



CASE STUDY :: 05

LOCATION

Positive Futures

England and Wales

OBJECTIVES

To demonstrate how sport can contribute to the building of inclusive communities through COMMUNITY SAFETY

BACKGROUND

The MORI Youth Survey 2004 showed that the peak age of offending is 14 and that if young people had not offended by the age of 14, then they are unlikely to offend in future. Early intervention to prevent young people offending could save public services more than £80 million a year (Audit Commission's report on Youth Justice 2004: A Review of the reformed Youth Justice System)

A national sports based social inclusion programme involving 108 youth projects (12 funded by the Football Foundation) in 20% most deprived neighbourhood (30 worst affected areas) in the country (according to index of multiple deprivation).

Individual projects adapt the principles to meet their own unique needs and circumstances. For example in May 2002, the Sefton Positive Futures project ran 2 evenings a week art & sport sessions for 10-11 year olds (eg photography, dance, drama, music, basketball), "eXperiential Learning" or "XL" programme 2 evenings per week for young people, for a duration of 3 months, followed by a 2-week break for participant to decide whether to carry on further range; sport & leisure activities carried out in the youth centre, with outdoor sport & leisure activities, trips to local clubs & facilities, occasional camping trips, residential weekends' outreach programme for evening football sessions, run on very informal involuntary participation basis.

PURPOSE

- To create healthier, safer communities by providing access to sport and leisure opportunities for the most vulnerable groups
- To provide an alternative to the street and distraction from vandalism, graffiti & disruption
- To have a positive influence on young people's lives by widening horizons & providing access to new opportunities within a culturally familiar environment
- To use sport and leisure as a catalyst to encourage project participation and engage the interest of young people
- To encourage participants to make their own decisions and take self-determined steps towards a positive future
- To steer young people towards education, training and employment
- To provide "gateways" to introduce alternative lifestyle by building trust and mutual respect between the young people and project staff

PARTNERS

Previously managed within the Home Office's Drug Strategy Directorate, with an advisory group of representatives from:

- Department of Health
- Department of Culture Media & Sport
- The Connexions Service (DfES)
- Sport England
- Youth Justice Board
- Football Foundation (UK's largest sporting charity and is partnership between football and Government)

From 1st April 2006, it will be managed by Crime Concern, the national crime reduction agency.

Locally, it is delivered by a range of agencies including local authorities, charities, sports clubs and crime reduction agencies.

Different projects create own unique local partnerships (eg Sefton Positive Futures Project: lead agency is Leisure Inclusion Service, Sefton Council and key partners include Drug Action Team, Mersey Police, Social Services Children & Families, Sefton Education Department, Sefton Health Authority, Sefton Safer Communities Partnership, South Sefton Primary Care Trust, Youth Inclusion Programme, Youth Offending Team)

COST AND DATE

Launched March 2000

2002/2003 budget for Positive Futures nationally set at £3.9 million (Home Office £2.6 million; Sport England £500,000; Home Office Recovered Assets Fund £500,000; Football Foundation £300,000; other local funds from private & public sponsors)
2003/2005 budget received additional £15 million

Individual project examples:

- Sefton: Positive Futures Grant (£50,000 for 2003/4) and funds from Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, Health Inequalities, the Drug Action Team (DAT), Quality Protects (total £340,000) for borough-wide project
- Southampton: Positive Futures Grant of £47,550 for 2003/4
- NE Lincolnshire: Sport England & Youth Justice Board funding £55,000 per year for project officer and project delivery costs, Community Partnership for North East Lincolnshire £37,500 per year, Social Services – Quality Protects Project £3,000 and other local support groups

TARGET

Disadvantaged and socially marginalised young people from 10-19 years of age, such as young offenders and those:

- permanently or temporary excluded from school
- with extreme and behavioural difficulties and those at risk of social exclusion
- with truancy, drug & alcohol problems
- in need of additional support, such as those with physical and learning difficulties

NB: 51% referrals by statutory and voluntary agencies (eg Youth Offending and Youth Inclusion Programme Teams, the police, social services and schools) and 39% are community referrals (eg self-referrals, outreach work and word of mouth)

STEPS

- 1 Outreach and detached work to contact young people at risk
- 2 Coaching skills across a range of sport, with football being overwhelmingly most widespread activity
- 3 Opportunities to play competitively in newly established or existing club
- 4 Education programmes, including those by Sports Leaders UK, National Sports Governing Bodies, Youth Achievement Awards and Open College Network
- 5 Leadership skills and mentoring programmes
- 6 Opportunities for volunteering, casual and part-time, and pathways to full-time employment
- 7 Using local people who know the area and the children
- 8 To award certificates of attendance, "exercising learning" credits and awards for achievements
- 9 Regular reports on evaluation, review and analysis, as well as up-date of the programmes

OUTCOMES/IMPACT

By October 2004, about 69,879 young people involved in regular Positive Futures project activities since 2000 start, with about 35,263 engaged in regular activities between October 2003 – 2004 (28% female and 17% non-white). Evidence has shown:

- significant drop in vandalism and arrests
- valuable educational tool as participants have positive experiences, confidence is boosted, and start to value themselves; participants learn communication, self-esteem and teamwork
- relationships are developed over time
- transformation from local troublemaker to potential community leader recognized by the authorities, and act as a role model/mentor

BENEFITS

Healthier, safer communities, with survey results indicating:

- anti-social behaviour has fallen, with improved relations with peers, within families, and improvement of young people's relations with adults; stability, reduced aggression, greater self-esteem, increased leadership skills and teamwork abilities;
- crime rate has fallen, with participants having made concrete progress and definite achievements, such as in educational improvements, volunteering, casual, part-time and full-time employment.

Strengthening of relationships and greater degree of involvement of partners at strategic, referral and delivery levels of the project, and greater degree of confidence among partners of future direction of the programme

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The incorporation of compulsory physical education and recreational activities into the school curriculum

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 Ensure multi-disciplinary nature of team and multi-components programmes
- 2 Using local people who are familiar with the area and people, and engage parents and local community leaders
- 3 Use broad base and creative techniques in programmes to provide the widest range of activities, and plan to suit local circumstances: "One size does not fit all";
- 4 Have flexible programmes to bridge gaps and waiting time in between programmes for new referrals to take part in activities in similar age group
- 5 Make the best use of local existing facilities and amenities
- 6 Have participation award schemes and "learning outcomes" for participants to move on to higher levels or other areas/qualifications
- 7 Introduce cross communities programmes and links to other projects in other areas of similar nature
- 8 Planning and funding for continuity and sustainability of programmes
- 9 Develop good form of "Monitoring and Evaluation" framework, with regular progress and impact reports for the project to measure progress and success/failure, and to make information and data available