

# TACKLING AIDS THROUGH SPORT

## UK GOVERNMENT DISCUSSION PAPER

A cross-departmental paper between the UK Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and the UK Department for International Development (DfID)

August 2006



# **USING SPORT TO TACKLE AIDS: A DISCUSSION PAPER**

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## Foreword

From our different perspectives within the UK Government we both welcomed the 2005 Commission for Africa report's acknowledgment of the effectiveness of sport as a means of communicating educational messages about HIV and AIDS, and its recommendation that sport be used more widely to help remove the stigma attached to the disease. Tackling AIDS through Sport originated in a partnership between our two Departments in response to that call.

In the developing world people under the age of 24 are most vulnerable to AIDS. Girls in particular in this age group are at risk of contracting the disease, as are orphans, many of whom have lost parents and carers to AIDS. To reach young people and to get them to act on AIDS prevention messages we must use all the tools at our disposal. Sport's huge popularity with children and young people throughout the world provides us with a medium for engaging with them on their own terms. Well-designed programmes that harness sport's power to touch young people's emotions and desires have a role in realising the aspiration of an AIDS free generation.

The case studies in Tackling AIDS through Sport demonstrate the potential of sport and its capacity to embody many of the essential policy actions for HIV prevention set out in this year's UNAIDS report. Tackling AIDS through Sport describes initiatives that build and maintain leadership, equity, supports the empowerment of young women and men and promote knowledge of transmission and prevention. These programmes are based on the principles of mobilising community based responses and targeting the HIV prevention needs of key vulnerable groups.

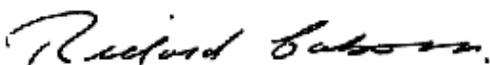
During Global Action on AIDS week in May, we shared the draft of Tackling AIDS through Sport with stakeholders in the UK and launched a period of consultation. We received a number of further case studies, and other valuable contributions, which are included in the final paper.

The 16<sup>th</sup> International AIDS Conference in Toronto in August, for the first time includes a plenary session on the role of sport in combating the disease and its social consequences. We are pleased to endorse Tackling AIDS through Sport as the UK Government's contribution to that debate. We hope that it will stimulate interest and contribute to the growing global pool of shared knowledge and understanding.

Most of all, we want Tackling AIDS through Sport to inspire and enable further action worldwide to prevent the spread of AIDS, remove the blight of stigma and save young lives.

Richard Caborn  
Minister for Sport  
Department for Culture Media and Sport  
Development

Gareth Thomas  
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State  
Department for International



## **Executive Summary**

This paper analyses the role of sport in tackling AIDS primarily in Africa. The UK Government, the United Nations and the G8 have pledged their commitment to halting the spread of AIDS. To achieve this, there is an urgent need to prevent new infections, to provide young people with the knowledge, life skills, and commodities with which to protect themselves, and to provide ongoing support and care to people affected by AIDS, especially children and young people.

Sport is hugely popular amongst young people in sub-Saharan Africa, more so than any other voluntary activity. Sport is therefore a credible and attractive way of engaging the attention of young people and providing a platform from which to promote prevention, de-stigmatisation and to encourage the development of important life skills.

The UK, and many other developed countries, recognises the wider role that sport can play in achieving domestic policies – such as reducing harmful drug use, preventing crime, enhancing formal and non-formal education, and improving health – especially among young people.

This paper identifies the main ways in which sport can be used to tackle AIDS:

- Sports programmes and activities as a way to engage young people and provide a platform for education and information about HIV and AIDS
- Developing life skills through sports and team activities, especially for young women and girls
- Using team games and sports to promote a sense of social inclusion, breaking down stigma and discrimination, and to provide a safe and supportive environment for people living with HIV or AIDS and children affected by AIDS
- Using sports activities to provide a point of access to voluntary and confidential HIV counselling and testing and other health services
- Harnessing sport's media profile to communicate and promote AIDS messages to a wider audience
- Exploiting the interest of the private sector in the use of sport for social corporate responsibility projects
- Encouraging and promoting both celebrity and community sportspeople and coaches as role models
- Using the resources of the international sporting industry as a funding leverage for HIV and AIDS work

This paper considers these approaches in greater detail and highlights examples where they are being successfully put into practice. It also reviews the existing evidence supporting sports interventions and identifies where additional research and evaluation is needed.

