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# CONTENTS

<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>5</b>
THE AIMS OF THE PROJECT	5
THE POLICY CONTEXT	6
<b>CHAPTER TWO SPORTS AND THEIR DIMENSIONS</b>	<b>9</b>
INTRODUCTION	9
SPORTS AND THEIR PROPERTIES	10
FORMAL PROPERTIES AND SUFFICIENT CONDITIONS	12
DEPRIVED COMMUNITIES	15
SOCIAL EXCLUSION	17
<b>CHAPTER THREE SPORT AND HEALTH</b>	<b>19</b>
RESEARCH EVIDENCE	19
CASE STUDIES: EVIDENCE	24
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	29
<b>CHAPTER FOUR SPORT AND CRIME</b>	<b>31</b>
RESEARCH EVIDENCE	31
CASE STUDIES: EVIDENCE	44
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	47
<b>CHAPTER FIVE SPORT, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION</b>	<b>49</b>
RESEARCH EVIDENCE	49
CASE STUDIES: EVIDENCE	51
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	53
<b>CHAPTER SIX SPORT, EMPLOYMENT AND REGENERATION</b>	<b>55</b>
RESEARCH EVIDENCE	55
CASE STUDIES: EVIDENCE	58
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	62
<b>CHAPTER SEVEN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND VOLUNTEERING</b>	<b>65</b>
RESEARCH EVIDENCE	65
CASE STUDIES: EVIDENCE	69
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	72
<b>CHAPTER EIGHT SPORT AND MINORITY ETHNIC GROUPS</b>	<b>75</b>
RESEARCH EVIDENCE	75
CASE STUDIES: EVIDENCE	79
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	82

<b>CHAPTER NINE</b>	<b>THE ENVIRONMENTAL VALUE OF SPORTS</b>	<b>83</b>
	RESEARCH EVIDENCE	83
	CASE STUDIES: EVIDENCE	84
<b>CHAPTER TEN</b>	<b>CONCLUSIONS</b>	<b>85</b>
	THEORETICAL OUTCOMES	85
	LACK OF OUTCOME MONITORING	86
	DIFFICULTIES OF MEASUREMENT	87
	SHORT-TERMISM	88
	IMPORTANCE OF PARTNERSHIPS	89
	SUSTAINABILITY	90
	LOCAL PROVISION AND 'NON-TRADITIONAL' DELIVERY	91
	THE ROLE FOR SPORTS	93
<b>CHAPTER ELEVEN</b>	<b>THE WAY FORWARD</b>	<b>95</b>
	INTRODUCTION	95
	RECOMMENDATIONS	95
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>		<b>99</b>
<b>FIGURES</b>		
FIGURE 1:	MODEL OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SPORT & WIDER ECONOMIC BENEFITS	13

# THE ROLE OF SPORT IN REGENERATING DEPRIVED URBAN AREAS

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### INTRODUCTION

The Scottish Office Development Department in collaboration with **sportscotland** commissioned the Centre for Leisure Research to undertake a study to explore the role which sport has played in the regeneration of urban areas in Scotland and to explore wider evidence for the assumption that sport can contribute positively to aspects of urban regeneration and social inclusion. The research was commissioned within the context of the publication of the Scottish Office's *Social Inclusion Strategy* and the view that sport has a role to play in countering social exclusion, by increasing individuals' self-esteem, building community spirit, increasing social interaction, improving health and fitness, creating employment and reduce the temptation to anti-social behaviour by giving young people a purposeful activity.

### Methods

The project had two components. Firstly, an extensive literature review of published and unpublished literature on the potential contribution of sports to physical and mental health, reducing crime, improving educational performance, providing employment, contributing to volunteering and community development, environmental improvements and issues relating to minority ethnic groups. Secondly, ten case studies were undertaken of a variety of sports-related initiatives in Scotland to explore the extent to which outcomes had been defined, monitored and achieved, the lessons learned, innovative ideas and best practice potential for development. Information was collected via relevant documents, in-depth interviews, group discussions and a telephone survey of participants in one initiative.

### Evidence of outcomes

The literature review and case studies illustrated a widespread understanding of the strong *theoretical* arguments for the potentially positive contribution which sports can make to a range of social issues. However, there is also a lack of systematic monitoring and evaluation of the outcomes of sport or physical activity-based projects (with a widespread reliance on *output* measures). This is explained by the complexity of defining and measuring outcomes, the short term nature of many projects, a lack of expertise and limited funding. There is need for a better understanding of the relationship between *necessary conditions* (ie participation in sport) and *sufficient conditions* (the conditions under which the potential outcomes are achieved and maintained).

### KEY FINDINGS

#### Sport and health

- Among many of the least active and least healthy groups, the promotion of a more active lifestyle may be a more useful strategy than only offering traditional sports.

- The frequency of activity required to achieve and sustain physical health benefits is difficult for many to achieve.
- The traditional product-led 'sports development' approach needs reviewed, with a more needs-based approach based on an understanding of personal and social circumstances.
- Some of the greatest gains from activity programmes relate to psychological health and increased feelings of well-being.
- Factors underpinning the success of activity provision have included, appropriate and convenient local facilities, recognising the importance of friendship groups, providing reassurance that 'people just like them' are able to participate, recognising that if the activity has some intrinsic value it may be more appealing and ensure adherence.
- There was a general absence of male participants in physical activity initiatives.

### **Sport and crime**

- Large scale diversionary projects tend to have vague rationales, overly-ambitious objectives and a limited understanding of the variety and complexity of the causes of criminality. Short-term funding ensures that projects often do not last long enough to achieve any meaningful impact
- Evidence suggests that traditional facility-based programmes have a limited impact. Outreach, bottom-up, approaches, credible leadership, and non-traditional, local, provision appear to have the best chance of success with the most marginal at-risk groups.
- Sport is most effective when combined with programmes addressing wider personal and social development.

### **Sport, young people and education**

- Research on possible causal relationships between physical activity and academic performance is inconclusive.
- The salience of sport can be used to attract under-achieving pupils to educational programmes (although outcomes depend on the quality of the learning environment).
- There are mutually beneficial opportunities to involve professional football (and other) clubs in the development of integrated sport/education programmes.

### **Sport, unemployment and regeneration**

- There is little research on the *regenerative* potential of investment in sport, or the long-term benefits to local communities of sports-led investment strategies.
- Although training opportunities for basic sports leadership awards contribute to the development of self-esteem and self-confidence, without additional qualifications their vocational value is limited.
- Because sessional work is the main employment opportunity for most sports coaches, there must be some doubt about such an employment strategy.
- The value of sports-orientated employment programmes may lie less in their directly vocational effectiveness, but in their appeal to certain groups of long-term unemployed and their reduction of social exclusion through the development of 'employment networks'.
- The personal and educational development needs of many long-term unemployed on sports-orientated employment schemes require parallel supporting programmes.

## **Community development and volunteering in sport**

- Because of its high social and economic value, volunteering in sport offers possibilities for the development of a sense of self-esteem and social purpose.
- Because of short-term funding and philosophies of 'empowerment' and 'ownership' developing volunteers is a priority for many initiatives.
- Barriers to the development of volunteers include resistance to 'top down' initiatives, 'initiative fatigue' and widespread scepticism about agencies' motives, a lack of confidence often associated with long term unemployment and the cost and difficulty of some leadership and coaching awards.
- 'Bottom-up' approaches, which build on and assist existing (or emerging) programmes provide a greater sense of involvement and ownership. Where sports projects provide a contribution to wider aspects of the community they are more likely to be sustainable.
- There is a need for a more systematic approach to the recruitment, training and support of volunteers, based on an appreciation of the personal and professional development needs of potential recruits from the long-term unemployed.
- It is unrealistic to expect all such programmes to be self-sustaining. Evidence suggests that there is a need for ongoing support from skilled professional workers.

## **Sport and minority ethnic groups**

- There is limited systematic information about minority ethnic groups and participation in sport and physical activity in Scotland.
- Although there are some barriers to participation, there are specific issues relating to cultural/religious beliefs and perceived racist attitudes..
- Several factors reduce the opportunities for casual participation, reduce the variety of sports which can be accessed and limit facility access for clubs at premium times.
- There is a lack of understanding of inter- and intra-minority group differences and this is often compounded by 'ghettoising' policy and practice. The dangers of 'false universalism' must be recognised and awareness training provided at all levels.
- 'Bottom-up' initiatives which build on traditions, seek to address issues wider than sport and use workers recruited from the relevant communities are those most likely to succeed.
- There is a need for greater clarity about the desired outcomes for such provision and these should be agreed in consultation with the relevant communities.

## **The environmental value of sports**

- Sports facilities can make an important contribution to the *physical infrastructure* of communities, providing a social focus for a community and affecting people's perception of their neighbourhood.
- The maintenance of under-used community facilities and wider environmental recreation-related improvements have a significant role to play in the development of the quality of life in communities.

## **Recommendations**

The final report makes seven recommendations.

## **1 Understanding and evaluating outcomes**

All Social Inclusion Partnerships, **sportscotland**, the Scottish Executive and local authorities should require current and future projects to improve the nature and quality of *output* and, more importantly *outcome* evaluation. The cost of this work must also be recognised.

## **2 Best practice manual**

The Scottish Executive and **sportscotland** should fund the production and dissemination of the best practice guide and **sportscotland** should act as a clearing house for the collection and dissemination of accumulated good practice.

## **3 New ways of working**

Local authorities should critically evaluate current programmes and the extent to which they are addressing issues of social inclusion. There is a need to work closely with community-based groups and within local authorities there is a need for greater collaboration between sport and recreation, community education and social and youth services. **sportscotland** should act to promote and support such new ways of working.

## **4 Long term planning, investment and integration**

At a national level the Scottish Executive should convene the *National Physical Activity Taskforce* to provide a collaborative forum and appropriate strategic leadership and seek to address differing professional perspectives which sometimes limit local collaboration.

All Social Inclusion Partnerships and local authorities should explore the potential for the *integration* of appropriate sports programmes into wider social programmes (while not compromising the flexible new ways of working).

## **5 From product-led to needs- based approaches: the need for education and training**

**sportscotland**, in association with Scottish Qualifications Authority and SPRITO (the national training organisation for sport, recreation and allied occupations), should evaluate the relevance of current SVQs as a preparation for developing communities through sport.

## **6 Sustainability and volunteering**

**sportscotland** should work in collaboration with the Scottish Association of Local Sports Councils, the Scottish Sports Association, Volunteer Development Scotland and the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations.

## **7 Young people and life-long participation**

All those involved in the provision of sporting opportunities for young people – the Scottish executive, local authority education and recreation departments, **sportscotland** and **sportscotland** Lottery Fund – should, as a matter of priority ensure that resources are targeted to areas of greatest need.



## **CHAPTER ONE            INTRODUCTION**

### **THE AIMS OF THE PROJECT**

1.1     The aims of this project, commissioned by the Scottish Executive Development Department in conjunction with **sportscotland**, were to explore the role that sport has played in the regeneration of urban areas in Scotland and to explore the assumption that sport has the potential to contribute positively to aspects of urban regeneration. The study focused on the social, economic and physical benefits of sports activity and participation, concentrating particularly on individuals and communities in areas of urban deprivation. It should be noted that although the remit was for urban areas, a number of the issues are generic to areas of urban or rural deprivation.

### **Objectives**

1.2     The more detailed objectives of the research were as follows:

- To report on the effects of sport in deprived areas and make recommendations for furthering the potential of sports projects to maximise positive and sustainable outputs and outcomes in the fields of social, economic and physical benefits.
- In so doing, to encompass consideration of issues of gender, age, ethnicity and disability where appropriate.

### **Methodology**

(i)     A review of literature

1.3     This reviewed both published and unpublished literature on the social, economic and physical impacts of sports projects and activities in areas of Scotland and elsewhere.

(ii)    Case studies

1.4     Ten case studies were undertaken of a wide variety of sports-related initiatives throughout Scotland. The intention was to explore the various rationales, the extent to which outcomes had been established, monitored and achieved, the lessons learned, innovative ideas and best practice potential for development. The case studies were chosen to reflect as wide a range of issues as possible and attempts were made to identify projects within three broad categories:

- (a) Individual sports-based initiatives which addressed specific issues within deprived areas (eg health, young people at risk, drug abuse).
- (b) Projects which aimed to use increased participation in sport for the purposes of community development.
- (c) Initiatives which used sport as one component of a wider set of initiatives to address social deprivation.

1.5 On this basis the following case studies were selected:

- An employment scheme for the long-term unemployed which provided employment opportunities in play and sport.
- A three month general health-awareness programme in a Social Inclusion Partnership (SIP) area, in which free programmes were provided to encourage increased physical activity.
- An 18 month project (based on co-operation between a health board and a local authority recreation department) which aimed to encourage people in a local neighbourhood to become more physically active and maintain a healthy lifestyle.
- A SIP funded sports development team with a wide ranging remit to contribute to the strategic aims of the SIP in the areas of crime reduction, health, employment and so on.
- A sports facility managed by a community trust and aimed at community regeneration.
- A community based, SIP funded, drugs/crime diversionary programme based on play and sports development.
- A small scale hillwalking programme for women in a peripheral housing scheme
- A large scale 18 month SIP funded, multi-agency, youth sport development programme with wide ranging aims and objectives
- An urban programme funded four year programme with a broad community sports development approach, placing emphasis on school-aged children.
- A sport development programme for members of minority ethnic groups.

1.6 Information was collected via the analysis of relevant documents (eg grant aid applications, strategies, annual reports) and in-depth face-to-face interviews with relevant personnel from the various projects. In addition, group discussions and individual interviews were conducted with participants in most of the projects and in one a telephone survey of those in possession of a free swim ticket was undertaken.

1.7 Except in a few selected cases the case studies are not reported in any detail. Rather, they have been used to explore, or illustrate, the more generic issues raised by the literature review and existing research. This approach was adopted because of a lack of available outcome monitoring information in most of the case studies limited our ability to establish a case for 'best practice'. Further, except in a few limited cases, there was a desire to maintain the anonymity of the various projects. The purpose was to learn generic lessons from the case studies rather than to criticise specific practice.

## THE POLICY CONTEXT

1.8 The research was commissioned within the context of the publication of the *Social Inclusion Strategy* and its statement that "Arts, sport and leisure activities...have a role to play in countering social exclusion. They can help to increase the self-esteem of individuals; build community spirit; increase social interaction; improve health and fitness; create employment and give young people a purposeful activity, reducing the temptation to anti-social behaviour". (Scottish Office, 1999, p 22). The implicit notion that participation in sport can contribute to the development of 'active citizenship' is clear in the statement that "people who participate in sports and arts activities are more likely to play an active role in the community in other ways".

1.9 The concerns of the study also stem from a wider policy agenda, including the 'Giving Age', 'Social Inclusion Partnerships', 'Working for Communities' and the broad strategy of investing in 'social capital' - a concern about networks through which 'social capital' can be developed via participation in groups as diverse as sports clubs, religious groups or voluntary groups. Further, the Policy Action Team 10 report (Department of Culture, Media and Sport, 1999, p22) suggests that sport (and the arts) can contribute to "neighbourhood renewal by improving communities' 'performance'" on four key indicators – health, crime, employment and education.

1.10 Such perspectives reflect a broad shift from viewing *urban regeneration* largely in economic terms – capital investment, incentives and environmental improvements (especially housing) to attract new industries and create jobs – to one which places more emphasis on people and the development of *social capital*. In this approach emphasis is placed on *social processes* and on ways to enhance the organisational capacities of communities. Issues of 'social cohesion' are addressed by creating or strengthening the physical, social and cultural infrastructure of communities. Investment is made in programmes and processes which develop social capital, skills, confidence, self-organisational capacity and strengthen social networks.

1.11 Thomas (1995, p2) provides a useful working definition of this approach;

*"Community development is the strengthening of the social resources and processes in a community, by developing those contacts, relationships, networks, agreements and activities outside the household that residents themselves identify will make their locality a better place in which to live and work".*

1.12 This emphasis on social relationships, and the development of 'human capital', has much in common with theories about the outcomes associated with participation in sport. Further, they are explicit and implicit in the rationales of most of the sports-centred case studies examined for this report.

1.13 Therefore, a number of publications and agencies are increasingly referring to the supposed positive outcomes which accrue, at both individual and community levels, from participation in sport. In the context of deprived urban areas the purpose of the study was to explore the evidence for the various claims concerning the wider social benefits supposedly associated with participation in sport.

## CHAPTER TWO                      SPORTS AND THEIR DIMENSIONS

### INTRODUCTION

2.1     The presumption that sport can contribute to community development, urban regeneration and social inclusion implies that participation in sport can produce outcomes which serve to strengthen and improve certain weak, or negative, aspects of processes, structures and relationships thought to characterise deprived urban areas. However, just as the processes underpinning social exclusion and social and community deprivation are varied, so are the processes and relationships associated with sport. Despite this, in much of the public policy debate, the formal benefits of sports participation tend to be associated almost solely with traditional, competitive, team sports. For example, in a submission to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, the Institute for Leisure and Amenity Management (ILAM) (1999) states that:

*"Team sport can help an individual learn to work with others and be part of a team. Participating in competitive sport enables you to learn about yourself, including motivation, limitations and skills that may not have been apparent before"*

2.2     In the Foreword to *Sport - Raising the Game* (Department of National Heritage, 1995), John Major stated that;

*"Competitive sport teaches valuable lessons which last for life. Every game delivers both a winner and a loser. Sports men [sic] must learn to be both. Sport only thrives if both parties play by the rules, and accept the results with good grace. It is one of the best means of learning how to live alongside others and make a contribution as part of a team".*

2.3     However, 'sport' is a collective noun which refers to a wide range of processes, social relationships and presumed physical, psychological *and* sociological outcomes. For example, there are individual, partner and team sports; contact and non-contact sports; motor driven or perceptually dominated sports and those which place different emphases on strategy, chance and physical skills. Further, the nature and context of participation can range from the competitive, via an emphasis on self-development, to purely recreational activity.

2.4     Reflecting this diversity of processes and possible outcomes it is helpful to think in terms of *sports*. In this regard it is appropriate to adopt the definition in the Council of Europe's European Sports Charter;

*"Sport means all forms of physical activity which, through casual or organised participation, aim at expressing or improving physical fitness and mental well-being, forming relationships or obtaining results in competitions at all levels".*

2.5 In arguing for the social value of sport, Sport England (1999) regard the heterogeneity of sports as a major strength, stating that "the wide diversity of activities sport offers enables individuals of all ages to participate at the level and intensity that suits them". Such an approach permits the avoidance of traditional, sports-centred, 'product-led' approaches and the possibility of a needs-based approach, in which the needs of individuals, groups and communities are matched to *relevant* sports.

2.6 In terms of contributing to the solution of particular social problems (crime and vandalism, poor fitness and health, community integration, employment, development of human capital) it is best to regard sports as a series of *social relationships* and *social processes* in which it is assumed that certain types of learning, or 'socialisation', occur. From this perspective the main issues are what *sports processes* produce what *outcomes* for which *sections of the population*, in what *circumstances* and the extent to which these can contribute positively to issues of community development and social inclusion.

## **SPORTS AND THEIR PROPERTIES**

2.7 Keller et al (1998) provide a list of 11 positive aspects of sport and the sports participation processes (although these will vary between different types of sports). They suggest that sport:

- provides a meeting place
- provides an opportunity for acquisition of fitness and skills
- can give 'meaning' to life
- allows one to test and affirm oneself in new ways
- tests strengths and aptitudes and enables participants to better know their body
- allows one to dominate and model one's own body and turn it into a prestige object
- provides an opportunity to search for adventure and strong emotions in risky (yet controlled) situations
- stimulates aesthetic perception and the pleasure of taking part in a physical activity
- can become part of the personal 'set of habits' and (healthy) lifestyle
- allows one to take responsibility for one's own health
- can be the subject for unlimited conversation

2.8 Svoboda (1994) offers a similar, if slightly more sociological, set of positive aspects of sport. For him participation in sport provides an opportunity to meet and communicate with other people; to take different social roles; to learn particular social skills (tolerance; respect for others); and to adjust to team/collective objectives (co-operation, cohesion); and it contributes to personality development; provides experience of emotions which are not available in the rest of life; and improves aspects of lifestyle. Svoboda (1994, p15) stresses the important contribution of sport to processes of *personality development* and *psychological well-being*, stating that there is "strong evidence ... on the positive effects of physical activities on self-concept, self-esteem, anxiety, depression, tension and stress, self-confidence, energy, mood, efficiency and well-being". Wankel and Sefton (1994) list the social and psychological benefits of sport and physical activity as reduction of anxiety and depression, socialisation, intergroup relations, community integration, educational attainment, social status and social mobility.



2.9 Reid et al (1994, p5), in a Canadian study of youth-at-risk, suggest that physical activity/ recreation can help by "improving self-esteem, providing positive role models, teaching teamwork and social skills, promoting self-confidence, providing a sense of belonging, reducing risk factors for disease, giving youth something constructive to do, providing a means of releasing stress, promoting positive morals and values, teaching cognitive, leadership and life skills, providing an opportunity for racial integration, enhancing cultural awareness, providing a sense of community, fostering family support and promoting the wellness of youth".

2.10 Collins et al (1999) list three broad types of sports-related benefits: national (identity, prestige, reduced health costs and trade) and two of more direct relevance to our concerns:

#### *Communal Benefits*

- Increased community/family coherence
- Lower law and order costs (via reduced vandalism and crime)
- Job creation
- Improved built and natural environment

#### *Personal Benefits*

These are broadly similar to the previous authors, emphasising health, personal development and social integration.

- Improved physical health
- Better mental health
- Better self-esteem/image/competence
- Increased socialisation/integration/tolerance
- Improved quality of life

2.11 Long and Sanderson (1998, p299), in a review of the claims of the community benefits to be derived from sport, add the "empowering of disadvantaged groups" and "improving the capacity of the community to take initiatives".

2.12 Sport England (1999) suggest that sport can make a contribution to "the new policy agenda" by contributing to the reduction in youth crime, improving fitness and health, reducing truancy and making a positive contribution to young people's attitude to learning, assisting in community regeneration (especially by acting as a catalyst in multi-agency co-operation), improving the environment and providing opportunities for 'active citizenship' via opportunities for volunteering. Best (1999) proposes that sport makes a positive contribution to health, has economic significance both as an employment sector and a potential economic regenerator and can provide a range of community benefits by increasing cohesion, preventing crime and contributing to academic achievement.

## FORMAL PROPERTIES AND SUFFICIENT CONDITIONS

2.13 The formal listing of the inherent properties of sports and the supposed associated psychological and sociological outcomes ignores the vitally important distinction between *necessary conditions* (ie participation in sport) and *sufficient conditions* (the conditions under which the potential outcomes are achieved). Clearly it cannot be assumed that any or all of the range of benefits outlined above will automatically be obtained in all circumstances by all participants. For example, Svoboda (1994) suggests that such effects are "only a possibility" and a direct linear effect between simple participation and effect cannot be assumed. He suggests that supervision, leadership or management are essential to ensure many of the effects and there is some evidence pointing to the importance of sports leaders (especially in obtaining positive outcomes among young people at risk) (Sports Council Research Unit North West, 1990; Nichols and Taylor, 1996). However, it is clear that a wide range of other factors will be important.

2.14 Firstly, participation in sport is just one of many things which people do, therefore its impact will depend on the relative *salience* of the experience and its associated values. For example, Hastad et al (1984) found that the extent of sports participation had little effect on deviancy, with the nature of deviant associates, peer status and personal values being more important.

2.15 Secondly, the nature and extent of any effects will depend on the nature and quality of the experience. Sports are not a homogenous, standardised product or experience – the nature of the experience of the same activity will be subject to wide variations.

2.16 Thirdly, any effects will be determined by the nature of the frequency and intensity of participation and the degree of adherence of participants (ie over what period of time they continue to participate). Although these factors are especially important in order to obtain fitness and health benefits, they also have clear implications for the development of technical and social skills and the development of particular attitudes and values.

2.17 Fourthly, even if sports participation does assist in the development of certain types of personal competence, confidence and attitudes, this cannot simply be taken to imply that these will be transferred to wider social or community benefits. It is clear that the benefits of sport are inter-dependent and many of the strategic benefits derived from sports participation are secondary. For example, the assertion that participation in sport reduces the propensity to commit crime is partly based on the assumption that this will be the outcome of increased self-esteem, self-discipline, improved ability to empathise with others and a higher locus of control. Figure 1 (Bovaird et al, 1997) illustrates a number of 'hypothetical chains' in which participation in sport leads to intermediate outcomes, which are then presumed to be linked to higher level outcomes. It is clear from this that the measurement of cause and effect, of the relationship between inputs and desired outcomes presents certain difficulties.

2.18 Fifthly, there is the problem of disentangling the effects of participation in sport from parallel social influences and developmental processes. For example, reduction in crime may not simply reflect the provision of 'diversionary' sports programmes but a range of other policing policies (eg CCTV) or wider environmental improvements.

