

# Street Elite

Annual  
Evaluative  
Report

Year 4: 2015

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## CONTENTS

Executive Summary	2
Political Context for Street Elite	5
About Street Elite	7
The Evaluation Research Methodology	8
Key Findings	10
Assessing the Impact of the Previous Research	12
Year Four Research: The Current State of Street Elite	14
Conclusion	17
References	19

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Street Elite programme offers young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) the opportunity to develop new skills and levels of confidence in order to engage in employment, education or further training. In particular, Street Elite implements a training to work scheme which seeks to offer young people on the edge of gangs and crime an opportunity that would otherwise be absent for many of them. Street Elite offers a unique and dynamic environment for the most hard to reach young people to engage in a mentoring scheme that has seen 70% of graduates engage in work, training or further education.

Statistics published in a recent House of Commons briefing paper suggest that the social inclusion levels – in terms of employment, housing, education, social mobility and societal engagement - of young people are at their highest since the economic decline of 2008. Despite this, there remain 922,000 young people in the UK between the ages of 16 and 24 years who were not in education, employment or training (NEET) in the second quarter of 2015 (Mirza-Davies, 2015). This equates to 12.7% of all people in this age group and represents a significant issue. Furthermore, there are many more young people simply classified as 'unknown' (Maguire, 2015). These are severely socially excluded and highly vulnerable young people who are not being included in NEET figures due to an inaccuracy in the way that their described marginalisation takes place (Maguire, 2013).

Because of the austerity measures implemented in Britain, the public funding available to support education, employment, sport and welfare has significantly reduced. This has increased the demand on the private and voluntary sectors to invest in programmes such as Street Elite which reach marginalised groups of young people in particular. At the beginning of the Coalition government in 2010, public policy goals shifted towards creating “a society with much higher levels of personal, professional, civic and corporate responsibility; a society where people come together to solve problems and improve life for themselves and their communities; a society where the leading force for progress is social responsibility, not state control” (Conservatives, 2010, p. 1). This is still an integral part of the new Conservative Government’s philosophy.

Street Elite can be seen as a direct response to these new social needs, funding pressures, and political ambitions. This evaluation reveals that it has brought about significant and life changing results for the young people involved. Specifically:

- + Of the 85 Street Elite participants in year four, 59 were in education, employment or training as of 30<sup>th</sup> September 2015
- + 23 socially excluded young people were given work placements. Seven of these moved into EET status to full time employment with the Berkeley Group and its contractors via the Street Elite programme as of 30<sup>th</sup> September 2015.
- + The programme was delivered within budget, reducing the unit cost to £2,515 (down from a cost per person of £2,678 in year 3. This represents a 43% reduction in cost from Year 1 to Year 4).

Our research in Year 5 will focus on understanding the stories, attainment and long-term impact of Street Elite on a cross-section of participants across 4 years of delivery from 2011-15.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings from this research lead the authors to make the following recommendations for Street Elite:

### **1. Face-to-face recruitment is effective and essential**

The localised and direct way in which Street Elite recruits most participants face to face on individual estates results in effective engagement with the target demographic of hard to reach young people. This strategy has also generated referrals from recent graduates of previous years. Given the continuing deterioration in capacity of formal referral agencies and youth services, this offers an important insight into how to reach difficult to engage and socially excluded young people.

### **2. Structure community engagement more tightly**

A more rigorous structuring of the community engagement phase is essential. There needs to be a similar educational focus as in the initial training phase of the programme. The lack of structure means that some young people are not fully engaged and are 'waiting' for their placement opportunity rather than impacting as positively as possible on their community. This section of the programme ought to be focused more tightly on contributing to real issues within the participant's own communities with clearly defined goals, targets, responsibility and resource.

### **3. Sustain the investment in mentoring for longer**

The intensity of relationships between Street Elite coaches, Berkeley employees and participants is vital to the programme's success. Maintaining the current level of investment in terms of resource and organisation is therefore paramount. This applies in particular to the work placement phase in the latter stages of the programme, between months six and nine.

### **4. Connect the graduates to support from multiple agencies**

In previous annual reports, the authors have recommended that Street Elite establish itself as part of a multi-agency approach to addressing employability and social exclusion as well as the other cultural and social issues young people have to face.

