The Winston Churchill Memorial Trust of Australia

Report by

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2006 Churchill Fellow

Churchill in Toronto, Canada

Sport and social capital in disadvantaged communities

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Signed Jacqui Cowell 12 March 2007
1. Acknowledgments
The Churchill Fellowship (fellowship) enabled me to explore best practice models in Canada and the United Kingdom where sport has contributed to social capital in disadvantaged communities.

This report provides an overview of my key learnings from this research. While not an academic paper, every attempt has been made to reference people’s ideas and comments, and it is hoped that by sharing these, learning is also shared. While attempting to focus on a fairly complex area, I also had the opportunity to learn about other areas of interest within the broader field of sport. I have not for the most part documented these learnings in this paper.

I wholeheartedly thank the Churchill Fellowship for this wonderful opportunity to gain an insight from another perspective and culture. I also thank all the fantastic people I met along my tour who shared their knowledge and experiences, showed me great hospitality, and helped me to expand my own knowledge in this area. Special thanks to Darren Horsman and the Sports Development Team at Hastings Borough Council; Karl Reid at Sport England East; Amanda, Paul Chambers and Derbyshire Sport; Loughborough University; Professor Fred Coalter; John News and the team at the Sports Council of Northern Ireland; Andy Sutch; and Melissa and David Lonergan.

To all of those who supported me to achieve the award of this fellowship I give my thanks and appreciation. Your confidence in me is always heartfelt.
2. Executive Summary

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The fellowship was undertaken between October and December 2006 to explore best practice models where sport has contributed to social capital in disadvantaged communities in Toronto (Canada), England, Scotland and Northern Ireland. A variety of organisations and professionals including government, community and academia were visited in an attempt to gain evidence from across a range of perspectives.

The findings are focussed on best practice success factors under the following themes: policy and strategy; partnerships; people, skills and performance; places and spaces; community/social development; evaluation and monitoring; and sustainability. The role of traditional sport clubs and local government in delivering social inclusion programmes and the emerging provision of community-based sport activities by community/social development organisations is discussed with potential pathways between these sectors considered.

Highlights of the fellowship included exploring “community relations” work being conducted in Northern Ireland, learning about social inclusion programmes such as Positive Futures, and visiting diversionary organisations such as Street League and Fairbridge. In addition, local governments, quangos such as Sport England, Sport Action Zones and community sports partnerships provided insight into a range of approaches.

A number of factors have been identified for consideration when developing and implementing “sport-based social inclusion programmes”. In particular, long-term viability in delivering social outcomes is key to the success of these programmes and can only be achieved through integration and coordination these factors and a commitment to funding/resources, innovation/flexibility, and transition to independence.

To utilise sport as a vehicle to contribute to social capital/inclusion within disadvantaged communities in Australia, the following should be considered:

- Programmes should be designed with regard to policy and strategy; partnerships; people, skills and performance; community and social development; places and spaces; monitoring and evaluation; and sustainability.
- Sport-based social inclusion programmes should be local area based and respond to individual community need utilising a social development approach.
• Monitoring and evaluation should form an integral component of the programme from conception to implementation and should contribute to the evidence base.

• Development of so-called ‘third way’ sports programs should be explored by government in partnership with community organisation’s with a view to mainstream or long-term funding.

The knowledge gained during the fellowship will be used to inform policy and programme work at a local level in addition to sharing key learnings at a regional, state and national level.
3. Introduction

In exploring how sport can provide a vehicle for contributing to positive social capital, the fellowship set out to investigate how various organisations have engaged disadvantaged communities through sport. Broadly, the following information was sought:

- Policy context/fit
- Funding
- Measurement/evaluation
- Sustainability/longevity
- Success factors
- Challenges
- Implementation

The three concepts investigated – sport, social capital and disadvantage – are defined below to provide the reader with an understanding of the approach taken and the complexity of the topic. This complexity was compounded by the variety of organisations visited from across different sectors that are involved in the delivery of ‘social inclusion’ programmes.

A. Programme

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**B. Sport**

The Australian Sports Commission defines sport as:

“A human activity capable of achieving a result requiring physical exertion and/or physical skill which, by its nature and organisation, is competitive and is generally accepted as being a sport.”\(^1\)

This definition is quite narrow with its focus on competition, and is unclear in relation to an activity being “generally accepted as a sport”. In seeking a broader definition that embraces physical activity (whether organised competitive sport such as football, or more informal activities such as kicking a footy around with ‘mates’ in the park, or activities traditionally associated with arts such as dance) the Council of Europe’s European Sports Charter has been adopted for the purpose of this report:

“‘Sport’ means all forms of physical activity which, through casual or organised participation, aim at expressing or improving physical fitness and mental well-being, forming social relationships or obtaining results in competition at all levels.”

This definition is consistent with the social inclusion policy approach prevalent in the UK. The Council of Europe acts to maintain the integrity and virtues of sport: promoting sport for all as a means of improving the quality of life, facilitating social integration and contributing to social cohesion, particularly among young people; and fostering tolerance through sport and defending sport against the serious threats currently facing it.

As a result, the fellowship investigation was not limited to organised sport but looked more broadly at how programmes that may have commenced with organised sport soon expanded to provide a more diverse offering to meet expressed community need. In particular, ‘sports’ that appealed to women and girls such as dance.

