

The Refugee Cycle Project - East Riding of Yorkshire Council

Best sustainable travel initiative - Community

The ongoing civil conflict in Syria has displaced approximately 10.9 million civilians with 3.8 million becoming refugees. The National Syrian resettlement program has placed 40 men, women and children in The East Riding of Yorkshire. Of the many challenges that this has presented, the safe use of British roads was identified, and road safety training was requested. It was then identified that, due to the expertise, experience, and capability of the Road Safety Team, more could be done. A partnership involving various agencies was formed with the intention of providing the migrants with reconditioned bicycles, helmets, training, and the confidence to become self-sufficient thanks to sustainable modes of travel, in order to access employment and/or education. This has effectively given 40 members of the community the ability to integrate, gain access to work and education and opened up the possibility of transport independence to those that were otherwise unable to ride a bike.

Local Authority

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Who Was Involved

David Butt (LEAD) + Angela Merrills – East Riding of Yorkshire Council, Tomasz Glinski (LEAD) + Frowynke Siegers – The Refugee Council, Simon Carlisle – Safer Roads Humber/Humberside Police, & John Marshall MBE – R-evolution. R-evolution are a local bicycle based charity who refurbish and rehome bicycles. Their aim is to refurbish bikes and returning them to the community

Budgeting

£5000 – Acquired through Safer Roads Humber as part of their funding for casualty reduction projects.

Project Development

The refugee cycle project saw the opportunity to integrate recently resettled refugees into local communities using cycling. However there were a number of barriers that had to be addressed to realise this vision. Following discussion with East Riding of Yorkshire Council David Butt joined the project to deliver a basic road safety briefing session with the first group in Beverley. The briefing allowed refugees to share their questions and concerns about British roads. The discussion continued for around 2 hours at which point the importance of the project became apparent as did the need to create a structure to these sessions. Clients who could then went on to participate in some cycle training. For the second project we aimed to offer the

cycle training to all, but we had to ensure that access to a bike was made possible so we set up a partnership with R-evolution and secured funding from Safer Roads Humber to supply 40 bicycles and helmets with safety equipment and cycle training.

What Was The Outcome

As a result of the scheme we have given 40 refugees resettling in the East Riding of Yorkshire access to cycling which has assisted in 5 finding work and 11 accessing education through local colleges as well as a further 3 taking up voluntary opportunities inside four months of the project. The Road Safety Team run an annual cycle event and This year included a challenging cycle ride for volunteers from among the refugee community to ride 100km from Cottingham to Bridlington many of which had never ridden a bike at the outset of the project. 24 refugees volunteered to take part, complete the distance, visiting key locations on the route. This is one of a number of successful outcomes, and a direct result of the project. There are now 40 new members of the community, actively contributing to society, and gaining independence and confidence. Women are not allowed to cycle in Syria, so this project has enabled a number of ladies to realise an ambition they never would have.

How Does This Project Meet The Criteria

The refugee bicycle project is a completely new area of work for our local authority. We have proactively approached the incoming Refugees to address integration, mobility and sustainable travel upon arrival. There have been a number of barriers we have had to overcome such as communication, cultural differences and the unique experiences of each individual, some for example had never owned or been able to ride a bike before leaving Syria. We have had to be dynamic in addressing these barriers as they have presented themselves. From the outset of the project it became clear that we required a number of partners coming together to deliver the project successfully and immediately consulted with Humberside Police, Safer Roads Humber, R-evolution, and the refugee council. Thanks to the regularly assessing and reviewing the project we have been able to deliver a really engaging project which has allowed 19 refugees to engage in a new British life, a number which continues to rise.