2.19 Sixthly, is the problem of self-selection. As participation in sport is mostly a matter of choice, then sport may attract particular types of people who are susceptible to sports' impacts



- those most in need of the experiences (either from a personal or community perspective) may be the least likely to participate. For example, Keller et al (1998) argue that the process involved is not simply a matter of values learned in sport being transferred, but suggest that individuals need to be receptive to the positive attitudes and values on offer, with the norms and values acquired in the other areas of life being mutually reinforced. In other words some people will have a propensity to accept the values and attitudes supposedly inherent in sport and others will not. This does not argue against the efficacy of sport, simply that its effects will have differential impacts.

2.20 Although there is a broad recognition of such problems, for a number of reasons they are largely ignored, with the emphasis being placed on the *theoretical* possibilities associated with sports participation. Perhaps paradoxically, the apparent theoretical strength and coherence of the description of sports' potentially positive contributions underpins certain weaknesses in sports practice. In particular, it partly explains widespread failures to undertake systematic monitoring and evaluation of the outcomes of sport or physical activity-based projects. The evidence from all the case studies (and wider literature) is that the general theoretical outcomes of participation in sport are widely known and form the explicit rationale for much of the work being undertaken. However, because of the strength of the belief in such outcomes, many practitioners regard monitoring of performance as unnecessary - theory permits the assumption of such outcomes.

2.21 Such an assumption also underpins the view that simply by extending participation opportunities to 'under-participating' groups a contribution is being made to reducing social exclusion – that somehow non-participation in sport is an index of 'exclusion', or that 'inclusion' is to be achieved simply by increasing sports participation. This policy is, of course, defensible on broader welfare and citizenship grounds. For example, in their review for the Department of Culture Media and Sport, Collins et al (1999, p10) contend that certain groups are excluded "from sports opportunities equal to the rest of the citizens" and make a series of proposals to overcome a variety of constraints. One unexamined problem with such an approach is that non-participation often reflects choice (not everyone wants to take part in sport and physical recreation). Further, many of those not participating in sport may be taking part in other types of activities, which in terms of social integration, self-confidence, self-esteem and so on may be the functional equivalents of sport (fitness and health are unlikely to be delivered by other, non-physical, activities). Consequently, a programme aimed simply at attracting previous non-participants to take part in sport (say, a weekly swim) may, in part, address issues of citizenship, opportunity and even social isolation. However, if the broader physiological, psychological and social benefits are to be obtained, the issue of 'sufficient conditions' needs to be considered – increased participation in sport cannot simply be equated with individual or community development.

2.22 As Coalter and Allison (1996, p8), in a review of the literature on sport and community development, suggest:

*"The lesson from Action Sport is that the shift from attempting to provide sporting opportunities at a local level for disadvantaged groups to the **instrumental** use of sport within community development programmes is fraught with dangers".*

2.23 In a survey of English local authority leisure service departments, sports development officers and leisure centre managers Long and Sanderson (1998) found that, among the supposed beneficial outcomes associated with sports participation, the *individual psychological effects* – improved self-esteem and self-confidence – were easily the most important perceived benefits. Clearly, benefits accruing to individual participants are regarded as the most likely and most tangible benefits of sports participation, with a greater degree of scepticism expressed about wider *community* benefits. For example, respondents were less secure in their perception of the contribution of sport to the more amorphous notions of 'social cohesion and social benefits' (sense of community, improving health and crime diversion) and even less so about contributions to "empowering disadvantaged groups and improving community capacity". Less than one in five felt that sport could make a contribution to youth employment and community economic regeneration. *It is worth noting that, as with the case studies for this project, those expressing the greatest scepticism about the broader social impacts of sport were those involved in the direct delivery of such services.*

2.24 Nevertheless, it is clear that the presumed positive properties and outcomes of sport are very similar to many of the processes and relationships regarded as deficient in deprived areas and among the socially excluded. However the issue is not simply whether increased sports participation can be viewed as contributing to personal and community development and the reduction of social exclusion. Rather, the question relates to the *nature* of the contribution such participation can make to reducing the linked factors underpinning social exclusion. More specifically, how can the processes, experiences and relationships that characterise sports contribute to the processes, experiences and relationship which underpin community development and social inclusion? Consequently, before exploring in detail the claims made for sports participation, it is worth briefly examining the nature of the latter processes and relationships.

## DEPRIVED COMMUNITIES

2.25 The broad shift from viewing *urban regeneration* solely in terms of economic and infrastructural development to a greater emphasis on people and the development of *social capital* has resulted in an increased emphasis on *social processes and relationships* and the organisational capacities of communities. For example, Forrest and Kearns (1999) suggest that the nature of communities needs to be explored on four dimensions.

### (i) Social glue

2.26 This refers to the quality of local individual and group relationships and encompasses such ideas as:

- shared sense of belonging or common purpose
- social solidarity between groups and across generations
- shared values and beliefs minimising conflict and allowing for social stability
- active, well-intentioned citizens
- dense networks of friends, family or acquaintances

### (ii) Civic infrastructure

2.27 This refers to the nature, extent and intensity of the local formal organisations and networks – such things as community groups, sports teams and clubs.

(iii) Physical infrastructure

2.28 This refers not only to the nature of the housing stock, but also to other amenities (eg shops, community halls, recreational facilities) and the extent to which they are social foci of the community. From this perspective the retention of otherwise under-used community facilities and wider environmental recreation-related improvements (parks, playing fields, pathways) have a significant role to play.

(iv) Attitudes and expectations of residents

2.29 This refers to how residents define a 'good neighbourhood' and perceive their own area. Stigma and negative stereotyping are major problems for residents of deprived areas (especially young people and those seeking employment). For example, Fitzpatrick et al (1998) in a study of provision for youth in six UK urban regeneration initiatives, found that the issue of stigmatised neighbourhoods was a priority issue for young people, perhaps indicating their concern with their relationships outside their neighbourhoods and their desire to be included in a world beyond the community (see also Coalter and Allison (1995) on the experience of young people in Wester Hailes). In one of the case studies a sports development programme was being pursued in a belief that sporting success can serve to reduce such perceptions. Another facility, managed by a community trust, sought to attract football and hockey teams from outwith the community to break down such barriers and negative perceptions.

2.30 Reflecting the concern not simply with individuals but also with social relationships, Thomas (1995, p3) emphasises the importance of *membership* - "how people experience being in relationship with each other, their sense of shared values about the tasks of living together, and the ways in which they see themselves contributing, or not, to the area in which they live". Consequently, he suggests that to achieve community development, a greater degree of social cohesion and increased inclusion, identity and belonging are required. To achieve this he suggests that neighbourhoods will need to:

- bring residents together
- have facilities which promote social contact
- have daily routines which promote social interaction
- have a variety of 'live' social and recreational networks
- have active organisations which bring people together and which represent their ideas and concerns
- allow residents to take on public roles outside the household that are of satisfaction to themselves and service to others.

2.31 It is clear from such analyses that the presumed formal, theoretical properties and outcomes of participation in sport are very similar to many of the processes and relationships which require to be strengthened in deprived areas and among the socially excluded. Those who take the 'social capital' approach to community development stress the importance of a "civic infrastructure" (Forrest and Kearns, 1999) and the need for facilities which promote

social contact and a variety of social and recreational networks (Thomas, 1995). Clearly, a range of social provision can seek to provide such infrastructure and out-of-home contacts.

2.32 Collins et al (1999) suggest that sport and physical recreation can provide personal opportunities for increased socialising and integration, with associated communal benefits of increased community coherence. The Hillary Commission (1998) suggests that sport contributes to social cohesion by facilitating the building of social networks, increasing a general sense of satisfaction with the community and providing opportunities for co-operation and participation.

2.33 Such positive outcomes are also related closely to issues of social exclusion.

## **SOCIAL EXCLUSION**

2.34 Although the term 'social exclusion' has gained widespread political currency, a precise definition is elusive (Burchardt, Le Grand and Piachaud, 1999; Commin, 1993; Forrest and Kearns, 1999). The multi-faceted nature of social exclusion is illustrated by Parkinson (1998: p1), who suggests,

*"Poverty is usually defined in terms of low income and material want; social exclusion conveys more... it emphasises the ways that people are locked out of the social, economic and political mainstream. Social exclusion has many faces and takes many forms. They include: unemployment and insecure employment; homelessness; inadequate housing and high levels of debt and arrears; low educational attainment; lack of mobility; limited access to essential services; poor health and lack of citizenship rights".*

2.35 Clearly exclusion is a much wider concept than poverty. For example, Room (1995) proposes that whereas poverty was distributional, social exclusion is relational – it refers to inadequate social participation, lack of social integration and lack of power. Forrest and Kearns (1999, p1) suggest that "social exclusion arises from a combination of unemployment, low income, marital breakdown and a generally resource-poor social network... trapped within or channelled into specific neighbourhoods".

2.36 Reflecting this complex set of inter-related causes, the Cabinet Office views social exclusion as resulting from *linked problems* of unemployment, poor skills, poor housing, high crime environment, bad health and family breakdown. The Scottish Office's *Social Inclusion: Opening the Door to a Better Scotland* (1999) adopts a broadly similar definition, adding low income as an additional factor (an analysis of European social inclusion policies (Roche and Annesley, 1998) concluded that unemployment and low income are at the root of social exclusion). As with the closely parallel processes of community development, the mechanisms underlying social exclusion are complex and, importantly, *inter-related*.

2.37 There are clear similarities between the properties and outcomes of sport and some of the processes and relationships underpinning community deprivation and social exclusion. However, the issue is not simply whether increased sports participation can be viewed as contributing to personal and community development and the reduction of social exclusion. Rather, the key questions relate to the *nature* of the contribution such participation can make.

2.38 In a paper for the Council of Europe Patriksson (1995, p128) argued that;

*"The point is that sport has the potential both to improve and inhibit an individual's personal growth. The futility of arguing whether sport is good or bad has been observed by several authors. Sport, like most activities, is not a priori good or bad, but has the potential of producing both positive and negative outcomes. Questions like 'what conditions are necessary for sport to have beneficial outcomes?' must be asked more often".*

2.39 In the next sections we examine the claims made for the contribution which sport can make to five key components of community deprivation and social exclusion – health, crime (especially youth crime), education, employment, and volunteering and community development (including issues relating to members of minority ethnic groups). In doing so we will draw on a wider range of literature and, where appropriate, illustrative materials from the ten case studies.

## CHAPTER THREE     SPORT AND HEALTH

### RESEARCH EVIDENCE

#### Introduction

3.1     The Cabinet Office and *Social Inclusion: Opening the Door to a Better Scotland* (Scottish Office, 1999) include "bad health" and its linked problems in the definition of social exclusion. The PAT 10 report *Arts and Sport* (Department of Culture, Media and Sport, 1999) includes health as an area in which sport can contribute to neighbourhood renewal.

3.2     The theoretical relationships between physical activity and general health-related fitness benefits are widely understood and are therefore only covered briefly here. Further, it is the area of 'sports-effects' with the strongest and most systematic research evidence. However, it should be noted that much of the clinical evidence relates to the positive health benefits of (often moderate) *physical activity* and not to sport per se. However, on the basis that most sports entail physical activity, sports are frequently promoted as being able to make a significant contribution to the improvement of health-related fitness. For example, Sport England (1999) emphasises the heterogeneity of sports, stating that "the wide diversity of activities which sport offers enables individuals of all ages to participate at the level and intensity that suits them". The benefits listed include the reduction of risk of coronary heart disease, obesity and osteoporosis; psychological benefits (e.g. reduction of depression); and a range of other more specific health benefits.

3.3     The evidence of the general health benefits derived from being physically active has been reviewed by expert panels, most of which have developed consensus statements about the amount and intensity of physical activity required by individuals to achieve these health benefits (American College of Sports Medicine, 1990; Surgeon General, 1996; WHO/FIMS, 1995; Health Education Board for Scotland, 1997). The benefits to physical health to be obtained from physical activity depend on the nature of the activity, the duration of participation and the level of intensity sustained. It further depends on factors which providers have little ability to influence – the frequency of participation and the length of adherence over time to the activity.

3.4     Since 1978 the amount of each component required to achieve, or maintain *fitness*, has been summarised as 'at least 20 minutes of any vigorous activity should be undertaken on at least three occasions per week'. (American College of Sports Medicine, 1978, quoted in American College of Sports medicine, 1990). However, a later statement from the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) (1990), which makes the often ignored distinction between *fitness* and *health*, reported that:

*"the quantity and quality of exercise needed to attain health-related benefits may differ from what is recommended for fitness benefits. The ACSM now recognises the benefits of regular exercise performed more frequently and for longer duration, but at lower intensities than prescribed". (ACSM, 1990) (See ACSM website [www.acsm.org/](http://www.acsm.org/), Pate et al, 1995 and WHO/FIMS 1995)*

3.5 This approach to the promotion of moderate activity is reflected in the public health targets for Scotland for 2005 which recommend that "the proportion of men and women aged 16-64 taking 30 minutes of moderate activity on 5 or more occasions each week should be increased to 50% of men and 40% of women" (Scottish Office, 1999, p57). The target for those aged 11-15 is vigorous exercise four times or more weekly.

3.6 The dose-response relationship remains a complex one, particularly with the diversity of fitness components (eg strength, endurance, flexibility) as well as specific health objectives (Bouchard, Shephard & Stephens, 1993). Nevertheless there is new evidence that moderate physical activity, even if accumulated in short bouts, can achieve health-related benefits. This has been demonstrated in control studies (De Busk et al, 1990) where subjects involved in a programme of three ten-minute walks per day showed the same improvements in health as those undertaking a programme of one 30-minute walk/jog per day.

3.7 Further, there is evidence (Blair and Connelly, 1996) that the greatest population health gain would result from getting those who are inactive and at the greatest health risk to increase their activity levels, rather than promoting more intense activity among those who are already moderately active and who have a lower morbidity and mortality rate.

## **Physical health**

3.8 It is the physical activity associated with most sports participation that induces physiological changes beneficial to health. While physical activity may prevent, or delay, the onset of certain diseases (Blair et al, 1989) it is also of value in their treatment and rehabilitation. In general, the major benefits of physical activity are to the heart and circulation, bones, joints and tendons, metabolism and hormones. In the case of other diseases associated with a sedentary lifestyle and a diet high in saturated fats (such as colorectal cancer - see White *et al*, 1996; Whittemore *et al*, 1990) physical activity has an important role in disease prevention.

3.9 Habitual physical activity benefits the *heart* via a range of mechanisms. These include increased cardiovascular efficiency, raised levels of high-density lipoprotein cholesterol, reduction in blood pressure levels, prevention against thrombosis, management of obesity (a major and increasing problem) and a reduction in stress levels (see Ashton, 1993 for a detailed account of the medical evidence supporting each mechanism).

3.10 *Joints, muscles, ligaments and tendons* benefit from physical activity as it leads to articular cartilage thickening, strengthening of the joint/tendon link and an increase in the synovial fluid which protects joints (Royal College of Physicians, 1991). It has also been established (Chow et al, 1987) that walking, running and moderate load-bearing activities such as weight training improve bone density which reduces the likelihood of osteoporosis and bone fractures.

3.11 Although more physiologically complex, the impacts which physical activity has on *metabolism and hormones* are also positive. The mechanisms relate to improved glucose tolerance and insulin sensitivity benefiting late-onset diabetes and obesity (for an in-depth discussion of this process see Trovati et al, 1984; Richter and Galbo, 1986; Peirce, 1999).

## Mental health

3.12 The links between physical activity and mental health benefits are less well-established than those with physical health. Nevertheless, the strength of the associative evidence is consistent enough to justify the conclusion that participation in physical activity, contributes positively to mental health (with the exception of overtraining). This position was confirmed at an academic symposium convened by Somerset Health Authority in January 1999, which resulted in a national consensus statement on physical activity and mental health. The statement was derived from evidenced-based reviews of six areas: anxiety, depression, mood and emotion, self-esteem, cognitive functioning and psychological dysfunction (SPAG, 1999). (See also Mutrie and Biddle, 1995, for an overview of meta-analyses).

3.13 Mood states can be altered by one-off bouts of physical activity as well as by long-term participation (Raglin, 1990; Steptoe, 1992). Studies have demonstrated that participation in a one-off bout of 'exercise' results in a reduction in anxiety levels and self-reported feelings of increased well-being. Further, these improvements in mental state have been reported to last for up to three hours after the activity session (for an overview of these studies see Raglin, 1990).

3.14 There are several hypotheses about why physical activity may have this effect, including: distraction and 'time-out' from daily routines (Raglin and Morgan, 1985); changes in body temperature which can result in reduced muscle tension, leading to increased feelings of relaxation and stress reduction; increased level of endorphins which some studies have reported lead to improved mood states (Panksepp, 1986). Such one-off effects have been reported to improve mood states and lead to improved feelings of well-being among healthy individuals as well as lifting the mood of individuals with mild depression. However, there is little evidence that one-off bouts of physical activity benefit those with clinically diagnosed negative personality traits (Raglin, 1990).

3.15 The positive mental changes that occur as a consequence of long-term participation in physical activity may also be caused by a number of factors – accumulation of short-term improvements to mood (Steptoe, 1992) and physiological benefits that improve individuals' psychological ability to deal with stressful situations. This ability to 'cope' better with day-to-day problems can reduce the likelihood of depression and anxiety (Steptoe, 1992). The psychological effects often associated with participation in sport – improved self-esteem, self-efficacy and perceived competence – have also been identified as resulting from long-term participation in an exercise programme (King *et al*, 1989). Such outcomes are likely to relate to an increased level of self-efficacy (mastery of situations) and an increased perception of physical competence following a progressive exercise training programme. However, Roberts and Brodie (1992) in a longitudinal study of recreational sports participants found no relationship between stress level and sports participation. They suggest that this finding may reflect the fact that the social and psychological pressures associated with certain activities and related time pressures could serve to *increase* stress levels.

3.16 Unlike the after-effects of short bouts of exercise, long-term participation has been shown to have beneficial effect on more serious mental health problems, such as clinically diagnosed negative personality traits (Raglin, 1990). The precise cause of such improvements is unclear and it may be the result of an interactive and/or synergistic relationship between the physiological and the psychological aspects described above.



## Lifestyle, sport, fitness and health

3.17 Much of the evidence outlined in this section relates to the benefits of *general physical activity* and is often based on small-scale, clinical evidence. There has been little large-scale longitudinal research into the relationship between sports participation, fitness and health within the context of people's everyday lives. The only UK study was undertaken by Roberts and Brodie (1992). The study of 7,000 people in six cities in the UK was conducted over four years and included non-participants and participants in activities provided in local authority sports and leisure centres (ie, largely recreational sports participants). The conclusions for the role of sport in the promotion of fitness and health are ambivalent. They found that playing sport did result in health benefits (especially increased muscular power and improved lung functions). Further the health benefits were evident in all socio-demographic groups and these benefits were additional to those experienced as a result of other lifestyle practices. They conclude:

*"Sport participation was certainly not the sole determinant of these people's health, but however favourable or unfavourable their other circumstances and living habits, playing sport was leading to measurable gains" (Roberts and Brodie, 1992, p138)*

3.18 However, they also conclude that, although sports participation was improving participants' self-assessment and strength, it was not improving their cardiovascular health or their freedom from illness (eg those who played sport were remaining just as vulnerable to illnesses, infections, accidents and injuries). A major reason for this was that "at low levels of sport activity, less than three times a week, only *self-assessments* showed statistically significant and consistent improvements within all socio-demographic groups" [emphasis added] (Roberts and Brodie, 1992, p139). They also state that, even alongside favourable lifestyle practices, participation in sport was not eliminating or reducing the health inequalities associated with age, sex and socio-economic status, ie all were improving but inequalities remained. On the basis of this evidence they conclude that if the "aim of health promotion is to draw the less healthy sections of the population towards the norm, sport will not be an effective vehicle" (Roberts and Brodie, 1992, p140). They base this conclusion on three factors:

3.19 Firstly, their evidence indicates that sports participation needs to be energetic and frequent to achieve changes in physical functioning. "Improving one's health through sport is hard work. Weekly swimming is not enough." (Roberts and Brodie, 1992, p140). Consequently they question if it is possible to build the required level of sport activity into a typical adult's lifestyle (when most surveys indicate that 'lack of time' constrains both participation and frequency of participation). Related to this is the fact that, for many sports 'participants' the commitment is rather cyclical, with most dropping in and out of sport over time and only a minority of participants taking part regularly over time.

3.20 Secondly, they suggest that lifestyles are not the basic source of health inequalities. "Even when economically disadvantaged groups were making the healthiest of all possible leisure choices, their well-being remained handicapped by their low incomes, relatively poor housing and working conditions and vulnerability to unemployment" (Roberts and Brodie, 1992, p141). This is consistent with the 1999 Health White Paper, which states that life chances are an important determinant of health. Thirdly, there are relatively persistent socio-demographic differences in sports participation patterns which will require a fundamental and sustained change in public policy to address (for example a greater emphasis on sport in primary schools, increased facility provision and changed management practices).

3.21 This leads them to conclude that "the balance of all the evidence and arguments... points towards a niche rather than a foundation role for sport within health policy and promotion... its impact is focused on a limited number of health factors and it offers no solutions to socio-economic health inequalities" (Roberts and Brodie, 1999, p141-142).

3.22 Some may regard such arguments as rather over-stated – although in relative terms inequalities remain, in absolute terms increased levels of activity benefit all participants. Nevertheless the arguments raise important policy questions about the health effects of current levels and frequency of sports participation, the ability of a purely sport-orientated strategy to have health goals, the ability to use sport for instrumental (ie health promotion) rather than affective (enjoyment) aims and whether the best strategy is to seek to solve such problems or simply "concentrate on retaining existing players, encouraging them to persist and to participate at the frequency necessary to maximise health benefits" (Roberts and Brodie, 1992, p143). If this conclusion is accepted then issues of health promotion among low participation groups might best be addressed via an 'active lifestyles' approach, in which sports will play a part for some people.

3.23 The issue of individual circumstances, the effectiveness of different types of intervention and the issue of long term adherence were explored in a study in Kilmarnock by Loughlan and Mutrie (1997). They found evidence that behaviour change in physical activity is dependent on the individual's readiness or intention to change. When 'contemplators' and 'preparers' were targeted by three different types of intervention - fitness assessment, exercise consultation and information only - all had the effect of increasing activity levels. However, they found "a rapid increase in physical activity levels in the period pre-test to four weeks, followed by a levelling off in the region between four weeks to three months, and then any positive effect diminishing from three months to post-test at six months" (Loughlan and Mutrie, 1997, p162). Their conclusion was that "health professionals who carry out physical activity interventions need to be aware of this trend and provide some measure of ongoing support to build on initial change and enhance long-term maintenance" (Loughlan and Mutrie, 1997, p163).

## **CASE STUDIES: EVIDENCE**

### **Introduction**

3.24 The view that physical activity is inherent in most sports informed most of the case study projects – whether they were the general 'sports development' participation programmes (in which improved health was one of the assumed general outcomes), or the more targeted health-promotion initiatives. The latter tended to be less concerned to provide increased

sporting opportunities, concentrating on the provision of general exercise programmes in local venues and/or subsidised/free swimming (partly because of its popular appeal and inclusive, family, nature). Although the case studies were chosen because of their sport/physical activity orientation, it is interesting to note that, despite the ACSM guidelines about 'active lifestyles' and the benefits of regular, low intensity activities, the emphasis was mainly on a version of 'sport and exercise', rather than seeking to develop more positive attitudes to 'active living'.

3.25 There were also important differences between various professional groups in the definition of the community's 'needs' – the medical model of the GPs was concerned that people need to be free from major illnesses and disease; health promotion/community development workers adopted an 'education' model, feeling that people need to be understood and supported in order to change behaviours; sports development workers adopted a 'marketing' model in which the 'right' sports and activities were identified in order to attract participants (hopefully to existing facilities).

### **Nature of provision**

3.26 The two health-related initiatives relied strongly on the sport and leisure services departments to guide the nature of provision to be offered. The initial belief was that they 'ought to be the experts'. However, in both cases this was subsequently questioned by health/community development staff. Possibly because the services were 'bought in' from sport and recreation departments by a combination of health, community development and social inclusion partnerships, the provision was defined as a sport and exercise 'product' (ie a series of weekly exercise classes or a specified number of fitness tests). The opportunities to develop partnerships that focused on managing a long term 'process' of behaviour change were not taken.

3.27 This led to a traditional concentration on formal activity provision and associated attempts to overcome perceived 'barriers' to participation (local provision, crèches, free access). Interestingly, the more general sports development initiatives with close links to a SIP did not have the same 'product' orientated approach, nor the same client/contractor type tensions. Provision was more flexibly programmed and adapted to respond to needs identified by a variety of SIP areas - crime, drugs, housing. However all of these approaches shared the same general attitude that 'any participation in physical activity is good' (especially among sports development workers), with performance being assessed by aggregate attendance figures. In part this approach reflected the view that most residents in an area of deprivation will have low levels of fitness and health and encouraging any form of physical activity is a step forward. While this may be true, it is also possible that, on the basis of self-selection, such programmes may have appealed more to those most positively pre-disposed to such activity, rather than those most in need of increased daily activity (and possibly most reluctant to participate).

