

INQUIRY REPORT

Evidence from StreetGames

StreetGames

1. Context

StreetGames is a network of local projects that is dedicated to developing sport within disadvantaged communities. We are organised as a national charity. We work across the country to make sport accessible to all young people regardless of their social circumstances by organising sport and physical activity at the right place, at the right time, at the right price and in the right style. We call this type of sport 'doorstep sport'.

StreetGames strap line is to: Change lives, change sport, change communities.

StreetGames has spent much time understanding what makes a sports programme able to drive this change; and what are the appropriate characteristics of a sports programme that makes a real difference. We have partnerships across the country that specialise in this work. There are other, sports development organisations that are good at it especially Access Sport, Street League at a national level and hundreds of local projects too.

Therefore, StreetGames welcomes this opportunity to help the APPG's discussion on the ability of basketball to change disadvantaged young people's life chances. We believe that basketball is well placed to make a difference.

Basketball's position is special because, as the Active People Survey ["APS"] 7 data indicates, 0.48% of all adults (circa 200,000 adults) said that they would like to play basketball. The proportion is significantly higher amongst young people from lower socio-economic groups. 1.75% of 16-25 year olds from the National Statistics Socio-economic Classification ["NS-SEC"] 5-8 - another 52,000 adults 'would like to play' basketball. Our target group wants to play basketball and that is a very good starting point.

It is not only in the inner cities where basketball can grow to make a major contribution to improving young lives and improving the whole community. Some of the most miserable communities and hope-less young people live in small towns. Participation in sport is often very low in these places: just as low as in inner cities. Youth unemployment is just as high. Take the example of Nottinghamshire. Economic inactivity is higher in the deprived districts of (amongst others) Bolsover, Ashfield and Mansfield than it is in Nottingham City. The rates of participation in sport are similar. Some of these small towns are even further away from mainstream society than the inner cities.

In this response we amplify the points above and suggest ways for basketball to grow and make a bigger contribution to changing lives.

2. Sport and Disadvantaged Youth

There are 7.4 million 10-19 year olds in the UK, 21% or 1.6 million of whom are profoundly economically disadvantaged. Research confirms that these disadvantaged young people under-participate in sport.

APS 7 results illustrate the differential.

- 42.1% of adults from the highest socio-economic groups NS-SEC 1-2 take part in regular sport; but
- 28.7% of the lowest socio-economic groups NS-SEC 5-8 play regular sport.

Research shows no lack of desire to participate; in fact 70% of disadvantaged young people want to do more sport, expressing a consistently higher rate of demand than any other socio-economic group.

Most importantly, basketball has high rates of latent demand amongst disadvantaged young people.

3. Maximising the social value of basketball in disadvantaged areas

Appropriately delivered basketball can make a difference to young people in disadvantaged communities because it has the ability to attract young people. Done well, a basketball programme can expect to become popular and so it will achieve the perquisite of getting people active.

While a standard basketball programme will, if done well, improve rates of physical activity, (and that in itself is very important) because of its appeal to disadvantaged youth, basketball lends itself well (and better than most sports) to drive positive change in disadvantaged communities and in young disadvantaged lives.

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Appropriately designed basketball programmes will determine its secondary benefits by stimulating positive change at individual and at community level - see table below. These benefits can be realised once the young people are captivated by the local offer.

Basketball delivered on the doorstep of disadvantaged communities can change lives and change communities						
1. Youth Offending						
These attributes are recognised by the Youth Justice Board as important protection factors against repeated youth offending. For more information see the StreetGames paper: Changing Sport, Changing Lives, Changing Communities - Using Sport as a Mechanism for Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour.						
Positive activities that can be a diversion	Positive way of life	Provides positive role models as coaches who demand high standards	Opportunities to gain qualifications	Opportunities to represent neighbourhood and feel pride	Opportunities to achieve and be praised	Opportunities to meet new people
2. Youth Empowerment						
An appropriately designed basketball programme will help young people to make positive choices						
Elements of the programme to be youth led	Volunteering opportunities encourage organisational and communication skills	Girls encouraged to play and to lead	Visits to other places widen horizons	Fundraising activities encourage self-sufficiency	Speaking to power teaches advocacy skills	Opportunities to graft mentoring onto the programme
3. Youth health						
The wider determinants of health are summed up in the Health Outcomes Framework [Public Health Outcomes Framework 2013 to 2016, Department of Health, updated 13 th November 2013]						
Opportunity to be adequate at Chief Medical Officer guideline levels	Opportunity to develop the habit of being active	Positive associations are good for mental health	Opportunities for secondary health messages (e.g. re smoking or 'fit not thin' message to girls)	Reduced crime levels are good for health	The better qualified an individual, the better their health prospects	Stresses within a community are reduced when adults see the young people take part in supervised activity.