Valuable lessons are being learnt from individual projects and programmes in Africa. These demonstrate that sport can have a profound impact on young people and is ideally placed as a channel to connect, engage and influence them.

This emerging evidence needs to be underpinned by academic research and understood within the wider context of international and country-led responses to AIDS.

## 1. Background and Acknowledgements

1.1 The UK Government identified Africa and tackling AIDS as key priorities for its Presidencies of the G8 and the European Union in 2005. This paper explores the ways in which sports-based interventions can contribute to tackling AIDS in Africa.

1.2 The role of sport in development has risen up the international agenda over the last five years, gaining recognition at UN level and amongst development agencies and NGOs around the world. In 2003, the UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, established an Inter Agency Task Force to report on the role of sport in development and peace. The Task Force's report found a role for sport as a "vehicle to help mitigate the spread and impact of HIV/AIDS".<sup>1</sup> The UK's Commission for Africa report published in March 2005 also recognises the importance of youth culture, including sport, in engaging young people in the response to AIDS<sup>2</sup>. Increasingly academics are realising the potential of sport and have begun conducting research into the value and impact of sport for social development<sup>3</sup>.

1.3 Analysing the role that sport can play in development, and specifically its contribution to tackling AIDS, builds on the UK Government's domestic experience of using sport to contribute to social and human development amongst children and young people. In UK domestic policy, as in many other developed countries, sports activities are promoted not only as an end in themselves but also as a means of achieving wider government objectives in health, education, social inclusion and crime prevention.

1.4 This paper is one of the outcomes of a twelve month secondment of a DCMS official, Penny Hobman into the Global AIDS Policy team at DfID. Penny's placement, co-funded by UK Sport and DfID aimed to explore the role of sport in contributing to development and in particular the Millennium Development Goals. It was also an opportunity to conduct an audit of current organisations using sport as a tool for development in the field. The success of the secondment and the work this paper illustrates, demonstrates a willingness within Government to explore innovative methods of achieving developmental goals.

1.5 This paper also builds upon the experience already gained by UK Sport (the Non-Departmental Public Body tasked with leading sport in the UK and accountable to Parliament) of supporting programmes in Southern Africa that aim to promote HIV and AIDS education and awareness through sport as part of its International Development Assistance Programme. The range of projects supported by UK Sport includes:

- the Kicking AIDS Out network of African organisations that use sport to tackle AIDS
- joint work with VSO in Malawi to partner youth development and sports development volunteers together to develop out-of-school youth clubs with a focus on HIV prevention and awareness

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<sup>1</sup> *Sport for Development and Peace: Towards Achieving the Millennium Development Goals*, Report from the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Sport for Development and Peace, United Nations 2003, p. 22.

<sup>2</sup> *Our Common Interest*, Commission for Africa Report, March 2005, paragraph 92, p.208.

<sup>3</sup> See UK Sport Website for links to Value of Sport Monitor and other research, <http://www.uk sport.gov.uk/worldwideimpact>

- the Alive and Kicking project in Kenya which manufactures traditional footballs in Nairobi that are printed with preventative health education messages on HIV and malaria
- the Go Sisters project run by EduSport in Zambia, using a peer leader approach to empower girls and young women and teach them about HIV prevention through sport

1.6 Thanks go to Penny Hobman for her hard work in pulling this paper together and to the following individuals and organisations for their contributions: Calle Alemdal, Chris Briers, Jane Bateman, Robert Hillier, Dr Roger Levermore, Beth Nicholl, Peter McDermott, Hans-Martin Boehmer, Robin Gorna, Clare Shakya, Halima Begum, Colin Fford-Divers, Anna de Cleene, Rob Worthington, Fiona Pettit, Mike McWhinney, Gill Drury, Harriet Yowela, Audrey Kettaneh, Martin Barnard, Jim Cogan, Aaron Beacom, Clive Bacon, Richard Weaver, the British Council, Sports Partnership Worldwide, Christian Aid, VSO Malawi, Jade Fothergill and Pippa Lloyd.