3.28 However, the issue of individual circumstances, needs and appropriate programmes were not addressed, largely because of the resources required to deliver such a counselling approach (Loughlan and Mutrie, 1997). Although, in one project initial fitness assessments were offered to participants and non-participants the data were not used to design programmes, were not collated by the project team, nor was the progress of those taking such tests monitored.

3.29 Despite the comment of Loughlan and Mutrie (1997) about the need for support to ensure long-term adherence, neither of the physical activity health-promotion case studies had the resources or expertise to follow-up participants after the short-term activity programmes to monitor the extent of adherence (several interviewees confirmed that this lack of long-term monitoring was widespread). In the absence of systematic monitoring, many involved in the health-orientated initiatives quoted anecdotal evidence relating to participants' self-reported feelings on 'healthiness' and fitness. While such effects are important in terms of mental health and a sense of wellbeing, their physical health (eg cardiovascular health) may have remained unchanged. For example, evidence suggests that the majority of the population perceive their fitness to be better than their exercise level suggests and therefore they may not identify with messages that are targeted at them.

3.30 In a 1993 HEBS survey, 80 per cent of those classified as being sedentary (no exercise of a moderate or vigorous intensity in the last four weeks) believed themselves to be very or fairly fit (HEBS, 1997). In this context, Wimbush (1994) noted that it is likely that people's assessment of their fitness is in relation to a sedentary lifestyle - "I am fit enough to cope with being sedentary". Other sources indicate that even where people are participating in physical activity the frequency and intensity of this participation may not result in positive health benefits (Sports Council and Heath Education Council, 1992; Roberts and Brodie, 1992).

### **Lack of outcome measures**

3.31 The failure to collect monitoring information on fitness and health outcomes precludes any firm conclusions about the effectiveness of the two health-orientated initiatives and the more general participation-based approaches. The absence of monitoring is explained by a number of factors:

3.32 Firstly, the strength of the belief in associated fitness and health benefits meant that such benefits were taken for granted and monitoring and evaluation of outcomes was not deemed necessary.

3.33 Secondly, there was an absence of pre-initiative planning and base-line data, in part reflecting the rather ad hoc funding arrangements and the need to spend funding quickly. In such short-term initiatives the limited financial resources were committed to service delivery.

3.34 Thirdly, in one of the case studies there was professional disagreement about the nature of the evaluation process and relevant outcome measures. For example, the health promotion and community development staff were sceptical about a 'medical model' approach, with its measurement requirements (weight change, blood pressure) and the perceived desire of health professionals "to meet their targets for health improvement" caused friction. Their concern was with counselling and a focus on changing attitudes and beliefs about health *as an antecedent* to changing behaviours. The move from non-participation to participation was viewed as an iterative process, involving stages of contemplation and sporadic activity before long-term changes could be sustained. In such circumstances diagnostic, pre-programme, measurement to provide baseline data was regarded as potentially both stigmatising and a disincentive.

3.35 Although in one case study a compromise was agreed and attitudinal and behavioural data were collected, confusion about roles and responsibilities meant that the data were partial, poorly completed and as a result were not used for any systematic project evaluation.

3.36 Fourthly, in addition to lack of financial resources there was a lack of relevant staff expertise in the design and implementation of monitoring approaches (it was suggested that this was a widespread issue). For example, one of the case study initiatives had planned to undertake fairly detailed individual monitoring, but underestimated the time and resources required for such intense individual consultation before, during and after the programme. Further, the counselling skills required to undertake such work were not anticipated and staff training was "too little too late".

3.37 It is clear that, although staff are aware of the need for programme evaluation, there is a lack of a shared professional paradigm and a general lack of expertise in the design and implementation of such work.

### **Survey data**

3.38 In order to explore the issue of outcomes a telephone survey was conducted with 232 individuals who had applied for a free 'Family Swim Ticket' as part of a large-scale participation-orientated programme aimed at improving health. In addition to free swimming the broader programme included exercise classes and fitness assessments (this was the only case study project which had retained a detailed list of participants). However, because this programme is still in operation this information provides evidence about its current impact, and does not permit conclusions to be drawn about longer-term effects.

3.39 As the swim ticket was for families (households) and not individuals, data were collected about approximately 750 people (although all questions were answered by the applicant for the swim ticket on behalf of all household members). Eighty-eight per cent of household members used the free swim ticket, with approximately half being under 16 years of age. However, of these participants, 85 per cent had been previous participants, with 15 per cent of household members being new to the activity. Among the 15 per cent who were new participants, 55 per cent were female and 30 per cent were under 11 years of age, with 40 per cent being between 26 and 45 years of age.

3.40 However, despite the fact that the ticket was used mainly by previous participants, it did encourage them to increase their *frequency* of swimming. For example, the proportion of previous swimmers who took part twice or more per week increased from 12 per cent to 27 per cent, and from 21 per cent to 33 per cent for those taking part at least once a week.

3.41 The most frequent reason for applying for the Family Swim Ticket was 'free/save money' (47%). However, just under one-third (29%) applied because it would 'encourage me/family to be active', with 28 per cent thinking that it would 'be good for the children' (30% of new participants were under 11 years of age) and 28 per cent because it was an 'activity the family can do together'.

3.42 Following the obtaining of the ticket the main *perceived* benefit was a social one – it enabled applicants to 'do things as a family' (50%). However, nearly one-third (30%) also said that the ticket 'enabled the family to be more active/fitter' (30%), with just over a fifth (22%)

saying that it contributed to their own fitness. The fact that the ticket provided free entry to a swimming pool was still regarded as a benefit in its own right by 30 per cent.

3.43 Respondents (74% female) were asked for details of the impact which the programme had on the activity levels of 11-15 year olds in their household, to enable comparison with the Scottish public health target of vigorous physical activity on four or more occasions per week for this age group. The survey evidence indicates that obtaining the free family Swim Ticket has led to a slight increase in activity. For example, before having the Swim Ticket respondents estimated that about one-fifth (19%) of the 11-15 year olds in their households undertook no vigorous activity and half (51%) did so less than four times per week. The estimate after the issue of the tickets was that those undertaking the minimum recommended level of vigorous activity increased from 29 per cent to 42 per cent.

3.44 As with the 11-15 year age group, some adults (16-64) increased the amount of physical activity they undertook after obtaining a family swim ticket. The proportion of adults aged 16-64 who had undertaken no physical activity of at least 30 minutes duration declined from 37 per cent before they obtained the Family Swim Ticket to 21 per cent after they obtained the ticket. In addition, the proportion who undertook moderate physical activity less than five times per week increased from 56 per cent to 66 per cent. However, although some adults increased their levels of physical activity after they had received the Family Swim Ticket, only 13 per cent undertook the recommended level of physical activity for this age group (30 minutes of moderate activity five or more times per week is the Scottish public health target).

3.45 Because this scheme was still in operation at the time of the survey it is not possible to draw conclusions about its long-term impact. However, this small survey indicates that, although the majority who obtained the ticket were previous participants, the initiative did create new participants and has led to increased frequency of participation among previous participants. Although many expressed fitness and health-orientated motivations, the social and psychological benefits of family participation were the main perceived benefits.

### **Psychological health benefits**

3.46 Despite the absence of outcome measures of fitness and improved physical health, it has been argued that there are important non-physiological, mental health benefits to be derived from such participation. For example, Roberts and Brodie (1992, p140) refer to the "responsiveness of self-assessments to minor changes in sport activity".

3.47 Qualitative evidence from the case studies indicated that the concentration on physical/cardiovascular health messages may have had limited impacts. For example, a young female participant initially joined a keep-fit programme in a SIP area to lose weight, but "I never bother about that now though – it's just about getting together and having a laugh". Another stated that "it's a great way to make friends – I only really knew one person in the group before I came here – now we're all pals". Another interviewee, referred to the fitness programme by her GP, was considering moving to a photography class next year – they were regarded as equivalent, as the key attraction was sociability and sustaining participation in activity that provided opportunities for positive mood states.

3.48 'Getting out of the house and meeting people' appeared to be at least as important as the physical exercise message of the programme. On a 50 plus programme for women, regular attendance had resulted in the establishment of friendship networks and holiday groups. For example, interviews with some of the participants of one initiative indicated that it had introduced them to a community facility of which they had not been aware, had provided an enjoyable context for socialising and provided the basis for the development of friendships. Although there is an absence of systematic measures of fitness and physical health outcomes, such classes clearly provide a variety of social and recreational networks and a regular routine which promotes social interaction – elements central to community development, social inclusion and mental health (Thomas, 1995; Forrest and Kearns, 1999).

3.49 Despite the absence of evidence of fitness and health-related outcome measures, the initiatives have illustrated that, within the context of concerns with community development and social inclusion, such issues of sociability and associated mental health benefits cannot be ignored. That this is an important outcome is illustrated by the comment of the Acheson report on inequalities and health (quoted in Health Education Authority, 1999, p2/3) that:

*"Opportunities afforded by exercise might also lead to wider networks and social cohesion... it has been suggested that people with good social networks live longer, are at reduced risk of coronary heart disease, are less likely to report being depressed or to suffers a recurrence of cancer, and are less susceptible to infectious illness than those with poor networks"*

3.50 However, qualitative information from the various case studies indicates that much of this appeal has been to women, with several interviewees expressing concern about their limited ability to attract adult males to such physical activity programmes. Although the reasons for this failure have not been investigated systematically, some involved in the promotion of these programmes felt that males' emphasis on competition rather than sociability and the desire for a sense of competence *before* entering such programmes militated against their involvement.

3.51 Those involved in the health-orientated initiatives acknowledged that such short-term projects could have very limited impacts on deep-rooted health problems and attitudes to physical activity. Further, limited interview evidence suggests that without a commitment to ongoing provision, infrastructure (eg crèches), local provision (transport issues and family responsibilities often restrict the time available) and social support such exercise programmes are unlikely to be sustained (Loughlan and Mutrie, 1997). There is clearly a need to develop a more sophisticated understanding of inactive people's readiness and willingness for change (Wimbush, 1994; Loughlan and Mutrie, 1997) in the context of possible broader lifestyle constraints and the types of activity that might be best for their individual needs.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

3.52 The literature, research and case study evidence suggest that:

- Much of the research evidence relates to the health benefits of *physical activity*, rather than sports per se. Further, the evidence suggests that, especially among many of the least

active and least healthy groups the promotion of an 'active lifestyle' may be a more useful strategy than the promotion of sports (although much depends on the definitions used). However, in the case studies there was a traditional concentration on formal activity, promoting facility use and uptake of classes and sessions, rather than a focus on behaviour change..

- Even among those predisposed to sport, the frequency of activity required to achieve and sustain health benefits is unlikely to be possible for many using sport as the sole focus (eg a moderate swim five times a week or a vigorous swim at least three times a week).
- There is a need to question the traditional 'sports development' approach and place more emphasis on the process of changing individual behaviour rather than marketing sport and exercise products in a 'target group' approach. This will require staff development/training.
- Qualitative evidence suggests that the greatest gains from involvement in activity relate to psychological health and increased feelings of well-being. This outcome is related to such factors as 'getting out of the house' and 'meeting other people' who are 'just like ourselves'.
- Formal activity provision can provide *one way* of socialising and can reduce feelings of isolation. However, it is important that this is complemented by a recognition of the unique physiological benefits of exercise, which would not be obtained from other forms of socialising.
- Factors underpinning the success of activity provision have included, appropriate and convenient local facilities (which need not be 'sports' facilities); recognising the importance of participants' friendship groups in getting involved and staying involved; providing reassurance that 'people just like us' are able to participate; acknowledging, particularly to older people, that some physical activity will be better than none; recognising that if the activity has some intrinsic value (good fun, enjoyable, a change of environment etc) it may be more appealing and ensure adherence.
- Concern was expressed about the general absence of male participants in formal physical activity initiatives.
- There is a widespread absence of robust monitoring information on the health benefits of provision. Much of the rationale for this has rested on assumed beneficial outcomes of any increased activity. Further, there is little long-term monitoring of adherence to activity programmes. This reflects the short-term nature of most initiatives, the lack of funding for such monitoring and the lack of expertise to undertake such work.



## CHAPTER FOUR      SPORT AND CRIME

### RESEARCH EVIDENCE

4.1 The definitions of social exclusion offered by the Cabinet Office and in *Social Exclusion: Opening the Door to a Better Scotland* both include "living in a high crime environment". Four recent policy-related reviews of the potential social value of sport (Sport England, 1999; Collins et al, 1999; Best, 1999; Department of Culture, Media and Sport, 1999) all list the prevention of youth crime as an issue to which sports can make a contribution. This reflects a widespread belief (see Collins et al, 1999; Coalter, 1988; Nichols and Taylor, 1996; Taylor, Crow, Irvine and Nichols, 1999) in the 'therapeutic' potential of sport.

4.2 The debate about the relationship between sports participation and crime divides broadly into theories of 'prevention' (or diversion) and theories about the rehabilitation of offenders. The former tends to express itself in relatively large-scale sports programmes targeted at specific areas, or during specific time periods (eg summer sports programmes). This has become a common component of many urban regeneration programmes. For example, Simmonds (1994, p9) estimates that in the first round of Single Regeneration Bids 20 partnerships secured £67 million worth of sports-related initiatives which identified the reduction of youth crime as an objective and are included as part of a broader 'community safety' programme. Four of the case study initiatives had this as a desired outcome of their broader sports development programmes, although only one systematically targeted (or precisely defined) 'youth-at-risk'.

4.3 The rehabilitation approach tends to be much smaller scale, concentrating on offenders. It tends to be much less 'product-led' and be based on an intensive counselling approach, in which the needs of offenders are identified and programmes adapted to suit their needs. This is usually via outdoor adventure activities, or 'demanding physical activity programmes', aimed at developing personal and social skills and improving self-confidence, self-efficacy and locus of control – which it is hoped will transfer to the wider social context and reduce offending behaviour (Coalter, 1988; Taylor, Crow, Irvine and Nichols, 1999). Because such specialised, targeted and small-scale rehabilitation programmes are not related directly to issues of urban regeneration, no examples were included in our case studies.

4.4 However, it is worth noting that a Home Office study of such programmes concluded that evaluation was variable and that performance indicators ranged from the simple monitoring of attendance via the use of anecdotal evidence, to a few who estimated reconviction rates (Taylor, Crow, Irvine and Nichols, 1999). This led the researchers to conclude that:

*"Programme managers... feel that quantitative indicators are insufficient to capture the essence of the outputs [and] that this reflects the difficulty of not only determining the significant variables but also measuring the precise effect they have... there is a problem finding qualitative evaluation techniques which are feasible with limited resources but which adequately monitor the complex outcomes which most of the programmes aspire to. All programmes*

*agree that physical activities do not by themselves reduce offending. All agree that there are personal and social development objectives which form part of a matrix of outcomes. These developments may, sooner or later, improve offending behaviour, but their impact is unpredictable in scale and timing. To expect anything more tangible is unrealistic" (Taylor, Crow, Irvine and Nichols, 1999, p50)*

4.5 These comments do not imply that such programmes fail to reduce recidivism for some young people. There is evidence that participation in outdoor recreation programmes can contribute to increased self-esteem, perceptions of mastery and control and increased social skills (O'Brien, 1992; Crompton and Sellar, 1981; Backman and Crompton, 1984). However, the issue is that there is no guaranteed linear relationship between participation and outcome. Many of these programmes have low completion rates, raising the possibility of 'self-selection', with those most positively affected being those least likely to re-offend. Further, returning participants to their original peer environment after short periods of time inevitably means that for some there will be a return to criminal or anti-social behaviour. For example, Taylor, Crow, Irvine and Nichols (1999) point to evidence that the relative success of such programmes is in part related to the length of the programme, with the longer programmes being most successful.

4.6 In a Home Office review of such programmes Utting (1996, p56) concluded that "there is a shortage of reliable information regarding which aspects of sport, adventure and leisure pursuit programmes are most effective and for how long. It is not clear which interventions are most appropriate for different groups of young people". Reporting on a programme in the United States, Feldman et al (1983) suggest that the type of treatment, leadership experience and group composition all had an influence on behaviour measures.

4.7 The nature of the issues at stake can be illustrated by a research-based illustration. Trulson (1986) assigned 34 young delinquents to three matched groups who each experienced a different version of martial arts training. One emphasised the philosophical and defensive aspects, one concentrated on sparring and self-defence and one included a range of other activities. After six months the 'philosophical' group were classified as normal rather than delinquent (below normal aggressiveness scores, less anxiety, increased self-esteem and social skills). However, the 'fighting' group had higher delinquency scores and were more aggressive. The 'mixed activity' group showed no changes on delinquency scores, although their self-esteem and social skills improved.

4.8 Nevertheless, despite such difficulties some commentators believe that, when compared to the costs of prosecution and detention, such programmes even with a low success rate are 'good value for money' (Tsuchiya, 1996). For example, Coopers and Lybrand (1994, p2) estimated that "the benefit to society of preventing a single youth crime would be a cost saving equivalent to at least £2,300, just under half of which would be directly recoverable from the public purse".

4.9 However, the generic issue of the problems of measuring inter-dependent and secondary effects of sports participation is present. Taylor (1999) suggests that the major problem in identifying and measuring the effects of sport on crime is that the influence on crime is indirect, working through a number of intermediate outcomes or processes, such as improved fitness, self-esteem, self-efficiency and locus of control and the development of

social and personal skills. It is clearly not sufficient simply to measure outcomes and assume that these are 'sports-effects'. From a policy perspective, and in order to inform the design of programmes and achieve the optimal allocation of resources, there is a clear need to understand the relationship between inputs and intermediate (psychological changes) and final outcomes (changed behaviour). These acknowledged difficulties in evaluating individual outcomes in small-scale, targeted schemes indicate the problems associated with the evaluation of outcomes in more general, larger scale 'diversionary' programmes (which rarely undertake systematic evaluations).

## **Sport as diversion**

4.10 The acknowledged salience of sports for many young people (especially males) has meant that provision of sporting opportunities has become an important element in many urban regeneration projects, largely aimed at reducing youth crime (in some case studies part of a 'community safety' programme). More generally young people are targeted in urban regeneration schemes because of what Fitzpatrick et al (1998) refer to as their "double disadvantage". Young people are more likely to be affected by, unemployment, lower wages reduced benefit entitlement, higher levels of homelessness, increased health risks (drugs and mental health), lower rates of educational attainment, greater risks of being a victim of crime and political marginalisation. In such circumstances Fitzpatrick et al (1998, p7), who examined how six UK urban regeneration initiatives dealt with youth, found that:

*"leisure was central to the quality of life of young people, as a key source of friendship, networks and self-identity, particularly in the absence of work, full-time education or family responsibilities"*

4.11 However, for those living in deprived areas, access to 'leisure' was regarded as expensive, too far away from their locality, or not open at weekends (youth clubs) or did not appeal to young women (youth clubs). The importance of leisure is illustrated by the fact that relevant leisure opportunities was easily the most frequently mentioned requirement among young people, compared to training and qualifications which were the highest priority for adult policy makers and providers (Fitzpatrick et al, 1998).

4.12 Although some provision is made in the belief that young people (and others) in deprived areas have the same right to sporting opportunities as other sections of the community, Fitzpatrick et al (1998, p9) suggest that the underlying motivations were usually instrumental - "sports and arts projects provided 'something to do', but were largely driven by concerns over improving young people's skills and orientation towards work", or were provided because they were diversionary and aimed at young people at risk of offending.

4.13 Within this context diversionary sports programmes aim "at the casual integration of youth at risk, in order to reduce delinquency rates by encouraging the positive use of their leisure time" (Robins, 1990, p19). Sport England (1999, p7) admits that "it would be naïve to think, and unrealistic to claim, that sport alone can reduce the levels of youth crime in society". However, it suggests that "strong experiential evidence exists to show that sport has a part to play in preventing crime" (Sport England, 1999, p8). It is suggested that sport can have an 'indirect effect' by providing challenge, adventure and giving meaning and purpose to young people's lives. "Sport delivered in a sound ethical framework can engender self-respect,

esteem, confidence and leadership qualities" (Sport England, 1999, p8) – the presumption being that these supposed socio-psychological outcomes of participating in sport can contribute to the reduction in the propensity of individuals (mostly young males) to commit criminal acts.

4.14 However, most large-scale diversionary programmes tend to have either vague rationales or over-ambitious objectives (often motivated by the need to impress funders with an apparent 'economy of solutions'). The nature of the 'anti-social behaviours' which need to be changed are often vague, often implicitly including everything from petty, often opportunity-led, vandalism, via systematic theft and drug abuse to crimes of violence. Such lack of precision greatly restricts the ability to set precise outcome measures with a general reduction in crime simply presumed to be one of the possible outcomes of the provision of the programmes.

4.15 That this is a widespread problem is indicated by Robins' (1990) review of eleven schemes designed to use sport to divert young people from criminal behaviour which concluded that "information about outcomes was hard to come by". In a review of 120 programmes for at-risk youth in the USA Witt and Crompton (1996) found that 30 per cent undertook no evaluation and only 4 per cent undertook pre/post evaluation of participation-related changes. They also pointed to the lack of clear objectives in most programmes, stating that "the lack of specific objectives written in an operational format leads to the inference that many agencies have not identified specific standards by which to evaluate the success of their programmes" (Witt and Crompton, 1996, p12).

4.16 An interesting approach to this issue and the establishing of baseline data is provided by the Reczones project in Bolton (a diversionary project based on reclamation of derelict land for play areas). In a pre-project household survey almost 90 per cent of residents claimed to have witnessed 'anti-social behaviour' in the previous 12 months, with the top six behaviours being abusive language, hanging around in groups, petty vandalism, litter, property damage and spitting (Morgan, 1998). When asked about possible solutions to such problems the main solutions included were the provision of a youth club/community centre, greater efforts to involve parents and the provision of organised sport/play facilities (Morgan, 1998). The performance evaluation of the Reczones project will not be based on any simple reading of crime statistics (as much of the 'anti-social behaviour' of concern to residents is not reported), but on two follow-up household surveys to evaluate any change of residents' perceptions.

4.17 Further, there is often little explicit discussions of what is meant by sport and how it might achieve the rather vague objectives – ie *the intermediate outcomes* which it is presumed will lead to the reduction in crime – and how they can be measured. The definition of youth-at-risk is often vague and is accompanied by rather simplistic theories of the causes of delinquency (usually based on assumptions about boredom, opportunity-led crime or low self-esteem). In a Home Office report Heal and Laycock (1987) argued that methods of preventing or treating youthful offenders should be based on theories of causes. However, Utting (1996) and Asquith et al (1998) illustrate that there are a range of more fundamental socio-psychological 'high-risk factors' related to the propensity to commit crime. These include hyperactivity, high impulsivity, low intelligence, poor parental management, parental neglect, offending parents and siblings, early child bearing, deprived background, absent father and maternal substance use in pregnancy. Clearly the ability of large-scale sports participation schemes to address such issues will be limited.

4.18 Utting (1996) suggests that if such programmes are to achieve more than simply providing short-term alternatives to opportunity-led crime, their effectiveness depends on whether they achieve at least some of the following:

- Improvements in cognitive and social skills. This is supported by Asquith et al's (1998) research on young offenders in Scotland, who conclude that cognitive-behavioural approaches appear to be most effective in strategies of prevention and rehabilitation.
- Reductions in impulsiveness and risk-taking behaviour
- Raised self-esteem and self-confidence
- Improvements in education and employment prospects

4.19 One approach to addressing the inter-related issues of theories of delinquency, the nature of sports' contributions and the identification of intermediate outcomes is provided by Schafer (1969). He outlines five elements underpinning the 'therapeutic' potential of sport based on a theory about various causes of delinquency. Although these relate to the reduction of anti-social behaviour among young males, they are worth listing as they refer to the nature of sports' processes and why they are presumed to have the potential to achieve positive outcomes.

(i) Differential association

4.20 It is suggested that, via the social processes and relationships involved in participation in sport, participants are influenced by "significant others" (coaches, teachers, other participants) who provide appropriate role models and espouse conventional values. Sport provides an *alternative* to delinquent peer groups, as the emphasis is placed on conventional norms and social conformity. Further, participation can reduce or eliminate association with delinquent peers – either by reducing available time or changing interests and attitudes.

4.21 The problems with this are clear. There are dangers in ignoring issues relating to the length, intensity and priority (the age of starting) of participation required to produce conformist behaviour (Purdy and Richard, 1983). Segrave and Hastad (1984) found that formal participation is not enough to generate commitment to institutions and non-delinquent values – sports were only one of a number of priorities and social experiences which influenced attitudes and behaviour. To make an effective contribution to the reduction of anti-social behaviour sports participation must be voluntary, committed and salient.

