

Street Elite

Annual
Evaluative
Report

Year 3: 2014

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Year three Achievements:

It is apparent that young people are increasingly finding themselves operating in changing communities, making it a complex and challenging task to meet their needs in terms of engagement, employment and education; three crucial factors in social inclusion. Policy makers have turned to the power of sport (broadly defined) as a way of overcoming these barriers to social inclusion toward a more equal, socially cohesive, physically active and peaceful society (Spaaij, 2009).

At the forefront of the Government's action plan for young people is the need to raise young people's aspirations, participation and attainment in both education and work. However, as resources and state driven provisions to address this have been increasingly scaled back in light of the Government's long term economic plan, and the political and economic shifts toward 'The Big Society' (Conservatives, 2010) it has been the charge of the private and voluntary sector to provide programmes such as Street Elite to achieve this goal.

The coalition government trajectory towards a reduction of the responsibility and pervasiveness of the state has seen a move toward "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).

The Change Foundation and Berkeley Foundation have risen to this challenge and produced significant and life changing results for the young people involved. More specifically:

- + Of the sixty five Street Elite participants in year three, fifty two were in education, employment or training nine months after the end of the programme.
- + Twenty six socially excluded young people were given work placements and eight young people have been moved from NEET status to full time employment with The Berkeley Group via the Street Elite programme.
- + The programme was delivered within budget, reducing the unit cost to £2,678 per person.
- + Year four will see The Change Foundation and Berkeley working with local authorities to start writing Street Elite into their NEET strategies.

Recommendations:

The research carried out for this year three report reveals that The Change Foundation and Berkeley Foundation are leading lights with regard to social inclusion projects using sport. However, our research also makes recommendations on how Street Elite can continue doing such innovative and beneficial work and develop into the gold standard of sport for development projects, engaging young people who are particularly difficult to reach. The key recommendations from the research are as follows:

+ Focus not only on re-engaging young people into society via employment opportunities, but on all areas of a young person's life and on mentoring that is individualised rather than pre-planned.

+ Create a broader, multi-institutional approach to delivering Street Elite. This will require building collaborative and robust delivery partnerships with local authorities and other organisations involved with supporting socially marginalised young people.

+ Facilitate greater training for the coaches themselves in order to equip them to offer greater support in the context of community engagement and leadership.

+ Provide greater access to Substances' Sportworks database in order for the research to build a more complete picture of the effectiveness of sports based interventions.

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 feeling active and valued members of society.

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CONTENTS

	Page Number
Executive Summary	1
Contents	3
Introduction	4
The Evaluation Research Methodology	6
Key Findings	8
Concluding Comments	17
References	20

INTRODUCTION

The main aim of the Street Elite programme is to offer the most socially excluded young people who are NEET the opportunity to access work placements and job opportunities, which are otherwise inaccessible. Via a rigorous training to work scheme, not only do employment opportunities become available but also a secondary yet critical output is that those young people develop new skills and levels of confidence in order to engage in employment, education or further training and facilitate their inclusion in society. In their report into youth unemployment opportunities Russell, Thomas and Simmons (2014) found that young people today face a great deal of uncertainty regarding their education and career opportunities. Such opportunities for young people in Britain are increasingly rare and as such the choices that are presented are either unappealing or inaccessible. Moreover, particularly when these young people have been NEET for extended periods, Russell, Thomas and Simmons (2014) suggest that they “face significant challenges when trying to enter or re-enter the labour market, and those with low-level qualifications are particularly vulnerable to labour market marginalisation and exclusion” (pp. 3-4). Whilst we recognise that NEET is far from a blanket classification, there is commonality in that those within the NEET category are “more likely to spend extended periods of time outside education and employment” (Russell, Thomas and Simmons, 2014, p. 4)

Street Elite attempts to provide a dynamic and unique environment for the most hard to reach young people to develop in a positive way thus providing a bridge to those opportunities and a strategy to reduce the extended periods young people spend as NEET. This research attempts to illuminate the landscape in which Street Elite operates in order to better understand the complexity of young people and the myriad of potential obstacles preventing their successful integration into employment, education and society.