## 2. Why sport?

### Focus on young people

2.1 HIV infection rates are currently rising year on year with 45 million new infections expected to occur between 2002 and 2010.<sup>4</sup> The largest generation of adolescents in human history is now entering its sexual and reproductive life. According to UNAIDS, these young people (aged 15-24) are both “the most threatened – globally accounting for half of all new cases of HIV – and the greatest hope for turning the tide against AIDS”.<sup>5</sup> Reflecting these concerns the international community has responded by making public commitments to tackle the crises: UNGASS has set a target of achieving a 25% reduction in infections in young people by 2010 and at Gleneagles in July 2005 the G8 set the target of achieving an AIDS-free generation.

2.2 It is widely agreed that new and innovative ways need to be found to reach young people and communicate with them in a way that they understand and find credible. The Commission for Africa report recommends the use of popular elements of youth culture, such as sport, radio and film, to engage young people in the response to AIDS and particularly in strategies to reduce stigma.<sup>6</sup> The UNAIDS 2004 Report on the global AIDS epidemic also stresses the importance of reaching those who influence young people.

*“Around the world sport, recreation and play are improving health  
[and] teaching important life lessons about respect, leadership and cooperation”  
– Carol Bellamy, Executive Director, UNICEF*

<sup>4</sup> *Intensifying HIV prevention: UNAIDS policy position paper*, UNAIDS, Geneva, 2005, pp. 3-4.

<sup>5</sup> *2004 Report on the global AIDS epidemic: 4<sup>th</sup> global report*, UNAIDS, Geneva, 2004, p. 93.

<sup>6</sup> Commission for Africa Report, *Our Common Interest*, paragraph 92, p.208.

## Popularity of sport amongst young people

2.3 Sport has a huge power to attract and engage young people. In sub-Saharan Africa – where 62% of all young people infected with HIV live<sup>7</sup> – sport is the most popular activity amongst teenagers of both sexes. In a survey for the British Council to gauge the interests of young people aged 11 to 20, sport was the clear top response in the two sub-Saharan African countries surveyed: Uganda (where 88% were interested in sport and exercise) and Zambia (83%).<sup>8</sup> Despite the often limited opportunities to play sport – especially for girls whose commitments to the household leave them with little free time – and poor sports facilities, engagement and involvement in sport remain strong throughout adolescence for both boys and girls. There is also a strong sense amongst both Ugandan and Zambian boys and girls (94% of the Sub-Saharan Africa sample) that they are interested in sport as a way for them to develop leadership skills.<sup>9</sup>

2.4 The findings of the British Council survey are supported by the views of children that emerge from an analysis of sporting activities in GOAL Kenya's projects.<sup>10</sup> A survey of 45 participants (19 girls and 26 boys) between the ages of 7 and 22 revealed that:

- 98% like playing sport;
- 89% participate in the sporting activities arranged by GOAL on a regular basis;
- 91% think more time should be spent on sporting activities; and
- 93% like going to school on days when sports are played.

2.5 Football has enormous visibility, support and enthusiasm in sub-Saharan Africa. In terms of overall interest in sport either as a participant or as a spectator, for boys football is by far the most popular activity (Zambia 83% and Uganda 80%).<sup>11</sup> For girls in both countries, football ranks second in the list of interests (Zambia: 47% and Uganda: 36%) after basketball and netball respectively. Football is the sport played by most boys in both Zambia and Uganda, although girls' participation is spread across a wider range of sports including football, netball, basketball and volleyball.

