

Title of Case Study	Hisham Saif, Karate and the Arab Community
Contact Name and Telephone Number	Jimmy Brennan
Project Timescale	Al-Ghazali Karate Club Opened 2000

Summary of Case Study

Jimmy Brennan 7th Dan teaches Karate at the Al Ghazali Karate Club on Earle Road, Toxteth. At first, the cultural differences between the Japanese art of Karate and the Arab community were a boundary to increasing the number taking part in the sport.

Jimmy Brennan faced these problems head on by liaising with key figures in the Community to explain the origins of the sport until understanding could be reached. The community sees the benefits of Karate teachings in its core principles of respect and discipline and the sport has also helped improve integration in the community.

Hisham Saif, from Yeman, joined the Karate class at the Al Ghazali Centre in 2000 where Jimmy is his Sensai (instructor). Hisham recently achieved national success having achieved the accolade of British Junior Champion in May 2010.

Why was it needed?

Increasing participation in sport improves community integration, improves health and wellbeing and teaches young people respect and discipline.

Aims and Objectives

To continue to increase the number of people joining the sport of Karate and to enable those currently taking part to achieve their full potential.

Main Outcomes

Hisham intends to take his sport to the highest level and to further develop his skills.

“I believe Karate has enabled me to be positive and believe in myself. It keeps me focussed on the things I want out of life. The sport in my opinion brings cohesion to the community and breaks down barriers such as culture or race. In the Dojo (club) we have a mixture of races and cultures and everybody gets on well and respects each other and this is the type of atmosphere I enjoy. The next step for me is to carry on competing internationally and develop my skills to become one day a World Champion.”

Who was involved?

Jimmy Brennan, Shotokan Karate
 Karate Union of Great Britain
 Liverpool City Council Sports Development
 Merseyside Sports Partnership

How was it Funded?

Karate is funded by membership and members also pay for a licence.

How do you know it was good practice?

Hisham Saif was presented with the Charles Naylor Memorial Trophy at the National Championships in Birmingham.

Have you already done any Publicity or Promotion?

Hisham has achieved publicity for his achievements in the local press over a number of years.

What Next?

Hisham will be taking part in International tournaments in Chicago (World Shotokan Championships) and the European Shotokan Championships in Poland.

Concluding Key Point about the Case Study

By really understanding people's reluctance to take part in sport, we are able to better address their concerns and promote sport to them by identifying the key benefits of sport that interest them.

National surveys such as Taking Part have attempted to establish reasons why people choose not to take part in sport, but the reality is that locally the issues may already be clear for a specific sport what the boundaries are. By tackling this locally, the Al Ghazali Karate Club has demonstrated best practice which can be adopted across other sports and throughout Merseyside. It takes an understanding of the area within which the club operates and the community it serves which Jimmy Brennan has shown us how to establish:

Jimmy Brennan said:

"The Al-Ghazali centre is very friendly and welcoming to anyone, regardless of their ethnic or religious background and it's been a pleasure to teach the members of the Arab community karate, in particular Hisham.

I have not only seen him reach a high level in the art of karate through his hard work and dedication, but have also seen him grow from a child of 6, when he first came to the club, to a mature, respected and respectful young man who I, his family and the community are very proud of."