4.22 Further, much depends on the nature of the 'role models' and how significant, or salient, they are for individuals. Here it is worth remembering Svoboda's (1994) contention that such effects are unlikely to be obtained via simple participation – especially for those most at risk. He suggests that positive effects are most likely to occur in the presence of appropriate supervision, leadership or management. For example, Maugham and Ellis (1991) found that positive verbal reinforcement and rapport with the recreation leader was an important factor underpinning measured improvements in young people's sense of efficacy and competence. Evidence from a small, intensive, 'sports counselling' programme for young probationers suggests that positive relationships with the sports leaders are one of the keys to success (Nichols and Taylor, 1996). Witt and Crompton (1996, p16), in a review of programmes in the USA, conclude that "leadership is perhaps the most important element in determining the positive impact of a program, since it shapes what participants derive from

their experience". However, such close one-to-one relationships are difficult to establish on large scale 'diversionary' participation programmes.

4.23 The importance of leadership and positive relationships does not only apply to young people at risk. In one of the case studies participants in a fitness class all agreed that a friendly atmosphere was an essential element in maintaining their interest "people who are friendly and take the time to get to know you a bit are really important". Also "when they are really loving the exercise, it rubs off on you too".

(ii) Development of self-discipline

4.24 The sports environment emphasises traits such as deferred gratification and hard work, which lead to increased self-discipline and self-control. It could be argued that this assumes a narrow definition of 'sport', with a desire to improve performance, rather than simply participate for recreational purposes.

(iii) Blocked aspirations, achievement and self-esteem

4.25 From this perspective delinquent behaviour is a form of adaptation, adjustment to and compensation for *blocked identity formation and status achievement*, usually resulting from educational failure and unemployment. A number of writers have pointed to the association between low educational attainment and increased risks of delinquency (Rutter and Giller, 1983; Elliot and Voss, 1974; Utting, 1996). From this perspective sport is regarded as a 'functional alternative'. However, Spady (1970) warns of the dangers involved if sporting activities stimulate students' status perceptions and future goals without providing the skills and orientations required for occupational success – sport needs to be a *complement* to education, not a substitute (we will return to this issue again).

4.26 Not all sports will be relevant for many vulnerable young people. For example, there is some evidence of the need for small-group or individual activities which are non-competitive, emphasise personally constructed goals and have a minimum of formal rules and regulations. Sugden and Yiannakis (1982) suggest that certain adolescents reject organised, competitive mainstream sport because it contains components similar to those which they have already failed to resolve – adherence to formal rules and regulations, achievement of externally defined goals and competitive and testing situations. Serok (1975) suggests that delinquents prefer games with fewer and less specified rules and with fewer requirements for conformity. Reflecting this, Rigg's (1986) analysis of the early Action Sport programmes for the unemployed emphasised the importance of an informal 'drop in' approach to encouraging participation and Robins (1990) refers to a number of diversionary sport projects whose main features were open access and a lack of rigid organisation. Rijpma and Meiburg (1989) quote a successful initiative in Rotterdam aimed at 'marginal youth'. 'Open youth centres' (neighbourhood centres without membership) that provided small-scale facilities for weight-training and an atmosphere which did not place an emphasis on skill were successful in attracting young people with housing and drug addiction problems.

(iv) Antidote to boredom

4.27 The most common assumption in diversionary sports initiatives is that 'the devil makes work for idle hands' and that vandalism and anti-social behaviour are a function of boredom.

This reflects the view that much adolescent crime is opportunity-led and 'giving young people something to do keeps them out of harm's way'. It is often the rationale underpinning holiday sports programmes, such as the much researched Staffordshire Police Activity and Community Enterprise (SPACE) programme (Heal and Laycock, 1987; Coalter, 1988; Robins, 1990). An internal police review of the programme acknowledged that the evidence of the impact of the programme on recorded crime was inconclusive. However, the programme still had a value in increasing the type and number of *non-criminal opportunities* available to young people during school holidays.

4.28 A Home Office evaluation (Heal and Laycock, 1987) of the SPACE programme illustrates some generic issues about such schemes. It proved to be extremely difficult to prove that what were statistically insignificant reductions in crime were *caused* by the programme. Further, such schemes will become less effective as the initial novelty declines and, despite a short-term diversionary effect, there was no evidence about the longer term impact on the attitudes and behaviour of participants.

4.29 However, others propose a slightly more sophisticated analyses, suggesting that boredom leads to more fundamental psychological and social problems. For example, it is suggested that perceived boredom may be related to alcohol use (Orcutt, 1984), that it is related to depression, hopelessness and loneliness (McGiboney and Carter, 1988) and that it may be related to deviant behaviour at school (Wasson, 1988). Reid et al (1994) quote evidence that regular physical activity can promote self-esteem (Calfas and Taylor, 1994; Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute, 1994) and that inactive subjects had three times the risk of depression compared to the active. This finding underpinned their assertion that physical activity/recreation programmes can assist in the reduction of behavioural risk factors for young people. Carlson and Petti (1989) and MacMahon (1990) suggest that depression may be reduced and self-esteem increased via intensive aerobic exercise (see also Raglin, 1990; Steptoe, 1992). However MacMahon and Gross (1988) warn that, as with all short-term programmes, it is not clear whether improved self-esteem transfers to the necessary social skills to improve behaviour and that much effort is required to specify which groups benefit most from such programmes.

(v) Adolescent development needs

4.30 This also emphasises the cathartic role of sport in providing an opportunity for an institutionalised display of force, strength and competitiveness and the opportunity for the display of adolescent masculinity. Sport is viewed as providing an opportunity to address the needs of adolescents to develop perceptions of efficacy, competence, control, freedom and independence (Maughan and Ellis, 1991; Hendry et al, 1993). As with many other of these presumed elements of sport, this seems to reflect the needs of young males rather than females (in fact it is such elements which young women often find most unattractive). Further, in a longitudinal study of young people in Scotland Hendry et al (1993) suggested that during adolescence there is a shift in interests away from sport and organised clubs and activities to more casual pursuits (see also Walker, 1987). Consequently, there is evidence to suggest that the period of the highest potential for delinquent behaviour coincides with a decline in the attractiveness of traditional forms of organised sports, especially among those most likely to be non-conformist.

4.31 Because of the understandable concentration of diversionary sports provision on young males there is often a failure to consider the needs of young women. Although they may pose less of a problem in terms of criminal behaviour, if such provision is also concerned to extend opportunities then some consideration needs to be taken of their needs. Research evidence suggests that young women are much less likely than young men to base their friendship networks on sport (Mason, 1994), are less likely to be attracted by competitive approaches (Mason, 1994; Roberts and Brodie, 1992), are more likely to have a individual, task-orientated competence motivation (Linder et al, 1991), are more attracted to motor dominated rather than perceptually dominated sports (Mason, 1994) and are more likely to be attracted by the social aspects of participation.

4.32 Although care needs to be taken to avoid the reinforcing gendered stereotypes, the issue of the potential contribution of community sport to the developmental needs of young people needs to recognise the wide variety of such needs. Further, evidence suggests that the optimal way to address such issues is via a 'bottom-up' approach, in which young people are involved both in influencing the nature of the provision and in its management (Coalter and Allison, 1996; Morgan, 1998; Fitzpatrick et al, 1998). In an analysis of diversionary sports programmes in the United States Witt and Crompton, 1996, p22) stated that "empowerment is an important theme that runs through these case studies. Empowerment enables youth to take ownership and responsibility for their recreational and social activities".

4.33 In terms of empowerment and the involvement of young people in meeting their own socio-psychological needs it is important to note possibly significant differences in the definitions of *criminality and anti-social behaviour*. Fitzpatrick et al (1998) found that adults defined the issues in terms of either diversion/prevention or rehabilitation. However, young people defined the issues in terms of *police harassment*, with the associated desire to gain adult respect and tolerance and to change people's attitudes towards them and their neighbourhood. This finding was confirmed in a recent survey of 892 young people in S1 to S4 school classes in Edinburgh. Only half (49%) of this sample thought that the police had a good understanding of the problems faced by young people, and only slightly more (54%) felt that the police treated young people fairly (Asquith et al, 1998). It is clear that, among such young people, the philosophy and approach adopted may have a significant bearing on its attractiveness and effectiveness.

## **Outcome measurement**

4.34 In a Home Office review of programmes and academic literature on sport and leisure programmes aimed at reducing criminality among young people Utting (1996, p84) concluded:

*"..it is difficult to argue that such activities have in themselves a generalisable influence on criminality. The lack of empirical research means important practice issues remain unresolved".*

4.35 Not surprisingly there is a dearth of detailed evaluation data on broad, community-based schemes. However, a study in the USA (Roundtree et al, 1993) reported that parents' perception was that their children's behaviour and attitudes had improved after participating in a community-based intervention programme – they mentioned improved interest in and achievement at school, willingness to help at home, communication ability and inter-action



with parents. Jones and Offord (1989) reported an increase in skill-competency and reduction in anti-social behaviour following participation in a recreation programme in two Ottawa housing projects. Witt and Crompton (1996) found that among those who undertook the pre/post testing all those who had taken part in structured activity programmes indicated improvements in various scores compared to children who had participated in other, less structured, activities.

4.36 In the UK the most widespread form of 'evaluation' is to attribute changes in recorded crime (especially at a very local level) to projects. For example, Sport England (1999) quotes a multi-agency scheme in Bristol based in a youth centre which attempted to address problems of drug-taking and associated levels of criminal activity. They quote a 15 per cent reduction in crime in the local beat area and a 43 per cent reduction in juvenile crime.

4.37 Achieving meaningful evaluations of at-risk youth programmes may be difficult, as it is not possible to prove a negative for example, a robbery or act of violence did not occur because of the programme. It is worth noting that, in a study of youth work with vulnerable young people in Scotland, Furlong et al (1997) concluded that, although many of those involved felt that their work had contributed to reducing vulnerability among young people, current mechanisms of evaluation are too underdeveloped to secure confirmation of success or failure.

4.38 However, as LIRC (1999) suggests, a clear rationale, a programme which relates inputs, to outputs, to intermediate outcomes and to strategic outcomes would permit the more coherent design of programmes and permit better evaluation of their effectiveness. Utting (1996, p84) suggests that sporting and leisure activities have a positive role to play as "ingredients in wider ranging prevention initiatives", but that the most promising programmes are those which furnish some evidence of positive outcomes and are governed by a clear rationale and strategy for achieving their objectives.

### **Sports leadership**

4.39 Although it is difficult to prove that such provision on its own will have a generalisable influence on criminality (Utting, 1996), evidence from the UK and the USA points to the importance of the nature and location of 'relevant' provision of diversionary programmes. Much of the available evidence suggests that traditional facility-based programmes provided by professional recreation staff are unlikely to have the desired impact – location and personnel seem to be a major factor in the success of the most effective programmes. In part, this has been recognised for some time, with outreach workers and non-traditional, local, provision being a central component of the Action Sport projects of the early 1980s (Rigg, 1986). Crompton and Witt (1997), reporting on a Roving Leader programme in San Antonio which used 'street workers' to reach at-risk youth, concluded that "the key to the program's success is the staff who operate it... [who] have a lot of flexibility – much more than... staff in recreation centres – and that is the key to their success".

4.40 Outreach approaches which seek to 'take opportunities to where young people are', rather than attempt to attract them to traditional local authority sports centres, are becoming more widespread. Especially for those most at risk, the evidence suggests that traditional approaches and forms of provision may not be effective. In a report to the Sports Council for

Wales the Leisure and Environmental Protection Department (1999, p4) of Newport County Borough Council concluded that:

*"While sport can have a positive role to play in addressing social cohesion, this is unlikely to happen if it is organised, or promoted along conventional lines. Engaging the most disaffected... can best be achieved through the deployment of a combination of community development and sports development resource"*

4.41 Witt and Crompton (1996) (drawing on experiences in the USA) argue that "to reach at-risk youth effectively, it is necessary to move beyond the boundaries of an agency's facilities" and they stress "the important role of outreach leaders". In his review of UK initiatives Utting (1996) also stresses the important role of youth workers in the delivery of sporting programmes. Witt and Crompton (1996, p16) conclude that "leadership is perhaps the most important element in determining the positive impact of a program, since it shapes what participants derive from their experience". Further, they also point to a key to the success of such programmes – "all the Roving Leaders were recruited from the neighborhoods in which they now work or from adjacent neighborhoods" (Crompton and Witt, 1997, p88).

4.42 The notion that 'sports leaders' should be recruited from the areas in which they operate is not new. It was central to the Action Sport initiatives and was a feature of several of the case study projects – "it is difficult to promote sport in these communities from behind a desk". In at least one case study, the development (outreach) staff believed that there is a higher uptake of activities when they are involved on a regular basis. Development needs 'sports motivators' to take an interest in participants as people, "raising the profile of sport and leaving them to get on with it is not as successful" (see also Rigg, 1986; McDonald and Tungatt, 1992). Among the Reczones residents, more than half of whom regarded sport/play provision as a possible solution to anti-social behaviour, "there is a sense of realism expressed... about the limitations of providing solely facilities in an attempt to deal with the more 'hard core' youths – without 'counselling' and supervision such provision would have minimum impact and could simply become a focal point for delinquent activity" (Morgan, 1998, p25-26).

4.43 Such an approach is favoured because not only are such recruits regarded as having more 'street credibility' than traditional coaches and recreational professionals, but it also provides training and employment opportunities. Three of our case study projects provided opportunities to undertake sports leadership/coaching courses, in the hope of ensuring longer term sustainability once project funding ended (the issues relating to this will be dealt with below).

4.44 More generally, programmes seem to be most successful when they are 'bottom-up' (Deane, 1998), with local leadership (often of a charismatic type) being a vital factor in the success of many programmes. For example, in a review of programmes for at-risk youth Witt and Crompton (1996, p 18) conclude that "the case studies reveal the profound influence of individuals or small groups who have championed the launching of at-risk programs".

### **Sports and integrated development programmes**

4.45 In addition to the importance of leadership and 'non-traditional' approaches evidence from the United States indicates that sport may be at its most effective *as part of a broader approach to diversion*. British proponents of the 'diversionary' potential of sports provision often point to the success of the so-called 'midnight basketball leagues' in reducing rates of reported crime (eg Morgan, 1998; ILAM, 1998). Wilkins (1997, p60) claims that the Kansas City Night Hoops programme has produced "an overall 25 per cent decrease in crime" and that "other cities who run hoops programs report similar results".

4.46 Basketball is increasingly being used to 'take children off the streets', partly because it is low cost, requires a minimum infrastructure, is a family-orientated sport, provides access for all, has a low injury rate and, perhaps most important of all, has strong connections with wider aspects of youth culture, music and fashion and offers the opportunity to connect street culture with notions of fair play. For example, ILAM (1999) reports on a community basketball initiative promoted by Cleveland Police and supported by two local SRB partnership areas aimed at reducing juvenile crime, by taking 20,000 "children off the street" over a five year period.

4.47 However, the apparently positive results of the programmes in the United States (and it is not clear that they can be related directly to the programmes) do not appear to be simply a function of participation in sport, but of a much more complex programme. For example, Wilkins (1997, p60) states that although basketball is the key to making contact with at-risk youth, "the most urgent objective" is education and life learning. With basketball as the central attraction, the programme also includes non-traditional education components which seek to develop employment skills, personal development, self-esteem, conflict resolution, health awareness and substance abuse prevention. The highly structured nature of the programme is further indicated by the provision of an identification card which must be punched every time participants attend an education/life learning programme or event and prizes and awards are given during every session to encourage participation. Consequently, while sport plays a central role in this programme, the clear implication is that 'diversion' must be complemented by *development* and that sport cannot achieve the desired outcomes on its own, especially among those most at risk. A UK scheme based on the American model, Midnight Basketball, has been developed in collaboration with the National Playing Fields Association. It is aimed at 13–18 year olds and combines basketball with compulsory 'lifestyle workshop discussions' on communication skills, citizenship, employment training and health awareness.

4.48 From this perspective the *salience of sport* for many young people permits it to be used as a medium to reach at-risk youth (Crompton and Witt, 1997). This rationale is similar to initiatives such as *Playing for Success* and *Learning Through Football*, which link schools to learning centres within football clubs (this is discussed under sport and education).

4.49 A UK example of such an approach is a highly targeted Youth Works scheme in the North East of England, in which 40 young people were trained in youth/sports leadership awards through supervised activities with recreational activities organised and facilitated by trained young people. The claimed outcomes of this are a 40 per cent reduction in crime, a 30 per cent reduction in 'trouble', £200,000 reduction in vandalism and a 70 per cent reduction in calls to the police (ILAM, 1999). In this, as in many other cases, much of the local crime was undertaken by a very small number of young males, possibly making targeting relatively straightforward.

4.50 Such integrated approaches which combine diversion with development, are positively evaluated by Utting (1996, p84), who suggests that sporting and leisure activities have a positive role to play as "ingredients in wider ranging prevention initiatives". The most promising programmes are regarded as those which both furnish some evidence of positive outcomes, but are also governed by a clear rationale and strategy for achieving their objectives. More importantly he suggests that programmes can only be successful if they are concerned with other aspects of young people's everyday lives, including school attendance, training opportunities and job-search and include follow-up work with participants in their own communities.

4.51 Fitzpatrick et al (1988, p8) also emphasise the importance of an integrated, developmental approach. In their analysis of urban regeneration projects they found that that some of the projects most attractive to young people were those which were:

*"designed to increase young people's self-confidence and improve their skills through sport, arts and culture... these were highly attractive to young people and had the advantage of developing transferable as well as specialist skills".*

4.52 In an analysis of some Action Sport schemes in the 1980s Deane (1998, p157) states that "the schemes that proved most successful at retaining commitment from the young unemployed were those that offered 'real' training opportunities that could lead to a foot on the employment ladder. Many schemes gained 'legitimacy' through offering training opportunities as a priority to the young unemployed". LIRC (1999, p36) argue that research on sports schemes for the unemployed (Glyptis, 1989) suggests that "one of the most valuable outcomes of a sports programme designed to reduce crime would be to enhance the participants' prospects for obtaining employment".

4.53 Clearly such integrated and developmental approaches require multi-agency working (as well as flexible approaches to service provision). Based on the experience in the USA, Witt and Crompton (1996, p20) argue that "few park and recreation agencies serving at-risk youth have the capacity, or perceive the necessity, to operate alone without substantial involvement with other social service organisations". In their national survey 97 per cent of agencies offering programmes targeted at at-risk youth worked directly with non-profit organisations or other government agencies, such as education, law enforcement and youth work organisations.

4.54 This integrated developmental approach, in which the salience of sport and its ability to gain access to certain groups of young people, is emphasised by Sport England (1999: 21) who argue that sport "has often led the way in promoting 'joined up' ways of working which impact positively on many aspects of people's lives". In other words, not only can sport per se make a contribution, it can make a wider impact by acting as a catalyst for inter-agency co-operation.

4.55 There are a number of examples of multi-agency integrated working, both in the case studies and in the literature (ILAM, 1999; Sport England, 1999). However Fitzpatrick et al (1998) suggest that this is not always the case. They found that there were few regeneration initiatives in which the youth-orientated projects were "logically programmed and well-

integrated with each other, and with existing youth provision" (Fitzpatrick et al, 1998:12). Youth-related projects tended to be under-resourced, compartmentalised and isolated from the mainstream. A further limitation was that most youth-orientated projects tended to concentrate on the perceived problem 14-19 age group, largely ignoring a relatively large group of 20-23 year olds (some of whom felt ignored and marginalised).

## **CASE STUDIES: EVIDENCE**

### **Introduction**

4.56 Four of the case study initiatives had the reduction of youth crime as a desired outcome of their broader 'sports development' programmes. However, all were based on the rather general, diffuse theoretical assumption that a general reduction in crime was a corollary of provision. There was no obvious understanding of the variety of causes of youth crime, nor any attempt to provide a precise definition of those most 'at risk' - in two of the SIP-funded multi-agency programmes all young people in the area were regarded as being at risk and specific targeting was deemed unnecessary. In only one was there systematic targeting - a play and sports development based programme aimed at diversion from drugs and targeted at 8 to 12 year olds (this is examined below).

4.57 One development officer did acknowledge the potentially complex factors underpinning criminal activity (see Heal and Laycock, 1987). He admitted that, in terms of crime prevention, the main target group were "real hard nuts whose problems we don't really understand". It was acknowledged that that one-to-one counselling was required to identify and assess the reasons for the social exclusion and anti-social behaviour of such groups, but that would be prohibitively labour and cost intensive. In such circumstances it was best to do something rather than nothing.

### **Outcome measures**

4.58 None of the case study diversionary sports programmes had any meaningful intermediate or final outcome measures. Evaluation was based almost wholly on volume output measures – attendances, teams, programmes. One major consequence of this was a widespread failure to estimate the number of actual *individuals* who participated, and by implication the proportion of the 'at-risk' target groups being attracted. The use of attendance figures simply measured *visits*, with the attendant possibility of multiple visits by a relatively small number of participants.

4.59 There was one, rather vague, attempt to assert some degree of correlation between a school-aged programme and a decline in recorded crime. This project combined pre-school and primary school programmes with a holiday sports programme, which attracted 1,300 *attendances* during the three main school holiday periods over a two-year period. During this period there were substantial declines in (a relatively small level of) recorded crime in the local areas involved – 45 per cent reduction in recorded crime, a 55 per cent reduction in housing crime and between a 10 per cent and 43 per cent decline in non-housing crime costs (depending on the area). However, although it is claimed that the general sports programme had made "some contribution" to this reduction, it is impossible to isolate the impact of a pre-school and primary school and summer sports programme from the impact of a wide range of

other initiatives (including policing) taken in the SIP areas. Clearly, a focus on pre-school and primary children will take a number of years to have an impact.

4.60 In a case study SIP the statistical measures of changes in recorded crime were deemed to be less useful than residents' *perceptions* (and the related fear of crime). Consequently, similar to the approach adopted in the Reczones project, household surveys were undertaken to measure residents' perceptions of the extent to which crime had been reduced in the area and the general perception of community safety. It is planned to repeat the surveys at five-year intervals to assess the extent to which the SIP programmes (including sport) have changed attitudes to the community. However, such questions were general, covering all the work of the SIP, making it impossible to isolate the impact of increased sports provision.

4.61 Despite the absence of quantitative outcome measures (or even systematic qualitative information), there is some anecdotal evidence about the ability of sporting success to develop self-esteem. For example, in a SIP funded large-scale sports development initiative, development officers responded to the demands for a football team from a group of "very difficult" 16-25 year olds, who were "in and out of various institutions for thefts, assaults and drug-related crimes". The sports development team persuaded the council to provide a prime time free let, which "made them feel really special... over the moon that someone was really listening to them and taking them seriously". The team joined a local league and started training and playing regularly. They eventually won a cup – "no-one knows how they managed it but they did, we never dreamt that these people could do this kind of thing". In this context responding to specific needs, facilitating entry to facilities to which they would not have been able to gain access made them "feel special" and the subsequent sporting success was seen to "re-educate" their energies (although no evidence was produced about recidivism or changed non-sporting behaviour among this group).

4.62 In the absence of systematic monitoring and evaluation, most of those involved were convinced that such initiatives were "making some contribution". This opinion was based on a mixture of the theoretical assumptions concerning the impact of sport, their experience of the enjoyment and commitment of the young participants and the belief that such provision was certainly not "doing any harm".

4.63 Although most accepted that there was a need for some form of monitoring and evaluation, many also sought to make the point that such provision should also be supported for non-instrumental reasons – young people living in deprived urban areas had a right to the type of sporting opportunities which were available to children in more prosperous areas, irrespective of its supposedly positive outcomes.

### **From Gladiator to Weightlifter**

#### *Introduction*

4.64 This play-based project in a large housing scheme contained many of the elements which research indicates are necessary to have a chance of success – it is a community-based, bottom-up programme (with three year reducing SIP funding), has charismatic leadership based in an understanding of the local community (this 'community-activist' approach can lead to conflict with traditional recreation professionals), trains and uses local recruits, uses non-standard provision (local community halls) and achieves project mobility by using a number of

local community halls and a mini-bus to transport children. It was also unusual in having a clear sports-development path, offering opportunities to progress to membership of a local (and highly successful) amateur weightlifting club.

### *The programme*

4.65 As part of a pyramidal development plan, Level 1 (foundation) work is undertaken via a children's play programme (based on the television programme, it uses a series of games/inflatables and charges each child 50p per session). In this play/fun environment 'indirect training' is provided via various games and exercises in a play environment. However, the main rationale is clearly social and aimed to 'keep children off the street', divert them from drugs and break down 'territoriality'. To achieve this the programme places emphasis on 'the mobility of the project' and the use of local 'satellite halls' – the intention is to provide very local opportunities in the early evening for young people (local authority programmes aimed at young people are offered between 4pm and 6.30pm, whereas this programme starts at 7pm).

