



ROC RESEARCH
CONSULTANCY

TACKLING INEQUALITIES FUND EVALUATION

Independent Evaluation Summary
April 2022

Introduction

The Tackling Inequalities Fund (TIF) was launched by Sport England in April 2020 to make £20m of National Lottery funding available to support community groups in maintaining connections and physical activity opportunities in the recovery from Covid-19. The TIF also intended to support those disproportionately affected by Covid-19 and prevent the inequalities gap from widening due to falling activity levels.

The pandemic required urgent action and Sport England challenged their partners to work collaboratively, using their knowledge and understanding of local contexts to ensure the TIF was distributed to the right places quickly. In response Active Lincolnshire developed new ways of working by building on existing relationships and establishing new ones to distribute the TIF. This evaluation retrospectively explored the TIF in Lincolnshire between November 2021 and February 2022 to understand how Active Lincolnshire, Sport England and partners across Lincolnshire worked collaboratively to find sustainable approaches to reduce health inequalities through physical activity using the TIF.

Key questions

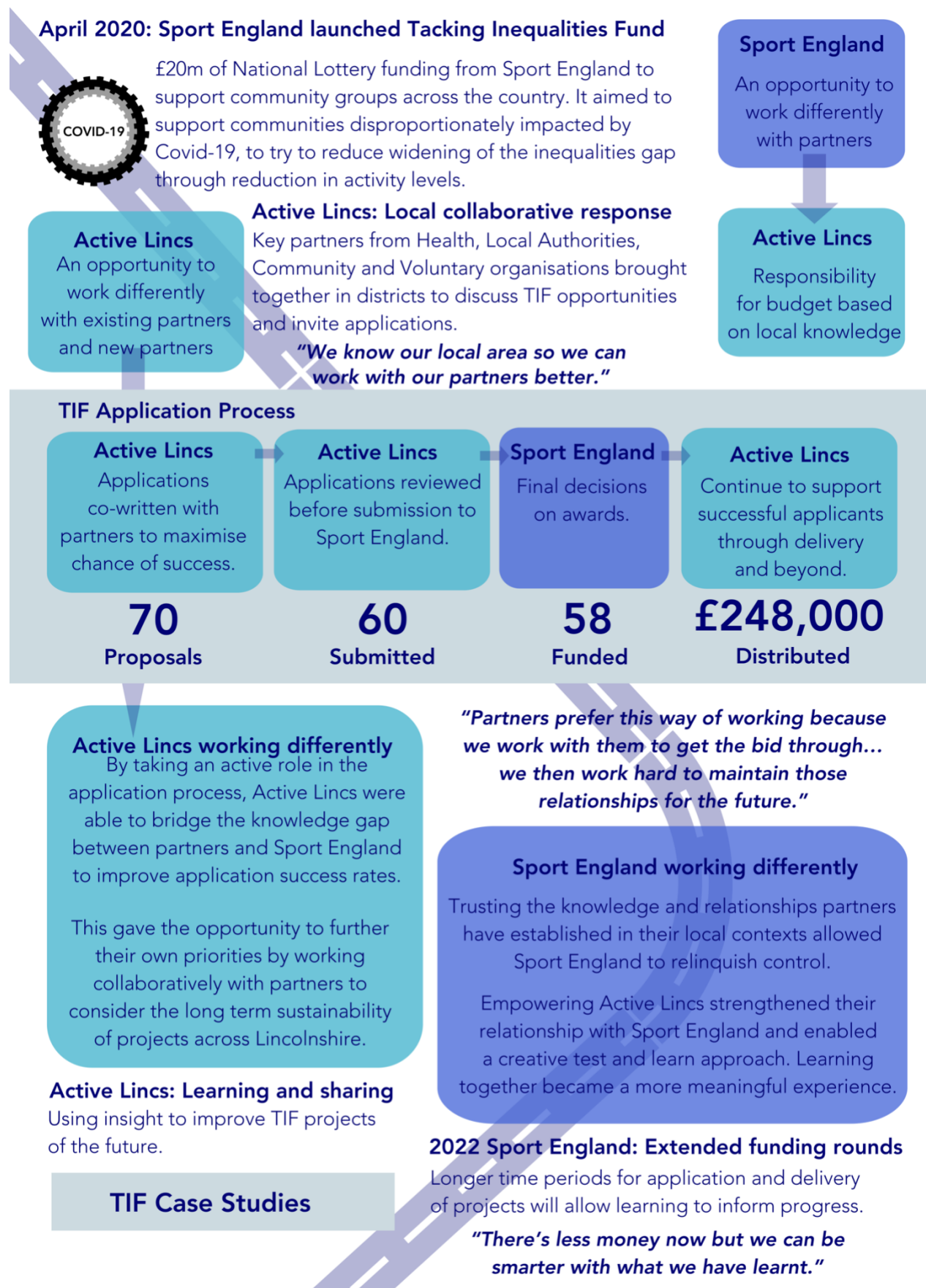
Key questions to inform the evaluation were as follows:

