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PHYSICAL ACTIVITY OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

A case study of StreetGames

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Context: Inequality in participation in youth sport

This chapter examines the work of the organisation StreetGames, which is a UK-based charity launched in 2007. StreetGames aims to bring sport to the doorstep of young people living in disadvantaged communities and in so doing ‘change sport, change lives and change communities’. The author has been involved with the organisation as an external evaluator on a number of different StreetGames programmes over a period of more than five years. The insight documented in this chapter is based on this experience viewed through a lens informed by broader debates around young people’s participation and active citizenship (Percy-Smith, 2008 & 2010; Tisdall, 2008; Mason et al., 2011). Such debates indicate that, despite considerable efforts, children and young people are still excluded from much of the formal decision-making that impacts on their lives.

StreetGames targets its work at young people aged 14–25 living primarily within the 20 per cent most deprived communities. In England these areas are identified by use of the English Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) calculated in England by the Department for Local Government and Communities (similar IMD are calculated in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland facilitating regional variation). The English IMD includes seven domains: income, employment, education, health, crime, barriers to health and services and living environment with the greatest weightings being applied to income and employment.

The term ‘disadvantaged communities’ is one which attempts to encapsulate the complex ways in which people experience living in households in poverty whilst simultaneously living in communities which reflect the divisive impact of widespread and persistent poverty. Whilst the term disadvantage is one that is much broader than the term poverty the two concepts cannot be isolated from each other – that is families that experience poverty typically experience a range of additional challenges beyond limited fiscal resources which leave them disadvantaged when compared to people living in more affluent households.

Rather than relying on absolute measures poverty has become increasingly recognised as being a relative term (currently positioned as living below of threshold of 60 per cent of median income). This approach highlights that those who experience poverty are excluded

1 from activities that those from more affluent communities consider basics of life. In the UK
2 around 2.3 million children were living in relative low income households and 2.6 million
3 in absolute low income households in 2013/14 (Department for Work and Pensions, 2015).

4 The pervasive impact of poverty (and disadvantage) on people's everyday lives has been
5 documented for many decades. Townsend's seminal work on poverty in the UK stated:

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7 Individuals, families and groups in the population can be said to be in poverty when
8 they lack the resources to obtain the types of diet, participate in the activities, and
9 have the living conditions and amenities which are customary, or at least widely
10 encouraged or approved, in the societies to which they belong. Their resources are
11 so seriously below those commanded by the average individual or family that they
12 are, in effect, excluded from ordinary patterns, customs and activities.

13 *Townsend, 1979:31*

14 More recently Darton et al. noted:

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16 Poverty in Britain is inextricably intertwined with disadvantages in health, housing,
17 education and other aspects of life. It is hard for people who lack resources to take
18 advantage of the opportunities available to the rest of society.

19 *Darton et al., 2003:9*

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21 As Darton et al. (2003) note low-income is also linked to educational under-achievement.
22 It is known, for example, that 11-year-olds eligible for free school meals because of low
23 income are twice as unlikely to achieve basic standards in literacy and numeracy as other
24 11-year-olds (Palmer et al., 2008). The challenges faced by children and young people in
25 childhood have implications which continue to disadvantage them as they progress into
26 adulthood. Additionally, the lower a child's socio-economic group at birth, the greater the
27 probability they will experience multiple deprivation in adulthood (Feinstein et al., 2007).

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29 It is perhaps not surprising then that people living in disadvantaged communities are less
30 likely to take part in sport than their more affluent peers. The Active People survey reveals
31 that since the first survey was conducted in 2005–2006 (APS1) the rate of participation (one
32 session of 30 minutes per week) amongst people aged 16 years and over is greater amongst
33 people from higher socio-economic groups than those from lower socio-economic groups
34 (Sport England, 2015). It also shows that rates of participation have decreased amongst the
35 lowest socio-economic groups since 2005–2006.