C. Social Capital

A number of different definitions of social capital abound and there has been much debate around these definitions. The main theorists are Bourdieu, Coleman and Putnam. “Putnam’s social capital can be regarded as a public good, which serves to bind communities together. Communities with high levels of social capital are viewed as being characterised by three main components – strong social networks and civic infrastructure; strong social norms; and mutual trust and reciprocity among members of a community. Whereas Bourdieu and Coleman view social capital in terms of individuals and various types of social groups, Putnam’s appeal to policy makers is that he is more clearly interested in the role of organised voluntary associations.”

Fred Coalter, Professor of Sports Policy at the University of Stirling asserts that “the diffuse and contested concept of social capital is central to the social regeneration/social inclusion agenda. Its centrality to recent policy development is indicated by the range of UK government departments that have produced reviews of its nature, distribution and policy relevance.”

The focus of this fellowship quickly became on how sport could have a positive impact on community connectedness and social inclusion, that is the level of trust and reciprocity amongst members of a community, and how sport could contribute to members of a community developing socially through supportive relationships, education, training and employment (paid or voluntary).

While much is made of social capital engendered through belonging to a sporting club, as either a participant or volunteer, this fellowship was more concerned with how sport could be used to contribute to cohesion, education and employment. As

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2 https://wcd.coe.int/
3 Ibid
4 Ibid
5 Coalter, F., Sports Clubs, Social Capital and Social Regeneration “ill defined interventions with hard to follow outcomes?” Paper submitted for publication, not dated.
Coalter\textsuperscript{6} writes “there have been two broad sports policy responses – to seek to increase social/sports participation via geographically targeted programmes in socially deprived areas and to emphasise the contribution which sports volunteering can make to ‘active citizenship’”. While Coalter’s paper goes on to discuss the latter, sports volunteering, this paper is predominantly concerned with the former.

There continues to be much debate around the concept of social capital and its inherent positive and negative aspects, and in particular how sport might contribute to this phenomenon. Seippel\textsuperscript{7} best summarises the debate: “In short, the situation is a lack of studies on sport as a specific part of civil society, a neglect of civil society within sociology of sport and, accordingly, a need for a more proper understanding of sport as part of the voluntary sector and civil society”.

\section*{D. Disadvantage}

Disadvantage, deprivation, and social exclusion are all terms used to describe areas suffering acute social problems - increasing population densities, low socio-economic status, and high rates of chronic disease, high levels of migration and multiculturalism, and young people at risk of exclusion / disaffection from society. Australia and the countries visited have a range of indices to measure disadvantage in order to identify where a concerted effort needs to be made through funding and interventions.

In Australia and in particular Queensland, Community Renewal Areas are identified in collaboration with Queensland Treasury’s Office of Economic and Statistical Research using a range of social and economic indicators including the Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage (SEIFA). This index concentrates on low income earners, low educational attainment, high unemployment, high proportion of rental accommodation and jobs in relatively unskilled occupations. The Queensland Government’s Community Renewal programme joins governments and communities to find new solutions to communities’ top priorities – such as developing stronger families, community safety, education and skills, economic development, access to jobs, health and well-being, community infrastructure, culture and identity, or the accessibility of local services.

In England, the Index of Multiple Deprivation contains seven domains which relate to income, employment, health and disability, education, skills and training, barriers to housing and services, living environment and crime. There are also two supplementary indices: income deprivation affecting children and older people. England's most deprived 20\% have the following characteristics on average:
- Just under a third of people are income deprived.
- One in five of women aged 18-59 and men aged 18-64 are employment deprived.
- Just under half of children live in families that are income deprived.
- Just under a third of older people are income deprived.\textsuperscript{8}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{6} Ibid
\item \textsuperscript{7} Seippel, O. “Sport and Social Capital”. Acta Sociologica 49(2), (2006): 169-183
\item \textsuperscript{8} http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1128444
\end{itemize}
The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) identifies small area concentrations of multiple deprivation across Scotland. It allows effective targeting of policies and funding where the aim is to wholly or partly tackle or take account of area concentrations of multiple deprivation. The SIMD 2006 contains 37 indicators in seven domains: current income, employment, health, education skills and training, geographic access to services, housing and crime.9

The report “Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2005” details levels of deprivation in 890 small areas covering Northern Ireland. It further develops previous measures published in 2001 (which have been used to target initiatives and projects such as the International Fund for Ireland's Disadvantaged Areas Initiative and PEACE II funding) and allows more effective targeting of policies and resources on deprived areas. The research ranks small areas based on a total of 43 indicators of deprivation, such as the receipt of social welfare benefits, crime rates and housing quality, across seven types of deprivation.10

In Canada Low Income Cut-Offs (LICOs) are income thresholds, determined by analysing family expenditure data, below which families will devote a larger share of income to the necessities of food, shelter and clothing than the average family would. To reflect differences in the costs of necessities among different community and family sizes, LICOs are defined for five categories of community size and seven of family size.11 In Canada, Toronto City Council use LICO to determine free access to their “Welcome Policy” for individuals living outside of their priority areas who are below the LICO.

While each country uses a range of different indices, they all aim to provide data on social problems to inform policy and programmes in areas of high need.