2.6 Watching football on television is also popular: 73% of Zambians (83% of boys and 63% of girls) and 77% of Ugandans (89% of boys and 68% of girls) reported that they regularly watch it.<sup>12</sup> This makes sportspeople popular, recognisable and credible role models for young people and provides them with a platform to spread positive messages and behaviour.

## 3. How can sport be used to tackle AIDS?

3.1 This paper identifies key ways in which sports-based interventions can be integrated into the response to AIDS:

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<sup>7</sup> 2004 Report, p.93.

<sup>8</sup> *Mapping the Sport and Physical Education Landscape: India, Sri Lanka, The Gulf States and Sub-Saharan Africa, Main Report*, River Path Associates, 31 March 2005, p. 45.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, p.66.

<sup>10</sup> *An analysis into the quality and standards of sporting activities within GOAL Kenya's projects.*

<sup>11</sup> *Mapping the Sport and Physical Education Landscape*, pp.49-50.

<sup>12</sup> *Mapping the Sport and Physical Education Landscape*, p.68.

- Sports programmes and activities as a way to engage young people and provide a platform for education and information about HIV and AIDS
- Developing life skills through sports and team activities, especially for young women and girls
- Using team games and sports to promote a sense of social inclusion, breaking down stigma and discrimination, and to provide a safe and supportive environment for people living with HIV or AIDS and children affected by AIDS
- Using sports activities to provide a point of access to voluntary and confidential HIV counselling and testing and other health services
- Harnessing sport's media profile to communicate and promote AIDS messages to a wider audience
- Harnessing the interest of the private sector in using sport to achieve corporate social responsibility objectives
- Encouraging and promoting both celebrity and community sportspeople and coaches as role models:
  - to advocate less risky sexual behaviours;
  - to de-stigmatise HIV and AIDS
- Leveraging funds from the sports industry to invest in HIV/AIDS prevention and education projects

*“Sport isn’t the only answer to curbing the spread of AIDS, but it is one piece of the fight that can address the holistic needs of youth”  
– Florence, 20 year old GO Sisters Peer Coach, Zambia*

### **Sport as a platform for education and information about HIV prevention**

3.2 Despite the great progress made in providing antiretroviral treatment to prolong and improve the quality of life for those infected with HIV, prevention of HIV transmission remains the mainstay of a comprehensive effort to tackle AIDS and is a key element of the G8’s aim to achieve an AIDS-free generation.

3.3 A lack of basic knowledge about HIV is still widespread in Africa. In a survey carried out in 21 African countries, more than 60% of young women had either never heard of the virus or had at least one major misconception about how it is spread.<sup>13</sup> Sports activities which attract and retain young people provide an innovative way to transmit essential information on prevention.

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<sup>13</sup> *Intensifying HIV prevention*, pp.20-21.

### **Case study 1: Using sport to disseminate prevention messages**

In upper Guinea, USAID sponsored a project that works with local youth authorities and football teams to promote prevention of HIV, sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancies to girls and young women. During games and at half-times, theatre troops performed sketches with prevention messages and youth peer educators disseminated messages to players and the crowd.

The programme was judged to be so effective that UNICEF, working with Guinea's Ministry of Youth, Sport and Culture, has organised a similar initiative in Middle Guinea. UNICEF Guinea and FIFA (the international football federation) have established a permanent national girls' football league as part of UNICEF's '25 by 2005' campaign to get more girls into school<sup>14</sup>.

3.4 Sports occasions (tournaments, league matches, formal coaching sessions or impromptu kick-arounds) provide a vehicle onto which AIDS education programmes can "piggy-back". Sports matches, coaching sessions and sports stars are able to draw a large crowd, often bringing whole communities together in a way other events would not. This presents an ideal medium for public information campaigns.

3.5 Information or peer discussion groups can be formed at half times, or before or after matches. This technique has proved popular and successful by the Mathare Youth Sports Association in Nairobi, Kenya which now numbers some 15,000 football players, both boys and girls. The Alive and Kicking project, also based in Nairobi, uses the footballs themselves to spread messages by printing slogans about HIV prevention and malaria on balls which are being used in Kenyan schools.