- How have organisations worked together with the TIF? (e.g. how have organisations been involved, what roles have organisations played?)
- How has the TIF impacted on health inequalities in the short term and long term? (e.g. has sustainable change been achieved?)
- What is the learning from work associated with the TIF and how can this be used to inform work in the future?

Methods

The data collection methods comprised of semi-structured interviews with key individuals involved in the work. Participants were identified by key stakeholders from Active Lincolnshire. Ten participants were invited to take part in the evaluation and nine agreed to take part.

The TIF application process:



Case study: England Netball Walking Back. TIF Award: £9350

Pre Covid-19: Walking netball groups well established across Lincolnshire

Many women loved playing netball in their younger years. Walking netball is a slower version of the game which encourages anyone to take part regardless of age or fitness.



Covid-19: Impact

Walking netball groups became inactive due to the rule of 6, cost of hiring facilities and additional equipment required to meet Government and England Netball guidelines. Participants were at high risk of reduced activity levels during the pandemic and may possibly fail to re-engage with walking netball during the recovery phase.

Active Lincs

EXISTING RELATIONSHIP

England Netball

TIF Application

Target Audience

People with LTHC
Disabled people
Women and girls
Older people

Aims

Restart participation within guidelines
Increase number of session facilitators
Increase membership
Provide suitable physical activity and social wellness
Avoid risk of group closure

Sustainability

History of successful groups promoting physical activity in target groups.
Requires kick-start to overcome barriers associated with Covid-19.



Kick started successful group following COVID-19



Addressing inequalities across the county through access to physical activity



Long term sustainability without additional funding

TIF: Impact

Walking Netball group's financial barriers from Covid-19 guideline removed. New equipment reduced infection risk. Running small groups despite a loss allowed participants to feel safe to return. Unexpected gains have led to long term sustainability and increase in target audience participation.