Appropriately designed sport and therefore basketball, can make a difference to mental as well as physical health, community safety, educational attainment and personal capacity. Appropriately designed sport gives more than just a run about. Participation improves fitness and mental wellbeing; volunteering, training and qualifications improve job prospects; positive, diversionary activities reduce crime and drug misuse; play and competition might unite different sections of diverse communities.

It is ironic that communities and young people that are most in need of sport's multiple benefits are those that struggle most to access sport.

This irony is sharply contoured in the case of basketball. Basketball is well placed to maximize this insight as it appeals to exactly the right group of young people - those at risk of youth offending and those most likely to adopt risk-taking behaviours. Because it is so attractive to disadvantaged young people basketball stands a very good chance of stimulating a real and positive change.

4. Best placed delivery agencies

Historically, investment in sport has been in traditional sporting structures. As a general rule these are out of reach both culturally and geographically for young people in deprived areas.

Growth in basketball will require investment with non-traditional partners. The local projects that do deliver basketball or would like to are many and varied. We would expect basketball to grow through partnerships and investment in:

- a) Neighborhood sports projects;
- b) Youth and community groups including faith groups;
- c) Community development and health interventions;

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- d) FE colleges (which offer huge opportunities for growth);
- e) British Basketball League ["BBL"] clubs because they have pizzazz and so are attractive to our target group. Some BBL clubs have good quality outreach programmes; and
- f) Leisure centres in disadvantaged areas.

5. What type of basketball is attractive to disadvantaged young participants?

Taking basketball to the doorstep of disadvantaged youth and applying the learning from organisations that are good at this type of work will produce positive results for the young people, for basketball and for neighbourhoods.

Basketball at FE or at estate-based level should be informal and fun. The skill level should not be too demanding.

3on3 is an appropriate form of the game. This has the advantage of being relatively easy to play and to organise.

Opportunities to play need to be at the right time, in the right place, in the right style and at the right price.

StreetGames has studied the experiences of over 250 projects over 5 years to move closer to understanding what these 'rights' actually are. This learning is part of sport's journey towards understanding what people want from their sport. This is necessary because irregular participants and non-participants alike say there is a mismatch between what they want and the traditional sporting offer.

1. **In the right place:** within the target group's neighbourhood at a safe venue - not necessarily a dedicated sports facility. DYP do not, by and large, enjoy the family support, transport, finance or confidence required to take part in 'out of neighbourhood' sport. The back-up that their better off peers enjoy is simply not there.
 - At a community level, (safe) places to play are needed. Sport is competing with opportunities to stay indoors, or to stave off boredom via other, sometimes riskier, behaviours that are easier and more readily available.
 - Holding regular StreetGames basketball sessions at a local neighbourhood facility (i.e. within the subjective neighbourhood of the disadvantaged community to negate any reliance on car travel).
 - Both indoor sports halls and outdoor MUGAs are used.
2. **At the right time:** when the target group is up and looking for something to do and not at work in a late night take-away shop. Doorstep sport should be an all year round offer.
3. **At the right price:** the teenage pound is much squeezed. Doorstep sport should be free or nearly free.
 - Data from the Office for National Statistics indicates that the average household spends circa £6.70 on sport every week and that those from the lowest earning households spend around 25% less (i.e. £5). Note, this is a household figure and not per person.
 - Our research highlights that disadvantaged young people are usually only willing/able to pay between £1 and £3 for Doorstep sport activities, but in some cases the need for free or more heavily subsidised pricing was essential. The higher fee - £3 - was specified by older teenagers involved with Us Girls. These young women were motivated by incentives - such as Buy One Get One Free ["BOGOF"].
 - Some sessions are subsidised by a range of partners, which include local authorities, the Police, Youth Services and external funding grants.
4. **In the right style:** disadvantaged young people want their sport to be informal and fun - not to be skills and drill sessions. The smart coach will work with the young people to decide which sports they want to play and when and how.
 - Doorstep basketball should be whizzy and bright: vibrant and varied. People want a vibrant and varied offer that requires little commitment and veers towards the social more than the competitive.
 - Effective basketball interventions will recognise the importance of friendships groups. They want their sport and physical activity to suit small groups of friends joining in when they can.
 - Must not threaten humiliation - at an individual level, a lack of knowledge, skills, confidence or motivation prevent people taking part.
 - The style of session will depend on the composition of the group (age, gender, ability). Positive sessions include:
 - Structured coached sessions;
 - Informal multi-sports session which incorporate basketball; and
 - Matches and competition.
 - Estates based sessions are very much about encouraging participants to 'come and have a go and