Crabbe (2009) has provided evidence, which we have now built upon, to draw the conclusion that sport is a useful tool with which to ‘hook’ the interest of young, often marginalised people when trying to address issues that have facilitated their social exclusion and NEET status. The developing political interest related to the need to move NEETs to EETs, and the way in which sport can play a role in this, is one that highlights tension between broadly capitalist and socialist ideologies. Darnell (2012) highlights that the tension between corporatised empowerment models of sport for development and sustainable, radical social change models can make it difficult to reconcile the needs of individuals at the centre of this debate. This makes it all the more important that programmes like Street Elite recognise that issues pertaining to social exclusion (Levitas, 2005) are understood and tackled. Issues that are well documented at both structural and personal levels 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.

According to Hagel, Coleman and Brooks (2013) and The Eurofund (2012) The United Kingdom’s record in these matters still lags behind our international competitors, however progress has been made in expanding participation rates (in education and employment) over the past year. The need to address the challenges facing this population has gained

increasing political support. NEETs are a vulnerable population and include some of the most disaffected and disadvantaged young people in our society. Reaching them is challenging because in recent years we have witnessed the removal of a number of financial and advisory support systems designed to encourage them to remain in education and training.

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 to these young people becoming socially disconnected from society, politically unengaged, culturally stigmatized and left behind by mainstream society (Giroux, 2005). The dislocation experienced by these young people coupled with a lack of self-esteem may well result in NEETs suffering from 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 distorted relationships and the outcomes they produce.

However, Coalter (2010) has argued that sports-based social interventions are mostly guided by inflated promises and lack of conceptual clarity. It is often not clear why it is assumed that participation in particular sports programmes can have certain impacts on people participating in them. There is a growing body of literature in the domain of sports research, underlining the view that sports-based social practices need to be more clearly conceptualised in terms of inputs (the used human, social, physical, cultural, political, economic resources), throughputs (what is being done with used resources and how it is done), outputs (what is being accomplished with used resources) and outcomes (to what concrete consequences have such accomplishments led for those involved). It is believed that this will contribute in creating better and more effective sports-based interventions for, amongst others, the socially vulnerable young population. The continued partnership between the authors and The Change Foundation hopes to continue extensive research and support the development of the Street Elite programme to become a leading light of sports based interventions embracing the conceptual parameters Coalter (2010) articulates.

THE EVALUATION RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This report is the third part of an on-going research and capacity building partnership between the authors and the Change Foundation 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 intervention.

Methodologies that seek to examine complex and multifaceted phenomena such as the Street Elite programme, and better understand their impact, according to Greene (2007), should 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. Upon the paradigmatic presumptions of realism and objectivism the collection of quantitative data involves measuring or recording a phenomenon against predefined indicators. 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 people's experiences of the social world. Qualitative data often takes the form of interview with participants or observational records of the delivery environment. Qualitative data collection via interviewing methods involves open-ended and fluid questions within (in this case) a semi-structured interview context, which seeks not to measure responses against predetermined measurement indicators, but rather to garner rich articulations of interviewees' experiences of a phenomenon 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 qualitative data follows either a deductive path of aggregating participants' words, or the researcher's observations, into categories of information and presenting the diversity of ideas gathered during data collection, or an inductive process of analysing the data using theoretical concepts to unpack the perceptions, feelings and thoughts of the participants.

The intention with this third annual report of the Street Elite project was to collect a range of data, both qualitative and quantitative, that would provide a holistic picture of the programme's background, performance, value and impact. Reflecting on value creation and impact requires a series of key questions to be asked of those responsible for the conduct of the input (Funders and Coaches) and of those in receipt of that input in the form of outputs and outcomes (NEETs and communities).

In order to achieve these objectives, the researchers undertook the following tasks:

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

Stakeholder interviews - Telephone interviews with key stakeholders were conducted.

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 numerous occasions, being involved, 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.

**It should be noted that access to the quantitative data derived through the Substance and Spotted 'sportworks' analysis tool was not possible for year 3 but should be accessible on-going in order to provide a fuller evaluation of the project.*

KEY FINDINGS

Street Elite: Sport for Development

The following section provides reflections on the current state of the programme in relation to its evolution from years one and two and also in light of the review of current research conducted for this annual report. It will then go on to offer recommendations and challenges for the Street Elite programme in order to continue to move forward and impact the lives of young people, the way it has been doing since its conception.