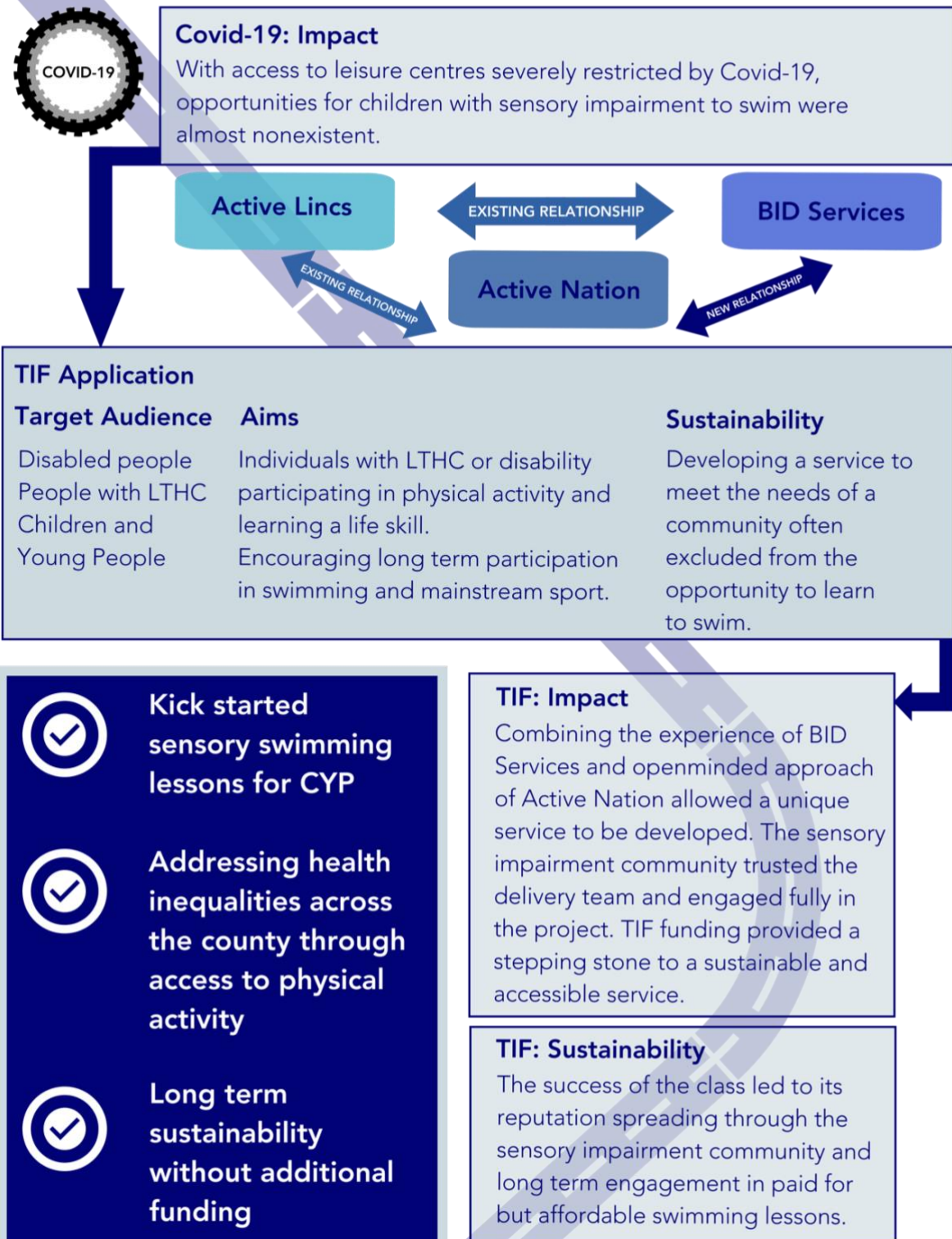
TIF: Sustainability

An underspend allowed the 11 new facilitators to be trained and new groups in places such as the East Coast are enabling people from low socioeconomic groups and those with LTHC to participate.