4.66 It is argued that traditional, formal provision, cannot encourage young people to participate, in part because of cost (especially of travel) and 'territoriality' – young people's fear of moving between areas is a major constraint, (especially after dark). Consequently, the project min-bus goes to all the 'satellite halls', collecting anyone interested in attending the weightlifting club. Further, they go "to the roughest streets in the area to ensure that children who could not afford to travel, or were too scared to travel to the hall were catered for". This is facilitated by the use of local staff who are able to travel safely in the various local 'territories'. The programme has taken on 12 unemployed people under the New Deal programme, with two obtaining sessional employment at the club and "others have remained volunteers". In addition, staff and volunteers are given the opportunity to take a number of training courses (eg British Amateur Weightlifting Association Leaders Certificate; Community Sports Leadership Award).

### *Outputs and Outcomes*

4.67 In terms of level of use the programme is a substantial success. Despite a confusion between visits (ie recorded attendances) and visitors (the actual number of children who account for the visits), the sponsors accept that nearly 8,000 children have been involved in the various programmes. This compares very favourably with about 3,000 attendances at the local authority-run After School Clubs at a local sports centre and nearly 5,000 at a Playzone Outreach Programme.

4.68 There is no evidence about the strategic aim of diverting young people from drugs, nor any police data identifying the effects of the programme on recorded crime. All concerned (including the local police) acknowledge that proving a negative – for example, they would have been taking drugs if they had not been participating in the programme – is almost impossible. It was admitted that "this was never a quick fix... there is no quick fix to drugs". However, all interviewees (including those sceptical about certain aspects of the programme) agreed that the programme is "contributing socially to easing the pressures". It was acknowledged that "the kids *really* enjoy it" and it is "a diversionary tactic which must have some value... it does contribute in some way".

### *Costs/benefits*

4.69 The professional evaluation of this project raises a cost/benefit concern which illustrates generic dilemmas about relevant performance measurement. The professional evaluation is that attendances of less than 8,000 per annum do not justify the current level of funding and staffing, although this is based wholly on an assessment of previously agreed, relatively arbitrary, *output* measures, i.e. attendances. However, funding decisions about such 'diversionary' or preventative initiatives need to be taken on the basis of some consideration of desired *outcomes*. For example, it is possible that, while not achieving an agreed volume target of 25,000, the diversionary and educative work done with 8,000 young people may have made a substantial impact on their attitudes to sport and drugs. Unfortunately, given the problems of outcome measurement, such information does not currently exist.

### **Targeting young adults**

4.70 Fitzpatrick et al (1998) suggest that most youth-orientated projects tend to concentrate on the 14-19 age group, who are perceived to be most 'at risk'. This has led to a failure to provide for a relatively large group of 20-23 year olds (some of whom felt ignored and marginalised). Many of the larger scale sports development projects appeared to be more concerned with providing 'diversionary programming' (understandably), than in identifying the varying needs of young people. Further, there was also a tendency to concentrate on school-aged children – partly because this might assist in developing patterns of life-long participation and partly because they were the most accessible group. However, the effect of such strategies may have been to marginalise those who have left school and older young people.

## **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

4.71 The literature, research and case study evidence suggest the following:

- There are strong theoretical arguments for the potentially positive contribution which sport can make to reducing the propensity to commit crime. However, there is an absence of robust intermediate or final outcome data, especially for large-scale sports development or diversionary projects. This is partly explained by the complexity of such measurements and the fact that the effects of sport on crime will be indirect, working through intermediate outcomes. In such circumstances performance evaluation has tended to be based on volume output measures, with outcomes assumed on the basis of theoretical propositions.
- Large-scale diversionary projects tend to have vague rationales, overly-ambitious objectives (often in an attempt to offer an 'economy of solutions' to funding agencies) and a relatively unsophisticated understanding of the variety and complexity of the causes of criminality. The widespread use of short-term funding means that such projects rarely last long enough to achieve any meaningful impact.
- Both rehabilitative and diversionary projects need to be based on more precise understandings and definitions of the causes of criminality, the nature of sports' processes which are relevant to addressing such factors and an understanding of the intermediate outcomes required to achieve the desired final outcomes. This may require detailed research.
- Available evidence suggests that traditional facility-based programmes will have a limited impact. Outreach approaches, credible leadership, 'bottom-up' approaches and non-



traditional, local, provision appear to have the best chance of success with the most marginal at-risk groups. A needs-based youth work approach may be more appropriate than a product-led sports development approach.

- Sport appears to be most effective when combined with programmes which seek to address wider personal and social development. Rather than hope that these develop as a by-product of participation in sport, sports' salience can be used to attract young people to integrated programmes which offer formal programmes in personal development, health awareness and employment training. Enhancing employment opportunities is the best way to reduce social exclusion and the propensity to commit crime – diversion must be complemented by development.
- To maximise their potential contribution sports organisations must adopt multi-agency working in integrated and developmental programmes.

## CHAPTER FIVE                      SPORT, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION

### RESEARCH EVIDENCE

5.1     Although low educational attainment is not a specific criterion in official definitions of social exclusion, it clearly underpins factors such as poor skill levels, unemployment and low income. Further, there is substantial evidence that criminality is strongly associated with educational under-performance. Increasingly there are suggestions that, as with diversionary programmes, sports' salience for many young people (especially young men) can be used to address a number of educational issues. For example, Sport England (1999) stresses the positive impact of early interventions on learning and the reduction of truancy.

5.2     There is little research which explores the precise relationship between sport and educational performance and the evidence about the relationship between physical activity and academic performance is inconclusive. Shephard et al (1977) reported that a group of 7-11 year old children who took part in five hours of physical activity per week performed better (measured by exam results) than a control group who took part in 40 minutes physical activity per week. Thomas et al (1994) concluded that the benefits of chronic exercise on cognitive function are small but reliable for reaction time, sharpness and maths. However, there is little longitudinal data on which to assess the cognitive benefits of exercise, especially for children. Snyder (1989) and Synder and Sprietzer (1977) report a positive relationship between sport and academic performance, and others have illustrated a link between physical education/exercise and academic performance (Keller, 1982; Shephard, 1997; Thomas, Landers, Salazar and Etnier, 1994), while others have concluded that there is no meaningful evidence for such links (Hauser and Lueptow, 1978). In a Hong Kong based study of the relationship between self-perceived academic performance and participation in sports, Lindner (1999) concluded that students with more confidence in their academic ability were the group with stronger motives for involvement in sports and physical activities. However, he stated that no causal relationship could be deduced from this data as there was no evidence that regular exercise *causes* good academic performance, or that lack of exercise or excessive participation causes poor school results (Lindner, 1999).

5.3     Reviewing a range of relevant literature, Lindner (1999, p130) concluded that:

*"interpretation problems plague studies attempting to link perceptual-motor training, extra physical education lessons and fitness or motor parameters with academic achievement. Most studies have been unable to specify the nature of any relationship found, and often the conclusions have been speculative".*

5.4 However, the *salience* of sport may mean that it has more indirect effects on cognitive and emotional development. For example, Evans and Roberts (1987) suggest that peer acceptance is central to development, that such acceptance is most likely if a child is good at something valued by other children, that being a competent athlete is likely to be regarded as a strong social asset and that physical education may provide a means of enhancing the peer status and social integration of unpopular children. More generally, Lipsky (1981) suggests that merely being interested in, and knowledgeable about, sports can facilitate social acceptance.

5.5 The salience of football underpins the *Playing for Success* programme, in which football clubs provide study support centres for under-achieving pupils. As part of this initiative Leeds United FC provides ten-week programmes for under-achieving pupils from local primary and (some) secondary schools (an extension of a much longer running programme entitled *Learning Through Football*). The programmes were held after school hours (3:30-7:30) and on Saturday mornings and a study centre bus collected pupils. The pupils were drawn from inner-city areas "where under-achievement and low self-esteem were major issues. Just under a third of pupils attending the Centres had special educational needs. Over a third of pupils were eligible for free school meals" (Leeds United Community, 1999).

5.6 During the sessions pupils worked in groups of five on a range of activities – an integrated learning system testing maths, spelling and reading, an internet and emailing session, CD-Rom and word processing and a non-computer based activity (eg completing homework, using a video camera, paired reading, painting or technology). Other than attending sessions at Elland Road (itself an attraction for many) the other 'football factors' were using the power of the Leeds United 'brand name' "to give the pupils a fresh identity", presentations of certificates and prizes by members of the management team and players and invitations to pupils and parents to attend two Premier League games.

5.7 As with the debate in health-promotion programmes, there was a disagreement about the nature of the desired outcomes, which had implications for the definition of performance indicators and monitoring and evaluation. Some felt that the use of pre- and post-testing would de-motivate already under-achieving children and that measuring academic achievement was secondary to improving pupil motivation. However, Leeds United applied pre-and post-tests in mental arithmetic and reading and these indicated substantial improvements. For example, there was a 29 per cent recorded increase in Key Stage 2 maths, and 17.6 per cent in reading. Among pupils in Key Stage 3 the increases were 14.6 per cent for maths and 10.8 per cent for reading. Although no tests were applied for IT, the report concludes that "many children entered the Centre with very limited IT skills and little confidence. By the end of the course there had been a significant change". The feedback questionnaire from the schools indicates support for perceived improvements on motivation, self-esteem and confidence, literacy and numeracy and study skills (although there is variation between schools in the evaluation of the strength of such changes). Parental feedback indicated perceived improvement in the children's confidence and some now had a wider circle of friends.

5.8 However, the football components of this scheme appear to be more promotional than educational. The 'brand' of the football club and the high quality location of the Study Centre at Elland Road are clearly factors increasing the attractiveness of the programme and for many children will represent a 'value added'. However, the reasons for the apparent success of the Centre are wholly educational. The evaluation by the National Foundation for Educational

Research (Sharp et al, 1999) suggests that the measured improvements result from a number of factors:

- Having access to computers and the Internet.
- The high ratio of staff to pupils enabled them to receive immediate help and to make progress in their learning.
- The informal, supportive atmosphere and encouragement from staff allowed pupils to make choices and develop independent study skills.
- Pupils responded well to incentives.

5.9 On the basis of available evidence it is not possible to identify the importance of the brand name and location within Leeds United Football Club. However, it is clear that its salience and the special treatment received by the young people must have had some impact on their self-esteem and motivation. Although the learning outcomes are clearly related to a distinctive learning environment, the *Playing for Success* initiative illustrates the potential contribution which professional football clubs can make to multi-agency programmes aimed at wider aspects of personal, educational and social development. Such programmes can also serve to integrate clubs more closely with their community and assist in the desire of some to become 'family friendly'.

5.10 Other benefits can accrue to participating clubs, as is illustrated by the Central Routes project which is based at Central Park, the home of Wigan Rugby League FC (Metcalf, 1998). Although the prime motivation for this initiative was to promote rugby league, identification with the club and sell merchandise, the club nevertheless fund a full-time school liaison officer who facilitates visits by primary school children. The children "take part in a number of learning activities, linking areas of the National Curriculum such as health education, English language and economic understanding with the world of rugby league. Secondary school visits are organised primarily on a half day basis, and focus on curriculum areas such as business studies, physical education and personal and social education" (Metcalf, 1998, p380).

5.11 Although there has been no systematic evaluation of the project, an interim qualitative evaluation states that "some teachers claimed that attendance at the club had contributed to the improvement of schoolwork in some children and there was often the continuation of the work done in the club into the 'normal' school curriculum" (Metcalf, 1998, p384). Although this seems a somewhat qualified evaluation, it is clear that most of the teachers felt that the initiative was worthwhile.

## **CASE STUDIES: EVIDENCE**

5.12 In the case studies there were two examples of the use of sport in an attempt to improve the ability or propensity to learn. One primary school programme attempted to use the *salience* of sport to improve social skills and school attendance.

### **Sidlaw View Primary School**

5.13 The project was for pupils with special educational needs and aimed to improve their social skills and ability to work with others. Every afternoon the children attended special classes which included sport, art, environmental studies and music. Although there were several components to the initiative, the teachers regarded sport as the most appealing to the pupils. This was provided by the local authority youth sport development team, who provided a range of activities (primarily football). The sports were the most popular activities and also had a useful cathartic function for high activity children.

5.14 Teachers regard the initiative as having had a positive impact on the pupils involved, although progress has been slow. However, the popularity of the sessions (and the sports component in particular) appear to have helped address problems of non-attendance. For example, one participant who missed 14 weeks of school last year has not missed a week of school since the project started. It is felt that issues of social inclusion are being addressed by attracting children to school who are most at risk of truancy (although no systematic evaluation has been undertaken).

5.15 In another case study area the salience of sport and sports-related employment was used to improve the academic performance and commitment to continuing education of disaffected secondary school pupils.

### **Supported study and sports-related education**

5.16 Co-operation between a community school in a SIP area and the local authority's recreation department, and funding from the Scotland Against Drugs Challenge Fund, enabled the provision of a supported study programme (during school hours) which led to a Junior Sports Leader Award. This was made available to young people who were not expected to get standard grades and were likely to leave school at the minimum age. The rationale was that this would provide them with a first step towards coaching qualifications and contribute to the improvement of their self-esteem and self-development. Although the programme was sports-centred, it also contained a range of other educational and developmental components - an initial residential team-building day, participation in a drugs/vandalism awareness workshop and a job preparation programme.

5.17 In terms of outcome measures, all of the 12 young people on the 1998 programme were regarded as obtaining positive results. Five secured 'apprenticeships' (three with the recreation department facility in their local community), one found permanent employment and six progressed to further education (four attended a vocational course and two returned to school when they had been expected to leave). Because of the educational history and low expectations of these young people, the assumption is that these positive outcomes were, in part, a product of the programme. The programme has now been extended to four schools, with about 40 participants, although its further expansion will depend on the availability of additional funds.

5.18 The evidence relating to a causal relationship between physical activity and academic performance is inconclusive. However, it is clear from these two examples (and the research

evidence from initiatives such as Leeds United *Playing for Success*) that the *salience* of sport for many young people enables it to make a significant contribution to attracting them to programmes which address issues of educational and personal development.

## **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

5.19 The literature, research and case study evidence suggest the following:

- Research on possible causal relationships between physical activity and academic performance is inconclusive.
- The *salience* of sport may mean that it can have indirect impacts on cognitive and emotional development, which may contribute to better academic performance.
- The salience of sport can be used to attract under-achieving pupils to educational programmes (although outcomes will depend on the nature and quality of the learning environment).
- There are mutually beneficial opportunities to involve professional football (and other) clubs in the development of integrated sport/education programmes.

## CHAPTER SIX SPORT, EMPLOYMENT AND REGENERATION

### RESEARCH EVIDENCE

6.1 Social exclusion and urban deprivation are intimately related to unemployment. Roche and Annesley (1998), in an analysis of European social inclusion policies, concluded that unemployment and low income are at the root of social exclusion. Further, an evaluation of the Apex Cueten project (Scottish Executive, 1999) stated that "employment is often the best way of diverting people from criminal careers" and LIRC (1999, p36) argue that "one of the most valuable outcomes of a sports programme designed to reduce crime would be to enhance the participants' prospects for obtaining employment". In addition, it has been asserted that sports-related employment can contribute to "neighbourhood renewal" (Department of Culture, Media and Sport, 1999) and sports-related jobs are a potential 'community benefit' (Best, 1999).

6.2 Although the sports economy is relatively small, it is growing. Precise details of sports-related employment are difficult to obtain because of definitional problems and the fact that a high proportion of such jobs are either seasonal, sessional (eg, coaches) or part-time. Nevertheless, it is estimated that in Scotland in 1998 consumer expenditure on sport was £1,080 million (2.55% of total consumer expenditure). This figure includes subscriptions and fees, purchases of footwear and clothing, equipment, travel, and gambling (24% of the total). Sports-related employment was 38,150 (1.7% of all employment). (LIRC, 2000)

6.3 There has been little systematic analysis of the precise role which sport can play in the economic regeneration of local economies. For example, existing economic impact studies of local areas (Henley Centre for Forecasting, 1989) have simply estimated the value of the sports industry, rather than addressed issues of *regeneration* (LIRC, 1997c).

6.4 In a study of the economic importance of sport in the northern region Lincoln and Stone (undated, p87) concluded that "although many claims are made for the contribution that this sector makes in terms of economic welfare, these are frequently based on assertion rather than concrete evidence. There is a need for a more systematic evaluation process to underpin strategies of support for sport both generally and in the region".

6.5 More specific work has been undertaken to evaluate the impact of sports *events* on local economies. For example, it is estimated that the staging of the 1996 Masters Swimming Championships in Sheffield generated £3.9 million additional expenditure and 99 full-time equivalent jobs (Holliday, Gratton and Dobson, 1996). The staging of the 1997 European Junior Swimming Championships at Tollcross Park Leisure Centre was estimated to have generated £210,370 in accommodation expenditure, although this was heavily concentrated on one hotel. An additional £58,000 secondary spend was also generated, although this was mostly by competitors. To obtain this expenditure the City of Glasgow invested £80,000 via marketing support, staff time, venue hire and transport and the event was guaranteed against loss by the Scottish Sports Council (of which approximately £40,000 was paid) (LIRC, 1997a).

6.6 The 1997 World Badminton Championships at Scotstoun Leisure Centre, Glasgow injected an additional £2.2 million expenditure, creating £668,000 additional expenditure in the Glasgow local economy resulting in 58 full-time equivalent job years – of which 83 per cent were in the relatively low paid sectors of hotels/restaurants/catering. To generate this income the City of Glasgow contributed £216,000, plus administrative resources and the Scottish Sports Council provided a grant of £196,000 to the Scottish Badminton Union (LIRC, 1997b).

6.7 Despite these event-specific evaluations, there is little evidence about the medium to long-term economic effects of such sports event-led economic regeneration strategies. In an analysis of available evidence, Gratton (1999, p9) concluded that "although some evidence is available on the economic benefits of sports events and sports tourism, many of the economic benefits to the local community have been poorly researched". In particular, there is a lack of available data on the *regenerative impact* of sports investments on local communities (the main concern of this project). In an evaluation of \$172.6 million sports-led economic development strategy in Indianapolis, Rosentraub (1994, p233) concluded that although "the overall sports strategy might have contributed to Indianapolis's image, that different or changed image did not result in higher average salaries or a substantial increase in jobs when growth rates for similar areas are considered". The strategy entailed substantial capital investment in five major facilities, a National Institute for Fitness and Sports and the hosting of seven governing bodies of sport. The authors concede that "it is very difficult, if not impossible to completely disentangle the sports strategy from the nonsports elements of the downtown development program" (Rosentraub, 1994, p225). They admit that the strategy created a small number of jobs and the spin-off from attendance at sporting events "generated a substantial number of service sector and hotel jobs" (Rosentraub, 1994, p237). However, they calculate that that sports-related jobs accounted for 0.32 per cent of all jobs in the Indianapolis economy (an increase of 0.03%) and the sports-related payrolls accounted for less than 0.5 per cent of the total payrolls of all Indianapolis businesses. They conclude:

*"without minimising the success and publicity Indianapolis has enjoyed, outcomes of this magnitude are so small that it is plausible to consider that, had the city focused on other factors, a larger economic impact would have been possible... Given how small sports is as an industry and the low pay associated with the numerous service sector jobs created by sports activities, sports is not a prudent vehicle around which a development or redevelopment effort should be organised" (Rosentraub, 1994, p238).*

6.8 Speaking of the UK experience, Lincoln and Stone (undated) refer to a certain scepticism about the extent to which community sports initiatives have a significant effect on local unemployed groups. Another concern is the type of jobs created, stating that "while rising participation in sports-related activities has led to an increase in the number of professional sports managers, administrators and coaches... much employment in this sector is still often temporary or seasonal and frequently part-time" (Lincoln and Stone, undated, p116).



6.9 However, Hooper (1998) provides a more positive, local example based on the building of a multi-purpose sports centre in a Priority Partnership Area in Glasgow. In addition to enhancing the physical appearance of the area and raising the confidence of the local community (with a previous 'bad reputation'), it is estimated that the building of the facility will have the following impact:

#### 6.10 *Employment*

- 175 people employed during the construction phase.
- 45 people required to operate the facility.
- 500 staffed weekly coaching hours. As these are sessional opportunities they are regarded as equivalent to 14 FTE jobs.
- User expenditure "should equate to around 70 indirect and induced jobs in the local economy" (although the basis of this estimate is not given).
- Total number of jobs created is estimated at 130 FTEs, although because of the part-time and sessional nature of some of the jobs, over 200 people will see some employment benefit.

#### 6.11 *Training benefits*

- This and other centres require a pool of instructors and coaches to deliver activity sessions (it is likely that such employment will be part-time and/or in addition to other employment).
- The centre will offer work placement opportunities in association with a local further education college.

6.12 Overall it is claimed that the facility will "play an important role in changing perceptions of the area, encouraging people to live in the area as well as acting as a catalyst for further investment contributing to the overall regenerative process" (Hooper, 1998, p 225). Clearly, such local facilities, *if they adopt a policy of local recruitment and training*, can provide opportunities for a limited number of both full-time and part-time jobs. However, it is noticeable from this and other examples, that much of the job opportunities are for part-time employment (often for coaches who have other full-time employment).

6.13 However, Crompton (1995) raises some important issues about the methodologies which underpin much current work on the economic impact of sports events and facilities. In an analysis of 20 studies in the United States he identified 11 sources of error leading to over-estimates. These errors included the misrepresentation of generated employment (especially service sectors jobs), the concentration on total rather than marginal economic benefits and the ignoring of opportunity costs (ie the potential value of alternative investments). This is not to imply that any of these errors are present in the data quoted in this report. Rather, Crompton's analysis emphasises the need for a close scrutiny of the techniques used to measure the actual, or potential, impact of sports events and sports facilities (see Késenne, 1997 for a similar European perspective).

6.14 Those expressing scepticism about the extent of benefits associated with sports-led employment strategies also suggest that it is important to consider the possible opportunity costs and to identify the nature of *appropriate* investments. For example, Gratton (1999) suggests that the two key sectors for an employment-orientated sports industry strategy are businesses supplying sports clothing and footwear and the providers of sports facilities for participants and sports events. Gratton (1999, p16) argues that the commercial sports sector "is the lead sector in any strategy of economic regeneration based on sports-related industry. This is mainly due to the substantial economic benefits in terms of the sector's contribution to the generation of employment, the value of consumer expenditure, the investment opportunities and the 'foot-loose' nature of the industries within the sector".

## **CASE STUDIES: EVIDENCE**

6.15 None of the case study projects had anything approaching a strategic sports-related employment strategy. Nevertheless, there was a low level concentration on using sport to increase the 'employability' of participants (via increasing self-esteem and self-confidence) and providing training opportunities for the Community Sports Leader Award and basic coaching certificates – aimed at employment in the voluntary or public sectors (as sessional leaders and coaches). This strategy in part reflects the desire to encourage the development of qualified volunteer helpers and sports leaders to ensure longer-term sustainability. Further, it also reflects the recognition that the involvement of local people increases the sense of ownership and credibility of sports programmes (Witt and Crompton, 1996; Utting, 1996; Deane, 1998). However, it also provided the opportunity for personal achievement and formal certification for a range of people without formal academic achievements. Some of the sports development workers felt that the opportunity for *certificated progress* (eg Community Sports Leaders Award) helped to re-inforce the sense of achievement. As most governing bodies of sport offer developmental training, it provided the opportunity for people to set targets for further development.

<p>6.16 For example, a partnership between a SIP, the local authority recreation department and a local further education college, established a three-year Community Sports Leader award with a target of 100 qualified assistant coaches. The courses receive a subsidy equivalent to 75 per cent of their total cost and in the first year 80 local people were trained and qualified (at the introductory level). Of these, 30 had subsequently been employed as sessional coaches by the local authority (operating in support of fully qualified coaches).</p>
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6.17 However, in those projects with the most systematic schemes it was clear that many of those taking part in such programmes had problems of low self-esteem which needed to be addressed via parallel support programmes. Further, although many could be supported through the basic Community Sports Leader Award, the more theoretical aspects and educational requirements of Level 2 qualifications proved to be a much greater hurdle.

6.18 The potential of sports-related training, the problems associated with dealing with the long-term unemployed and the need for parallel support and development are best illustrated by an examination of a project whose sole purpose was to provide sports-related employment opportunities for the long-term unemployed.

## **Glasgow Works Play/sport**

6.19 This is offered by Castlemilk Development Agency (CEDA) in collaboration with the City of Glasgow Department of Cultural and Leisure Services, and offers opportunities to the long-term unemployed (6 months for 18-24 year olds and one year for 25 and over) to train as playworkers and sports coaches. A total of eighteen 'workers' are recruited each year. Although there are no gender quotas, most of the playworkers are women, with the majority of sports workers being male. Successful applicants are given a contract for up to 12 months and are paid £126 per week, retaining elements of housing benefits and Family Credit. They are provided with a weekly Zone Card and receive an essential clothing and footwear allowance. The project combines CEDA/Glasgow Works support for personal and professional development with a placement and training provided by the Department of Cultural and Leisure Services. This is paid for by Glasgow Works, which also pays for coach education courses. More generic training courses are also available on such topics as Exercise and Fitness Knowledge, First Aid at Work, Nutrition, and Fitness Marketing. The average cost per participant is £12,000.

