



INSIGHT INTO ACTION

THE LESSONS FROM THE
DOORSTEP SPORT CLUB
PROGRAMME 2013 - 17



SECTION 1

KNOWING THE CUSTOMER

THE LIFESTYLES AND PRIORITIES
OF DISADVANTAGED YOUNG
PEOPLE AND THEIR ATTITUDES
TO BEING ACTIVE



The issue: How can sport better fit into the lifestyles of young people and therefore become more attractive?

The answer: Sport is a long way down their list of priorities, so the low-cost sport and activity offer needs to be commitment-free, fun and able to be enjoyed with friends.

During the early days of the DSC programme we wanted to find out more about young lives. We commissioned several research studies from specialist social marketing agencies 2CV and Diva Creative[1] and from [Loughborough University](#), the [University of Birmingham](#), [LSE](#) and [SIRC](#) at Sheffield Hallam University.

This research shed light on the priorities and thoughts of disadvantaged young people – DSC participants and non-participants alike. We also analysed the data returns from DSCs to find the patterns of successes and failures and also carried out participant surveys. Hosts used these findings to shape their approach to increasing participation in their club.

The lifestyle insights and the successful DSCs tell us that most participants are not motivated by sport. A social activity that provides, fun, fitness and friendship is more important. The features of ‘fun, fitness and friendship’ are sometimes strung together in promotional slogans, and they are always integral to programme design.

Lifestyle insights

- Although many young people hold relatively positive attitudes towards fitness and sport, they have many other interests and demands on their time. Socialising, school work, earning money and family commitments vie with being active.
- Being a part of a social group is a priority for most young people, and is heightened for those disadvantaged youth whose home lives and finances sometimes lack stability. Their everyday priorities revolve around maintaining relationships – be this physically, in terms of hanging out together, going to town or communicating with friends via Instagram, Snapchat, WhatsApp, Facebook and other forms of social media.
- When teenagers and young adults are tempted into sport, they want it to be part of their social lives - like listening to music, going shopping or hanging out with their friends. They want their sport to be informal, varied and vibrant; they want a say in what goes on at their sports sessions. They also want to be able to drift in and out of sports participation as it suits them.
- Teenagers are concerned for their wellbeing and aware of the value of activity to good health. ***‘You feel more energetic, ‘cos when you just sit you just become lazy’, ‘It makes you feel good after you’ve done it’, ‘Sports can make you a more confident person’, ‘It clears your mind, takes your mind off things’¹***
- Many females feel self-conscious about participating in physical activity, especially if their friends aren’t involved. Some feel that many traditional team sports – such as football and basketball – are for ‘tom boys’, and so drop out of participating. Many feel that sport does not fit with their ideal personal image, and fear the gendered judgement of others if they participate.
- Young males are also very conscious of peer approval. Maintaining body image and reputation is very important; for some this means going to the gym regularly to ‘bulk up’. Sport is also played as a means to create and sustain bonds.
- While disadvantaged youngsters are subject to much the same attitudinal and behavioural influences as all young people, some factors are emphasised through social and financial instability. Anxious to avoid being perceived as ‘disadvantaged’, these youngsters’ concerns and worries include a ‘need to fit in’, a desire to own the ‘coolest’ brands and a ‘live for today’, ‘earn and burn’ mentality. Young people called the aspirational brands, ‘swag’ and were motivated not to appear as ‘tramps’.
- Debt is commonplace – a 2010 study by Bazalgette highlighted how personal debt has escalated and become the social norm for many. 90% of young people are in debt by the age of 21, 46% of 18-24 year olds owe over £2,000 and one in five owe over £10,000.
- Both genders are very much part of the ‘brand me’ generation. The brands they wear, how they present themselves on social media and the celebrities they idolise are integral to their identity. Many seem to live in great fear of a fashion or behavioural faux pas that will lose them friends and status. This humiliation will be ubiquitous since there is no escape from social media.
- What particularly differentiates young people in disadvantaged communities from their peers is living in a world that’s severely limited. While aspirations are generally high, this ‘limited world’, and lack of knowledge about pathways through education and employment act as obstacles. There is often low awareness that they are already veering away from those steps that are necessary to achieve their aspirations.

¹Scoping Exercise into Young People’s Attitudes & Engagement in Sport, Diva Creative for StreetGames <http://www.streetgames.org/sites/default/files/Scoping%20Exercise%20Into%20Young%20People%E2%80%99s%20Attitudes%20and%20Engagement%20In%20Sport.pdf>