Case study: BSL Sensory Swimming. TIF Award: £3005

Pre Covid-19: Inadequate sensory swimming provision for CYP in Lincolnshire

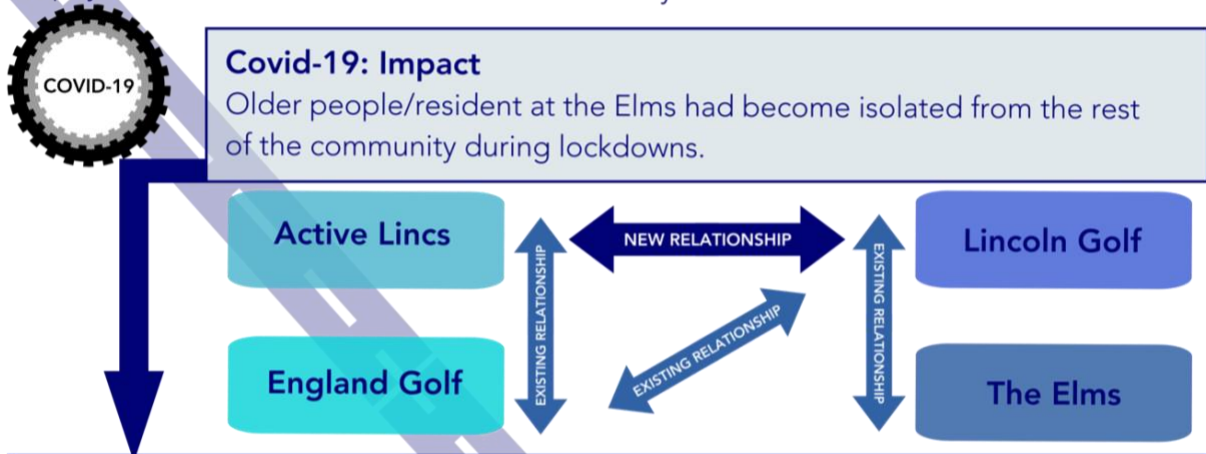
Due to a lack of British Sign Language swimming teachers, individuals who wanted to learn to swim had to access 1:1 lessons at a premium price.



Case study: Golf, Tea and Cake. TIF Award: £1175

Pre Covid-19: Loss of local community hub and provision for older residents

Lack of local amenities and traditional golf club barriers limited older residents access to physical and social activities in local community.



TIF Application

Target Audience

Disabled people
People with LTHC
Women and girls
Older people

Aims