4. Case Studies

The following selection of case studies highlight a number of programmes visited:

A. Positive Futures

- Positive Futures is a national sport and activity based social inclusion programme delivered through 119 local partnership projects across England and Wales.
- It aims to support young people aged 10 to 19 living in socially and economically deprived communities across England and Wales by helping them find routes into education, volunteering and employment.
- “Positive Futures is not a conventional ‘diversionary’ or sport development project. Key to its approach is engaging with young people through an ability to teach them or help them learn something they think is worthwhile: starting from ‘where they are’ in a non-judgemental way. Central to its success is the commitment to a flexible, organic local development strategy and the role of community coaches.”12
- www.positivefutures.org.uk

9 http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/SIMD/Overview
11 http://www.statcan.ca/bsolc/english/bsolc?cutno=75F0002MIE2006004
12 Home Office, Cul-de-sacs and Gateways, 2003
**B. Leyton Orient Community Sports Programme (LOCSP)**

- LOCSP is a community based charity operating since 1989 across Northeast London. It started out as a Football in the Community programme before developing as an independent charity.
- Its aim is to engage with and access young people who are traditionally excluded from mainstream sports, leisure and education opportunities.
- LOCSP runs a range of innovative and creative sports and educational projects in Waltham Forest, Newham, Hackney, Tower Hamlets, Barking and Dagenham and Epping in partnership with a range of agencies from local authorities, regeneration agencies, youth offending teams, and schools to Connexions, London’s’ Trusts and the Home Office.
- [www.locsp.org](http://www.locsp.org)

**C. Lambeth and Southwark Sports Action Zone (SAZ)**

- SAZ is a local area based programme working in the London boroughs of North Lambeth and Southwark.
- It aims to support people aged 45 or over; women and girls; socioeconomic classes; people with disabilities; and ethnic minority communities.
- SAZ are about developing and enhancing existing and establishing new partnerships and testing new ways of working using sport as a catalyst to bring about the social and economic well being of local communities within the zone. The SAZ does not directly run its own activities, but works through partners and local groups to enhance existing provision. Examples include “Street Dance Art or Sport?” project with Nike.
- [www.southbanklondon.com](http://www.southbanklondon.com)

**D. Fairbridge**

- Fairbridge is a national charity based in 15 of the most disadvantaged urban areas of the UK.
- It aims to support 13-25 year olds who are not in education, training or employment or at risk of dropping out.
• Fairbridge enables young people from inner cities to meet the opportunities and responsibilities of society by offering them a long-term personal development programme that builds confidence, motivation and personal, social and life skills. The programme consists of different motivating activities including canoeing, cooking, rock climbing, team challenges and navigation that are used as a vehicle to work with young people on their basic personal and social skills.
• www.fairbridge.org.uk

E. Street League
• Street League is a charity established in 2001 with programmes in London and Glasgow.
• It aims to support disadvantaged (excluded from mainstream) people over 16 years of age including homeless and rough sleepers, drug and alcohol dependent individuals in rehabilitation, ex-offenders, long-term unemployed, those with identified learning disabilities, refugees and asylum seekers, those with mental health issues, individuals at risk.
• It provides a sports programme including football, basketball and multi-fitness sessions which are used as a tool for engaging people into organised sport and as a means for developing their social and transferable skills in a fun environment. Sports based activities are underpinned by Street League's Directions 2 Work programme which encompasses personal development, educational and career advice programmes, with the aim of improving skills and employment prospects of participants.
• www.streetleague.co.uk

F. Right to Play
• Right to Play is an international humanitarian ‘sport for development’ organisation.
• It aims to create a healthier and safer world for children through the power of sport and play. It is athlete driven and uses sport and play as a tool for development in the most disadvantaged areas of the world.
• Programmes foster the healthy physical, social and emotional development of children and build safer and stronger communities.
• www.righttoplay.com

5. Key Learnings/ themes
Key learnings are explored below and focus on best practice success factors in relation to: policy and strategy; partnerships; people, skills and performance; places and spaces; community/social development; evaluation and monitoring; and sustainability. It is important to note that these factors are not independent, but act together to deliver success. The role of traditional sport clubs and local government in delivering social inclusion programmes and the emerging provision of community based sport by community/social development organisations will be discussed with potential pathways between these sectors considered.
**A. Policy and strategy**

Social inclusion policy, particularly in the UK, has driven to an extent the recent emphasis on sport as a potential panacea for a range of social ills in particular youth disengagement and crime. In England, PAT 10\(^{13}\) and Game Plan 2002\(^{14}\) justify public investment in sport for delivering other social benefits rather than “sport for sports sake”.\(^{15}\)

While there seems to have been a very strong top-down approach supported by funding, grass roots approaches have also demonstrated successful local area based approaches. This has created a policy debate where some argue that the sport sector needs to start talking to government about how it contributes to the social agenda, while others believe that sport for sports sake should be recognised and valued. It would appear however that there is room for both and that what may work is an approach that recognises diversity and flexibility.

An integrated and coordinated policy approach that recognises the role of local government, central government (or State government in the Queensland context), community organisations, and the traditional sport sector in the provision of sport, in addition to using sport as a mechanism to engage, is a way forward. This approach would recognise a spectrum of opportunity where outreach sits at one end of the continuum and traditional sport provision at the other, with structures that support movement along the continuum by participants, if so desired by the participant.