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. The commitment to sport as a major intervention strategy can be attributed to British culture being imbued with an enthusiasm for engaging with sport, both participating and viewing, and thus, sport participation is seen as a powerful tool for personal and social development (Crabbe, 2000; Coalter, 2007). This engrained belief is further supported by a number of findings within the data collected for this report. Participants interviewed spoke of their passion for sport and reported that only sport and music were influential enough to capture their imagination and therefore their investment into the programme.

Through Street Elite, the Change Foundation and Berkeley Foundation partnership it is clear that a range of stakeholders are given an opportunity, via an intensive sport for development intervention, to engage 'with' and 'in' a unique moment in their respective communities, whilst learning to volunteer and to accept a sense of responsibility for a civil society.

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 & Depro, 2006; Nichols, 2007), the development of the self (Green, 2008; Kay, 2009) and the development of social trust and reciprocity (Spaaij, 2009). So much so that sport has been described as "the training ground for life" by Danish (2002, p. 50). Indeed, one Street Elite participant echoed the sentiments of Danish, articulating that they had developed a number of skills through their engagement in sport such as leadership and communication. It is clear that there are many connections between sport and every day life and the young people involved in Street Elite are benefitting through excellent mentoring and structured experiences.

As was the conviction in the two previous annual reports, the authors maintain the position that the Street Elite programme continues to offer a prime example of a successful and progressive sport for development model. As such the authors continue to recommend that there is much to be admired about the Street Elite programme and even more in the way of arguments adding rigour to the claims that the programme should be shared with other agencies and establishments across the country.

Assessing the Impact of the previous research

The previous data, which has allowed the authors to arrive at this conviction, were articulated in the first and second annual evaluative reports. These reports made a number of clear recommendations and the first section of this report is a reflective consideration of the Street Elite programme in light of the previous research reports.

Previous years' reports highlighted the Street Elite programme as a highly effective provision, which "provides a unique opportunity for delivery staff to reach out to and engage with particularly marginalised NEETs. Street Elite has established an infrastructure of support and mentoring relationships for NEETs as they generate positive aspirations for the future" (Roberts & Abrahams, 2012, p. 7). The research asserted that sport in this instance could indeed have the power to affect. These data, however, allude to the committed work of the coaching and mentoring staff, and their dedication to engage with NEETs on a deeply interpersonal level, which is the real predicator to the success of the programme in raising the social and personal development of marginalised NEETs.

The research conducted for the year three report on the programme provides evidence that this is still the case across the Street Elite programme. When considering, however, the issues around 'data and accountability gaps', which were flagged up in the year one report it was suggested that "At present there is a lack of consistent evidence based in the design of the progress reports and a lack of well-designed protocols for the delivery of any such evidence. We encourage Street Elite to measure progress formatively and summatively against vocational outcomes" (Roberts & Abrahams, 2013, p. 9). Assessing this against the data from this year's research, it is apparent that there has been a lack of progress in this regard. The gaps in terms of the accountability and monitoring of the participant's vocational outcomes and holistic personal development are still apparent. So the recommendation remains that the highly effective work of Street Elite would be better served if more explicit evaluative and tracking mechanisms were incorporated during the programme and for considerable periods after finishing the programme. This has been, in some ways, addressed through the development of case studies and individual reports from the case team but this needs addressing in a more coherent manner.

Secondly, there were recommendations regarding the nature of the selection process; "the selection process of individuals on the Street Elite programme (those living on the edges of gangs and crime) could be reviewed in order to achieve a level of inclusion for individuals and communities that goes beyond typical sport for development interventions" (Roberts & Abrahams, 2013, p. 11). It is evident that this has been addressed and greatly improved. The attention and commitment to a face-to-face consultation process for recruitment onto the programme, as opposed to arbitrary selection or an open door policy, has moved the Street Elite programme far beyond other sport for development programmes. Both Crabbe (2009) and Maguire (2013) allude to some of the difficulties in accessing young people who may be marginalised and Street Elite is to be commended on its rigorous and community facing approach to selection. The evidence appears to be that young people were from more varied and in some cases, more marginalised backgrounds.

The above themes that have emerged out of the data speak directly to the claims that the Street Elite programme is a highly effective provision and is reaching its goals of improving the aspirations, employment opportunities and social inclusion of the most marginalised and vulnerable young people. They add significant qualitative rigour to the defining quantitative measures of success currently being used on the Street Elite website; “so far, after 2 years, 79% of participants have successfully moved into education, training or employment, having delivered regular coaching sessions on housing estates across London” (Street Elite, 2014). These data begin to offer rich and deep qualitative evidence, which pertain to the reasons for Street Elite’s success, going far beyond simply illustrating it statistically.