Develop The Elms golf society
Re-engage the golf club with local community
Engage residents of the Elms in physical activity
Develop women's only golf

Sustainability

Enable continuation of gold through provision of free social golf membership for Elms residents



Kick started relationships within community



Addressing health inequalities through access to physical activity



Sustainability at risk without active input

TIF: Impact

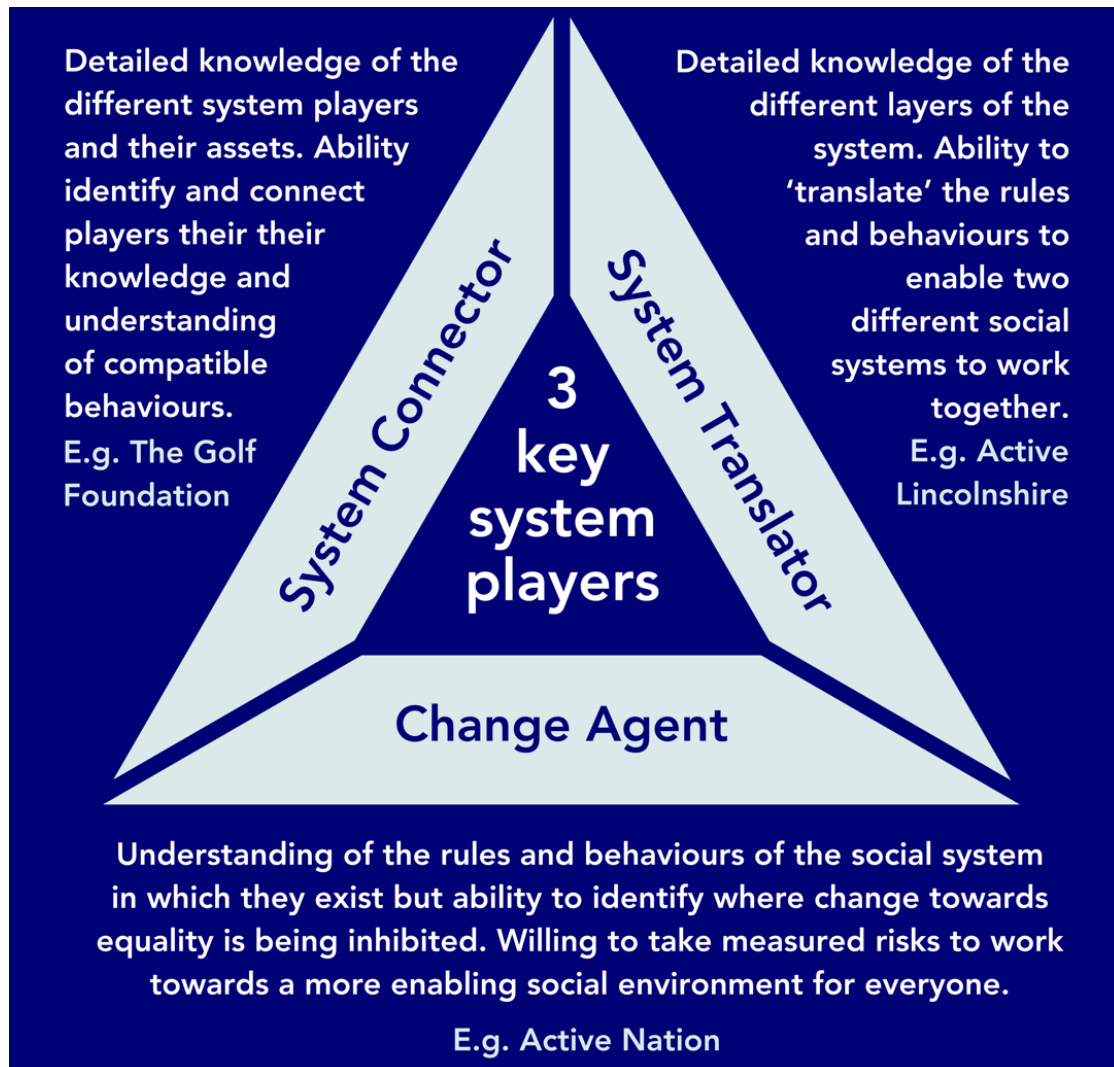
Improved connection between community and local golf club resulted in increased engagement with golf and social activities. Increases in physical activity a byproduct of the social gains experienced from participation.