36 37 **StreetGames network**

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39 StreetGames was originally established as a result of a small number of neighbourhood sports
40 projects, all experienced in community regeneration projects, working in collaboration.
41 They aimed to make sport more widely available for disadvantaged young people and to
42 maximise the power of sport to change young lives and communities. Following a successful
43 two year pilot StreetGames secured funding from the Sport England Lottery and officially
44 launched in January 2007.

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46 StreetGames continues to work to ensure that more young people living in disadvantaged
47 communities take part in sport than have done previously. Despite its focus on sports
48 participation it is important to note that StreetGames is not a sports delivery organisation.
Instead the charity works with more than 700 local partners (community organisations) who

deliver a range of sports-based activities to young people living in disadvantaged communities utilising a doorstep approach. StreetGames projects are therefore more accurately visualised as being sports-based activities delivered by a network of organisations using a doorstep approach. The network of organisations is supported by the infrastructure that the charity StreetGames has developed since 2007. The support on offer to the network organisations includes financial resources, monitoring and evaluation, training and opportunities for young people to participate in a range of sports and volunteering activities.

Whilst StreetGames has always sought to increase participation in sport their remit is much broader as they also aim to impact positively on young people's lives and on the communities in which these young people live. These ambitious aims are articulated by the charity as a desire to 'change lives, change communities and change sport' (StreetGames, 2015a). This chapter examines each of these three ambitions for change beginning with the aspiration to change sport which also includes an outline of the doorstep approach that is intrinsic within StreetGames's delivery.

Changing sport

From the outset StreetGames recognised that attempting to redress inequality in sports participation in disadvantaged communities required a new approach to sports delivery. Whilst lack of financial resources was clearly a pervasive barrier to sports participation StreetGames recognised it was not the only barrier that disincentivised young people in disadvantaged communities taking part in sport. Another, possibly equally pervasive barrier, impacting on participation in sport by young people in disadvantaged communities was the belief that the sporting offer that was typically available was not reflective of the aspirations and preferences of many young people.

StreetGames recognised that even within disadvantaged communities there existed various school- and community-based sports opportunities on offer for young people who were already enthusiastic about sport and could afford to take part. However StreetGames also believed that there were many young people within these communities who were excluded from sport either through financial constraints or who were not attracted to the existing sporting offer within their communities. StreetGames believed that lack of enjoyment was an important reason why the traditional sporting offer was not engaging more young people from disadvantaged communities. Fun and enjoyment is therefore a key element of StreetGames sports delivery.

In addition it was recognised by StreetGames that the opportunities for 14–25 year olds in particular were limited, and perhaps non-existent, within disadvantaged communities. This was particularly the case when there was a need for the opportunities to also be affordable and accessible. In response StreetGames developed a new sporting offer which was often in direct contrast to existing provision for young people. The alternative approach was named 'doorstep sport' which reflected a desire reduce the barriers to participation by bringing sport (and physical activity) to young people – on their doorstep – in a style that better reflected their lifestyles and aspirations.

Doorstep sport – The StreetGames approach

The doorstep approach was developed by StreetGames in order to address some of the barriers that impact specifically on young people's participation in sport in disadvantaged communities. The term doorstep describes sports delivery which is offered to young people

1 living within disadvantaged communities in the ‘right place, at the right time, for the right
2 price, in the right style and by the right people’. The doorstep approach is not prescriptive
3 in terms of the sports and activities that are offered and instead deliberately seeks to ensure
4 that the sporting offer is developed with young people’s preferences as its starting point. The
5 approach recognises that different groups of young people, who may all share an experience
6 of living in disadvantaged communities, may not share their expectations of sport and for
7 this reason the sporting offer therefore needs to be very different in different locations and
8 within different communities within those locations. The StreetGames Strategic Plan 2013–
9 2017 describes doorstep sport as follows:

11 Doorstep sport provides a vibrant and varied sporting offer that keeps young people
12 coming back for more. Doorstep sport has very few of the costs, social expectations
13 and rules that shape a traditional sports club. Instead it is informal, fun and designed
14 to suit young people’s lifestyles and expectations.