### ***Initial barriers***

6.20 Many recruits have to address a number of hurdles. There are three broad sets of issues:

#### ***'The benefits trap'***

6.21 Despite what could be regarded as an attractive package, many of the long-term unemployed have psychological and emotional difficulties in moving from the security and predictability of benefits and taking the risk of preparing for a job. This often requires counselling and support in order to help them to "walk away from the comfort zone".

#### ***The importance of ongoing personal support***

6.22 Many of the applicants have serious personal and social problems and a major feature is the ongoing support provided by Glasgow Works. Support sessions are held weekly throughout the programme, to discuss progress and personal and professional issues. Not only is this a vital support mechanism for the workers, it also underpins the strength of the partnership. For the Department of Cultural and Leisure Services, Glasgow Works "takes the hassle out of recruitment and management" of recruits – the Department does not have to deal with the placement workers' personal problems. Without this it is unlikely that people with personal difficulties/development needs would be given a chance to train as playworkers or as sessional coaches.

### *Personal and professional development*

6.23 Many have been unemployed since leaving school and suffer from a lack of confidence, low self-esteem and have relatively poor educational skills. Consequently, substantial personal development work is required to develop the social and intellectual skills necessary to be able to benefit from the work placement (seen as a particular problem for males). An individual diagnosis of personal and professional development needs is undertaken and the first week is spent exploring individuals' strengths and weaknesses. Each worker is allocated a £250 personal development budget, which many use for driving lessons, although others have undertaken training in such things as step aerobics and aquarobics. In addition, courses on self-development are available via Steps to Excellence for Personal Success (STEPS), a course which encourages people to think about themselves, why they think the way they do and to explore their capabilities and develop interview and assertiveness skills.

6.24 Two previous participants spoke highly of this course and felt that it was an essential pre-requisite for the placement - "it really made you think about yourself".

### *The importance of placement*

6.25 A major strength of this project is the partnership with the Cultural and Leisure Services Department, which ensures a practical work-experience with a major employer. Workers shadow a coach/instructor for a week or two and then take a basic pre-requisite leadership/ coaching assistant award. Mentoring continues until workers are required to complete either the SVQ Level 2 in Playwork or a more advanced coaching qualifications (for sports workers, equivalent SVQ awards are only available for swimming and hockey). However, there is evidence that some of the workers "struggle to get to Level 2". Although most were competent at the assistant teacher/sports leaders' level, the greater volume of information, the more theoretical nature of the knowledge and the requirement either to write essays, or to sit exams, presents problems for some (although only 2 out of 34 playworkers have failed to get the NVQ).

6.26 The placement element is regarded as vital for two reasons:

(i) **Applied training**

Formal coaching awards/VQs might not be sufficient to be considered for employment, without the practical experience obtained via shadowing/mentoring. Because all participants undergo their training programme to their standards, their employment potential for Glasgow is increased - they "are trained by their trainers to their standards".

(ii) Networks

Fitzpatrick et al's (1998) analysis of youth and urban regeneration projects suggested that there was an enhancement of employment prospects, not simply because of the skills they had gained, but also through personal contacts - a major component of social exclusion is exclusion from 'employment networks'. This also appears to be a major factor in the success of Glasgow Works, with the placement providing access to potential employers and employment networks. Two past workers felt that this networking aspect was one of the most beneficial outcomes of the programme.

***Outcomes***

*Employment*

6.27 The performance requirement is a 65 per cent rate of exit employment. Possibly reflecting the vetting and selection procedures (improved as the programme has developed), less than one in 10 has dropped out of the play/sport scheme, although some require substantial support to remain. Further, it is estimated that about 80 per cent of the 70 participants have obtained exit employment (about 60 per cent are women, reflecting the better employment possibilities for playworkers). However, although 80 per cent are recorded as moving into employment, this does not imply that it was a permanent job, or that they are still in employment – an estimated 65 per cent were employed one year after leaving the programme.

6.28 Further, especially among sports workers, full-time employment is less likely to be in a sports-related job. As many of the case study projects offer the possibility of such qualifications for a range of reasons (sense of achievement, training volunteers for sustainability, improving employment prospects) it is worth noting that the employment potential for sports leaders/coaching assistants is limited in four ways. Firstly, as there is a good supply of coaches (this will vary between areas and sports), there is competition for employment and, in some instances, participants in Glasgow Works may be in competition with graduates from sports-orientated degrees and top class performers. Secondly, it is essential not to under-estimate the skills and expertise needed to become a sports coach. Coaches have to pass written examinations, require the ability to deal with mixed ability groups and have confidence, personality and communication skills - "skills not always associated with the long-term unemployed". Consequently there is a need for intensive support for personal and professional development - it is unrealistic to expect the sport experience/work placement to provide opportunities for the development of self-esteem and self-confidence without additional support. As one employer remarked, many sports-related jobs (eg coaching, sports leadership) "are demanding in terms of emotional maturity and self-confidence. These are not attributes commonly found amongst people who have been unemployed for long periods of time".

6.29 With sessional employment being the major opportunity, many are unable to obtain sufficient work to earn a living wage – often sessional coaches are supplementing income from other, full-time, employment. It is for this reason that sports workers are advised to obtain at least three governing body coaching awards, increasing their chances of sessional employment. Fourthly, both playwork and sports coaching are areas which are rapidly 'professionalising' and this is reflected in the increasing emphasis on formal certification (S/NVQs). This can disadvantage many long-term unemployed and it is an issue which needs to be addressed in any future schemes. These diverse sectors will not recruit solely from the unemployed, and the number of students taking sports-related degrees and diplomas has expanded rapidly.

6.30 Finally, the sustainability of the Glasgow Works: Play/Sport programme is partly dependent on the size of sports provision in the City of Glasgow. Given the importance of the work placement and the volume of coaches required in a city as large as Glasgow, care needs to be taken in any consideration of the extension of such schemes to other areas.

6.31 Although employment is a centrally important outcome of such schemes, it is too simple to measure the achievement of such programmes by employment in sport. Rather, sport's salience for certain, otherwise disaffected long-term unemployed or secondary-school pupils, encourages and (with support) enables them to develop self-esteem, self-confidence and obtain work experience – skills and experiences which are transferable to other occupational sectors. Although the main aim of the Glasgow Works Play/Sport programme is to direct participants to employment in playwork and sports coaching, it is clear that the concentration on personal and professional development also helps to develop important 'transferable skills' and this was acknowledged by the interviewees. As an aerobics teacher stated, the programme "gave me confidence to stop apologising for myself and instead of fading into the background I now volunteer".

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

6.32 The literature, research and case study evidence suggest the following:

- There is little existing research on the *regenerative* potential of investment in sport. Much of the available evidence relates to estimates of the current economic value of national and regional sports economies or one-off events.
- There is little evidence concerning the long-term economic and employment effects of sports-led investment strategies and the economic benefits to local communities have been poorly researched.
- Many of the SIP-funded projects provide training opportunities for basic sports leadership awards. These clearly contribute to the development of self-esteem and self-confidence, but without additional qualifications their vocational value must be doubted.
- Because sessional work is the main employment opportunity for most sports coaches, there must be some doubt about such an employment strategy.
- The value of sports-orientated employment programmes may lie less in their directly vocational effectiveness, but in their appeal to certain groups of long-term unemployed and their contribution to the reduction in social exclusion through the development of 'employment networks'.

- Because of the personal and educational development needs of many long-term unemployed, sports-orientated employment schemes must provide parallel supporting programmes.

## CHAPTER SEVEN      COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND VOLUNTEERING

### RESEARCH EVIDENCE

7.1 People are central to new approaches to community regeneration, with their philosophies of 'empowerment', community consultation and involvement and concerns with encouraging 'active citizenship' and increased voluntarism as part of the 'Giving Age'. Forrest and Kearns (1999) suggest that socially cohesive communities tend to have a shared sense of belonging or common purpose, active, well-intentioned citizens and a strong "civic infrastructure" of organisations and networks. In this regard Sport England (1999, p8) stresses the positive aspects of 'volunteering' – as "voluntary and community activity is fundamental to the development of a democratic, socially inclusive society. Voluntary and community groups...enable individuals to contribute to public life and the development of their communities... In so doing they engage the skills, interests, beliefs and values of individuals and groups". Consequently such policies are as much concerned with the instrumental use of sport for purposes of community development as they are in simply developing sport in the community (Coalter and Allison, 1996).

7.2 The key policy message here is that the *potentially positive benefits of sport are not only to be obtained via participation* – involvement in the organisation and provision of opportunities for sport and physical recreation can assist in the development of self-esteem and a series of transferable skills – a view of volunteering as "active citizenship".

7.3 This perspective is worthy of note for a number of reasons. Firstly, economic analyses have illustrated that sport is highly dependent on unpaid volunteer labour (coaches, referees, administrators, organisers, drivers). For example, in the United Kingdom it is estimated that there are approximately 1.5 million sports volunteers, accounting for more than one quarter of all volunteering (Sports Council, 1996). This is more than three times the best estimate of the total number of people in paid employment in sports-related activities. Further, it is estimated that the hours worked by volunteers in sport are equivalent to over 108,000 full-time equivalent workers. In such circumstances volunteer effort in sport has a high social and economic value, as it makes a major contribution to the provision of opportunities and, via unpaid labour, reduces the cost of participation. Although this is an area not without its problems (eg the relationship between volunteers and paid employees, insurance and liability, the financial status of paid volunteers and child protection issues) it has potential for the involvement of those who may wish to contribute to, but not necessarily participate in, sport. Finally, because it makes such a high value contribution (providing opportunities, reducing costs) it offers the possibilities for the development of a sense of self-esteem and social purpose.

7.4 Research into volunteers in sport has identified a number of issues which need to be addressed if such a strategy of volunteer-led development is to be a possibility.

- Firstly, "there is a widespread feeling that it is harder to attract volunteers to take on roles in clubs than it used to be" (Sports Council, 1996, p vi) – in fact in one case study it was



suggested that across a range of voluntary organisations it was the "same faces every time... the usual suspects".

- Secondly, in relation to coach training the cost of courses and associated travel was regarded as too expensive (an issue recognised via the use of subsidies in some of the case studies).
- Thirdly, many potential volunteers lack confidence, especially if they have become involved via their child's participation rather than as participants themselves (Sports Council, 1996).

7.5 In the case studies it was also clear that such a lack of confidence was also related to the experiences of long-term unemployment. To address this issue it has been suggested that "it is important that the initial stages in coaching awards are easy to attain" (Sports Council, 1996, p xii). Further, reflecting the experiences of many of our case studies with the long-term unemployed, it is recommended that governing bodies think carefully about the implications of incorporating National Coaching Foundation modules into their awards structure and whether awards which are more demanding (but have NVQ status) are relevant for volunteers.

7.6 Other research confirms these analyses and recommendations. For example, McDonald and Tungatt (1992) reporting on research on sports development projects such as Action Sport in the 1980s, conclude that although many of the unemployed attended the leadership courses, many did not have the desire or confidence to lead. Further, many were reluctant to commit to attend regularly to assist with frequent sessions, making forward planning difficult (a finding confirmed by Sports Council, 1996). McDonald and Tungatt (1992, p16) conclude that:

*"potential participants ...typically exhibited all the aspects associated with multiple social deprivation... lack of motivation, lack of drive and in some cases a sense of acute despair and disillusionment with society and its treatment of them.. the typical reaction is that inner urban life has enough stresses of its own without further responsibilities... the lesson which emerges from the Action Sport programme is that a community development approach to providing sporting opportunities in inner urban areas relies heavily on skilled professional workers taking the lead... the biggest hurdle facing the programme has been enabling the sporting activities to continue without Action Sport support".*

7.7 Consequently, if the intention is to recruit such volunteers from the long-term unemployed, the evidence from research (and the case studies) is that many will need substantial encouragement and support to be able to undertake such roles. Further, if the intention is that the unemployed get jobs, such volunteering may, necessarily, be temporary. For example, in one case study of a local community sports trust it was suggested that membership tends to be dominated by the long-term unemployed and that the "level headed employed man with a family" does not have the time to get involved in such community initiatives, or involvement ends when their children stop participating.

7.8 Further, the Sports Council (1996) comments on the need for a much more systematic approach to the recruitment and training of all types of volunteers in sport. It is seeking to address these issues via its Volunteer Investment Programme, Running Sport and through the New Opportunities Fund Millennium Volunteers programme.

7.9 There are two further potential obstacles to the recruitment of volunteers – resistance to top-down 'imposition' and scepticism. In relation to this McDonald and Tungatt (1992, p6) suggest that the best way to build the confidence and social skills required to get people to participate is by "employing sports leaders to work closely alongside existing and embryonic, community groups... acting as a catalyst, with local knowledge, access to resources and the ability to bring in related agencies" is part of the key to success.

7.10 A sense of 'ownership' appears to be an essential component of successful initiatives and McDonald and Tungatt (1992, p12) refer to a project in Norwich (Working with Women) which worked with existing community groups and enabled women to run their own sessions (with the assistance of a part-time community activity organiser) for their identified needs. The significant finding for this approach was that the "sense of ownership has enabled many to adapt to the inevitable short term lifestyle changes which... often... result in a return to non-participation".

7.11 Authors writing about urban regeneration projects more generally (Thomas, 1995; Forrest and Kearns, 1999) have stressed that those living in deprived areas have been subject to a wide variety of 'development' initiatives and are naturally sceptical about new initiatives. Further, Deane (1998) found a high level of scepticism about Action Sport programmes because of the perception of them as short-term initiatives, with no long-term commitment to the community. This also reflects the experiences of some of the Action Sport schemes. For example, Deane (1998, p153) suggests that many of the schemes,

*"suffered... credibility problems with local community representatives. Local community representatives perceived the schemes as being a short-term attempt by central government to show that they were doing something for the young unemployed... [and] saw the Action Sport schemes as a complete waste of resources".*

7.12 Deane's (1998) proposed solution (and that of many of the interviewees in the case studies and research findings) is a 'bottom-up' approach, which seeks to address wider inclusion issues through sport - either to act in support of already existing projects, or to recruit and train the unemployed and operate a positive discrimination policy when employing sports leaders from the local community. As with previous evidence (Witt and Crompton, 1996; Utting, 1996) the solution is to emphasise the productive contribution which sports projects can make to the local community and not simply offer what appears to be a 'quick fix' – such an approach develops a sense of ownership and commitment, which is more likely to encourage voluntary contributions.

7.13 Summarising the Action Sport experience McDonald and Tungatt (1992, p33) state that, although Action Sport challenged the values of traditional sports provision,

*"the widely used term 'sports development' still has connotations of coaching and competition for some community development agencies. This must be avoided. Objectives, and more importantly, performance indicators must be set and judged by people who understand the nature of the work."*

7.14 We have already noted the conclusions of the Leisure and Environmental Protection Department of Newport County Borough Council (1999), that sport can only contribute to the reduction of social exclusion (especially among the most disaffected) if it is *not* organised or promoted along conventional lines. Further, they propose a new, more all encompassing, role for community/sports development workers. Their job will be to:

- Establish/generate local interest in sports and engage the community in both planning and playing.
- Develop within the community groups and organisations the capacity to fundraise for local sports activities and to prepare bids for appropriate resources.
- Network with key agencies to ensure that they can effectively intervene when opportunities arise to support individuals or groups to meet other personal or community objectives (eg employment advice, lobbying on non-sport issues). *This is a key role in adding value to the sports activities in order to impact on exclusion* [emphasis added].
- Support groups and communities to establish real ownership of local resources, such as sports facilities, and thus increase participation.
- Identify and train local sports leaders, team managers etc to provide an infrastructure for sustained activity.
- Provide access to progression routes for talented individuals.

7.15 The central message of the above (and also the analyses of diversionary initiatives aimed at combating youth crime) is that "developing sports activities in deprived communities will necessarily take a different form to developments in more affluent areas (Leisure and Environmental Protection Department of Newport County Borough Council, 1999, p5). Further (and also confirmed by the analyses of youth-at-risk and health promotion) sport must form part of a wider multi-agency approach if all aspects of social inclusion are to be addressed.

### **The nature of community**

7.16 However, just as the nature of 'sports' and their presumed outcomes require some conceptual clarification, it is important to consider what is implied by 'community' in such initiatives. Much of the research and debate has related to strengthening the 'internal' structures and relationships within communities. However, Forrest and Kearns (1999) raise a more complex issue, especially for a social inclusion agenda. For them, the social and spatial links to the world *beyond the immediate neighbourhood* are important, especially the extent to which the neighbourhood may be socially and spatially isolated. Their concern is that otherwise stable and integrated communities can be '*excluded*' - i.e. inward looking, 'defensive communities' with little contact with the broader community/city. Consequently, Forrest and Kearns (1999, p1) argue that "the quality and degree of interaction with the world beyond neighbourhoods" is important. They suggest that,

*"cohesion may not be inherently positive – it can be inward-looking and suspicious of outsiders... [for example] the cohesion of youth culture... can be perceived and experienced as anti-social by others" (Forrest and Kearns, 1999, p22)*

7.17 Consequently there may be a tension between *community development* and broader processes of social *inclusion* - if social inclusion is taken to mean participation in the wider society, rather than simply strong local/community networks. For this reason Parkinson (1998, p1), referring to social exclusion initiatives, suggests that "the key dilemma of the current policy debate ...is how to integrate area-based programmes with wider conurbation or regional strategies". This relates to a more radical questioning of the continuing importance of the traditional view of community. For example, the neighbourhood represents only part of an increasingly diverse web of relationships of kin, friends, colleagues, other contacts and leisure consumption (this is certainly true for the most 'included' - the affluent middle class) and there was evidence from the case studies that young people especially were concerned that the stigmatised image of the areas in which they lived prevented their integration into the wider job market (see also Coalter and Allison (1995) for similar attitudes expressed by young people in Wester Hailes). Some of the work in the case studies was based on the perceived need not only to strengthen communities, but to broaden horizons.

## **CASE STUDIES: EVIDENCE**

7.18 In most of the case studies the issue of volunteers was an important strategic issue – combining a philosophy of 'empowerment' and 'ownership' with the more pragmatic realisation that because of short-term (and in some cases reducing) funding the projects' long-term sustainability would depend on the work of volunteers. More generally, it was felt that sports could contribute to broader issues of community development by seeking to support the development of a shared sense of belonging and a strong 'civic infrastructure' of organisations and networks. As part of this strategy some of the projects provided highly subsidised sports leadership and initial coaching courses (in one case the subsidy covered 75% of the course costs).

7.19 However, in at least three of the case studies, the recruitment and employment of volunteers (or even part-time paid coaches/leaders) had proven to be difficult. In one SIP-funded project the initial strategy had been to establish programmes which would be sustained by input from trained volunteers. However, a number of factors led them to doubt the possibility of such a strategy. For example, the development team felt that it would be unrealistic to expect volunteers to take responsibility for some of the more alienated and excluded groups with which they had to work. They believed that they had already lost some volunteers because of the poor behaviour of some of the groups and concluded that it would be unfair to require volunteers to work with these groups until a stable pattern of activity had been established and volunteers had developed their skills and confidence to manage difficult situations. Consequently, the development officers took a strategic decision to concentrate on recruiting from professional groups with experience of working with children and young people (school teachers, youth and social workers). This approach had been welcomed by one of the head teachers involved, who believed that regular in-service training is needed to maintain interest among staff in the activity programmes. However, it will do little to develop a sense of 'ownership' among the members of the deprived communities for whom the provision is being made.

7.20 More generally it was suggested that current mechanisms for community involvement often involve relatively few people. For example, the case of a community-run sport/community centre illustrates certain problems associated with 'community involvement' and volunteers. It was suggested that the domination of a (ultimately financially unsuccessful) bar by a few local people resulted in a narrow base of community involvement and a lack of a sense of ownership. The possibility of this type of 'narrow localism' (characteristic of similar initiatives), raises issues about the limits of the 'communities' served by such facilities, with a danger of a restrictive type of 'ownership' developing, which works to exclude the wider community. Some of those involved felt that the sport trust illustrated a generic problem concerning the nature and balance of local control. The apparent paradox of this example was that initially there was *too much of the wrong type* of local control and now there is *not enough local involvement*, as the centre has lost a strong local identity.

7.21 The issue of local involvement is also raised by the fact that many residents of deprived areas have been subject to a variety of, often short-term, 'development initiatives' and may be 'initiative-weary'. Some interviewees stated that it often takes a long time for local people to get involved in the programmes because they are sceptical about "yet another council project".

7.22 In one of the case studies a community representative on a general sports development programme stated that "we were very suspicious of the project – we have had so many things piloted in and out". In two of the SIP-funded case studies there was evidence that a sense of trust and ownership took a long time to develop – some viewed 'volunteering' as "doing the Council's work".

7.23 On the other hand, in one case study the salience of sport was a major reason for its introduction into a number of areas of SIP-funded programmes. For example, it was being included in programmes aimed at drug rehabilitation, health education, family centres, employment and training programmes, housing development and facility infrastructures. The rationale was to use sport/leisure provision to reach potential users of other services, who may be difficult to contact through more traditional social work and outreach programmes.

### **Developing Community Management**

7.24 In one case study a 'top down' approach was resented because there already was a strong community infrastructure. In this context, and in the absence of consultation, the larger initiative was perceived as a threat, with residents regarding the local authority as attempting to 'take over' their existing sports programme. However, the scepticism was overcome by the collaborative approach of the development workers who began to respond to community requests. This collaboration was developed further by encouraging some of the regular participants to establish their own sport and leisure club, and take more responsibility for the management of sport in their areas.

7.25 Initially, there was resistance to the idea of a 'club' - "the word club to them meant that people would get left out, so they wouldn't consider it. But they said that they wouldn't mind forming a community sport and leisure group". This group initially involved a few people who expressed an interest and its first task was to organise a summer barbecue to raise their profile in the community. The development officer regarded the barbecue as a success because it

attracted local people who might not have attended a formal meeting about a sport and leisure group. Also, by charging a small amount for the barbecue, the group made a small profit, which started their fundraising.

7.26 The sport and leisure group was formally constituted with a chairperson, secretary and treasurer and, in pursuit of inclusivity, it decided that anyone could join the management group (between 12 and 20 people took on a role in the group). There is no affiliation charge for residents of the area and it is hoped that this will assist communication with residents as it will not be regarded a 'club membership' scheme.

7.27 However, ongoing support is essential, with the development officer working in the community centre for a few days each week. The officer assists the group to do such things as develop a room as a community gym by assisting them to identify good, second-hand sports equipment and making a bid for funds for sports/fitness equipment and coaching costs.

7.28 The neighbourhood represents only part of an increasingly diverse web of relationships of kin, friends, colleagues, other contacts and leisure consumption (this is certainly true for the most 'included' - the affluent middle class) and there was evidence from the case studies that young people especially were concerned about the stigmatised image of the areas in which they lived prevented their integration into the wider job market (see also Coalter and Allison, 1995). Further, as indicated by the success of Glasgow Works Play/sport, social networks outwith the immediate neighbourhood are a key element in obtaining employment and reducing social exclusion.

### **Broadening horizons**

7.29 Although increased local provision and opportunities are essential to encouraging participation, some recognised the potentially negative consequences of reinforcing already 'defensive communities'. For example, a community-based sports trust sought to bring outsiders into the community by attracting teams from outwith the local community and encouraging local young people to join such teams. The Glasgow Works Play/Sport project provided job training opportunities outwith its local area (although support was often required to enable people to overcome their reluctance to travel to other areas). In a SIP-sponsored scheme a free swim ticket encouraged families to swim in pools in other parts of the city (only 14% walked to the venues, with 24% taking a bus and 61% using private transport). In a large-scale youth-orientated initiative the sports development worker took young people out of their areas to sports events "to broaden their horizons".

7.30 The arguments of McDonald and Tungatt (1992) and Leisure and Environmental Protection Department of Newport County Borough Council (1999) that sport can only contribute to the reduction of social exclusion (especially among the most disaffected) if it is *not* organised or promoted along conventional lines was confirmed by a 'sports development' officer in one of the case studies. She viewed her role as not being to develop 'sport' per se. However, this confused other professional staff with whom she had to work, who knew little about the potential role of sports in deprived areas. She explained "if you are in employment development your role is to get someone a job... if you are in sports development they think that your job is to get them into a sports team and winning competitions... [however] my role is to give people something to feel good about – enjoyment and pleasure". Clearly, in order to

achieve the necessary multi-agency alliances, traditional professional definitions and understanding need to be questioned (and appropriate and relevant outcome measures agreed).