Organisations that have used outreach as a method of engagement including Leyton Orient Community Sports Programme (LOCSP), Lambeth and Southwark Sports Action Zone (SAZ), Positive Futures and Street League have developed organically over time by responding to local need. Positive Futures argues that to use sport as a ‘relationship strategy’ “projects need to be set free to operate at the radical edge of this field of work in order that they can attempt to find ways of engaging with and inspiring those young people who have been alienated by more structured, ‘mainstream’ approaches.”\(^{16}\) These organisations have operated free from the confines of bureaucratic structures that are found in local government and traditional sport clubs and have flourished.

Local authorities are also providing sport programmes to their local communities and in some instances delivering outreach programmes. Like the programmes mentioned above, they also provide coach education and training to participants providing them with an opportunity to become coaches and deliver the programmes that they themselves have engaged and participated in. Crabbe et al\(^{17}\) warn however that

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\(^{13}\) Department for Culture, Media and Sport, Policy Action Group 10; Arts and sport, cultural and recreational activity, can contribute to neighbourhood renewal and make a real difference to health, crime, employment and education in deprived communities.

\(^{14}\) Department for Culture, Media and Sport, Game Plan: a strategy for delivering Government’s sport and physical activity objectives December 2002

\(^{15}\) Rowe, N, The Value of Sport, Raising the Stakes: 4\(^{th}\) All Island Sports Development Conference, Naas Co. Kildare, October 2005.

\(^{16}\) Crabbe, T. et al, “Knowing the Score, Positive Futures Case Study Research: Final Report” for the Home Office – November 2006

\(^{17}\) Ibid
“statutory organisations are more likely to be successful if they set up structures that allow a project to operate outside bureaucratic constraints”.

Sporting clubs seem less likely to engage directly with hard to reach groups as they are predominantly run by volunteers and are focussed on delivering their sport. This is primary to their purpose and takes up the majority of their time. Examples do however exist of clubs that provide more of a social outreach programme or that work in partnership with community organisations or local governments to provide access, including clubs cited by Hastings Borough Council, Glasgow City Council and the Gaelic Athletic Association in Northern Ireland.

A move away from “universal” programmes to innovative local needs based programmes appears to be more successful at engaging priority groups. While this might appear more costly in terms of investment per capita, it is far more successful at engaging those that are hardest to reach and who will not engage in mainstream programmes, and therefore have the greatest impact. Sport England’s report on Sport Action Zones suggested that “the policy challenge is to focus resources in an even more targeted way in order to deliver the biggest impact in participation terms” and that funding should be allocated to facilitate innovation and flexibility to respond to prioritised community need.

**B. Partnerships**

One of the key success factors appears to be developing, engaging and retaining multiple partners that can support the delivery of programmes and outcomes through a range of different mechanisms including funding, delivery, expert advice, and referrals. This also supports greater ongoing sustainability.

Street League is one example of a programme that started as a six week voluntary project in 2001 to grow into a charity that has now in excess of 80 different partners, of which 20 are funding partners. Partners not only provide financial support, but corporate social responsibility activities such as volunteering to support programme delivery and the provision of office space. Other partnership models used by Street League include: twinning businesses to Street League teams, buddying a Street League player to provide mentoring and coaching support in a professional and sometimes emotional capacity, work experience and employment, sponsorships and in-kind resource provision. Part of this philosophy is involving businesses in their communities. Street League cites partnerships with over 40 referral agencies and delivery partners in London and relationships with over 50 corporate partners and more traditional funders including London Development Agency, Sport England, Football Foundation and Newham Borough Council.

It is important to note that funding in the UK has been increasingly generated from non-sport focussed government agencies, with organisations accessing programmes aimed at social inclusion and regeneration. Sport England in establishing Sport Action Zones (SAZ) stated that an organisation should “actively encourage as wide a set of partnerships within and outside of sport as possible as this will be the key to
delivering sustainable community sporting opportunities”\textsuperscript{18}. The Lambeth and Southwark SAZ is a successful example.

“The funding philosophy that underpinned the SAZ programme was unlike any other area based initiative. The Sports Lottery core funding was kept to a minimum and the SAZ managers were given the remit of working to attract funding into their Zone from established sporting and non-sporting funding streams”\textsuperscript{19}. It could be argued that this also ensures a more community based approach with an organisation having to establish relationships and partners within their local community to ensure survival.

Right to Play is another example of an organisation that works successfully to partner with international volunteers, local coaches, and local organisations to deliver sport and play as a tool for development in some of the most disadvantaged areas of the world.

Fostering a diversity of differing partners contributes to the long-term viability, funding and community engagement of these programmes and ensures that each organisation is not dependent on any one partner or funder.

\textbf{C. People, skills and performance}

People, skills and performance are important for both the organisation delivering the programme and the participant and are intrinsically linked in the sport-based social inclusion programmes.

1. Organisation’s skills

A common theme identified by many of the community organisations, and one also identified by Sport England in relation to the development of Sports Action Zones, is strong leadership at the local level. This critical success factor is exemplified by committed and enthusiastic people with vision and determination leading the development of LOCSP, Positive Futures, Street League, and Belfast Community Sports Network, to name a few.