15 *StreetGames Strategic Plan, 2013–2017:4*

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17 Whilst doorstep sport varies significantly in terms of individual projects at a local level
18 StreetGames has developed programme strands which focus on particular target groups of
19 young people. These programmes utilise the learning that has been gained through adapting
20 and refining projects across the UK. An example of such a programme is Us Girls.

21 Taylor & Francis 22 Us Girls

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24 Engaging more young girls and women aged in sport has been recognised as a particularly
25 challenging aspiration for many years. StreetGames developed their own response to this
26 challenge in 2011 in the form of the Us Girls programme. This was initially designed as a
27 two year programme targeted young women aged 16–25, and it was funded with a grant of
28 £2.3 million of National Lottery investment via Sport England. The programme engaged
29 34,000 young women, exceeding its initial target of 30,000, from 50 different disadvantaged
30 areas. In 2013 the success of the programme was recognised as it won the public vote for
31 Best Sports Project awarded by the National Lottery (StreetGames, 2015b).

32 The Us Girls programme illustrates the importance (and effectiveness) of the ‘right place,
33 right time, right price, right style and by the right people’ principles. The programme
34 responds to many of the challenges which have been identified as being particularly relevant
35 to teenage girl’s disengagement from sport. These challenges include fear of judgement,
36 wanting to participate with friends in social and fun activities and lack of confidence to attend
37 generic sessions. Us Girls was promoted on the basis of a sports-based session, specifically
38 targeted at girls, which offered ‘fun, fitness and friends’. An Us Girls session would typically
39 be located near to the girls’ home, take place at a convenient time for them, involve incentives
40 for regular attendance and be delivered by a staff team (supported by volunteers) experienced
41 with working this target group. This is not to say, however, that all Us Girls sessions will
42 look and feel the same. Each project will reflect the local context in which it is located
43 resulting in unique projects which evolve over time.

44 45 **Impact on national governing bodies**

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47 As outlined in their 2013–2017 strategy, by 2013 StreetGames had ‘helped 200,000 young
48 people to broaden their horizons onto a pathway towards a healthy, active lifestyle’ (StreetGames,

2013:1) and they aimed to have enabled 10,000 young people to become volunteer coaches and encourage 250,000 new participants to enjoy sport on their doorstep by 2017.

As a result of the success of doorstep sport StreetGames were funded by Sport England to work with 12 priority NGBs in order to develop their sports offer within disadvantaged areas. This work involved researching young people's aspirations and developing new sports offers in order to meet these aspirations. Young people within the doorstep sports clubs trialed the new offers and groups of StreetGames Young Advisors worked with a number of NGBs to help co-create new offers and ensure that these appeal to young people in disadvantaged communities. Examples of new offers that were developed with the support of StreetGames were StreetGolf, Smashup! Badminton and Instant Ping Pong. These new formats all addressed particular barriers to participation that prevented young people in disadvantaged communities engaging in more traditional sports offers.

Changing lives

The aspiration for StreetGames to help change the lives of young people living in disadvantaged communities recognises that there is a widely held belief that participation in sport can result in a range of positive outcomes for young people. Despite successive UK governments seeking to capitalise upon this potential the National Children's Bureau (2013) recently concluded that very little has changed over the last 50 years for children and young people living in poverty. In 1969 the National Children's Bureau (NCB) completed a major study of the experiences of children from poor, disadvantaged backgrounds in the UK and concluded that children from poorer backgrounds were 'Born to Fail' as a direct result of poverty due to poor health, underachievement at school and lack of opportunities to fulfil their potential. Fifty years later, in 2013, the NCB re-examined 12 key factors and found that children in the UK still experience inequality and disadvantage and found no evidence to suggest that the position has improved in the intervening decades. Other studies have also concluded that poverty in childhood and youth has an impact on achievement at school which also impacts on their upon aspirations and future life-chances (Hirsch, 2007; Menzies, 2013; Raffo et al., 2007).