We now recommended that a dual approach be taken: a multi-agency approach should be embedded at the start of the programme (current approach) to establish a network of support and understand the complexity of each young person on the programme. In addition, there should be a multi-agency approach *on graduation* from the scheme. This would help to ensure continuity of support for each participant across a number of areas in their life (employment, education, housing etc.) once Street Elite has ended.

The authors hope that this report will contribute to the on-going development of the programme and an increase in the number of young people not simply involved in education, employment or training but feeling like valued and active members of society and fully engaged in their communities.

## POLITICAL CONTEXT FOR STREET ELITE

This fourth annual report offers insights into an independent research project, evaluating the impact and effectiveness of the Street Elite programme as delivered against the backdrop of falling NEET numbers in the UK. At the end of the second quarter of 2015, 922,000 young people, between the ages of 16 and 24, were NEET in the UK (Mirza-Davies, 2015). This number equates to 12.7% of total people in this age group. It represents a fall of approximately 50,000 since January 2014 on top of a further reduction of 118,000 on the previous year (ONS, 2014).

Maguire's (2015) in depth analysis of the current NEET statistics suggests that the picture is not as simple as the headlines suggest. Her conclusions reveal that training and apprenticeship initiatives are being successful in engaging young people directly from school, thus impacting positively on NEET numbers. However, the young people in the post 18 age group are continuing to experience difficulties with transitions beyond school age and there remains a significant NEET problem.

It is important at this point to note the following. A recent report by Thompson (2013) brought into question the assumed relationship between NEET numbers and the state of the economy. More specifically, Thompson (2013) argues that to make the assumption that as the economy recovers and grows, in terms of GDP, the number of young NEETs automatically falls, or vice versa, is a naive and isolated conclusion to draw. Rather, Thompson suggests that amongst a number of contributing factors, including educational investment and variations in recording and tracking mechanisms, there is a direct correlation between falling adult unemployment and falling NEET population. Thus, it is vital that all of the influencing factors involved are considered when postulating on the causes of rising and falling NEET numbers. For example; employment culture is changing and there has been an increase in part-time employment opportunities and combined with the perpetuation of zero hours contracts, it has been argued by Begg (2014) that these figures may be inflated and skewed.

The Office for National Statistics (2015) reports that as of June 2015 the number of people taking positions as their main employment on zero-hour contracts was 744,000. The same report goes on to detail that people on these contracts are more likely to be under 25 years old.

The last three years have seen a significant push, through various governmental initiatives such as the Youth Contract and the Traineeships programme, to place young people on educational programmes or deliver high quality job offers within four months of becoming NEET according to the Youth Guarantee Initiative. However, according to research conducted by Machin (2015) these opportunities do not equate to a living wage or meet the relative or relevant financial needs of individuals.

Despite this, the falling NEET numbers do reflect the success of both public work-based training initiatives and private programmes aimed at providing employment skills and opportunities, notwithstanding the issues above.

The challenge now is to address the persistent problems faced by some of the most disaffected and disadvantaged young people in our society. Reaching them is particularly challenging because a number of financial and advisory support systems designed to encourage them to remain in education and training no longer exist.

Embedded in their social vulnerability is the progressive accumulation of negative experiences with their families, schools, the labour market, healthcare provision and the justice system. Such experiences eventually lead these young people to become socially disconnected, politically unengaged, and culturally stigmatized (Giroux, 2005). The exclusion experienced by these young people coupled with a lack of self-esteem results in prejudice and discrimination (Haudenhuyse et al., 2012).

Sports-based interventions, such as those offered by the Change Foundation, are viewed as a way to alleviate these negative experiences and the outcomes they produce. The policy response to tackling youth unemployment, in the shape of work based initiatives and programmes, alongside mounting pressure on the private sector to demonstrate corporate social responsibility (King, 2014), has brought the NEET agenda into sharp focus. This has led in turn to a comprehensive government review of all policy, funding and provisions for addressing youth unemployment.