Lifestyle insights

- Young people are strongly influenced by their peers and some are driven by challenges and leadership opportunities. Many young people desire fame or money and are influenced by celebrities, especially artists they listen to. However, role models tend to be closer to home, where young people look up to others that inspire them - such as friends, older siblings, youth mentors and coaches.
- There is often a lack of direction in terms of sports participation. Youngsters ‘drift in and out’ of taking part, with no clear decision-making processes in play. Their pathways can be typically divided into three key stages:
 - **Taking Part:** typically amongst 13-16 year olds where there is high exposure to sport via school PE and team sports.
 - **Fitting In:** typically amongst 15-19 year olds where social capital is of primary concern and looking good and not embarrassing yourself become very important.
 - **Gaining Control:** typically amongst 18-25 year olds where there is a perception that there is very little support, access or encouragement to do sport and it is more about individual activities like going to the gym to look good, de-stress and feel healthy. 2CV research tells us that, after turning 21, young people feel it is too late for them to start to be involved in sport.
- The barriers which curb participation and the trigger which can ‘nudge’ young people back into taking part differ at each of these stages. This learning, which is shared via summary diagrams in Appendix 1 highlights how different elements of the DSC programme are used to develop ‘activity know-how’ at each of these stages.
- They want their club to take place close to home. Many, but not all, girls want it indoors and away from the judgemental male gaze. Both genders value being in a place that they consider to be ‘safe’.
- Disadvantaged young people are sensitive to relatively small triggers and barriers. This means they are prone to many external influences which result in them temporarily ‘dropping out’ of sport. However, many can be relatively easily ‘nudged’ back into participation if the right triggers and offers are present.
- Avoiding situations that threaten humiliation is important: this includes situations where not having the right kit or the right know-how becomes apparent.
- For disadvantaged young people, the move from adolescence to adulthood can feel like an almost overnight change, especially as responsibilities become very ‘real’ around the 18th birthday. At this age, money moves from being a want to a pressing need; support from institutions seems to quickly fall away and having a child can be perceived as the norm in some locations.

On the whole, teenage males and females have different priorities. Table 1 (below) shows that girls are more likely to prioritise friendship than males. They are also more likely to prioritise ‘family’ than males. We do not know if this to do with the unequal distribution of family responsibilities or if it is about choice of activity. Males were almost three times more likely to prioritise sport than females.

Lifestyle Priorities

Priorities	% Males	% Females
Friends	54%	66%
Family	47%	62%
School/College	44%	45%
Hobbies/interests	59%	37%
Relationships (boyfriend/girlfriend)	21%	18%
Playing sport/being active	29%	11%
Part-time job/work	11%	5%

(StreetGames DIVA Research, 2013)

The Views of Young People in Doorstep Sport Clubs

The mid-programme survey showed the participants’ views about what they think are ‘good’ in both a DSC session and in a DSC environment. It confirms the importance of ‘fun, fitness and friendship’ and adds the importance of providing a good variety of activities and the critical role of the leader.

What makes a good sports session for you?



The graphic below is from the same survey. This confirms the importance of offering a variety of activities and social aspects in each session. Time to socialise, having a say in the planning of sessions and being with friends are really important – as are opportunities to develop and learn new skills.

The importance of a good leader is also clear: he or she provides the protection young people need and lends a supportive, listening ear.

What makes a good sports environment for you?

- 48% - Opportunities to try different/new sports
- 36% - Time to socialise with friends
- 34% - Banter
- 32% - Opportunities to improve/learn new skills
- 31% - Opportunities to play matches/tournaments
- 31% - Being with friends
- 23% - Being with others my own age
- 20% - Music
- 17% - Informal/fun atmosphere
- 15% - Fairness (clear ground rules)
- 12% - Opportunities to volunteer/lead
- 11% - Having a say in what we do

We sum up this learning into five baskets that guide the planning of Doorstep Sport: DSCs must be at the, right time, at the right price, at the right place, with the right people and in the right style. – which is the focus of Topic paper 2 the ‘Five Rights’.

By way of example – see a DSC case study example from Active Newcastle:

www.streetgames.org/resources/newcastle-fusion-plus-girls-fitness-dsc

Fuller insight pieces are on the StreetGames website:

<http://www.streetgames.org/resource/2cv-lifestyle-research>

<http://www.streetgames.org/resources/2cv-research-participant-pathways-0>

‘Light Bulb’

Practice	Policy
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Listen to what young people say about their lives and what they want from sport.The leader must show he or she cares about the young people and has time for them.Organise provision around the Five RightsTake care never to split up a social group.Create a positive environment full of praise and fun where the boundaries of acceptable behaviour are well understood.Many girls are happy to exercise with males. Others prefer to exercise away from the male gaze.Be aware that young people are under pressure and want the support of adults.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Understanding disadvantaged young lives is key to shaping an attractive sporting offer.Sporting offers need to reinforce friendship groups and become what a young person ‘does’, much like any other social activity.Fun, fitness, friendship and variety with a good leader are the key touchstones in the design of Doorstep Sport.

Training Workshops

StreetGames also provides **training workshops** across a range of different topic areas. If you are interested in learning more about the lives of disadvantaged young people and how to engage them effectively in sport you may be interested in the following workshops:

- Understanding Young People
- Empowering Coaching For Doorstep Sport.



-  StreetGamesSportsCharity
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-  www.streetgames.org

