

Annemarie Fellowship Int Final

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My name is Anna Marie and I am the research fellow on the together study, which is a NIHR funded community trial that aims to evaluate the effectiveness of a parenting programme that is designed by the race equality Foundation. And this parenting programme is called Strengthening Families strengthen communities. And what we're hoping is that by improving Family Well Being, that it will have a positive impact on children's health and behavioural outcomes. So the project is in its place in the department of epidemiology and public health, even though it's more social sciences, in a way, but it's part of epidemiology and public health. This is a four year community trial that I'm leading on, and we're coming towards the end of, of the trial. The first thing is I felt, which is partly due because of COVID. But also, because of what I said is that the study itself is more social sciences. And I'm a psychologist by background. So I've sort of come to work at the Department of Epidemiology, epidemiology and public health, where everybody around me are identified and are working on different different projects. And then during COVID meant that sometimes I felt I was working on this great project, but kind of alone, and no one really knew about it. And even though I was you know, it was very fulfilling and great work. But I wasn't, I wasn't really sharing it. So when I saw then the fellowship advertised, I thought, wow, this is really, this is really great, because this is going to help me one with kind of helping, helping to learn how can I make this? How can I share some of the learning that I've done on this on this project? How can I make it, you know, more, better known, but also the end? That's, that's the second reason is that, I know that from a personal perspective, I don't always have to have the comfort, the confidence, or I'm not really, I find it quite difficult to boast or to brag about, about research. And, and I know that, you know, if you want to share the impact of your research, you can't just be quiet and waiting for people to come to you, you need to be able to share this. So I was hoping that it would also help me kind of my confidence. Yeah, so from a personal perspective, so there were two main reasons really, why I Yeah, why sort of very attractive, and I applied for it. A common limitation of health research, and particularly in parenting research, which is the together study, but in health research in general as well is that people who would often benefit most from the research or from the parenting programme, are actually underrepresented in the research. So ethnic minority groups, people living in poverty, older people, homeless people, these are all groups of people who are actually less likely to take part in the research, but would really benefit from from the outcomes from the research. And although there's an increased awareness that we should be more inclusive, and it's, if there's still a lot that needs to be changed. Now, we worked really hard in to get a study to actually reach these people. So we know that there's very stark differences in child outcomes for children from ethnic, ethnic minority backgrounds are those living in poverty. So I worked really hard to try and recruit parents from those, those

groups, and I've been quite successful in that. So as part of the health and public fellowship, I want to organise an event where we can kind of share this share this learning from the together study, and how did we recruit those underserved groups, to kind of what to hopefully encourage a shift in thinking about the importance of diversity and community health research and to Yeah, hopefully, give give other researchers who are planning to do either parenting or health research or, you know, in a community to kind of

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reduce some of the barriers of including these these groups. So that's, yeah, that's the aim. So I will be hosting an event for 5050 people. And these people are it's geared towards people want basically people who are interested in who are aware that their research may not be as diverse as it should be.

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And then kind of like want to learn how How can they make their research more inclusive? So there'll be a participatory participatory workshop, it'd be like a half day event where we will be sharing stories and experiences of recruiting diverse population groups. And I have invited people from underserved communities to talk as well about what are their, you know, what are their barriers? And what are their experiences of, of research and researchers in general. So I'm working closely with the race equality Foundation, who are study partners. And I've been lucky that NIHR, the ones who funded to get a study, they, they heard about the success of the together study in recruiting these diverse groups. And then they heard that I wanted to do these events. And they said, Well, we were thinking of something similar. How about, we do this together, and your budget will be a little higher? So I've been I've been lucky in that, in that respect, that it's become a bit of a larger event than I had initially planned. Just to budget constraints. So yeah, so they've provided me with a lovely, lovely venue and champagne reception afterwards, I would say, I would say that I've learned a lot, I've learned a lot more than I that I thought I would do. So when I initially met with you and Helen, and I think it was September, August, September last year, I literally thought it was just I was kind of going to learn how to organise a workshop. But now the journey that I've done, it's been a lot because as I, as I said to you before, even there's even a lot of indirect learning along the way, because obviously, it stays in the background of your of your mind throughout the, throughout the year. And I've been even in my communications with, with other researchers or with research partners, it's just constantly there, in the back of my mind, I like how can we make sure that the research is more diverse or more,