As King (2014) describes, significant cuts to public spending budgets as part of wider austerity measures, alongside the continued importance of youth unemployment to government policy, has made the private sector a critical partner. Many private initiatives have turned to the perceived power of sport and sports development programmes to make a positive impact on the lives of young people. Crabbe (2009) provided evidence, reinforced by the data collected through Street Elite, to demonstrate that sport is indeed a useful tool with which to 'hook' the interest of young, often marginalised adolescents and young adults when trying to address issues that have led to their social exclusion and NEET status.

The strong political interest in moving NEETs to EETs only increases the pressure on these 'hooks' (Coalter, 2007). This makes it all the more important that programmes like Street Elite reflect the issues pertaining to social exclusion (Levitas, 2005) and how sport can deliver positive social outcomes for young people. Issues that are well documented at both a structural and personal level can impact on young people's disengagement such as mental health and emotional resilience, boredom, poverty, frustration, or lack of positive role models. Many of these factors impact on a person's likelihood of being engaged in education or employment and can be seen as important indicators of the country's future economic competitiveness and of young people's prospects for employment and progression.

Sports based intervention programmes done in a short term, reactionary and isolated manner can in fact reinforce young people's experiences of rejection and exclusion. This in turn perpetuates and exaggerates the exclusionary mechanisms perceived by young people in the first place (Kelly, 2012) and at best will simply occupy the time of those most at risk (Kelly, 2011). By contrast, sports based interventions done well – offering intensive mentoring relationships with a developmental focus on a number of important skills for social inclusion and mobility - can be highly beneficial.

## ABOUT STREET ELITE

Street Elite is a training for work initiative that uses sport to engage with socially excluded young people in society developing their employability, employment skills and employment opportunities. The young people that Street Elite works with are NEET, often hard to reach young adults living on the edge of gangs and crime. The programme is designed to identify and meet their needs, and facilitate the transition from being socially excluded members of society to being employed, included and active citizens.

Undertaking the programme involves completing a rigorous training to work scheme, followed by a prolonged period of applying the skills learnt within community engagement programmes and selected work placements.

Street Elite engages these young people through a 'plus-sport' intervention model (Coalter, 2007), using sport as a hook to engage young adults who often have a background in youth offending, violence, drugs, gang crime and theft. The programme lasts 9 months and offers the intensive and long term mentoring that is rarely seen in Sport for Development (S4D) initiatives. The programme follows a clear and detailed pathway:

- Local face to face 'door-to-door' recruitment targeting individuals that are the hardest to reach
- 12 weeks of sports based training focusing on coaching qualifications and key 'soft skills' relating to motivation and confidence
- 10 weeks of community engagement delivering sports sessions on agreed local estates
- Organisation and delivery of a one day sports festival involving local schools
- A two week work placement with one of the partner organisations (such as the Berkeley Group or a participating council), guaranteed to each participant that successfully completes the first three phases of the programme
- Followed by transition to work, college or training, depending on the individual.

Coalter (2010) has argued that sports-based social interventions are mostly guided by inflated promises and lack of conceptual clarity. He suggests that it is often not clear why it is assumed that participation in particular sports programmes can have certain impacts on people participating in them. This evaluative report addresses these concerns and offers insights that challenge the assumptions associated with sports based interventions. It evidences models of best practice; using Street Elite as a blueprint.

Our year three report articulated the need for continued work on clearly conceptualising sports based interventions in terms of inputs, outputs and outcomes. It is believed by the authors that this year's report will contribute to achieving a more concrete understanding of effective sports based interventions for those most vulnerable in society.

## THE EVALUATION RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This evaluative report details the fourth year of data collection and analysis which is part of an on-going research project. It represents a research partnership designed to evaluate the long-term impact of the Street Elite Programme on its key stakeholders, and to assess the programming, structures and outcomes of this sport for development (S4D) intervention.

Methodologies that seek to examine complex and multifaceted social issues should, according to Greene *et al.* (2001), focus on a mixture of qualitative and quantitative data in order to attain a more in depth picture of the context, particularly in relation to such issues as social identities and the cultural practices of young people (Greene et al., 2001).

Quantitative data is that which consists of information that is clearly defined, statistical, objective and measurable. Quantitative information can also be found in documents such as progress reports and performance records. Analysing quantitative data involves either mathematical or numerical analytical processes toward answering predetermined research questions or a hypothesis regarding value and impact.