It has become apparent that for successful sport-based social inclusion programmes ‘coaches’ require a skill set that goes beyond their sporting/coaching abilities. While sport skills were needed to earn credibility with participants, other skills were considered far more important. A number of organisations identified essential skills to work successfully in outreach including empathy and good interpersonal communication skills. In particular, Crabbe et al from their research on Positive Futures suggest the following:

“It is clear to us that whilst successful relationship building may be assisted by sports competency, it is primarily driven by participants’ identifications with the socio-cultural background and approach of staff. As such, it seems important that staff display certain characteristics which are present in most relationships between friends or ‘buddies’ including:

- interest in participants’ wellbeing

\textsuperscript{18} Sport England Research, Sport Action Zones – The key to transforming community participation, September 2006

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid
• familiarity with and knowledge of personality traits
• concern over their future plans
• co-receptive trust and respect
• warmth, joviality and humour.

At the same time, more formal characteristics are required which ‘relocate’ their relationships with participants from that of a ‘buddy’ to one of a ‘mentor’ or ‘role model’. These characteristics include:
• consistency and reliability
• setting of appropriate boundaries relating to language and behaviour
• written or unwritten codes of conduct
• purposeful and developmental aims to the relationship

Ultimately though, projects need to strike a balance which involves the employment of youth work styles characterised by the construction of both ‘buddy’ and ‘bounded’ personalities which it seems young people are frequently able to respond to, precisely because of the mix of the two. The creation of a respectful relationship which acknowledges both similarity and difference enables mutual exchange whilst also allowing staff to challenge behaviour and, if necessary, enforce rules. 20

Damian Hatton of Street League agreed that as an organisation they are now cognisant of the elements they consider essential to be a good Street League coach and as a result have introduced a grading system, specific drills and skills, and ongoing development sessions for their coaches.

Derry City Council’s Sport Development Officer stated emphatically that there is a need for ongoing professional development for sport development officer’s to be able to respond to community need in disadvantaged communities. Re-skilling has been a significant issue in his role where nutrition and GP referral skills training along with a move away from traditional sports coaching certificates was required to deliver programmes the community wanted and needed.

2. Participant’s skills
An important element, and in many instances the primary focus of these programmes, is developing the self confidence and skills of the participants, including engaging some as deliverers of programmes, or assisting them to develop skills and gain employment in a sport related or other unrelated field. For example, Street Leagues’ Directions 2 Work Programme. As identified earlier, this sometimes works best when coaches come from the community they are working with. These coaches can then act as a “cultural intermediary” and positive role model that help participants navigate between cultures, for example between disadvantage and mainstream. 21

Examples of local authorities that have incorporated training and employment opportunities for local people include Toronto, Hastings and Amber Valley. Local authorities play a significant role in providing access to coaching qualifications as cited by Newham Borough Council, “residents can complete discounted training

20 Crabbe, T., et al. Knowing the Score
courses to obtain recognised coaching qualifications …Since 2004, the number of sports coaches working in the borough has quadrupled. There are now 400 new coaches and over 700 qualifications taken. They are helping run club activities and courses on housing estates and in schools. With a rise in employment opportunities in the sports field, they are improving their job prospects and boosting the local economy” 22.

Establishing supportive networks is another key element of this work and is part of the relationship building strategy mentioned by Positive Futures and also one supported by Street League. There is a “need to create a community of people that can support one another” 23.

A participant’s ‘performance’ is also recognised by their movement into volunteering, coaching, employment, or training, establishing friends and community, and general improvements in self confidence and esteem. This is also referred to as the ‘journey travelled’ by the Positive Futures programme.

D. Community/social development versus sports development

“It is the adoption of a personal and social development model which is sacred to sport-based social inclusion programmes rather than ‘sport’.” 24

As suggested, the successful delivery of programmes in harder to reach communities appears to be more successful when a social development or youth/community work approach is taken utilising sport as the engagement tool. This is a significant move away from the traditional sport development approach, focussed on developing sport as the term suggests, and has as its primary focus social development as opposed to sport development. There also appears to be some confusion around sport development terminology, as illustrated below in Section 1.

22 Interview with Alan Skewis and Fiona, Newham Borough Council, 24 October 2006
23 Interview with Damian Hatton, Street League, 12 December 2006
24 Crabbe, T., et al, Knowing the Score
1. Community/social development

Positive Futures uses a sports-based social inclusion approach and refers to itself as a ‘relationship strategy’. It is concerned with the ‘journey travelled’ of its participants in their personal and social development and sport is merely the tool to engage participants in this programme.

“Positive Futures is not a sports development initiative, or a diversionary programme. It does not see the participation of young people in sport, the winning of medals or the development of an individual into a professional sportsman or woman as the focus of its work. Rather, the programme uses sport and physical activity as a hook to engage and encourage young people to look at the broader issues that affect them. It’s a method for building community participation and citizenship and a pathway to education and employment opportunities. Further, the benefits of increased participation in physical activity are often built into this process as part of the promotion of an overall healthier lifestyle”.25

Sport for development principles espoused and practiced by the Mathare Youth Sports Association (MYSA) in Kenya have been adopted by a number of the organisations interviewed including Right to Play and Street League. MYSA is a self-help youth programme linking sports with environmental cleanups, AIDS prevention, leadership training and other community service activities. Started in 1987 as a small self-help project within Mathare slum in Nairobi, the organization has grown to an internationally renowned youth serving organisation that promotes sports for development.26

“the basic organizational principle in MYSA is "You do something, MYSA does something; you do nothing, MYSA does nothing". So through the MYSA Leadership Awards, young leaders are identified, motivated and supported to engage in positive community building initiatives and enables these best leaders who might otherwise not be able to get pay for their school fees stay in school.”27

The development of a community/social development approach raises the question as to what types of organisation/s are best placed to deliver social outcomes. Examples exist of traditional sport clubs, local government and a range of community/social development organisations all attempting to deliver social outcomes through sport.