## **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

7.31 The literature, research and case study evidence suggest that:

- Sport is heavily dependent on volunteer labour and provides opportunities for 'non-participants' to obtain the potentially positive benefits of sport. Because of its high social and economic value, volunteering in sport offers possibilities for the development of a sense of self-esteem and social purpose.
- In many of the case studies the development of volunteers was a strategic aim. This policy combined a philosophy of 'empowerment' and 'ownership' with the pragmatic realisation that short-term funding required the work of volunteers to ensure sustainability.
- Barriers to the development of volunteers include resistance to 'top down' initiatives, widespread scepticism about agencies' motives, an 'initiative fatigue' in areas suffering from long-term deprivation, the lack of confidence often associated with the long term unemployed and the cost and difficulty of some leadership and coaching awards.
- 'Bottom-up' approaches, which build on and assist existing (or emerging) programmes provide a greater sense of involvement and ownership
- There is a need for greater clarification of the distinction between developing sport in the community and the instrumental use of sport for purposes of community development. These require different strategies, different personnel and different outcome evaluations.
- Where sports projects provide a contribution to wider aspects of the community they are more likely to be sustainable.
- There is a clear need for a more systematic approach to the recruitment, training and support of volunteers, based on an appreciation of the personal and professional development needs of potential recruits from the long-term unemployed.
- It is probably unrealistic to expect all such programmes to be self-sustaining, as evidence suggests that there is a need for ongoing support from skilled professional workers.

## CHAPTER EIGHT      SPORT AND MINORITY ETHNIC GROUPS

### RESEARCH EVIDENCE

8.1 The notion of 'community' inherent in many community sports initiatives often has implications of cultural homogeneity, stability and consensus. However, many modern communities are heterogeneous and can contain 'communities within communities' - a fact indicated by the widespread perception of 'territorialism' within our case study areas. The nature and degree of social cohesion will vary depending on the ethnic mix, the balance between long and short-term residents, the age structure of the community and the gender balance. For example, via ties of religion, culture and extended family networks some minority ethnic communities, living within larger geographical 'neighbourhoods', may have a high degree of social cohesion - yet, in some ways, may be separate from the larger community. Such communities raise complex issues relating to provision for sport, the balance between exclusive provision, integrated provision and integrated participation and the nature of appropriate policy outcomes.

8.2 There is a general lack of data on minority ethnic group participation in sport (Verma and Darby, 1994) and although there is information on best practice, as with other areas, there is an absence of outcome analysis (Collins et al, 1999). Further, there is a recognition that the complexities of the issues have rarely (and often inadequately) been researched (Fleming, 1994). This is especially so in Scotland. In part this may be because ethnic minority groups account for a relatively small proportion of the population. The 1991 Census indicated that the non-white minority ethnic population totalled about 60,000 (1.3% of the population), with almost two-thirds concentrated in Glasgow and Edinburgh (Horne, 1995). Or, it may be that sports provision for such groups is not regarded as an issue (Horne, 1995). For example, only 32 per cent of Scottish local authorities specified provision for ethnic minorities in their CCT contract specifications (Coalter, 1994), although the equivalent figure for England, with a much higher proportion of minority ethnic groups, was only 36 per cent (Coalter, 1993).

### Similarities and differences

8.3 Research evidence suggests that the barriers to participation in sport among members of minority ethnic groups are both similar to, and different from, the rest of the population. For example, a report from the Health Education Authority (1997, p3), concerned with promoting physical activity among minority ethnic groups, concluded:

*"In general most of the barriers to physical activity are not culturally specific. Indeed, quantitative research undertaken among the white adult population of England identified many similar barriers. However, there were differences in ways of participating in physical activity and different requirements of facilities for physical activity and these were sometimes influenced by cultural or religious beliefs".*

8.4 Of course such factors raise complex issues about the balance between exclusive provision (for religious/cultural reasons, to develop confidence, for culturally-specific activities), integrated provision (providing access to quality facilities at appropriate times) and



integrated participation. For example, religious and cultural factors can greatly reduce the amount of possible *casual* participation. Where there is a requirement for single sex participation, the ability to achieve this on a casual basis is limited. Because of the degree of planning required, the variety of activities which can be undertaken is reduced. Further, where young people attend after-school cultural and religious classes, the standard local authority after-school provision cannot be used.

8.5 There is some evidence that, as with other groups, constraints on participation are often rooted in school experiences and negative stereotyping. For example, (Fleming, 1994, p171) suggests that - "the perception of young South Asians being less physically able than their peers from other ethno-cultural groups became very widespread, especially in educational discourse". Further, the absence of appropriate role models (PE teachers, coaches, successful sports people), especially for South Asian children, can have negative consequences for participation. Nevertheless, Verma and Darby (1994) found the same level of interest in sport among children from minority ethnic groups as their white counterparts (although opportunities for girls and young women were much more limited).

8.6 The lack of understanding of such issues is often compounded by the widespread problem of "false universalism" (Fleming, 1994). From such a perspective local authority policies are developed for 'minority ethnic groups', with little appreciation that "ethnicity is a multi-faceted and complex phenomenon and embraces, for example, historical and cultural tradition, geographic origin, language, literature and religion. Moreover, ethnicity is neither fixed nor rigid" (Fleming, 1994, p166). Further, gender, age and social class have significant impacts on how ethnicity is interpreted and expressed. Also, although many members of minority ethnic groups suffer both social and economic deprivation, not all do so (although they are often victims of racial stereotyping). Both published evidence and case study information indicate that such inter- and intra- ethnic group variations are not well understood, or expressed in policies or practices in sport.

8.7 However, even where specific provision is included, policy and criteria for performance measurement often remain vague. This is confirmed by Verma and Darby (1994, p84) in their survey of local authorities' policies and practices for sport for minority ethnic communities in the North West of England: "the policy documents were no more than statements of intent and often seriously flawed by a lack of clear objectives or descriptions of the processes by which the policy goals were to be realised". However, as this report indicates, this is a situation common in other areas of sports policy.

### **Dangers of 'ghettoising' policy**

8.8 In response to such issues some local authorities have appointed minority ethnic group sports development officers, often recruited from the relevant communities. Paralleling the general findings about the importance of locally recruited leadership (see Section 4.1) Verma and Darby (1994, p154) state that:

*"It is our opinion, supported by our research, that workers are more likely to achieve desired outcomes if they are of the same ethnicity as the community with which they are dealing and are preferably members of it".*

8.9 Although such an approach represents a positive recognition of the need to identify and cater for the differing requirements of minority ethnic groups, it also contains the danger that such work will be 'ghettoised', with matters relating to minority ethnic groups regarded as the sole responsibility of the specialist officer. Verma and Darby (1994, p85) argue that "work with ethnic minorities cannot be effective and is not serious if it is seen as an extra to the mainstream work of the department". To 'ghettoise' policy and provision often results in a failure to provide the education and training required for *all* staff in order to develop the necessary understanding (and empathy) with the needs of members of minority ethnic groups. The failure to undertake this work can constrain the nature and pace of the strategic development work, as other officers fail to acknowledge their responsibilities for working with members of ethnic minority groups. At the point of consumption, operational staff (often through ignorance) may act improperly (eg with regard to dress or behaviour) leading to the perception of racist and unwelcoming attitudes. For example, a participant in a group discussion for the Health Education Authority (1997, p48) research stated that "sports centres and clubs are set according to the culture of English people. They don't suit our particular needs; we don't know if our elderly people will be treated with respect".

8.10 A possible consequence of such an approach is to regard minority ethnic groups as 'problems', rather than the policies and practices of the service. For example, Fleming (1994, p163) argues that,

*"it is the pre-occupation with the 'problems approach' and concerns with attempting to make sense of the unfamiliar that have prevented the effects of racism from being highlighted as prominently as they should have been... the focus of the analysis needs shifting from the Asian culture, religion and norms, to the racist structures and institutions".*

8.11 The perception that they are being viewed as 'a problem' also underpins a certain scepticism about development initiatives – a reaction similar to other socially and economically deprived groups who have been subject to a series of initiatives. For example, the Commission for Racial Equality (1985), commenting on general developmental initiatives, stated that:

*"The communities felt that what the councils meant by consultation was not getting the views of the communities and acting on them, but rather a means of telling the communities what was going to be done regardless".*

8.12 The dangers of failing to address the key concerns of communities are illustrated by the experience of the Scunthorpe Ethnic Minorities Recreation Project (Sports Council Research Unit, 1990), which aimed to increase sports participation. A project development worker stated that "our work is seen as just selling a ball game and not addressing essential problems such as education and social welfare". As is illustrated in other parts of this report, sports-orientated initiatives among minority ethnic groups are most likely to take root if they are integrated into broader programmes which seek to address more fundamental issues of deprivation and exclusion.

8.13 Verma and Darby (1994, p157) argue that the achievement of desired outcomes (which are often not clear) will be slow and that:

*"... the process will put demands on leisure departments' resources and that the benefits afforded to those groups whose opportunities have been restricted or denied may be at the expense of some of the privileges that have come to be regarded as 'rights' by the white majority".*

8.14 Some of the "privileges" referred to by Verma and Darby (1994) include historic programming and access to facilities at premium times. This is most obvious in relation to the difficulties faced by newly established sports clubs among minority ethnic groups.

### **Voluntary sports clubs**

8.15 In addition to the programmed and casual participation opportunities provided by local authorities, sports clubs are the other major provider of opportunities to take part in sport. Clubs are important not just as providers of opportunities for participation, but also as providers of pathways enabling the progression from recreation to performance. However, many ethnic minority clubs face a series of disadvantages. Firstly, they are often relatively new and consequently face competition with long established clubs for resources and access to high quality facilities (Pote-Hunt, 1987). Further, minority ethnic clubs often find it difficult to gain entry to established networks and leagues, reducing their competitive opportunities. Even where they gain entry to leagues it is often difficult to accommodate cultural requirements, or there are established practices which are not culturally acceptable (culture of alcohol, male spectators/officials at female sport events).

### **Promoting participation**

8.16 The Health Education Authority (1997) outlines a series of factors which should be taken into account when developing policies to encourage increased physical activity among minority ethnic groups. These are as follows:

- Greater emphasis should be placed on the health benefits of exercise and activity, because of the particular health issues facing some minority ethnic groups (heart disease among the South Asian population in the UK is 40% higher than the general population). A project in Scunthorpe suggested that making leisure linked to health and education a stronger part of lifestyles was a helpful precursor to the promotion of sports programmes (McDonald and Tungatt, 1991).
- Fun, enjoyment and sociability (including family participation) should be emphasised.
- Images of 'ordinary' Asian and black people should be used in promotional campaigns, not just stereotypes such as black athletes or Asian cricketers.
- Local authorities should adapt advertising to emphasise the acceptability of all dress codes.
- Efforts should be made to recruit and train more Asian and black coaches and facility staff.
- Greater use should be made of 'local' facilities, including existing cultural and community centres (this recommendation is relevant for all 'under-participating groups).

### **CASE STUDIES: EVIDENCE**

8.17 Because of time constraints and difficulties in contacting the diversity of members of minority ethnic groups, the information collected for this case study was more limited than for the others. Nevertheless, the evidence collected provides a useful confirmation of many of the issues identified in the literature review.

### **Building on traditions**

8.18 Like other 'initiative weary' social groups within deprived areas, members of the minority ethnic communities were initially sceptical about working with a sports development officer. Like other groups, they had limited faith in the long-term commitment of the local authority and were reluctant to be "used for another council initiative". The development officer had "to let them see that I was listening and to win their confidence". This involved spending time with groups, identifying their needs and seeking to find ways to address these needs.

8.19 A major part of the strategy was to build on existing cultural practices by assisting in the promotion of traditional cultural events and use them as an opportunity to raise the profile of sport and physical activity. For example, exercise to traditional music was used to make associations between such cultural traditions and physical activity. In addition to promoting knowledge of the standard activities provided by the local authority, support was provided for traditional activities such as Kabaddi and Chinese and Asian dance. Further, in an effort to challenge racial stereotypes and to illustrate the value of minority ethnic cultures, some attempts have been made to introduce such sports to the indigenous community. For example, a Kabaddi team of nine white and three minority ethnic participants participated at the Birmingham Mela and public exhibitions have been given at such events as the West of Scotland Highland Games.

8.20 A number of high profile events have been organised which have served a variety of purposes – to raise the profile of sport among minority ethnic groups, to attract both participants and spectators to local authority facilities and to provide opportunities for competition and the development of a sense of achievement and pride. For example, the 1999 Asian Sports Meet (in association with the Scottish Asian Sports Association) was held at four major local authority venues over one weekend and catered for all ages and a wide range of sports. The inaugural UK Asian Football Championship was hosted at a major facility, with the finals held at Celtic Park.

### **Managerial, attitudinal and cultural constraints**

8.21 More generally there is a perceived need for both exclusive and integrated provision. The need to develop both social and physical confidence among some (usually older) members of the minority ethnic communities requires that initial participation takes place in exclusive sessions (this is also the case when religious factors are significant) . However, the perception is that there are many in these communities who wish to participate in mainstream facilities, but are unable to obtain access for a variety of reasons. This can involve actual or perceived racist attitudes from other participants or facility staff, which was regarded as a particular issue for young Asian men - "sometimes they just don't feel welcome". It was felt that there is a need for better education and training to enable staff to become more sensitive to the culturally-specific needs of potential participants. Another constraint is long standing

club/team block bookings, which reduce the ability of facilities to accommodate new user groups and teams (especially at premium times).

8.22 Religious/cultural constraints include the need for single sex provision, which, because of the need for forward planning, has three major consequences.

8.23 Firstly, it reduces greatly the opportunities for casual participation. A member of the Asian Women's Netball Team commented that "we can't just go in and use anywhere like other people can... we need somewhere that we can go along to on a casual basis to do a range of activities, things like using a gym or playing a casual game of badminton". Another commented that "it would be good to be able to choose when I go swimming. At the moment I have to pile in with all the other Asian women on the same night every week and it is really busy because that's the only time".

8.24 The second consequence of such requirements is that the variety of available sports is reduced greatly: "we end up having to go to the same class every week because that's the only one accessible to us".

8.25 Thirdly, as there is often a need to make 'special arrangements', there is often a 'special charge' which can be prohibitive for some people – especially young people.

8.26 As indicated by existing research, the development of clubs is constrained by the lack of opportunities to compete. A member of the Asian women's netball team commented that "we rely on our coach to find us competitions - we don't get enough information about leagues and events". A further constraint was the difficulties involved in finding a coach, in part because they do not play in a mainstream council facility, but also because they play on a Friday evening in a school hall - "because we can't get a let anywhere else that suits our needs to have no men around". This 'ghettoisation' also constrains their recruitment and development as they have difficulty in advertising and promoting themselves in the wider community (further restricting participation opportunities for others).

### **Extending remits and integrating policies**

8.27 There was a perception that there was a risk that some staff regarded the development officer as "taking care of all the ethnic issues". However, such an approach (with its implications of a marginal 'problem group' and special provision) contained the danger of other development staff failing to include such issues in their work (eg the problems faced by minority ethnic clubs can only be addressed successfully via the work of the sport-specific development officers).

8.28 In addition to such 'administrative' changes there was a perceived need for ongoing education and development among staff at all levels to increase understanding and empathy with the needs of minority ethnic groups. Without this more corporate approach the development work of a limited number of minority ethnic group development officers will inevitably be slow.

8.29 More generally, local authorities need to address systematically a number of corporate issues – the dangers of 'ghettoisation' and the need to integrate fully ethnic minority issues into mainstream policy and practice, the need for race awareness training among all staff, a

recognition of the difficulties which clubs face in gaining access to facilities at premium times (although this is a constraint faced by many new clubs). More generally (as in other areas of policy examined in this report) there is a need for a greater clarity on desired policy outcomes. Here there may be a need for both universal and specific policy outcomes. Referring to more general policies for race and urban regeneration, Brownhill and Darke (1999) argue that universal targets have the advantage of being readily accepted by regeneration professionals and reflect policy language.

8.30 However, they may fail to benefit all groups as diversity becomes subsumed under general headings such as exclusion (or participation). Specific targets overcome these shortcomings (although they may provoke hostility in some quarters). To achieve this there is a need for better baseline data on all aspects of minority ethnic communities, a need to acknowledge diversity based on culture, religion, age, gender and social class and a need (where possible) to integrate provision into the mainstream.

## **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

8.31 The literature research and case study evidence suggest that:

- There is limited systematic information about minority ethnic groups and participation in sport and physical activity in Scotland (this is surprising given their concentration in a few areas).
- Although some barriers to participation are common to both ethnic minority and white communities there are specific issues relating to cultural/religious beliefs and perceived racist attitudes among both providers and other participants.
- A range of factors serve to reduce the opportunities for casual participation, reduce the variety of sports which can be accessed and limit facility access for clubs at premium times.
- There is a lack of understanding of inter- and intra-minority group differences and this is often compounded by 'ghettoising' policy and practice. As with all communities the dangers of 'false universalism' must be recognised and awareness training provided at all levels.
- As with other communities, 'bottom-up' initiatives which build on traditions, seek to address issues wider than sport and use workers recruited from the relevant communities are those most likely to succeed.
- As in other areas of provision there is a need for greater clarity about the desired outcomes for such provision and these should be agreed in consultation with the relevant communities.

## RESEARCH EVIDENCE

9.1 In addition to such things as a shared sense of belonging and common purpose and a vibrant civic infrastructure, Forrest and Kearns (1999) suggest that the *physical infrastructure* is an important aspect of community regeneration. Amenities (shops, community halls, recreational facilities) provide the social foci of the community, contribute to the quality of life and affect people's perception of their neighbourhood (and improve the image of an area in the eyes of outsiders). They suggest that the experience of 'neighbourhood' may matter most to those with least resources and therefore least mobility. In other words it is for those most excluded, those who rarely venture outside their local area (the old, single parents, the young) that the nature of neighbourhood/community has the greatest importance. Forrest and Kearns (1999, p36) conclude that;

*"..the neighbourhood environment still matters... to these disadvantaged communities. The elements of the neighbourhood conceived in early planning concepts are still... desired though not always present... residents would prefer their neighbourhoods to satisfy a range of residential functions, but changing social patterns of shopping, leisure and recreation, together with the significant costs involved in providing facilities, meant that these neighbourhoods were no longer self-sufficient for many of the functions people sought from them".*

9.2 Evidence from the USA suggests that "physical, social and environmental attributes of a community have a significant effect on one's overall perception of well-being" (Allen and Beattie, 1984). Using regression analysis of household survey data they found that although income, housing, employment, health and safety are regarded as essential to subsistence, "leisure services, economic conditions and quality of the environment contribute the most to one's overall feelings of satisfaction. It is these dimensions which appear to be the satisfiers of community life" (Allen and Beattie, 1984, p106).

9.3 From this perspective the maintenance of otherwise under-used community facilities and wider environmental recreation-related improvements (parks, playing fields, pathways) have a significant role to play in the development of the quality of life in communities. For example, Sport England (1999) suggest that open space is a valuable sporting and recreational resource in our towns and cities, whether as formal areas for activities (playing fields, playgrounds) or more informal multi-functional areas such as parks. Many sports-related projects have re-claimed derelict land and improved the physical and visual amenity of deprived areas. For example, the Reczones project in Bolton is reclaiming derelict land for playgrounds and general sporting areas, the Mountbatten Sailing and Watersports Centre is converting a redundant RAF seabase and derelict industrial land to recreational use (Sport England, 1999).

9.4 While sports and leisure facilities can have a positive impact on neighbourhood environments, such developments also reflect the need for *local* provision for both organised and casual sport and physical recreation. The evidence from many of the case studies (and research such as McDonald and Tungatt, 1994) emphasises that local provision is a major factor in encouraging certain social groups to participate.

9.5 Young children, women with young children, people with disabilities and the elderly all face transport problems, which are addressed by the provision of local facilities and amenities. In other words, although many of the schemes examined in this report provide sporting opportunities for instrumental reasons (improve health, divert from crime and anti-social behaviour, contribute to community development) there are good grounds for arguing that residents of deprived urban areas should have access to the same quality facilities as other (more prosperous and mobile) sections of the population.

## **CASE STUDIES: EVIDENCE**

9.6 Most of the case studies in SIP areas were part of a more general strategy to improve neighbourhood environments. In one, physical redevelopment specifically included 'leisure areas' on the basis that even if people did not use the new or improved facilities, their presence contributed to an increased 'feel good' factor about the local community.

9.7 Another illustrates the contribution which sport can make to the retention of local amenities. A diversionary play project in a SIP area provided local opportunities and overcame the constraints of 'territoriality' by using a network of nine local community halls. This scheme contributed hall hire fees of approximately £750 per annum and additional, but unquantified, income for those who ran cafeterias and tuck shops. It was suggested that some of these halls would be closed without this project's income, with the subsequent loss of a neighbourhood amenity.

9.8 The wider importance of the retention and use of such halls is illustrated by the view expressed in another case study that the programmed fitness classes in previously underused community centre "brought it to life again". More importantly, such classes were also perceived as helping to address concerns about community safety – with "more going on" in community buildings the area felt safer.



## CHAPTER TEN CONCLUSIONS

### THEORETICAL OUTCOMES

10.1 In general the claimed inherent properties and potential outcomes of sports participation are closely related to several factors associated with the promotion of community development/ regeneration and social inclusion. Further, there appears to be a widespread, broad understanding of these supposed relationships and outcomes and this informed the rationale for many of the policies and practices in the case study programmes.

10.2 It is clear that participation in the broad range of sports has the *potential* to improve physiological and mental health, contribute to personality development (self-concept, self-esteem; locus of control), improve psychological well-being (reduce anxiety and stress and increase sense of well-being) and assist in social learning (roles, tolerance, respect for others). It is also possible that, at a secondary level, such individual improvements might transfer to forms of behaviour and relationships which lead to a reduction in the propensity to take part in anti-social behaviour, assist in the improvement of educational performance and involvement in more positive social relationships which improve the 'civic infrastructure' and reduce a sense of social exclusion.

10.3 However, although there are strong *theoretical* grounds for assuming such positive individual and social outcomes, there is a widespread lack of empirical research on both outcomes, and more importantly the mechanisms and processes via which they are achieved (especially in 'real life' situations). As Patriksson (1995, p128) comments, "sport, like most activities, is not a priori good or bad, but has the potential of producing both positive and negative outcomes. Questions like 'what conditions are necessary for sport to have beneficial outcomes?' must be asked more often".

10.4 It is clearly not sufficient simply to measure outcomes (the definition of which are often disputed) and assume that these are 'sports-effects'. From a policy perspective, and in order to inform the design of programmes and achieve the optimal allocation of resources, there is a clear need to understand the relationship between *inputs* and *intermediate* and *final outcomes*. In part this is because the experience of sports is highly variable. Not only are there a wide range of sports, but there will be a wide variation in such things as the quality of the process, the nature of leadership, the intensity of involvement, the frequency of participation and the relative salience of the experience for participants (especially important if the aim is to change attitudes, values and behaviour). Consequently it cannot be assumed that such benefits will automatically be obtained in all circumstances by all participants, or that they will be transferred to wider social contexts. As Svoboda (1994) suggests, such effects are "only a possibility" and a direct linear effect between participation and effect cannot be assumed.

### Key issues

- Sport has a potential contribution to make to urban regeneration and social inclusion.
- Potential theoretical outcomes are not supported by systematic research evidence.
- Need for understanding of relationships between inputs, intermediate and final outcomes.

## LACK OF OUTCOME MONITORING

10.5 A widespread belief in the positive individual and social outcomes of sports participation underpins much public investment. For example, in one case study the proposal for urban regeneration funding simply listed a series of very ambitious theoretical outcomes for sport, while providing no defence or analysis of *how* these would be achieved. In a health-related initiative the 'known benefits' of exercise were simply assumed and monitoring was regarded as unnecessary. It is worth noting that evaluating local authority sports schemes for the unemployed over ten years ago, Glyptis (1989) wrote that "virtually all provision has been based on the basis of assumed need and presumed benefit... in the field of sport and the unemployed there is a danger that assumptions have already been enshrined as conventional wisdom". It would seem that little has changed.

10.6 The theoretical strength and coherence of the description of sports' potentially positive contributions partly explain the widespread failure to undertake systematic monitoring and evaluation of project outcomes. Because of the strength of the belief in such outcomes, many practitioners regard monitoring of performance as unnecessary - theory permits the assumption of such outcomes. Except for the sports-related employment project (where outcome measures were related to employment success), where monitoring did occur it was simply on the basis of volume *output* measures - classes, coaches, attendances. However, even in terms of output measurement, these data were limited.

- (i) The recording of attendances (visits), rather than people (visitors), or the failure to keep attendance records (except for the free family swim ticket) meant that it was not possible to estimate the number of people from the relevant communities who participated in the various projects – there is no information about the 'penetration' of the projects and the extent to which they were contributing to reducing aspects of social exclusion.

- (ii) With no record of frequency of attendance, there are no data about the level and intensity of participation, nor the commitment of participants - all factors which will influence the impact of participation on fitness, health, attitudes, diversion from drugs, reduction of social isolation and so on.