In contrast, qualitative data is data that consists of understanding people's experiences of the social world. Qualitative data often takes the form of an interview with participants or observational records of the delivery environment. Qualitative data collection via interviewing methods involves open-ended and fluid questions within a semi-structured interview context, which seek not to measure responses against predetermined measurement indicators, but rather to garner rich articulations of interviewees' experiences in their own words. It can also involve observing participants at the sites of research, gathering documents from diaries or meetings, and viewing audio-visual materials such as news cuttings, film clips and other cultural artefacts.

Analysing data follows either a deductive (quantitative) path of analysing key facts, figures and other such data; or an inductive (qualitative) process of analysing data using theoretical concepts to understand the perceptions, feelings and thoughts of the participants.

The intention with this evaluative report was to collect a varied range of data from a multitude of sources surrounding the Street Elite programme, both qualitative and quantitative, in order to establish an empirically grounded picture of the programme's value and the impact it has on its participants. Analysis of the data has been carried out to better understand how it achieves these objectives.

The researchers undertook the following work:

Documents and data - *A review of key research, policy, and regulatory and operational documents relevant to the study.*

Stakeholder interviews - *Telephone interviews with key stakeholders were conducted (including participants, Change Foundation, Berkeley Foundation, Local Authority, and Housing Associations).*

Case studies – *The emergent findings were distilled from individual stories.*

*A review of literature – An analytical review of current and critical academic and policy literature pertaining to this area*

*Ethnographic field work – An extensive ethnographic approach was adopted, visiting the Street Elite programme on numerous occasions, building relationships with the stakeholders and keeping field notes throughout.*

*Video recordings – Go Pro, first person, cameras were used to film various elements of the programme from a participant's point of view.*

## KEY FINDINGS

### *Street Elite: Sport for Development (S4D)*

Street Elite seeks to employ sport and coaching tools to engage and work with young people in some of the most deprived communities of London. As described in the introduction it does so by employing sport as a hook to initially engage young people who are subject to social exclusion. It maintains a pervading emphasis on sport whilst addressing key issues (discipline, time keeping, empathy, confidence, organisation) and delivering crucial educational elements through intensive mentorship relationships.

Within academic literature, such programmes are conceptualised as 'sport for development' or 'plus-sport' programmes (Coalter, 2007; 2010; Crabbe, 2013; Kelly, 2011, Nichols et al., 2011). Such programmes are built upon the understanding that participation in sport can provide a myriad of individualised and societal benefits ranging from social mobility (Jarvie & Maguire, 2013; Spaaij, 2011), crime reduction (Hartmann and Depro, 2006; Nichols, 2007), personal development (Green, 2008; Kay, 2009) and the development of social trust and reciprocity (Spaaij, 2009).

Sport continues to be a major axis around which intervention strategies revolve. Multiple government departments - Health, Education, Culture, Media and Sport as well as Business, Innovation and Skills - all harness the perceived power of sport to reengage NEETs and other young people into society. The continued commitment to sport as a tool for development spans both public and private sector efforts. Increasing emphasis is placed on the private sector and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) to supplement the work of government (King, 2014). Significantly, work within CSR often has a focus on sport for development as it is perceived as an engaging and powerful tool across the business industry.

This commitment to sport and its perceived inherent ability to bring about change reflects a culture in Britain imbued with an enthusiasm for sport. Participation continues to be seen as a powerful tool for personal and social development (Crabbe, 2000; Coalter, 2007).

Street Elite participants who were part of the research for this year's annual report echoed the sentiments that pervade academic literature around sports development. One participant noted that they 'would not have come along' if it weren't for the fact that they had an opportunity to do something active, and take part in sport. The use of coaching qualifications (one particular borough had a boxing qualification delivered by the Amateur Boxing Association) to supplement sporting activity enabled the participants to do more than just play sport and thus moved the programme from a mere diversion or hook and instead towards a more developmental tool.