Is one type of organisation best placed or do they all have a role to play?

While some sporting clubs may have this ability it is unlikely that the majority would consider social development their role. Nor would the majority have the appropriate people/skills to achieve social outcomes, particularly in a voluntary capacity. Coalter warns that imposing this agenda on the voluntary sport sector could be detrimental to its ongoing viability.28

25Crime Concern, Be Part of Something, June 2006
26http://www.mysakenya.org/
27Ibid
28Coalter, F., Sports Clubs, Social Capital and Social Regeneration “ill defined interventions with hard to follow outcomes?” Paper submitted for publication, not dated.
Local government involvement in sport-based social inclusion programmes is seen by an officer from Glasgow City Council as follows: “that’s where we (Council) come in … capacity building is critical to what we do, we can enable and link community organisations with the traditional sport sector, and can underpin and assist with access to venues”\(^{29}\). For example, Glasgow City Council has a role in supporting organisations like Gladiators and its protagonist Alex Richards (another example of grass-roots leadership). It supports a community engagement and outreach approach and recognises that to promote increased participation amongst disadvantaged communities requires a stronger area based sports development approach based on successful models like Greater Easterhouse.\(^{30} \) \(^{31}\) (The use of ‘sport development’ in this context appears more likely to refer to sport for development or social development).

The key to successful social inclusion programmes is their ability to attract and engage, the tool is not the primary focus, but a means to an end. Recognition that sport can potentially alienate and have negative consequences also highlights the need to utilise a broader range of activities, for example access to the arts and music, in social development programmes.

2. Sport development

The emergence of sports-based social inclusion programmes should not undermine the importance of sport development. A number of local authorities and community organisations visited are delivering valuable sport development programmes to local communities either through leisure centres, schools or estate based programmes and contributing to or coordinating training and employment of local people through these programmes. Examples include Hastings, Craigavon, Derry, and the Brownlow Sports Trust.

Mass sporting events can also engage individuals in sport development, increase their active participation through training for and participating in the event, repeat participation in subsequent events, attraction and involvement of volunteers (although it is unclear whether volunteers then move into other longer-term roles), and help to create community identity.\(^{32}\) However, while “one-off events are important for strengthening people’s connection to their community, ongoing programmes and interventions are likely to have the most significant impacts upon educational attainment and levels of crime.”\(^{33}\)

The intention however is not to necessarily move people from sport-based social inclusion programmes to sport development, but merely to provide the opportunity to participate at all levels, with pathways which may or may not be taken up by the participant. And in the case of social inclusion programmes, achieve social outcomes as opposed to participation outcomes, although this is a secondary benefit, and as

\(^{29}\) Interview with Niki Smith and Ian Hooper, Glasgow City Council, 21 November 2006
\(^{30}\) http://www.gedc.org.uk/aboutus/index.htm. Established in 1991, Greater Easterhouse Development Company (GEDC) was set up as one of 8 local development companies to promote the regeneration of Glasgow's most deprived areas.
\(^{31}\) Glasgow City Council, Best Value Review Sport and Recreation, Final Report, December 2002
\(^{32}\) Interview with Tom Kerry, Limelight projects, 17 October 2006
\(^{33}\) Interview with Alan Skewis and Fiona, Newham Borough Council, 24 October 2006
espoused by Hatton\textsuperscript{34} participants should move from sport being their development tool to their leisure choice.

Suffice to say, this could potentially open the way for the development of a ‘third way’ in Australia where community based organisations provides local grass-roots participation for their communities, with strong linkages and partnerships with mainstream sport.

\textbf{E. Places and spaces}

Disadvantaged people/communities have been notoriously difficult to engage, partly because there has been an expectation that “they should come to us”. Place based initiatives where the activity is taken to the community using non-traditional spaces/places, such as the street or community centre, at which to deliver programmes and activities appears to have been far more successful. The importance of local accessible spaces also requires staff to bring those spaces to life.

For example, in Newham “When young people won’t go to leisure centres or sports clubs, we go to them. The Council runs year round sports projects at 33 venues on housing estates and community centres for 8 to 19 year olds. Over 2,000 young people regularly took part in the estate-based football programme alone in 2006, more than two thirds were from lower income groups. The most impressive result is that crime has reduced…”\textsuperscript{35}

\textsuperscript{34} Interview with Damian Hatton, Street League, 12 December 2006
\textsuperscript{35} Interview with Alan Skewis and Fiona, Newham Borough Council, 24 October 2006
Emphasis has moved from capital to revenue funding with the recognition that buildings alone do not encourage participation. There also appear to be more staff per capita in local authorities in the UK than in Australia with an emphasis on sports delivery.

