of violence against women and girls and street harassment and our public spaces and how we take action in a way that really feels both impactful and also joyful and creative in its process.

So any particular tips for people listening who are wanting to engage young people in either this subject or in similar subjects? What would you advise them now based on what you've learned?

**Adil:** I just think it's really important to have the outreach and engagement first and build that trust with communities and there needs to be certain incentives.

I think for us, one of the biggest incentives was having a bronze arts award for it. So what incentives can you offer when you're delivering a certain program? Because it was a very difficult time in terms of delivery because it was the summer holidays and people had commitments, but we still had people turn up.

So that shows that if you put something out there, people will come that they're really hungry for being part of some sort of creative intervention really. So, and having their voices heard. So I would say look for incentives, really build trust. Especially with young people, families, I found I built a really good relationship with families because they wanted to build trust and send their young people to a space where they felt safe.

And I think we created that. We created a safe space for young people to come and express themselves. And I think now that we've built that, it'd be a shame that we don't build on that.

**Eve:** You've talked about some of the indicators of success or change. So the actual expression from those young people and how that's translated into fantastic photography and the poetry and the feedback from them and from their parents and some of your own learning in the process.

Is there anything else that you would now take into account in terms of as a measure of success of this work? How do you measure success?

**Adil:** For me, success is the outreach and engagement of these people who haven't been accessing support, especially like, the homeschooling community that for me is a huge success because these parents are constantly looking for activities and positive activities for their young people to be part of or conversations around that.

And for them to actually be talking about such a serious issue, I think that was a really good success. The fact that they're thinking about this and being active in terms of having a decision on what things might change. I think that's really important. And I think for them to be really being involved in social action has been a real positive for me as well.

You know, especially like from the BAME community and the South Asian and the Pakistani and the Muslim community that I'm from, sometimes when you express yourself or say something or speak out about, something that you're passionate about, you could get labeled in a certain way because of negative media representation of yourself.

And it makes you stop in your tracks to, Oh, I better not say something because I'll be labelled as something. This allows them an avenue or a medium to express themselves or be passionate about something. And it's almost an accepted and safe environment. So I'm quite proud of that.

**Eve:** You should be. We were talking before this conversation around, Yeah, stigma and all those unfortunately. Cultural norms that get in the way of people having conversations or being able to express themselves. So, finding a way in a safe space and creating those conditions is fantastic.

Well, I've loved working with you. I've loved seeing the work that you've done with young people over the last few months. And I'm definitely committed to us doing more and seeing what's possible and excited about that.

**Adil:** I just want to say thank you, Eve, to you and all the team. I really loved working with you. And I've just really enjoyed working with all of you.

**Outro**

**Eve:** I’m always blown away by the passion of our partners. It really has been a great way of building energy across the project and very heartwarming to know how that passion is now growing and being passed on across our communities.

So that's it for this episode. A huge thanks for listening. I think we've really heard about the magic that happens when you create the conditions for thriving partnerships. When we come together in that way, we really can be more than some of our parts, and the added value that that creates when people and groups with different skills and strengths, not just come together, but really work and learn together, you really can make two plus two, make five, making resources go so much further, delivering a much greater impact and increasing the learning growth and joy in the process.

This podcast and the whole of the Right to the Streets project is just the start of the conversation. As ever, we'd love to hear more from you. Any particular special partnerships you've had the joy to be part of? What do you think are the key ingredients of a good partnership? Whatever it is, let us know and we'll share your thoughts on future episodes of this podcast.

We've got a few ways that you can get in touch. You can tell us on social media, we're on LinkedIn and Twitter. Simply search GM Moving or you can drop us an email. Just head to our website at GMMmoving.co.uk and hit the contact button.

Finally, a big thanks to everyone who's contributed to this episode. It's been great.

This Right to the Streets series of the GM Moving podcast is just one element of the Right to the Streets work. Led by Greater Manchester Moving, Trafford Council, Open Data Manchester and lots of GM Moving partners, some of whom we've heard from today. Thanks again to funding from the Home Office for Safer Streets.

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