The authors of this report maintain their position that Street Elite continues to offer a prime example of a successful and progressive sport for development model. There is much to be admired about the programme and which should be shared with other agencies and establishments across the country. Its success is built on four pillars:

### Recruitment

Recruitment of young people to the programme is a continued strength of the programme. It is clear that in addressing Maguire's (2015) concern about the unknown population of NEETs and the hard to reach (Crabbe, 2007), Street Elite offers a best practice approach to the recruitment of vulnerable young people to the programme. The coaches spend time over a two month period before the training begins doing estate walks, meeting local youth workers, and inviting young adults to take part. This face to face approach is not without risks but has consistently proved highly effective.

### Mentoring

The programme simply would not work without the intensity of mentoring from the Change Foundation coaches and Berkeley Group staff. A number of stakeholders interviewed all pointed to the intensity and power of these relationships. A number of participants noted that they would not have stayed beyond a few weeks (on the programme) if it weren't for the coaches following up on their whereabouts and wellbeing. Equally, in the community engagement and placement phases there is a lack of recognition for the work that employed staff do (Change Foundation and Berkeley Group) to make the programme a success.

### Funding

Whilst the cost per NEET (£2,515) is much reduced again this year, it is worth noting that some hidden costs (volunteering, private sector workforce, cost of festivals) are subsumed through the relationship with Berkeley. Instead of being a criticism, it is worth noting that a more sophisticated look at real costs is required in order to better understand the value of such collaborations between the private and social sectors.

Moreover, access to Sportsworks has allowed the researchers to understand and explore the nature of the impact of Street Elite from a more quantitative measure and it is clear that whilst there is more to do to understand the nature of community engagement and impact at an individual level, the cost per NEET (in crude terms) offers value for money in terms of individual, community and societal cost.

## ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF THE PREVIOUS RESEARCH

As part of the monitoring and evaluating of the programme, the authors engaged with stakeholders and carried out numerous visits to the programme in order to understand how the previous years' recommendations had been met.

### *Utilise the Full Potential of Mentoring*

*“To ensure that the central and most instrumental part of Street Elite, its efficacy in building relationships with and mentoring the young people it engages, is utilised to its full potential the authors suggest that significant research is undertaken to better understand the needs of the participants and their perceptions of the mentoring they receive. More specifically, such research should aim to answer questions such as what actually happens during the mentoring relationships between youth workers and NEETs? And, what can happen and how does it happen? This will move our understanding of mentoring past the current focus on measuring what works and what doesn't - toward a consideration for the individualised nature of mentoring (Colley, 2006).” (Roberts, Abrahams and Longhurst, 2015)*

The intensity of relationships developed is inspiring and a central tenet of the work done on the Street Elite programme. This intensity (texts at any time of day/night, phone calls, following up job opportunities, encouraging attendance, going into local communities to check attendance) of each relationship is powerful but is clearly a resource intensive commitment. One coach that was interviewed talked about the 'difficulty of running a number of boroughs'. The intensity of the relationships means that we recommend staff only 'lead' in one borough and potentially, where they are experienced and skilled, support one cohort in one other borough. Beyond this, the relationships developed will be diluted or staff will become unable to meet the demands of a challenging group of young people.

### *Develop a Multi-Agency Approach*

*“Street Elite refocuses its endeavour as a multi-agency and multi-faceted developmental approach, which incorporates a programme of employment but also strives to develop other life skills that pertain to the various social and cultural contexts that its participants will have to navigate to integrate into society” (Roberts, Abrahams and Longhurst, 2015)*

A multi-agency approach was now evident throughout the research visits and stakeholder interviews. In 2015, Street Elite has refocused its efforts on working with the local authority, housing associations, youth offending teams and corporate partners, and a more streamlined and effective approach was evident. A number of stakeholders all highlighted this as a positive move whilst acknowledging that more work in terms of communication and structure (management and reporting) was needed due to the wide range of agencies now involved in many of the boroughs. There is no doubt that the funding that multiple partners bring is key to the sustained success of Street Elite.