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enjoy' - rules and technique are less important. The sessions are also about meeting others and developing friendships - so need to have a 'social' feel.

- Projects will also usually build-in competition, for example, via a central venue league or by hosting regular central venue tournaments where representative teams from each local StreetGames session compete to be 'king of the court'. These events are often hosted at a large or high profile facility - which may not normally be accessible to StreetGames participants.
- Some projects host StreetGames basketball jams that are linked to wider community events to raise the profile of the sessions.
- Street leagues are also being developed by a number of projects.
- Engagement of females tends to work best via female only basketball sessions and the use of female basketball coaches (females tend to be less attracted to the open access/multi-sport style sessions). Therefore, it is important that projects look to up skill young females to become assistant coaches and coaches.

6. Basketball in the StreetGames Network

As a national delivery partner of Sport England, StreetGames is creating networks at national and local levels to strengthen the commitment to doorstep sport. StreetGames' ambition is to link new doorstep sport with sports clubs, National Governing Bodies of Sport programmes, local authority services, Police and Crime Commissioners and health agencies.

To pep up a doorstep sport programme and enhance retention StreetGames offers competitions - at the right level for novices and festivals and trips to elite or mass events.

Basketball is popular activity amongst projects within the StreetGames network. Over many years, it has typically been the third most popular sport provided by projects in the StreetGames network (after football and dance). Annual monitoring data in Year 7 indicates that over 1,000 basketball sessions were provided to circa 2,500 participants. For the first six months of the current monitoring year, StreetGames has delivered: 451 sessions across 21 Doorstep Sports Clubs ["DSCs"] to 822 participants with over 6,468 attendances. 76% of participants are Male and 24% Female.

StreetGames projects have also found that basketball appeals well to key target groups within disadvantaged communities - proving particularly popular amongst children and young people from black and minority ethnic ["BME"] communities, amongst both younger children and older teenagers (16+) and both boys and girls.

Early learning from the DSCs has also confirmed the popularity of basketball. 70 DSCs (25%) intend to deliver basketball. This number could be greatly expanded by a coherent offer that makes delivering basketball an attractive offer to both young people and their multi-sport community coaches.

7. The Role of the Coach

Coaches and Volunteers are key to retention.

The skills of those delivering the sessions are critical to its success. Coaches need to have a good rapport and be able to interact well with participants, as well as having good delivery skills to ensure that sessions are fun, interesting and challenging.

It may be helpful to provide delivery staff with additional support and training beyond their sports coaching qualifications; for example in areas such as managing challenging behaviour, the essentials of working with young people and conflict resolution.

The engagement and up skilling of local volunteers is extremely important. Not only in terms of the support they provide, but as StreetGames volunteers tend to be recruited internally they act as role models to younger participants and can relate well to those attending.

8. Retention

The following factors are considered most important in terms of retention/minimizing drop-out:

- Personal contact between the coach and participants to build relationships, provide positive feedback about performance, check they are coming to the next session.
- The provision of competitions and matches (may be only friendly matches but these encourage participants to keep attending).

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- Community-led - by the young people.
- Recognition - such as player of the week or month.
- The use of incentives such as medals, water bottles and t-shirts.
- Including time within the sessions for participants to socialise and build friendships within the group.

9. Partnerships

Having supportive local partners is also very important. The better embedded into the life of a community the project is the better. For example a tenants association might well be the most respected agency on an estate.

Recognition provided by the StreetGames brand is also considered to be important by doorstep sport providers. Children/young people are familiar with the brand and know what they are coming to.