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more diverse and inclusive? And how can I make sure that I practice what I

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preach? So that's, that's been an indirect impact. But also, for example, I almost think I was a little bit naive. When I started the fellowship that I was thinking about how to measure impact, I was always thinking my mind was always to like research. So like, how can you measure

was always thinking, my mind was always to like research. So like, how can you measure impact, that would literally mean giving people questionnaires, and then afterwards comparing the pre and post, sort of outcomes, but that's not that's not necessarily true, there was so much more to it. And then that I thought, like, I know that you told me, like, you can measure the impact of an event by seeing if people afterwards will sign up to to a future event, or perhaps you can start having a working group, you know, on the back of this, this event, just so just things like that have been very eye opening for me. Other other surprises. I think that that's more practicalities, because I so on one hand, I've been very lucky that other people came on board with doing this event. But the kind of challenging bit is then the practicalities that it's also been slightly out of my hand, for example, the data has been moved a few times, which, you know, happens, but if you do it on your own, you have more ownership of of these things, if that makes sense. So I would say that's been my my main challenge. What I really like is that I've, I've managed to form links with people from the community. So I've got apti and Asma Han, who are kind of community champions, one in the Arabic community and the other in the Somali community. And I've made them they've been instrumental in the study, but they've also become so I think I've given them a lot of confidence, because I've asked and asked and listened to the, to the inputs. And so I think that I've, you know, both of us have grown in confidence, because all three of us have grown in confidence because of this. And I think having seen that, I think is really wonderful. And that they are now so keen, for example, as well, to help with this event. I only have to say, yes, yes, of course. Of course. I'll be there and I'll talk about my experience and I love that that they're also very proud of having been part of the together study and now wanting to kind of like help me with this with this event, for example. So I would say that that That's the part I'm most proud of. I've just applied for some future evaluation work. And straightaway as part of the evaluation work I put, so it's like three phases of work. And in the first phase, I put a participatory workshop to talk about, you know, to kind of CO design with, with, with various stakeholders, including people from the local communities, including people. So it's about reducing violence in young people. So including young people, including people at risk of high, you know, leaving, perhaps in areas of high crime. So I've straightaway included in the bids to have this have a participatory workshop at the first phase of the study, to actually work together on defining the research questions. And I just think that that's prior to this fellowship, I may not have, uh, may not have done that, I may have done that at the end, for example. So I would say that already I can, I can tell that it's changed my working practices. I don't know what the different kind of like what what would be the difference between good research practice and making sure that your research has impact it, that's also part of good research practice, good research practice should be thinking about impact from the start. This this piece of evaluation work about youth reducing youth violence is, is with again, again with the race equality foundation. So we've we've established very strong working relationship. And we'd like to, yeah, we'd like to, we'd like to carry on for sure. One of the things that I really remember is the session, because because obviously, because of the fellowship, I attended several, several seminars, and one of them was about the media. And I didn't even know that you could put your name on a list, and that you can then be contacted to talk about to talk about your research or to save, you know, what your expertise is, for example, and I'll probably still don't feel confident to do to do that. But I thought that was amazing learning really that and I really thought like, yeah, you just need to put yourself out there a bit more and think a lot more about outside the box, not just think like, Oh, my study does this and but just think a lot more about what your study could mean for others. And even though I think it's like that everybody does it my way. That's not true at all. So people, I always think like, oh, no, but everybody already knows that. And then you say, you said to me like No, no, they don't. And it doesn't matter if they hear it again, because it's very good for people to, you know, to think about it to encourage people to think and reflect on their work. So yeah, so I would definitely say



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yeah, learn, like dare to be a bit less humble about your resume. It probably has a lot more impact than you actually realise it does.