Year three research: The current state of the Street Elite programme

The research collected for the year three report has provided further evidence for the already established positive impacts of the Street Elite programme and also seeks to offer key challenges for the period ahead.

Intensive relational work

Previous research which has been conducted on the Street Elite programme has clearly identified that its fundamental strength is the key individuals that work directly with the NEETs within the programme and their ability and dedication to work intensively and untiringly to offer advice, support, employability training and to raise their aspirations. Furthermore, the intensive work that is carried out by the partner organisation, the Berkeley Foundation, is becoming a critical success factor in the development of young people in the work place.

Our findings have identified three strategies that the staff coaches used to develop relationships with the participants; namely, by minimising relational distance through their sensitive behavioural approaches and their use of technology and social media; secondly by encouraging active inclusion in the many activities (albeit supported by funded attendance); and finally by attending to the relational ties, always making themselves available to the participants. The intensive work done by key employees at the Berkeley Foundation (having a key person appointed to their placement support and administration) has also served to extend the sense of care and support provided for the young people considered NEET and on the edge of gangs and crime. A sense of belonging is clearly fostered and is having a life changing effect on some young people on the programme. Such relational strategies served as the foundation for both active engagement in the programme by the participants and the promotion of positive developmental outcomes for them.

Yet again the research echoes these sentiments that it is the relationships built upon within and around the sporting environment of Street Elite that is the mechanism through which the aspirational goals of Street Elite are achieved. The success of the programme therefore remains heavily dependent on the relationships formed between those facilitating the programme and the participating young people.

However, in previous reports the authors have suggested that an overreliance on the dedication of a small team of individuals who work tirelessly to develop young participants is not a scalable model without significant investment. The data from this year’s research has contributed to a further emphasis on the need for such investment so that not only an

increased number of these inspired and high quality people can join the team but also that they are given the resources and effective strategies needed to maintain such highly intensive relational work.

As discussed by Coalter (2012) and Kelly (2012) such highly intensive relationships of support and nurture are the most effective way of affecting the lives of NEETs. In support of these assertions, a significant number of Street Elite participants said that they only attended and stayed involved in the programme because of the coaches. This relationship has been emphasised every year that the programme has run and now needs consolidating and enhancing in terms of investment in the staff.

In light of discussions by Coakley and Dunning (2012), (Kelly, 2012) and Chamberlain (2013) this consolidation and enhancement of relationship building ought be coupled with a move beyond the parameters of the sporting session and an over reliance on the sporting activity itself to foster the sort of impact that Mutz and Bar (2009) describe; so that it can be the gateway to a better life which teaches crucial personal and social lessons.

In light of this, the authors urge caution to ensure the intensive relational work found within Street Elite at present is maintained and developed into systems of relationship across institution and individuals, and not to digress into a position where the activities are being charged with delivering development. Indeed, Coalter (2012) found via extensive research that such systems of high intensity relationships are most likely found in sport plus models. That is to say that sport is positioned as merely the 'hook' to engage with a marginalised youth, as opposed to relying on sport in and of itself to provide the lessons and education required to aid young people's journey away from being NEET.

The value of mentoring

The Street Elite programme has adopted an open-ended youth worker mentoring approach to the relationships it has enjoyed with the participants, which has been effective in terms of creating real value for the participants within and outside of the sporting activities they engage in. The programme endeavours to enable in-depth, intensive and extensive social relationships and does so with considerable efficacy. The supportive environment created by the staff coaches has played a crucial role in facilitating rehabilitative psychosocial outcomes. A number of the participants interviewed commented on the fact that it was supporting them because; they could rely on someone being there for them every week; the team at Street Elite are the only ones that believe in them; they felt like they finally had a chance to do something worthwhile; they were being successful in something at last.