The evidence relating to young people aged 16–24 is equally concerning. Job prospects for young people without or with low level qualifications are poor and without support for young people continue to deteriorate (Wilson and Bivand, 2014). More than one in five young people experiencing long-term unemployment believe they have nothing to live for, and that 40 per cent of jobless young people have experienced symptoms of mental illness (The Prince's Trust, 2014). Evidence such as this support the case that there is a need to change the lives (and life chances) of those living in disadvantaged communities. As Darton et al. (2003) note:

A wide range of disadvantages in childhood and youth – from mental health problems to low educational attainment – are experienced more by people with worse-off parents. Therefore, strategies to fight poverty and to combat wider social disadvantage need to go hand in hand.

Darton et al., 2003:16

The legitimacy of the claims made for sporting participation to positively impact on young people's lives have however been contested as a result of the inconclusive evidence base underpinning the claims arising, in part, from poor or unsystematic monitoring and evaluation processes (Coalter et al., 2000; Coalter, 2007). This critique does not necessarily mean that the claims made for participation in sport and physical activity are not appropriate but instead

1 indicates that there is a need for a more nuanced understanding of which outcomes are
2 realised, by which young participants in sport and under what circumstances (Coalter et al.,
3 2000; Coalter, 2007).

4 The StreetGames's aspiration to 'change lives' recognises that regular and sustained
5 participation in sport can provide a range of benefits for those taking part including impacts
6 on health, wellbeing and psycho-social outcomes. Lower rates of participation in sport by
7 young people in disadvantaged communities potentially result in a range of missed
8 opportunities for these young people to reap a range of potential benefits of sporting
9 participation including improved health (physical and mental), development of psycho-social
10 skills, improved educational outcomes and enhanced employability. In addition taking part
11 in sport that young people can enjoy is important given that young people in the UK
12 experience greater levels of life dis-satisfaction than young people living in many other
13 countries around the world.

14 Some of the ways in which StreetGames have helped to change young people's lives
15 include encouraging sustained sports engagement, increasing employability and reducing
16 youth offending.

18 Sustained sports engagement

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20 In 2012, *Creating a Sporting Habit for Life – A New Youth Sport Strategy* was published by The
21 Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). This strategy marked a change in
22 approach to youth sport that recognised that individuals' involvement in sport across the life
23 course is not uniform. As they progress through their lives the sporting habits of individuals
24 change in response to changes in their lives. Working with Sport England, DCMS aimed to
25 increase the proportion of 14–25 year olds engaged in sport and to establish a network of links
26 between schools and sports clubs in local communities with the aspiration of keeping young
27 people playing sport up to, and beyond, the age of 25. The strategy also recognised that in
28 order to engage more young people in sport there needed to be a broader sporting offer. As
29 a result Sport England worked with StreetGames, and other partners, to extend the reach of
30 doorstep sport by creating 1,000 sustainable Doorstep Sport Clubs (DSCs), taking sport to
31 where young people live. Each project is unique and more than 30 sports feature in StreetGames
32 projects with around 20 per cent of projects using multi-sport delivery. Sessions take place in
33 a range of different venues including leisure centres, parks, schools, youth centres and less
34 conventional sites such as beaches and car parks in order to ensure 'doorstep' provision.

35 The doorstep approach was developed specifically in order to engage young people in
36 disadvantaged communities in sport, and importantly to keep them engaged in the longer
37 term, and this was clearly in keeping with the ethos of *Creating a Sporting Habit*. Because
38 enjoyment is intrinsic to the perceived success of doorstep sport this approach specifically
39 aims to retain young people in the long term. Importantly if a StreetGames project is found
40 to no longer be meeting the needs of local young people it changes. The project adapts to
41 ensure the offer is still offered in the 'right place, at the right time, for the right price, in the
42 right style and by the right people' even if this means changing the day, time, venue or sport
43 that is offered. In this way doorstep sport evolves with the young people it aims to serve. It
44 is not static or restricted by a particular pre-existing infrastructure.