### Access to Sport Works Database

*“It is essential that access to Sport Works be facilitated in order to build a more complete picture of the success of the programme in quantitative and qualitative terms.” (Roberts, Abrahams and Longhurst, 2015)*

This was provided early in year 4 and has proved invaluable in understanding the nature of the work being done in various boroughs and communities. In conjunction with the management reports, case studies and testimonials from coaches, Street Elite staff, Berkeley staff and participants – a fuller picture of the work done is now available and is forming a significant part of the long-term impact study in Year 5.

### Addressing Structural Frailties

*+ Build positive and more robust delivery partnerships with various local authorities involved with supporting socially excluded young people.*

*+ Build the skills and qualifications young people need for sustainable employment by entering into partnerships with further education colleges*

*+ Investigate further opportunities of how the voluntary and housing sectors can support young people with pre-employment schemes, work experience, traineeships and apprenticeship placements.*

*+ Enable young people to work together to create social action projects in their local communities and implement these into the heart of the Street Elite community engagement phase.*

*+ Facilitate greater training provision for the coaches and Street Elite programme leaders in order to equip them to offer greater support in the context of community engagement and leadership” (Roberts, Abrahams and Longhurst, 2015)*

There are clearly efforts to address the training needs of coaches and participants on the Street Elite programme and this should be an on going part of the programme. Notable efforts around training young people to work on building sites for their placement, first aid training, coaching qualifications and other softer skills in the training phase are to be encouraged.

## YEAR FOUR RESEARCH: THE CURRENT STATE OF STREET ELITE

Whilst the research has provided further evidence with which to illuminate Street Elite's successful engagement with young people, it has also uncovered opportunities for development during the period ahead. This section of the report will detail those areas and offer recommendations on how to address them.

### *Redefining NEET: Accessing the Hard to Reach*

Throughout the research process, particularly from secondary research of the policy and research literature, it has become apparent that the term NEET and the categorisation it denotes ought to be questioned. Maguire's (2015) work on young NEET people in the UK highlights an alarming number of what she calls 'unknowns'. Her research shows that over a quarter of NEETs are claiming Job Seekers Allowance, leaving almost three quarters out of the system and subject to increasing difficulties in tracking and supporting. This in turn, Maguire (2015) argues, positions these young people as even more susceptible to social exclusion.

Street Elite addresses this approach through face-to-face recruitment and is a powerful example of how to engage with 'unknown' young people. However, better data is required in terms of monitoring the types of young people and their reasons for staying in, or leaving the programme.

In light of this, programmes such as Street Elite, which aim to work with the hard to reach, must evolve as the nature of young people's social exclusion becomes increasingly nuanced. There exists a vast number of young people in the UK 'beyond NEET' who have been lost as support services and the ability of public agencies to map their whereabouts and status has declined. By their very nature, these young people are difficult to track, monitor and connect with. However, it is the belief of the authors that Street Elite is perfectly positioned – with its existing integration in communities and its growing alumni from which connections can be networked – to begin to reach these young adults.

### **Recommendation**

Redefine the parameters of what being NEET involves. Street Elite's engagement of those young people who are currently defined as NEET is highly effective. However, work must be done to target and engage with those who are beyond the NEET category. By effective and embedded community engagement and establishing a multi-agency recruitment partnership the most severely marginalised young people can begin to be accessed and engaged. In addition, a multi-agency support network is then required after the end of the formal Street Elite programme.

## Community Engagement

The community engagement phase of the Street Elite programme has been the greatest area of focus within our research this year.

Excellent community engagement would enable Street Elite to do two things:

- + Identify and recruit those young people at most risk
- + Support and develop communities to the extent that they can impact on what is already an at risk, marginalised group of young people.

To examine this further, we draw on the work of Collins and Kay (2014) who suggest that not only are young people most at risk in this group but also most likely to be offenders; they point to historical data that suggests as many as 2 in every 5 offences are being committed by young men under the age of 21.

In response, Collins and Kay (2014) highlight that in order to prevent and reduce these kinds of exclusion, we must promote more engagement, better socialisation, and a well structured programme of community involvement.

The evidence collected over the last year on Street Elite suggests that some participants feel at this stage they are merely waiting for their work placement as opposed to doing a productive community engagement project. We believe that more needs to be done to make this a genuinely useful and important element of Street Elite after what is an already excellent first training phase.