It is clear that the open relationships formed between staff and participants within Street Elite has underpinned the success of the programme in terms of creating feelings of empowerment amongst the participants. The relational aspect constitutes the cornerstone of the Street Elite programme. This is not unique, however what is even more admirable and pioneering about the Street Elite programme is the time such relationships are given to develop. The initial programme is over a nine-month period, a unique length of time in terms of sport for development programmes. Moreover, support and mentorship often continues once the participants have completed the Street Elite programme and are employed with the Berkeley Foundation. However, there is significant work to be done to develop an

infrastructure to stay connected and sustain the mentoring relationships with the young people that remain NEET, fall out of the programme or venture into other employment positions outside of the Berkeley Group. One example of this type of post programme provision, is the support shown by a number of Berkeley employees. St James, a subsidiary of the Berkeley Group, for example were impressed by one of the Street Elite graduates on placement, but did not have a full time post available for him. Upon completion of the placement, the HR coordinator there invested significant time recommending him for a post in another part of the business and doing a mock interview with him to increase his chances of success. Other examples highlight how staff have spent time mentoring and finding on the job training or qualifications for the Street Elite employees.

It is evident then that fundamental to the Street Elite model, and instrumental in its successes, is the central premise of mentorship and the establishment of deep interpersonal relationships. Indeed a number of the participants spoke of their relationships with those facilitating the Street Elite programme was their reason for their engagement with the programme. Moreover, it was clear that the mentoring and relationships established at times transcended the predefined and fixed models of mentorship (Colley, 2006) to more significant and dependable relationships which, to varying degrees, were missing in the lives of the young people within the programme. As such, Street Elite is an exemplary manifestation of what key academics (Colley, 2006; Maguire, 2013) argue is the most effective way of engaging with the most marginalized young people and sustaining the engagement of NEETs in the process of social inclusion. With this said, the authors would like to raise some critical points of caution in discussing mentoring.

- Due to the intensive and highly interpersonal nature it is a model that is difficult to sustain for those mentoring. It is a model of intervention that becomes increasingly difficult to maintain as the programme grows without significant increases in funding to afford the employment of more highly skilled street/youth workers.
- The intimate and complex nature of mentorship in the context of social inclusion of NEETs dictates that the approach has to be an individualised one. A one-size fits all approach cannot work. An acknowledgement of the power relations at play between mentor and mentee, and a deep understanding of the existing social networks and world views of the mentee rather than dismissing them as part of the problem is vital (Colley, 2006). Indeed considerable evidence (Colley, 2006) suggests that NEETs only value and engage in relationships with others when those relationships are entered into freely and for the reasons a young person deems of importance to their life.
- We ought be cautious about placing high expectations on mentoring in isolated social inclusion programmes. Without deploying a fully joined up approach to social inclusion which incorporates all of the varying social institutional that touch the lives of young people and their communities, mentoring may not be as powerful as intended when it comes to the extremely varied and complex issue of social exclusion. Indeed, it is suggested by Pawson and Boaz (2004) that the close relationships formed through mentoring will not break down the structural and institutional forces that may have marginalised them in the first place. A joined up, multi-institutional approach is required in order to place the young person at the centre of decision-making.

- Most importantly in this context is the assertion that for mentoring to be effective it must recognise social inclusion and reintegration into society as more nuanced than an end goal of moving NEETs into the labour market. Again, Colley's (2006) rich research shows that social inclusion programmes, and the mentoring they can offer, for NEETs are as much about the access to help and support that allow them to navigate difficult personal issues and the transition into active citizenship and adulthood, as they are about gaining employment.

Recommendation:

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).

Filling the gaps

'Filling the gaps' makes reference to three separate points of analysis that have emerged from the data. Firstly, it is the perception of the authors that there are significant gaps in the data sets, and structural hurdles to collecting the data needed to monitor and evaluate the programme effectively and wholly. More specifically the programmatic infrastructure at present makes it extremely difficult to track and monitor the participants once they leave the programme and indeed build up an accurate picture of their lives outside of Street Elite. There is currently only opportunity to collect data whilst the participants are engaging in Street Elite. To truly begin to measure the efficacy and effectiveness of Street Elite and sports based interventions more generally; more longitudinal and multi-institutional research ought be conducted, engaging with the participants lives outside of Street Elite and also for an extended period after they leave the programme.

Secondly, throughout the interview data and from evidence in the video recordings of informal post session discussions with the participants the theme of 'being glad' that they had the programme in their lives emerged. Participants spoke more specifically of the value they placed on having something that is 'filling the gap' left by a lack of belonging within society and the consequences of existing within the margins of citizenship; consequences summarised not only by their NEET status but also by exclusion from other areas of society and oftentimes difficult, or non-existent, family and social networks.