45 StreetGames has a number of different work strands which impact on changing the lives
46 of young people. In addition to locally based sporting opportunities StreetGames provides a
47 range of opportunities for young people to take part in residential activities including
48 attending major sports events such as the London 2012 Olympics and the Glasgow 2014

Commonwealth Games. Other residential opportunities include a series of annual regional sports-based activity camps and also competition finals where young people attend as participants or as volunteers. The impact of residential experiences on young people have been well-documented and yet young people in disadvantaged communities typically have less opportunity to participate in residential due to a lack of financial resources.

Increasing employability

In addition to the sporting offer available through the StreetGames network young people also have the opportunity to develop other skills through their involvement. Coaches who deliver doorstep sport are trained and experienced in meeting the needs of young people, and they seek to enhance the development of the young participants through sport. Young people are supported to develop their soft skills (e.g. confidence, self-esteem, resilience, team working) in a supportive environment. More than 13,900 young people have volunteered through the StreetGames network and they have collectively gained 7,400 qualifications which helps sustain their involvement further. This approach helps to ensure that the sports offer is delivered in the ‘right style’ and by the ‘right people’ as these young volunteers have strong connections with the communities the projects are located within and they are visible role models for their younger peers.

Reducing youth offending

The government’s ten year strategy for young people introduced in 2007 (Department for Children, Families and Schools/HM Treasury, 2007) emphasised the role of sport and other positive activities in promoting a range of favourable outcomes for young people including reducing involvement in crime and anti-social behaviour and improving attainment. One of the priorities for community safety in addressing crime and anti-social behaviour is the provision of youth sport and activities in local communities within a multi-agency approach (Sport England, 2008).

The Sport and Recreational Alliance (2013) identified four main ways in which sport can be utilised in order to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour. At the simplest level sport can be used as a diversionary activity to keep young people away from trouble. Sport is also used as a ‘hook’ for other interventions and opportunities which help young people to develop positively. Additionally, some sports experiences are believed to provide opportunities for personal transformation which results in behaviour modification through the activity itself (e.g. Outdoor Education). Finally engagement in sport is characterised as providing an opportunity for the promotion of social inclusion which then has favorable impacts on young people and the communities they live in. Whilst the processes through which youth sport participation enhances youth crime prevention remain poorly understood (Kelly, 2011) there is still a strong commitment to developing better insight. A recent study by New Philanthropy Capital (NPC) suggests that sport is most successful when it is linked to other educational opportunities and support:

When sport is used as part of a wider programme of education and support, it can be highly effective at tackling youth crime, and can provide excellent value for money. Given the huge costs associated with youth crime, there is a compelling case for government and other funders to support such projects.

New Philanthropy Capital, 2012:8

1 StreetGames have taken up the challenge of utilising sport to reduce youth crime and enhance
2 community safety. For example, in 2015, in collaboration with the Police and Crime
3 Commissioner for Derbyshire, they began a Youth Crime Reduction and Sport programme
4 after securing funding from the Home Office Police Innovation Fund. The project will test,
5 explore and build an evidence base to show the most effective ways to maximise the value of
6 appropriately designed sport interventions to policing and youth crime reduction. As with
7 other StreetGames programmes this endeavour involves delivery partners utilising a doorstep
8 sport approach to engage young people in targeted areas in disadvantaged communities in,
9 and through, sport.