## Recommendation

Review and restructure this stage of the programme. It would make the participants more ready for employment, education or training if there were clear goals, intended outcomes and developmental elements embedded in their community work.

## A Multi-Agency Approach

The year three annual reports recommended an increased level of collaboration with other partners involved in Street Elite. Much has been achieved in 2015 and the multi-agency approach evident in this year's research is bringing about even greater impact on the lives of the young people involved. However, the authors have established from this year's research with key stakeholders that what is required is a greater emphasis on post-programme support strategies.

Work by Nichols (2007) has clearly evidenced that where there is continued engagement, post intervention in community-based programmes where participants are given meaningful roles, as well as continued connection to support mechanisms, it has a significant positive impact on self-esteem, social inclusion and reduced potential for becoming involved in criminal activity.

Street Elite alone cannot attend to all the support needs of all participants post-programme. But a similarly joined-up and multi-agency approach with clear, strategic and allocated responsibilities which go beyond simple concerns with a participants' work status is imperative. If a network of support agencies can begin to build a post-programme strategy, it will surely impact on the long-term goal to re-engage young people living on the edge of gangs and crime.

### **Recommendation**

The Change Foundation should work with local partners and agencies in other sectors to develop a multi-agency support network after participation in Street Elite has finished. This should be concrete and structured yet tailored to each individual. Incorporating support from other agencies beyond the Berkley Group and The Change Foundation will ensure that participants who have been engaged stay engaged and receive the support in all areas of social inclusion, not just employability.

## CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

This report has drawn upon significant data collected from in and around the Street Elite programme. The data pertained to the experiences of the key stakeholders: coaches, participants, funding partners and statutory agencies.

The research findings illuminate a programme built around the combination of mentoring and sport, inspired by dedicated coaches working with highly disaffected, marginalised young adults.

The research collected for this research offers further evidence to the notion presented in the third year report that truly effective “plus sport” models require highly intensive relational work if they are to succeed. The mentoring structure in place within Street Elite offers a comprehensive and effective model for delivering such intensive relational work, which can be delivered by skilled professionals given enough training, time and support.

This annual report has built upon the assertion made in the third year report which articulated that there was scope for:

*...increased longitudinal ‘post-programme’ support and monitoring. This assertion relates to the school of thought that suggests that the work of engaging marginalized young people needs to move beyond the aspirations of placing them in the labour market. Indeed social inclusion is more nuanced and encompassing of all areas of young people’s lives. Young people oftentimes find the transition into active citizenship and adulthood difficult and this transition is more than a discussion about employment and education. (Roberts, Abrahams and Longhurst, 2015)*

This year four report emphasises the importance of developing a multi-agency approach *post* programme to ensure that these individuals continue their journey after the programme, rather than falling subject to the same exclusionary mechanisms as they did before.

The authors are very aware that this would constitute a big shift for the Change Foundation and the Berkeley Foundation, away from considering Street Elite in isolation and towards seeing it as part of a larger network of intervention programmes working toward the same end goal of youth employment and social inclusion.

Of particular importance throughout the report has been the issue of defining the meaning and relevance of the term ‘NEETs’. The report has called for greater work following that of Maguire (2015) and Crabbe (2009) on better understanding the multitude of different circumstances and exclusionary barriers impacting on those within this category. Moreover, crucial to this report is the call to consider those who are ‘beyond NEET’; those who have been excluded from the statistics and who are ‘unknown’ to central audit and statistical collection as well as localised support provisions.

Our year three report celebrated the richness of the qualitative data about those people directly involved in the delivery of Street Elite. Since then, greater incorporation of Sport Works has also created a stronger quantitative evidence base. This should now help the programme better understand the nature of those defined as NEET and begin to establish a more accurate picture of how many severely excluded 'unknowns', there may be potential to reach.

Delivering the recommendations articulated above will have significant implications for how Street Elite is delivered, the nature and complexity of funding and the impact the programme can have on policy. The programme will undoubtedly continue to carry out hugely beneficial work impacting on the lives of many young people on the edges of society. By evolving its form and integration into the communities in which it operates, the Change Foundation and the Berkeley Foundation could now turn Street Elite into a beacon of good practice for all sports based intervention programmes to follow.

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