TIF: Sustainability

Some use of social membership made available to Elms residents but risk of disengagement if the social aspects of the group are not actively maintained.

Key learning from the Tackling Inequalities Fund

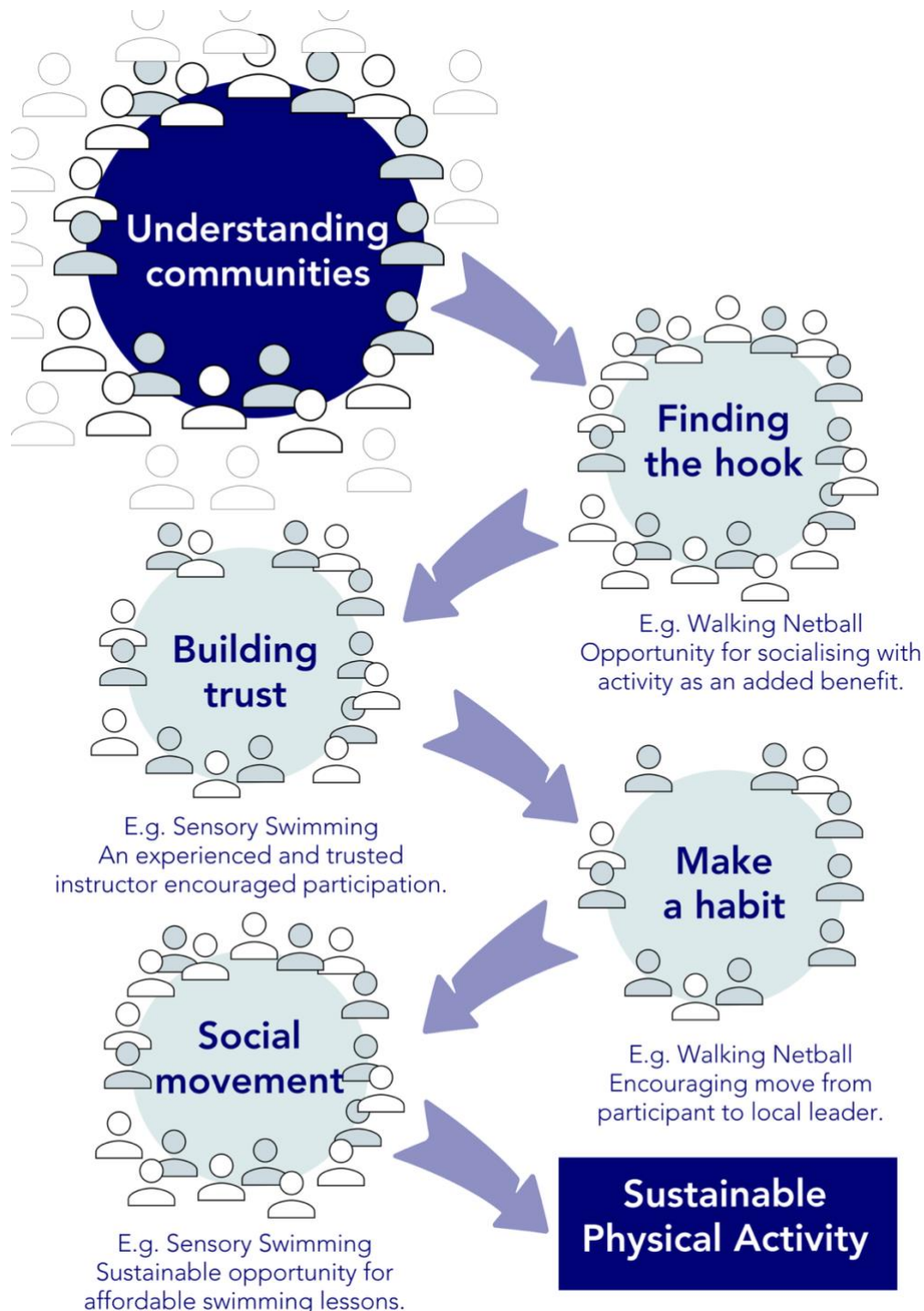
3 key roles to get projects up and running



Active Lincolnshire have successfully distributed the TIF by working collaboratively with partners, both existing and new across Lincolnshire. Key to successful implementation of projects is the development and maintenance of relationships, and recognition that partners can play different but complimentary roles when they work collaboratively to find solutions to tackling health inequalities. When these systems players are present during collaborative working, opportunities arise for a new and innovative projects to emerge that challenge the existing system have potential for sustainable approaches to physical activity.

Engaging target communities

Although projects can be well planned and implemented, key to their success is engagement of target communities. In all three projects there was engagement and participation and this appeared to be based on a good understanding of the target communities, the ability to find the hook for participation, building trust between the participant and the project, making activity a habit through participation and creating a social movement towards sustainable physical activity.



Conclusion

By using their unique understanding of the physical activity landscape in Lincolnshire and strong relationships with existing partners, Active Lincolnshire have successfully distributed the TIF. Active Lincolnshire play an important role as System Translators to bring together different parts of the system together and facilitate high quality applications to the TIF which maximises the chance of a sustainable change in physical activity behaviours.

The approach is further complimented by partners who can act as connectors to new parts of the system where Active Lincolnshire may not have explored, and by change agents who are open to a new and collaboratively way of working by breaking down barriers in the system. To continue the successful implementation of TIF projects in the future, Active Lincolnshire need to continue this way of working with their existing partners and identify new partners who may act as system connectors and change agents in the future.

We would like to thank Active Lincolnshire and Lincolnshire County Council for funding this evaluation through ROC Research Consultancy Ltd.

For more information please contact:

Dr Rebecca O'Connor

info@rocresearchconsultancy.co.uk

www.rocresearchconsultancy.co.uk

ROC Research Consultancy Ltd

21 Trevor Road

West Bridgford

Nottingham

NG2 6FS