10 **Changing communities**

11 The third aspiration identified by StreetGames for their work is to change communities. This
12 is clearly an extremely ambitious aim but nonetheless it is one that recognises the inherent
13 structural inequalities that exist within the disadvantaged communities where StreetGames
14 delivery takes place. The previous discussion has identified some of the ways in which
15 StreetGames projects delivers outcomes that have the potential to impact favourably on the
16 wider community by enhancing the health, well-being and employability of young people
17 engaged in doorstep sport living within these communities. As noted above a key way in
18 which StreetGames aim to positively impact on changing communities is through young
19 people volunteering in sport and therefore being ‘active’ citizens.
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Volunteering in sport

The aspiration to engage young people in volunteering remains a visible aspiration for
successive governments. Examples within the UK include Millennium Volunteers (2000),
Active Citizens in Schools (2001), Giving Campaign and Giving Nation (2006), Young
Volunteers Challenge (2003–2005) and V Inspired (2006). More recently the current
government’s National Citizens Service programme seeks to engage young people in
volunteering across a range of community and education sectors. Underpinning these efforts
is a belief in a range of positive outcomes that can arise both for young people and for their
communities through such experiences. Young people, employers, HE staff and volunteering
organisations agree that volunteering allows young people develop transferable skills including
communication and team working skills (V, 2008).

Inequality in sports participation is also reflected in volunteering participation. Bennett
and Parameshwaran (2013) found higher classes were more likely to volunteer than lower
classes but social class effects become insignificant once social and cultural capital measures
were included. However, young people not in education, employment and training (NEET)
were the most sceptical about the benefits to be derived from volunteering (V, 2008) thus
indicating that those with potentially the most to gain from volunteering were those least
convinced about the benefits of volunteering.

Morgan (2013) examined the links between sport volunteering, active citizenship and
social capital enhancement within a political context which promotes a ‘Big Society’ (an
aspiration of the 2010 UK coalition government whereby a significant amount of responsibility
for the running of a society is devolved to local communities and volunteers). Drawing on
previous studies Morgan questioned whether community sports clubs – a site where much
sports volunteering is located – are well positioned to be able to enhance individual’s social

capital. Morgan suggests that social capital enhancement through voluntary involvement is most likely to be achieved when:

- Individuals are deeply involved and engaged
- Individuals are involved in the longer term

Working with local partners the StreetGames network offers those involved in doorstep sport the chance to undertake a range of volunteering opportunities through programmes including the StreetGames Young Volunteers (SYV), Coca Cola Training Academy and the Pre Apprentice programme. Through such opportunities young people access training, undertake qualifications, take part in residential experiences and volunteer at a range of events including high profile events such as the Commonwealth Games. This investment in young people helps ensure that the network retains ‘the right people’ within the StreetGames network as some volunteers go on to become employed within the StreetGames network.

The StreetGames doorstep approach offers opportunities to young people who may not have previously been engaged in sport to become involved in volunteering opportunities that suit their individual preferences. Some volunteers will be involved in stand-alone events and festivals in roles such as marshalling, assisting delivery of activities and social media interaction. Other volunteers will be engaged over a longer duration in weekly sports/activity sessions in roles such as assisting in the delivery of sessions, leading a session, mentoring other volunteers, administrative support and social media coordination. Some of the regular volunteers also take on ‘Young Advisor’ roles and work on the design and delivery of national StreetGames programmes. In addition StreetGames provides a small number of full-time, intensive, social action opportunities where volunteers contribute 25–30 hours per week for 13 weeks to 24 weeks.

Keys to success

StreetGames is an ambitious organisation that has a clear mission to bring about change for disadvantaged young people and their communities utilising a doorstep approach which offers sport ‘right place, at the right time, for the right price, in the right style and by the right people’. In order to be able to do this StreetGames works with a wide range of partners who know what the challenges and opportunities are locally. This partnership approach is integral to the success of StreetGames delivery.

The approach is a flexible one which means that doorstep sport sessions will be extremely varied in terms of location, time, venue and sports offer and these may all change within one location over the duration of the project in response to the preferences of the young people involved. The element that all successful doorstep projects share however is that they are built on the recognition that young people need to enjoy the sessions otherwise they will not come back and none of the other additional potential benefits (on health, well-being and employability) will therefore be realised in the longer term.