Trust is an issue with social inclusion programmes and one that must be established in a safe and familiar place before challenging cultural and physical boundaries. Cost of transport, access and locality of formal sports facilities can act as barriers to participation and engagement. Ensuring participants do not need to find transport to a purpose built sport facility (where they may feel unwelcome), by providing access in the street, local park or community centre allows space to slowly introduce participants to activities, build relationships and over time expand horizons and access through introductions to other facilities, programmes and services. The role of cultural intermediaries as discussed earlier comes into play here too.

Facilities are important nonetheless and need to be strategically located (integrated and collocated with a variety of services). However, investment should be made into programming these facilities to provide broad community access, including outreach services. Strategic location should consider position in relation to safe and convenient access via pedestrian, bicycle and public transport. Newham claims “the success of many of the interventions piloted by the cultural and sporting programmes highlights the importance of ensuring that services are geographically and culturally accessible to all local residents, as well as being embedded within community venues and settings.”

F. Evaluation and monitoring

There continues to be a limited evidence base for sports contribution to the social inclusion agenda. Evidence remains largely anecdotal, although the recent publication of “Knowing the Score” which provides evidence on the efficacy of the Positive Futures programme, promises to continue to contribute to the evidence base.

“One of the things that has marked Positive Futures out from other sport-based social inclusion initiatives is its commitment to the development of a comprehensive programme of research, monitoring and evaluation that combines both quantitative and qualitative assessments. This was borne of an early recognition of the failure of a succession of similar programmes to demonstrate their achievements or provide definitive evidence of a direct causal relationship between involvement in sports and specific social outcomes.”

Within this research, recommendations are made regarding how best to monitor and evaluate outcomes which have largely been unchallenged in the past. A number of reasons for this are cited by Crabbe et al including an inherent belief in the good of sport, and therefore a lack of concern to measure, and its apparent difficulty to measure. Hatton highlights this issue “we come at it from the belief that sport does, from all of the evidence we have as practitioners, hit so many different agendas. And it is the only thing with some clients that is making a difference to them. Some of our

36 Interview with Alan Skewis and Fiona, Newham Borough Council, 24 October 2006
37 Crabbe et al, Knowing the Score
players will sit around, do nothing until the next one. Because it is fun, it is the
highlight for their week and they get to meet other people, the actual importance is
enormous, utilised in the right way, delivered in the right way, with the right messages
to get the most out of it – that is really the challenge.38

Others interviewed felt that while important, monitoring and evaluation was not the
primary concern of the deliverer/coach and in some instances could be interpreted in a
negative way by the participants. As a result, it has largely been left undone. In
addition, much of the evaluation and monitoring work undertaken has been to comply
with funders and as a result has tended to focus on outputs, number of participants
that move through the programme, rather than on outcomes.

A number of organisations including Street League are attempting to implement
mechanisms to better measure and evaluate their work. And as mentioned above,
Substance39 is now using a tool to continue to evaluate projects under the auspice of
the Positive Futures programme. The Substance Project Reporting System (SPRS) is
not just about monitoring and evaluation. Crabbe prefers to call it a learning and
development tool – it captures stories of the projects, encourages projects to think
about their work in a self reflective way, and enables to demonstrate meeting
outcomes of stakeholders/funding partners, and potentially draw down more funds. It
is an investment in the future of project, rather than added cost or added burden.40

Fairbridge has also recognised the need for monitoring and evaluation engaging a
three-year independent research project which proved that for young people involved
with Fairbridge, the development of personal and social skills significantly improved
prospects in education, employment and training.

“A combination of quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods should be
employed. Survey finds provide the big picture, but do not always tell the full story.
Interviews, focus groups and diaries can be used to explain why and how a project has
achieved its outcomes, explore unintended benefits or consequences, consider whether
a project is attracting the right demographic groups, and discuss improvements in
more detail” is suggested by Newham.

Monitoring and evaluation is an area however that many organisations regard as
essential in the development and continued growth of their organisation and its
programmes. It is also strongly connected with sustainability and partnerships, as the
ability to demonstrate outcomes will support the continued support of funders and
partners.

**G. Ongoing viability (or sustainability)**

The ongoing viability (or sustainability) of sport-based social inclusion programmes is
subject to all of the factors as demonstrated above – policy and strategy; partnerships;
people, skills and performance; community and social development; places and
spaces; monitoring and evaluation.

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38 Interview with Damian Hatton, Street League, 12 December 2006
39 Tim Crabbe is based at Substance a social research company located in Manchester
www.substance.coop
40 Interview with Professor Tim Crabbe, Substance and Sheffield Hallam University, 13 November
2006
There also appear to be a number of other elements that contribute to, and a methodology for achieving long-term viability, that are closely aligned to these factors. The elements include funding/resources, innovation/flexibility, time and ‘recycling’ participants through programmes to become involved in delivery. The methodology appears to start with a demonstration or pilot project, followed by its escalation and subsequent transition to relative independence either through achieving core funding or through its ability to generate funds through a range of partnerships and revenue streams.

Sustainability is strongly linked to partnerships and as mentioned above, establishing a variety of partners to support the ongoing delivery of an organisation’s work, like that achieved by organisations like Street League, Fairbridge and Right to Play, is essential to ongoing viability. Other examples include North Lambeth and Southwark SAZ and LOCSP, while still dependent on funding, each organisation has diversified its offering and at the same time its funders’ to ensure that their organisation is not solely dependent on one organisation’s philanthropy or grant giving.