- (iii) There is a lack of any long-term monitoring to assess the extent to which participants adhere to exercise programmes, if participation declines following short-term interventions or subsidised promotions.

10.7 This lack of outcome measurement is widespread. For example, in an analysis of 180 items on sport and social exclusion, Collins et al (1999) found only 11 studies had "anything approaching rigorous evaluations and some of these did not give specific data for excluded groups or communities". In a review of 120 programmes for at-risk youth in the USA, Witt and Crompton (1996) found that 30 per cent undertook no evaluation and only 4 per cent undertook pre/post evaluation of participation-related changes. Such absence of monitoring is not confined to sports projects. In a review of youth work in Scotland Furlong et al (1997) concluded that the many apparently positive outcomes from youth clubs and activities were not being monitored and evaluated, making it difficult to assess the cost of services and their impact on vulnerability.

10.8 This absence of monitoring (and therefore evidence about the effectiveness of programmes) is also explained by limited funding and the short-term nature of many of the projects. Some projects were the result of a year-end quick spend, others were simply short-term 'demonstration' projects. In such circumstances the available time was committed to setting up the project, rather than discussing desired outcomes (about which there were often professional disagreements). Alternatively the money was not available for evaluation, it was felt (correctly) that the projects were too short-term to have measurable effects, or there was a lack of monitoring and evaluation expertise among staff.

### **Key issues**

- Widespread use of volume *output* measures to assess performance.
- Current output measures are inadequate.
- Need for definition and use of *outcome* measures.
- There is a lack of long-term monitoring and evaluation.

### **DIFFICULTIES OF MEASUREMENT**

10.9 In addition to resting their case on theoretical assumptions, many felt that the measurement of outcomes presented insurmountable difficulties. For example, it was argued that it was impossible to 'prove a negative' and evaluate the success or otherwise of projects aimed at keeping young people away from drugs. Others felt that they were making 'some contribution', but argued that it would be extremely difficult to disentangle the precise effects of participation from a range of parallel social influences and developmental processes. For example, reduction in crime may not simply reflect the provision of 'diversionary' sports programmes, but may also be related to a range of other policing policies and environmental improvements.

10.10 Others suggested that such interventions would "take years" to have any discernible impact, making short-term evaluation irrelevant. Further, disagreements about the nature of relevant performance indicators reflected differing professional perspectives – the 'attitudes to health' approach of community workers and the 'medical model' of others; the relevance of recidivism rates as a measure of 'success'; the relevance of recorded crime statistics to evaluate diversionary programmes. For many, the desired outcomes were often qualitative and rather amorphous - increased community cohesion, civic pride, community spirit, personal confidence and sense of well-being. The definition and measurement of such outcomes involve complex methodological issues and often require a form of monitoring and evaluation not possible with limited project budgets.

10.11 Therefore the combination of assumed benefits, short-term funding, emphasis on delivery of services, lack of funding and monitoring expertise led to a widespread lack of specific objectives (rather than broad aims) written in an operational format. This meant that few agencies had identified specific standards by which to evaluate the effectiveness of their programmes.

### **Key Issues**

- Difficult to identify the precise contribution of sport in wide-ranging initiatives.

- Short-term initiatives limit ability to evaluate effectiveness.
- Lack of professional consensus on desired outcomes.
- Failure to identify standards for evaluation of effectiveness.

## SHORT-TERMISM

10.12 In many of the projects the sports workers felt that they were subject to unrealistic expectations for quick results. This derived from a number of factors - the political needs of funding partners, the fixed life of Urban Partnerships and SIPs and a narrow instrumental concern with the presumed outcomes of sport, rather than a concern simply to provide sporting opportunities for deprived communities. In one area such 'short-termism' resulted in a shift in focus from school-children (seeking to establish patterns for *long-term* participation) to adults, in an attempt to address short-term health and employment issues.

10.13 Although wholly committed to their work, both sports development and health promotion workers acknowledged that short-term projects had very limited impacts on deep-rooted fitness and health problems, attitudes to physical activity and crime diversion. For example, Collins et al (1999) recommend that new programmes need to run for at least five years before legitimate evaluations can be undertaken. Despite a long-term increase in aggregate levels of participation in sport and physical recreation, there are persistent and relatively stable socio-demographic differences (see Coalter, 1998 for an analysis of trends in sports participation in Scotland between 1987 and 1996). Further there is evidence that the differences are explained as much by culture, attitudes and values as they are by the more traditional 'constraints' perspective (cost of participation, lack of time, lack of transport) (Coalter, 1993; Roberts and Brodie, 1992).

10.14 To address such deep-rooted differences will require a fundamental and sustained change in public policy. For example, Roberts and Brodie (1992) suggest such policies as a greater emphasis on sport in primary schools, increased local facility provision and changed management practices. Short-term impacts require 'sports motivators' rather than increased levels of formal provision (see also Rigg, 1986; McDonald and Tungatt, 1992; Witt and Crompton, 1996). In this context it is worth noting a conclusion derived from the work of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation on area regeneration (Parkinson, 1998, p4) that there is a "need to ensure a long-term commitment to sustainable neighbourhood regeneration at all levels of government". This raises the issue of the need for such initiatives to be more fully integrated into the strategic policies of agencies (especially local authorities, who will outlast SIPs and other partnerships).

10.15 Of course, such 'mainstreaming' might prove to be difficult, not simply because of funding, but because of the often different approaches needed for 'sport and community development' work. As indicated by both research and case studies such work requires outreach, flexibility, non-traditional provision and ways of working which may clash with the more traditional local government 'leisure professional' (in part because such approaches contain an implied criticism of previous ways of working).

10.16 Nevertheless such a commitment is essential to achieve the theoretical individual and social outcomes of sports participation, but it also serves to legitimate such interventions. In this regard Collins et al (1999) recommend that, wherever possible, initiatives should build on existing community organisations rather than attempt to start new ones. The evidence from the case study interviews and the experience of Action Sport (Deane, 1998; McDonald and Tungatt, 1992) indicates that programmes are more likely to be viewed positively (and obtain co-operation and participation) if they are not viewed as "yet another council project" – a (narrow) short-term response to deep rooted problems. Some development workers expressed concern that, where sport is used in an all-purpose instrumental approach, there was a risk of superficiality and a potential price to be paid for 'failure'.

### **Key Issues**

- Policy makers have unrealistic expectations for quick results.
- 'Short-termism' often leads to a failure to address issues of life-long participation.
- Increased participation will require increased inter-agency co-operation.
- There is a need for a long-term and integrated approach.

### **IMPORTANCE OF PARTNERSHIPS**

10.17 There is evidence of unresolved professional tensions concerning the intermediate and final outcomes of some projects and there is not always a happy relationship between the sports development/community development perspectives. In part because of the short-term funding, the planning stages of projects tend to concentrate on operational issues, rather than seeking to address conflicting professional paradigms and agree on desired outcomes.

10.18 Further, Fitzpatrick et al (1998) found that there were few regeneration initiatives in which the youth-orientated projects were logically programmed and well-integrated with each other and with existing youth provision. Youth-related projects tended to be under-resourced, compartmentalised and isolated from the mainstream (like the ad hoc and short-term funding of some of the case study projects). Nevertheless there is also evidence of successful integrated working and it is clear that sports-based initiatives are most likely to contribute to issues of regeneration and social inclusion when they have close working relationships with the strategic agencies.

10.19 The integrated and developmental approach proposed by certain analysts (Utting, 1996; Witt and Crompton, 1996; Fitzpatrick et al, 1998) requires multi-agency working (as well as flexible approaches to service provision). Clearly few sport and recreation departments wishing to address issues of health, youth-at-risk or broader aspects of social inclusion have the capacity to operate successfully alone. In fact the evidence is that they work most effectively by using the salience of various aspects of sports/physical recreation to gain access to particular social groups, which other social services might have difficulty in contacting. For example, as illustrated in this report, alliances between sports programmes and employment and training programmes can be effective. Further, in one of the case studies it was suggested that the popularity of sport among certain groups could be used to 'engage' residents in the broader processes of regeneration. The elements of choice, fun and a positive, healthy image were regarded as more user-friendly than the more 'serious' aspects of regeneration (although there is no evidence regarding the success of this strategy).

10.20 Although there are many positive examples of partnership and inter-agency working there are also examples of difficulties which derive from differing professional definitions of the issues which need to be addressed. This was most obvious in the area of health, where there were clear differences in definitions between community-orientated fitness officers, health workers and GPs.

### **Key Issues**

- Need for integrated and developmental approaches based on agreed outcomes.
- Sport can assist other agencies to gain access to often marginal individuals and groups.
- Sport can be used as the 'friendly face' of regeneration projects.

### **SUSTAINABILITY**

10.21 Most of the case study projects were marginal to the core operations of local government or the partner agencies and were dependent on short-term funding. Consequently, their long-term sustainability, irrespective of their 'success', appeared to depend on a combination of increased volunteer input and the achievement of some form of financial independence.

10.22 For example, a successful drugs diversion play project aimed at 8-12 year olds was funded for three years on a reducing budget, with the aim of progressively replacing core funding from other, self-generated, sources. Although able to meet the first year income targets, at least two factors indicate that the long-term viability of such an approach must be in doubt. Firstly, deprived areas tend to have unemployment rates substantially above the national average, making it very difficult to generate the necessary replacement funding without seeking income from outwith the area. Secondly, the need to concentrate resources on fund-raising will inevitably divert energies from the core operations and aims of the project.

10.23 This example raises important questions about the extent to which such projects can achieve financial independence in areas of high unemployment and social deprivation. Because SIPs have a limited life and have a strategic policy of ensuring sustainability, they cannot commit to long-term funding. However, as most public sector sport, recreation and play facilities operate with substantial subsidies, it seems unrealistic to expect these type of initiatives to become financially self-sustaining.

10.24 Volunteering is a second aspect of sustainability and is intimately linked to policies for social inclusion. Volunteers are viewed as the key to longer term sustainability and many projects provide opportunities for training and certification in sports leadership and lower level coaching awards (hopefully increasing employment potential). However, there are a number of possible problems with this approach.

10.25 Firstly, people needed to be assured that there was a longer term commitment to the project before they were willing to become involved in the management and administration of programmes.

10.26 Secondly, the increased 'professionalisation' of sports leadership and coaching (and concern about child protection) means that there is an increased emphasis on SVQ Level 2

qualifications. The evidence from this and other research is that many long-term unemployed do not have the educational ability to achieve the relevant standard without substantial support and assistance.

10.27 Thirdly, an evaluation of similar initiatives in England concluded that many "coaching/volunteer jobs are demanding in terms of emotional maturity and self-confidence... not attributes commonly found among people who have been unemployed for long periods of time" (McDonald and Tungatt, 1992).

10.28 Fourthly, the same evaluation suggested that permanent paid leadership supporting the concept of sports outreach is the greatest factor in success. Fifthly, in at least two of the case studies, concern was expressed about the narrow community recruitment base for volunteers.

10.29 Although the theoretical and practical rationales for the development of volunteering are clear, there must be some scepticism about the ability of this strategy to ensure the longer term sustainability of many of these projects. If this is to be achieved, then there is a need for a more systematic approach to volunteer recruitment, training and support and to ensure that the initial stages in coaching awards are relatively easy to attain (Sports Council, 1996).

### **Key Issues**

- It will be difficult for projects in areas of social deprivation to achieve financial independence.
- Volunteering will only succeed with more systematic recruitment, training and support.

### **LOCAL PROVISION AND 'NON-TRADITIONAL' DELIVERY**

10.30 Although many interviewees were concerned to break down the social barriers constructed by 'defensive communities', there was also a recognition that participation is most likely to be encouraged via the use of local (often non-specialist) provision. Local provision addressed many women's fear of travelling after dark, or reduced the travel time (and costs) to fit in with childcare. It also addressed young people's concerns with 'territorialism' and their (or their parents') reluctance to travel outside their own neighbourhood after dark. Further, it was widely agreed that working in socially and economically deprived areas requires the use of locally recruited people - who will be 'sympathetic' to the attitudes and requirements of the local population. For example, an evaluation of sport and leisure services for the unemployed (Glyptis, 1989) concluded that this was most successful where there were small community-orientated facilities in tight-knit neighbourhoods, staffed with local people.

10.31 Such analyses appear to be even more relevant to programmes aimed at at-risk young people. Evidence from the UK and the USA points to the importance of the nature and location of 'relevant' provision of diversionary programmes. Evidence suggests that traditional facility-based programmes provided by professional recreation staff are unlikely to have the desired impact. Outreach approaches which combine youth work and community development with sports development and take opportunities to where young people are (rather than attempt to attract them to traditional local authority sports centres) are becoming more widespread.

10.32 In attempting to address issues of community regeneration and social inclusion some have suggested that the whole concept of 'sports development' needs to be redefined, with outcome measures more appropriate to the needs of communities than the traditional, product-led, needs of sport. Further, some also suggest that consideration needs to be given to the type of workers required to deliver relevant opportunities. For example, a sports development officer for the West Midlands Police stated that "in my experience it is much easier for a youth worker or a community volunteer, to learn the sports skills side... than it is for the sports person to learn the coaching and leadership side" (quoted in Robins, 1990). Furlong et al (1997), in a review of Scottish social work practice with vulnerable young people, concluded that both providers and young people valued personal characteristics such as enthusiasm, commitment and a sense of humour as being more important in a youth worker than the possession of specific skills.

10.33 In 1989 the report of the Minister for Sport's Review Group, *Sport and Active Recreation Provision in the Inner Cities*, commented on frequent confusion between the role and objectives of outreach workers and sports leaders and their relationship with youth and community workers. They commented that this could not only lead to unnecessary duplication of effort, but also to uncertainty within communities about their boundaries of responsibility. Although agencies are increasingly recognising the need to address the issue of integrated working, it is clear that if sports' contribution to addressing issues of social inclusion is to be maximised then the issues identified in 1989 still need to be addressed systematically.

10.34 The central message of the above (and also the analyses of diversionary initiatives aimed at combating youth crime) is that "developing sports activities in deprived communities will necessarily take a different form to developments in more affluent areas" (Leisure and Environmental Protection Department of Newport County Borough Council, 1999, p5). Further (and also confirmed by the analyses of youth-at-risk and health promotion) sport must form part of a wider multi-agency approach, if all aspects of social inclusion are to be addressed.

10.35 Much of these analyses echo the more general conclusion of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (Parkinson, 1998, p4) that there is "the need to transform mainstream services at the local level" and a "need to bring residents to the centre of the policy debate and action".

10.36 The strength of the above analyses is illustrated by the relatively persistent socio-demographic differences in patterns of sports participation. For example, an analysis of trends in sports participation in Scotland between 1987 and 1996 identified increased participation in the 'selected sports' category (excludes walking, dancing, snooker/billiards/pool) among all social classes (especially the predominantly female C1) (Coalter, 1998). However, much of this increase had occurred in the early 1990s and had subsequently plateaued.

10.37 The report concluded that, overall, "taking into account a sampling error of plus or minus three per cent, social class participation rates [in all categories of activities] have remained relatively stable, with little change in the absolute or relative proportions of each social class participating" (Coalter, 1998, p65). For example, in 1998 the proportion in each social class taking part in the 'selected sports' category were AB (62%), C1 (57%), C2 (49%) and DE (35%), although DE has a considerably older age profile than the other social classes and participation declines with age in all social classes (MacGregor and Martin, 1999).



10.38 Differential participation rates are also confirmed by area-based data from the 1999 Scottish Household Survey. For example, only one-third (34%) of respondents from 'disadvantaged council estates' had used or visited a swimming pool in the past year, compared to 47 per cent in 'high income areas' and 'middle income home owners'. The same differentials are evident in the use of sports/leisure centres, with 30 per cent from 'disadvantaged housing estates' using/visiting such centres in the past year, compared to 46 per cent from 'high income areas'.

10.39 Such deep-rooted differential participation rates reflect a range of complex factors. These include lack of appropriate opportunities in early life; different socio-cultural attitudes to sport and physical activity; gender; age; lack of interest or confidence; cost of participation; lack of childcare and lack of local and relevant opportunities. However, whatever the cause of such differentials, it is clear that new approaches to encourage participation are required.

### **Key Issues**

- Local provision and locally recruited people are required to promote participation.
- The product-led 'sports development' approach need to be replaced by a needs-based one.
- Programmes need to be based on an understanding of the complexity of 'constraints'.

### **THE ROLE FOR SPORTS**

10.40 There is a general absence of systematic empirical evidence relating to the impact of sports-related projects (especially large-scale development initiatives). However, the strength of the theoretical arguments, with a range of indicative and associative information and anecdotal evidence, have led most commentators to agree that sports activities have a positive role to play as *ingredients in wider ranging initiatives* to address issues of health promotion, diversion from crime, education and employment initiatives and community development and social inclusion.

10.41 The key message relating to work in deprived communities and socially excluded groups is that although sport is rarely *the* solution, in many circumstances and used diagnostically it can be *part* of the solution. For example, although sports diversionary schemes may attract youth-at-risk, to be effective they must be complemented by opportunities for personal and educational development. Conversely, the *salience* of sports for otherwise disaffected long-term unemployed and school children can be used to gain access and connect them with other social agencies, who deal with wider aspects of social exclusion. Likewise, although there may be potential for sports-related employment and volunteering, this will not occur without appropriate recruitment, support and retention mechanisms. For health-related initiatives there is evidence of the need for a critical evaluation of the precise contribution of sports and the need for some measure of ongoing support and re-inforcement to assure adherence. In general, such work requires both non-traditional forms of delivery and ongoing support. As one development officer stated, "raising the profile of sport and leaving them to get on with it is not as successful".

10.42 However, there is a clear need for an improvement in the systems for monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of sports-centred initiatives. There is a need for clearer rationales for such programmes and greater clarity about the nature of the relationships

between inputs, outputs, intermediate outcomes and strategic outcomes. Such an approach will permit the more precise identification of the role of sports, lead to more coherent design of integrated programmes, a better evaluation of their effectiveness and optimal allocation of resources.

### **Key Issues**

- Sport can play a positive role as an ingredient in wider ranging initiatives.
- Sport is not *the* solution, but properly used it can be *part* of the solution.
- More precise statements of the role of sport and its associated outcomes are required.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN THE WAY FORWARD

### INTRODUCTION

11.1 Despite the examples of best practice outlined in this report, for a number of reasons sport has not fully realised its potential contribution to a range of social issues. In order to increase the effectiveness of the contribution of sport to issues of urban deprivation and social inclusion, a number of steps need to be taken and these are outlined below.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Understanding and evaluating outcomes

11.2 There is an urgent need to address issues of *outcome evaluation*, as the presumed theoretical benefits of sports remain largely unexplored, with an absence of robust empirical data. Monitoring is undertaken mostly on the basis of simple volume *output* measures of performance, which are of limited value.

11.3 To design more coherent programmes and target resources more effectively, there must be a better understanding of the rationale for provision and clearer statements of the strategies for achieving the desired outcomes. Programmes need to explain the relationships between inputs, outputs and outcomes in order to permit better evaluation of their effectiveness and to establish best practice.

Consequently two strategies are needed:

11.4 (i) Current and future projects need to improve greatly the nature and quality of *output* evaluation.

11.5 (ii) Relevant *outcome* measures must be defined and appropriate monitoring methods adopted.

#### *Responsibilities*

11.6 All funding agencies and providers - Social Inclusion Partnerships, **sportscotland**, the Scottish Executive, health authorities and local authorities – should insist on (i) and (ii) as a condition of funding (and recognise the funding implications of such requirements).

#### Best practice manual

11.7 Because of the widespread lack of expertise in outcome definition and measurement there is a need for a *best practice manual* for developing communities through sport. Such a manual would illustrate best practice management for a variety of groups and issues and improve the planning and implementation of new projects. It would also provide a user-friendly guide to the definition of outcomes and appropriate methods for their monitoring and evaluation, assisting in the achievement of the previous recommendation (it could be a condition of funding that the best practice manual is used). It should also lead to a greater

consistency across a variety of projects, increase effectiveness and lead to an accumulation of comparable findings and best practice.

#### *Responsibilities*

11.8 The Scottish Executive and **sportscotland** should fund the production and dissemination of the best practice guide.

11.9 **sportscotland** should also be responsible for acting as a clearing house for the collection and dissemination of accumulated good practice.

#### **New ways of working**

11.10 Research evidence indicates that traditional, facility-based, approaches may not be successful in reaching target constituencies in deprived urban areas, nor in addressing the complex issues of social exclusion. The initiatives with the most chance of success achieve a balance between developing sports in the community and the 'development of the community through sports'. The ingredients of success are a varying combination of an outreach, bottom-up approach; the use of local facilities; building on existing structures and traditions; recruiting local people; adopting a needs-based rather than a product-led 'sports development' approach; addressing issues wider than sport and physical recreation. Further, the use of local facilities also contributes to their retention and contributes to the strengthening of the civic infrastructure and local amenity value.

#### *Responsibilities*

11.11 Local authorities should critically evaluate current programmes and the extent to which they are addressing issues of social inclusion, rather than simply seeking to increase participation. There is a need to work closely with community-based groups and, within the new unitary authorities there is a need for greater collaboration between sport and recreation, community education and social and youth services.

11.12 **sportscotland** and **sportscotland's** Lottery Fund should promote and support such new ways of working.

#### **Long term planning, investment and integration**

11.13 Sports' contributions to issues of social deprivation and social exclusion are most effective as part of wide ranging programmes - 'sports cannot do it alone'. Sports' contribution is maximised via multi-agency working in integrated and developmental programmes (in which the nature of the contribution of sports is clearly identified).

11.14 If sports are to contribute to processes of community development and social inclusion it is essential to view their contribution in the medium to long term and not expect quick results. Such programmes need to be integrated more firmly into broader strategies for community development, with ongoing support for community groups from professional officers. However, where short-term projects are 'mainstreamed' such 'new ways of working' must not be compromised.

#### *Responsibilities*

11.15 Closer liaison at both national and local level will ensure the development of more integrated approaches. At a national level the Scottish Executive should convene the *National Physical Activity Taskforce* to provide a collaborative forum and appropriate strategic leadership and seek to address differing professional perspectives which sometimes limit local collaboration.

11.16 All Social Inclusion Partnerships and local authorities should explore the potential for the *integration* of appropriate sports programmes into wider social programmes (while not compromising the flexible new ways of working).

### **From product-led to needs- based approaches: the need for education and training**

11.17 Initiatives need to be based on more precise understandings of the nature and causes of the issues they wish to address. The shift from developing sports in the community to the 'development of the community through sports' requires a new range of skills. In addition, there is a need to develop new collaborative frameworks to enable more effective inter-agency working and to enable sports to maximise their contribution. This will require more pre- and in-service education and training for those involved in such work.

#### *Responsibilities*

11.18 **sportscotland**, in association with the Scottish Qualifications Authority and SPRITO (the national training organisation for sport, recreation and allied occupations), should evaluate the relevance of current SVQs as a preparation for developing communities through sport.

11.19 Social Inclusion Partnerships and local authorities should examine the need for relevant in-service training programmes for all relevant staff (this will include both sports development staff and those with whom they have to work).

### **Sustainability and volunteering**

11.20 The development of volunteers is central to many sports projects, reflecting philosophies of 'empowerment', 'ownership', 'active citizenship', or the need to ensure sustainability after the end of short-term funding. However, evidence suggests that most volunteers require substantial encouragement, training and support, with many potential recruits lacking the educational skills to achieve leadership and coaching awards. Therefore there is a need for more systematic approaches to the recruitment, training and support of volunteers in sport.

#### *Responsibilities*

11.21 **sportscotland** should work in collaboration with the Scottish Association of Local Sports Councils, the Scottish Sports Association, Volunteer Development Scotland and the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations to develop programmes for the training and ongoing support of volunteers in projects aimed at developing communities through sport.

### **Young people and life-long participation**

11.22 Because of short-term funding, the need for quick results and the immediacy of many of the problems in deprived urban areas there has been a tendency to target resources at 'at-risk' adolescents and adults with health and other problems. However, evidence suggests that 'life long participation' is best assured by early intervention. If sport is to play a strategic, rather than an ad hoc, role in addressing aspects of social inclusion it is essential that resources are committed to physical education and provision for sport is targeted at both primary and secondary schools in socially deprived areas and that such schools should not be deprived of the proposed school sport co-ordinators because of lack of funding.

### *Responsibilities*

11.23 All involved in the provision of sporting opportunities for young people - the Scottish Executive, local authority education departments, **sportscotland** and **sportscotland** Lottery Fund and governing bodies of sport- should, as a matter of priority, ensure that resources are targeted to areas of greatest need.

### **Sports for sports sake**

11.24 Much of this report has been concerned with the instrumental use of sport to address a range of social issues. However, there remains a case for 'sport for sport's sake'. All provision in areas of social deprivation should not be made wholly on instrumental grounds and assessed by measurable outcomes (this is rarely the approach adopted for the 'socially included'). There remains a case for developing sport in the community and providing all citizens with equal opportunities for participation.

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