Whilst on the surface such filling of the gaps seems beneficial both personally and societally, Coalter (2007) suggests that there exists a clear distinction between the moral intentions of various sports based intervention programmes. Coalter (2007) describes how intervention programmes can be either diversionary or developmental and are concerned with either diverting young people from criminal or antisocial behaviour or working intensively to attract young people into a mentoring setting, using sport as a tool for development. The danger of taking sports based intervention lightly is an over dependence on a diversionary prerogative, which has seldom proven to be impactful. On the surface level the data pertains to

somewhat of a divergent element to Street Elite's programme; with the participants reporting feeling a sense of diversion or a gap being filled where they would normally feel boredom or a propensity towards deviance. However, considered against the other findings excavated by the research around the value of mentorship and the highly intensive relationship built up with the coaches it is clear that Street Elite moves far beyond what Coalter (2007) labels mere diverting sports development; rather it is a truly developmental programme which concentrates on the individual as a whole, rather than occupying prescribed time slots.

Thirdly, a more fundamental concern has arisen. As identified above, Street Elite currently operates (in the opinion of the authors) as somewhat of a developmental, rather than diversionary programme as Coalter (2007) refers. However, an increasingly sophisticated understanding of social exclusion necessitates a more comprehensive and holistic developmental strategy be deployed. Key literature (see Levitas, 1999) examines the discourses that perpetuate and sustain the social exclusion of those marginalized by society. They suggest that social exclusion manifests and is maintained by three main discourses:

- The first of these discourses is a redistributive discourse (RED) that views social exclusion as a direct result of poverty; that is to say a lack of access to ordinary life patterns and activities and a dearth of resources, financial, cultural and societal is responsible for social exclusion.
- The second approach is that of a discourse of social integration (SID), which suggests that employment is the only legitimate means of societal integration. This understanding of social exclusion revolves solely around a cause and effect relationship between economic activity/inactivity and social inclusion/exclusion.
- The third is a moral underclass discourse (MUD), which focuses on the moral and cultural causes of poverty. It concerns itself with the moral hazard of 'dependency' (Levitas, 1999) of entire households and social groups on the state and the consequent stigmatization of certain groups and demographics based on often-preconceived notions and perpetual projections of such groups.

In light of this multi-faceted understanding of social exclusion, a programme with the end goal of placing young people into the labour market toward the aim of integrating them into society needs developing to include a more holistic approach to the individual, as it is clear that economic activity is not the only inclusive force in a young person's life. The current assumption, which underpins Street Elite's good developmental work, is that employment is the difference between inclusion and exclusion for these young people in extremely difficult and complicated situations. However, if it is to be truly effective in developing the young people it engages it must build an understanding of the complex social structures the participants exist within into the very mission of Street Elite. If this doesn't happen, following Levitas' (1999) work, the suggestion is that their exclusion will only perpetuate. An over bearing focus on employment fails to deliver the holistic development socially excluded young people need to integrate into society successfully and in a sustained manner.

Recommendation:

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.

Substance: Coordinated access for all parties

As discussed at length in the second annual report, Sportworks, the pioneering and sustainable measurement tool produced by Substance and Spoted, is still a factor of the Street Elite operation that the research needs to address if there is to be a full and complete picture developed which outlines the impact of the project.

In the second annual report the authors noted that “Substance (2011) have produced data pertaining to Street Elite which offers insight that has yet to be explored and understood by the authors of this report and which may be an important part of evaluating the impact of Street Elite going forward” (Roberts & Abrahams, 2013, p. 6). The report offered a recommendation that access to the data within the Sportworks be opened up to further analysis to produce a more complete picture of the Street Elite funding. Understandable concerns about data protection and access to the database have been put forward and there are clearly issues with independent researchers gaining access to Street Elite controlled data. However, there needs to be a move towards a more collaborative approach to collecting and interpreting the various data produced as this will further enhance the claims made about the positive and impactful nature of Street Elite. If the quantitative and qualitative data can be combined it will only enhance the position of the charity. This research is designed to challenge and ask questions that are sometimes difficult but in no way does it set out to undermine the position of the charity.