“Funding is the key issue in relation to this and long term funding is the ideal way in which to bring together communities, to provide opportunity for participation and to work with communities to develop their ability to sustain this activity after the funding runs out.”

Each of these organisations started with small amounts of money and resources and has continued to develop organically over time in response to community need. Key to the success of the Positive Futures programme, for example, is “the commitment to a flexible, organic local development strategy and the role of community coaches.”

Long-term funding over a reasonable period of time is essential to the development of organisations and their ability to sustain themselves. This is also true of funded positions within an organisation. Organisations stressed that traditional low-paid short-term (one to two year) contracts were detrimental to sustainability and community development. Short-term contracts struggle to retain staff for the duration of the contract and are not well received by the community due to their short-term drop-in, drop-out nature. The need to develop trust, continuity and capacity cannot in the main be supported by quick fix solutions. Organisations also suggested that relying solely on volunteers to deliver programmes was not sustainable, although some programmes use volunteers extensively, they are supported by paid staff.

‘Recycling’ of participants into coaching positions has proved very successful for both the individual and the organisation and its sustainability across a range of programmes. It relates directly to the social outcomes sought by the programmes and contributes to the people, skills and performance of both the individual and the organisation. However, this ‘recycling’ requires sufficient employment options.

An innovative response to ongoing employment has been the recent establishment of Sportopps.com in Belfast. It aims to act as a placement agency for sports coaches.

41 Nacro, Nacro Braintree Community Sports Project, End of Project Report 2001-2006
42 Home Office, Cul-de-sacs and Gateways, 2003
This was borne out of the work undertaken by the Belfast Community Sports Network and its member partners who have developed local community members in sports coaching and the provision of estate based programmes. Sportopps.com seeks to place these coaches in regular casual employment and to sustain their involvement in community work.

Sport England presents SAZ and Positive Futures as successful examples of demonstration or pilot projects that were seed funded with a small investment. Positive Futures has developed to become a mainstream program funded by the Home Office, while SAZ has developed a range of activities and funders to continue its development and contribution to social outcomes for the local community. Sport England is clear however that “a medium to long-term view about the length of time this approach will take to generate real impact” is required.

6. Conclusion

While there is currently little evidence that sport contributes to social capital, sport does have substantial social value. It can provide an excellent ‘hook’ for engaging people who may be suffering from disadvantage, and providing a supportive environment to encourage and assist those individuals in their social development, learning and connection through related programmes and services. As Crabbe et al state in their review of the Positive Futures programme “We have found that while sport does have social value, this can only be fully realised within a social and personal development approach”. Practitioners are passionate about the impacts their programmes have on individuals and their social development, and while this is largely anecdotal, new evaluation tools are attempting to capture meaningful data that can contribute to the evidence base.

A number of factors have been identified that should be considered when developing and implementing sport-based social inclusion programmes. These include: policy and strategy; partnerships; people, skills and performance; places and spaces; community/social development; evaluation and monitoring; and sustainability. Long-term viability or sustainability in delivering social outcomes is key to the success of these programmes and their contribution to social inclusion and can only be achieved through integration and coordination of these factors and a commitment to funding/resources, innovation/flexibility, and transition to independence.

Modern society demands more flexibility and choice, and this should also be true of how communities and individuals access a range of opportunities - one size fits all or universal programmes do not meet all communities needs. The challenge for the traditional sport sector in Australia is to move beyond the current delivery of ‘vegemite sandwiches’ to providing a range of products including low cost local grass roots opportunities.

However, there is a danger in relying on this predominantly volunteer based sector to deliver social outcomes. The opportunity exists for community organisations, with government support, to establish long-term viable programmes that use sport, music and the arts to engage with communities to deliver social outcomes. Partnerships

43 Sport England Research, Sport Action Zones – The key to transforming community participation, September 2006
between the traditional sport sector and community based organisations could be forged to support participation in sport across the continuum from outreach to mainstream participation.

Suffice to say, this could potentially open the way for the development of a ‘third way’ in Australia where community based organisations provide local grass-roots participation for their communities, with strong linkages and partnerships with mainstream sport.

Donnelly44 provided the following summation “All recreation provision should be based on long term, established funding; should be continually monitored and evaluated in light of ongoing research, and should, for the most part, be offered for the purposes of social opportunity and social development rather than social control.”

### 7. Recommendations

To utilise sport as a vehicle to contribute to social capital/inclusion within disadvantaged communities in Australia, the following should be considered:

- Programmes should be designed with regard to policy and strategy; partnerships; people, skills and performance; community and social development; places and spaces; monitoring and evaluation; and sustainability.
- Sport-based social inclusion programmes should be local area based and respond to individual community need utilising a social development approach.
- Monitoring and evaluation should form an integral component of the programme from conception to implementation and should contribute to the evidence base.
- Development of so-called ‘third way’ sports programs should be explored by government in partnership with community organisation’s with a view to mainstream or long-term funding.

In addition, I hope to advocate for:
- Trialing the establishment of local area based programs utilising the Positive Futures and Street League approaches in the Brisbane region.

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44 Interview with Prof Peter Donnelly, University of Toronto, 10 and 12 October 2006
The knowledge gained during the fellowship will be used to inform policy and programme work at a local level in addition to sharing key learnings at a regional, state and national level.
8. References


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* A list of additional resources is available upon request