In addition to the network of partners StreetGames has developed another vital ingredient of their success is the human infrastructure that supports StreetGames delivery. Developing sport in the ‘right style’ demands that those who deliver the sport understand not only sport but also young people and their preferences and are therefore ‘the right people’. For this reason StreetGames invest heavily in the coaches and volunteers who make doorstep sport a reality. This investment includes a training academy which enables coaches and volunteers to develop their skills and seek accreditation and also opportunities for progression. The

1 StreetGames Training Academy offers workshops, coaching courses and resources which
2 have been developed in order to prepare the doorstep sport workforce to provide high-
3 quality sporting opportunities in a style suited to the particular community.

4 Another area which StreetGames prioritises is insight. The organisation takes monitoring
5 and evaluation seriously and continually seeks to improve the processes through which it
6 evaluates its own successes (and failures). Additionally StreetGames invests resources into
7 gathering insight, knowledge and understanding which will help to ensure that decisions that
8 are made at both operational and strategic levels are evidence-based. They also have a
9 willingness to share that knowledge and understanding with others as exemplified by their
10 website (with a section devoted to 'knowledge and insight') and by their willingness to engage
11 with numerous partners and organisations in the UK and beyond in order to share insight.
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13 **Implications for future physical activity policy and practice**

14 This chapter has examined the StreetGames offer to young people in disadvantaged
15 communities. The work of StreetGames is extremely significant in terms of implications for
16 future physical activity policy and practice and this is recognised by the charity which lobbies
17 vigorously to try and ensure that disadvantaged and socially marginalised young people are
18 visible within sport and physical activity policy across the UK. This was exemplified as
19 doorstep sport was showcased within the 'Creating a Sporting Habit' strategy where it was
20 noted that NGBs have adapted their practice – and sporting offer – as a result of the success
21 of doorstep sport in disadvantaged communities. With its ethos of meaningful engagement in
22 sport, and its focus on people who tend not to participate in sport, the StreetGames network
23 is also well placed to contribute to realising the vision contained within *Sporting Future – A*
24 *New Strategy for an Active Nation* (Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2015). The new
25 strategy also recognises the importance of broader engagement in sport, in particular through
26 volunteering in sport, and this is another strength of the existing StreetGames network.
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28 As a charity, however, StreetGames is reliant on the support of external funding partners
29 in order to maintain and extend the reach of doorstep sport. The organisation is necessarily
30 required to make decisions about how to balance the desire to create opportunities for young
31 people within disadvantaged communities with the ethical dilemmas that surround con-
32 tributing to the corporate social responsibility agendas of commercial business. In a broader
33 context of austerity and fiscal constraint these tensions look unlikely to be resolved within
34 the short term.

35 Whilst StreetGames have a mission to bring about greater equality for young people in
36 terms of their access to sport and physical activity their work also highlights that there are
37 additional possibilities for all young people in terms of providing alternative offers that meet
38 their preferences. Some young people may not experience fiscal constraints but they will still
39 have their own preferences for sport and physical activity. Using young people's preferences
40 as the starting point for changing practice and prioritising opportunities that are enjoyable
41 may challenge the notion that young people are 'sporty' or 'not sporty' and instead be
42 characterised as 'having their physical activity preferences met' or 'not having their physical
43 activity preferences met'.

44 As noted in the introduction to this chapter this discussion has been informed by wider
45 debates around young people's participation and citizenship which argue that young people
46 are largely excluded from decision-making that impacts on their lives – particularly young
47 people living within disadvantaged communities. In order to bring about change Percy-
48 Smith (2010:119) argues that:

We need to move away from the current emphasis on participation in formal, institutionalised public decision making processes and instead focus more on the multiplicity of ways which people act, contribute to and realise their own sense of agency in everyday life contexts.

Percy-Smith provides a timely reminder that young people from disadvantaged communities must influence the future of physical activity and sports policy and practice directly if these are to be effective in delivering positive outcomes for these young people. Doorstep sport provides an example of how this aspiration can be realised for young people living within disadvantaged communities.

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