The Spoted website (Spoted, 2014) claims that sport can support development work by building strong communities; reducing crime and anti-social behaviour; reducing barriers to regular participation for marginalised groups; developing young people by providing them with skills for the workplace and life; and, [developing] education in health and well being. The evidence that has been garnered across a number of projects (notwithstanding the Street Elite project) through sportworks would help the research team to build a more robust and clear picture of the impact of Street Elite and access to the data will help this

Recommendation:

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.

Readdressing the structural frailties

Through extensive ethnographic research and participant observation, significant structural issues pervade the Street Elite programme threatening to undermine the laudable relational and mentoring work of the individuals developing the futures of a significant number of vulnerable NEETS.

The structural frailties apparent within the Street Elite operation speak particularly to a lack of alignment and connectedness to the wider community. Despite various phases of the programme being focused on; the researchers found little evidence of Street Elite participants engaging with the community and its residents as part of the programme. The

researchers recognise that this could have been unique circumstances but there were multiple occasions where no community presence was observed during the time in which the programme took place.

Whilst The Change Foundation has undoubtedly risen to the challenge of a rolled back state and greater civic responsibility placed on communities through the voluntary and private sectors it is essential that full integration into a community programme be developed. If the mantra of the 'Big Society' is to be followed, a more community wide, joined up multi-institutional approach must be sought. 'The Big Society' approach hinges on empowered communities coming together to address local issues, in this case social exclusion and the NEET population, and demands mass engagement within a culture of responsibility, and obligation (Conservatives, 2010). The Change Foundation ought to seek out connections and partnership with other community institutions and pillars so that proper organisation of community engagement can work, be properly planned and benefit everybody. Moreover, the researchers feel that an over reliance on sport as the medium for engagement with the community is detrimental to the development of the Street Elite participants. Rather, it is suggested that the community engagement phases of the programme incorporate not only sports coaching but require the participants to develop their skills and experience of being community leaders, working in all aspects of the community, taking responsibility for the betterment of themselves, other and their community via a multitude of mediums.

To address this and become a beacon of how sports based interventions aimed at NEETs should be run, it is suggested that the Change Foundation will need to explore innovative multi-agency strategies from leading educational, health and social institutions to help their young people build skills for life and work, support them to participate in training, divert them from criminal activity and improve their mental and physical health. Indeed Chamberlain (2013) argues that sports based intervention programmes are most effective when they are broader and targeted strategy that works across institutional and situational context. By introducing a new multi-agency approach The Change Foundation can outline how all parts of society - including charities, schools, councils and businesses - can work in partnerships to provide high-quality services and activities for young people, including early intervention and prevention programmes and support services for the vulnerable NEET. Moreover, such approaches can begin to introduce the relational infrastructure needed between key community institutions in order to facilitate engagement with the community that the authors suggest should be integral to the Street Elite programme.

Recommendation:

The following measures are suggested:

- 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.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

In this report the authors have drawn upon largely qualitative data pertaining to the experiences of the key stakeholders in the Street Elite programme; coaches, participants, key partners. The research has illuminated a programme that is dependent on the value of mentoring and the continued dedication of those individuals committed and inspired to work with NEETs. The research has supported the notion that truly effective “plus sport” models require highly intensive relational work if they are to succeed. However, more than this, the research highlighted that we ought to curb our expectations of sport and attribute the successful development and engagement of NEETs to the relationships it affords, as opposed to the activities in and of themselves. An over reliance on the power of sport, built on assumptions of what is learnt through sport, should be cautioned and rather viewed as the lens through which relationships with mentors can flourish.

With this said, equally an over reliance on the dedicated and untiring work of those working with the young people in Street Elite is not a sustainable model without significantly more training for those individuals and indeed greater provision for an increased number of those people who can act as mentors and maintain such intensive relationships with those most marginalized. Furthermore further research and a more multifaceted evidence base is needed to better understand the mentoring process and how to maximise the potential of mentorship. Finally it is the conviction of the authors that such a strategy is at its most fruitful when the end goal is moved beyond placing socially excluded young people into the labour market. For mentoring and relational work to be truly effective in the context of sports based interventions with NEETs the aim must be moved to one of holistic development; one of understanding and working with an individualized approach focusing on the needs and complex social situation of each particular young person.

Moreover, it is in this vein that the research has indicated that a joined up and multi-institutional approach should be developed. By this, the authors refer to a project, which engages various community institutions that touch the lives of the young people involved. In the spirit of the ‘Big Society’ and the increased emphasis on relational and community based intervention, it is suggested that the process of social inclusion should seldom be taken on by an isolated body but rather in conjunction with, for example, the community leaders, the schools and colleges, local health services and other youth services in the community.