As the StreetGames name is increasingly known workers from other sectors sign-post young people into the sessions.

Outreach work is used to promote and raise awareness of the sessions. Delivery staff and partner teams need to go out directly into the communities to engage with the target group and for some this may require some initial 'hand holding'.

Sessions provided in partnership with local basketball clubs ensure clear pathways are provided for participants. Some projects have well developed referral mechanisms, which begin with estate-based 3on3 sessions that feed into localised or inner city clubs with the same coaches delivering the sessions in each and links into established basketball clubs.

10. Recommendations to the APPG

1. **Central Hub or Service Centre:** we would welcome England Basketball adopting the role of a central hub or service centre with responsibility for helping all those organisations that deliver basketball. The central hub would:
 - a) Make it easier to deliver basketball by:
 - recognising the types of organisations that need help to provide a better local offer;
 - providing insight for community deliverers about how to activate the latent demand for basketball in deprived communities;
 - producing a version of 3on3 that is appropriate for our target groups, not necessarily dissimilar to the Expanding the 'Ball Again' initiative;
 - teaching coaches and leaders to understand how to deliver 3on3;
 - running 3on3 competitions for all levels;
 - running a girls programme;
 - increasing ease of setting up full sized matches probably via central venue leagues;
 - supporting community deliverers to get money through small grants regimes;
 - making it easy for community players to get to see top level basketball - opening up access to BBL - cheap/free tickets for young people on StreetGames projects; and
 - running a talent ID programme in the heart of disadvantaged communities.
 - b) Maximise value of basketball to social change by:
 - developing a guide for maximising the value of basketball projects to community safety, health, educational attainment/qualifications and community cohesion; and
 - making it easy for basketball deliverers to share good practice.
2. **Across wider sports authorities we would recommend:**
 - a) Easy route to buy/fund hoops perhaps by ring-fencing small amounts of small grants to do this.
 - b) A programme to replace broken hoops on multi-use games areas in youth centres - modern hoops are strong and can survive kids swinging on them.
 - c) (NB. This is not the only relatively small type of capital investment programme that is needed. There is a similar need for outdoor table tennis tables and on a larger scale for floodlights on multi-use games areas.)

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11. Basketball: Participation Figures

APSS indicate that in total, the number of adults (16+) who took part in 30 minutes of moderate intensity basketball at least once a week was 158,300 (0.39%) in APS 1 (2005/06) and is now 154,700 (0.36%) in APS 7 (2012/13). The results indicate no significant change between APS 1 and APS 7.

As with most sports, the rates of participation do vary across the different demographic groups. Basketball is unusual as it maintains higher rates of participation amongst the lower socio-economic groups especially young people: the majority of regular basketball participants are aged under 25 years. Basketball shares this peculiarity with football.

APS 7 results show that 0.23% (22,100) adults from NS-SEC 5-8 played basketball at least once a week whilst only 0.13% (18,000) adults from NS-SEC 1-4 did so - See latest data below from APS 7. These rates of participation translate to circa 80,000 basketball participants across England from these the most deprived communities (On a ratio of about 2.5:1 male to female.)

	Once Per week		Any Basketball
Adults	All Adults	0.36%	0.64%
	NS-SEC 1-4	0.18%	0.37%
	NS-SEC 5-8	0.30%	0.55%
16-25 years	All 16-25 years	1.57%	2.81%
	NS-SEC 1-4	0.18%	0.37%
	NS-SEC 5-8	0.30%	0.55%

(NB. The highest participating group is NS-SEC 9 which mainly includes full-time students)

12. Case Studies

We have also refer below to two case studies of successful basketball projects to illustrate how basketball could be used throughout the country to make a difference to the social challenges affecting young people:

1. The Eagles Community Foundation - with funding from the Northern Rock Foundation, StreetGames has developed a programme aimed at boosting basketball participation amongst women and girls in the area.
2. The Sport Action Zone team in North Southwark and North Lambeth, and StreetGames has developed the doorstep basketball project, Back to Basics, in South London estates. The programme is now running on 10 estates in Lambeth and Southwark as well as on estates in Brent and involves a range of partners including Limelight, NIKE, London South Bank University, Positive Futures and Reach and Teach as well as Community Coaches.