Advocating this can address the structural and accountability issues that have emerged from the data.

Revealed by the data 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. Once placed in employment at the end of the programme, increased support and monitoring should be offered to the individuals to aid them in other areas of their lives, as employment is not an isolated aspect of one's life. Moreover, without a focus on a holistic approach to developing the whole individual there is significant evidence to suggest that an individual's resistance to returning to NEET status is at times fragile.

Finally, whilst it is acknowledged in the previous reports that the Street Elite programme has been able to access government funding, and should be congratulated on doing so, there is indeed more government funding available however stringent the criteria may be to acquire it. However, if Street Elite is to maintain a programme that is and needs to be highly labour intensive due to its intensive relational nature it must be able to have deeply evidenced claims that it is effective in dealing with the current NEET dilemma. Whilst qualitative reports such as this one provide rich accounts that pertain to the effectiveness of the programme, a rigorous evidence base must include the sort of quantitative data that full access to the Sport works database, used properly, can provide.

It is with considerable vigour that the authors want to make a point of noting that whilst at times this report may seem critical of the programme, it is by no means the overall impression of the programme. The authors maintain an overwhelmingly positive perception of the Street Elite programme, and recognise that the model of Street Elite programme and those involved in its implementation are a platform with significant potential for working effectively with NEETs.

However, the success of the programme will finally be judged by it bringing about much needed policy change. It will no doubt accomplish this, and its endeavour to do so will be aided by demonstrating a newfound emphasis upon collective impact efforts via a relational infrastructure between community institutions and authorities. The Change Foundation and Berkeley Foundation have already made significant steps toward this. Annual policy influencing seminars are hosted every year and whilst these events are in their infancy they are a highly innovative, and multi-institutional, example of the action needed to bring about policy change and to develop an integrated approach to service delivery and advocacy.

Achieving macro-level change requires a shift toward understanding that successful youth inclusion intervention comes from the combination of many interventions of like and unlike programmes. By no means does a more networked approach minimize the importance of individual programmes; rather, it positions each individual programme as a vital and focused node in a reinforced network of interventions. It is when each node is working together to solve the complex problem of youth social exclusion, in the recognition that no one

intervention on its own is suffice for solving such complex problems, that intervention can be most effective and the vital mind-set shift is achieved.

Moreover, such a shift is a cultural one. It will require those delivering the programme to position their work as one contribution to the network of support young people receive. For those funding the programme it will involve a refocusing of that funding from individual intervention programmes to establishing more complex funding strategies targeting the facilitation of relationships and joined up interventions between multiple organizations. The final tenet of this culture shift is that of a more transparent and linked data sharing system where data is shared across agencies and access to varying data sets from the different institutions involved is more openly and easily attained.

Burnett (2001) has developed context-sensitive research assessments that enable evaluations to be carried out across three levels of inspection:

- At the macro-level where consideration is given to the impact of the sport development programme in relation to broader socioeconomic and environmental factors;
- At the meso-level where consideration is given to local community development and the usage of institutional resources; and
- At the micro-level where the emphasis is placed upon the holistic development of participants in terms of personal experiences.

In light of Burnett's (2001) distinctions, it is clear that at the micro-level the programme is successful; it is now necessary to move the emphasis to the other two levels in order to address the issues of sustainability and growth. The best possible outcome for the Change Foundation and the Berkeley Foundation is the on-going success for those who participate in the Street Elite programme but in addition and increasingly more importantly, is the growing and significant influence of impacting upon the meso/macro levels of society.

The authors are very aware that this action would constitute a vital shift for the Change Foundation and the Berkeley Foundation, away from considering Street Elite in isolation and toward seeing as part of a larger context or network of intervention programmes working toward the same end goal of youth social inclusion. The authors assert that achieving the shift articulated above will have significant implications for how the Street Elite programme is delivered, the nature and complexity of funding structure and the impact the programme can have on policy change. The Street Elite programme will undoubtedly continue to carry out its hugely beneficial work of positively impacting on the lives of many young people on the edges of society. However, by moving toward the vital mind-set changes articulated above, the Change Foundation and the Berkeley Foundation will be able to elevate the Street Elite programme to the gold standard of sports based intervention programmes.

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