3.6 The fact that sport tends – though not exclusively – to be organised in single-sex groups also lends itself to an atmosphere in which groups of peers are more able to discuss sensitive issues around sexual behaviour. Anecdotal evidence from Edusport's 'Go Sisters' football programme in Zambia, supported by UK Sport, tells us that some of the girls who have participated in the programme have opened up to their peer-coaches and told them about sexual abuse that they have suffered and have been able to ask for support and guidance.

3.7 The Kicking AIDS Out (KAO) concept uses sport to raise awareness about HIV and AIDS. It was developed and pioneered in Zambia and is now in use in a number of countries in southern Africa. KAO embeds HIV prevention messages and life skills education into exercises based on traditional games and sports. These exercises range from football dribbling exercises, in which the participants have to race to pick up placards with AIDS messages on them, to passing exercises that make a link between the importance of passing the ball in a football game and the importance of passing on information to friends and relatives about how to prevent HIV infection.

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<sup>14</sup> See [http://www.usaid.gov/gn/health/news/050429\\_girlssoccer/index.htm](http://www.usaid.gov/gn/health/news/050429_girlssoccer/index.htm)  
[http://www.usaid.gov/gn/health/news/050429\\_girlssoccer/portraits.htm](http://www.usaid.gov/gn/health/news/050429_girlssoccer/portraits.htm)  
[http://www.uncief.org/infobycountry/guinea\\_25923.html](http://www.uncief.org/infobycountry/guinea_25923.html)

## Case study 2: Grassroot Soccer in Zimbabwe

Grassroot Soccer, an American NGO, has delivered its programme of AIDS awareness, education and de-stigmatisation through football to over 3000 seventh-grade students (both male and female) in nine schools in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe.

An independent evaluation of the programme conducted by The Children's Health Council, an affiliate of Stanford University, found that it had produced significant positive changes in participants' knowledge about AIDS, in their attitudes towards HIV prevention and perceptions of the support available to them, and in their prejudices against people who are HIV+.

Almost all of the positive changes noted immediately after the programme were sustained over the subsequent five months and students reported that they had put the knowledge gained through the programme into practice<sup>15</sup>.

### Developing life skills through sport

3.8 As well as providing access to information, influence and advice, participation in sport can also help young people to develop life skills that are valuable in their personal and social development and may help them to avoid risky sexual behaviours.

*“Sport is a unique tool for sustainable human development”  
– Adolf Ogi, UN Special Advisor*

3.9 Although the development of life skills through participation in sports activities has, until now, received limited attention in mainstream development work, studies and policy-making experience in the developed world demonstrate that participation in sport brings great benefits to young people's health, social development, confidence, self-esteem and academic performance.

3.10 In brief, sport provides the opportunity for young people:

- to take on challenges and stretch themselves;
- to develop self-esteem, self-confidence and social skills and make new friends;
- to co-operate and negotiate as part of a team of their peers;
- to lead a group of their peers;
- to play according to a defined set of rules and to face penalties if they break those rules;
- to develop a positive body image and a sense of control and ownership of their own bodies (particularly important for young women).

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<sup>15</sup> Grassroot Soccer Foundation - HIV/AIDS Education Program: An Intervention in Zimbabwe, Evaluation Report August 2004, The Children's Health Council Outcomes Research Consulting Service  
[http://www.grassrootsoccer.org/downloads/CHC\\_Eval.pdf](http://www.grassrootsoccer.org/downloads/CHC_Eval.pdf)

3.11 Evidence in the UK has shown that sport can be used successfully to deter young people from risky behaviour such as crime or drug-taking. A recent UK report, *Sports Activities and Youth Offending*,<sup>16</sup> identified that appropriately-structured sports activities can contribute to a reduction in the likelihood of a young person participating in crime or anti-social behaviour. The successful Positive Futures programme in the UK uses sports activities to engage marginalised young people and act as a catalyst to encourage participants to make decisions for themselves, and to take self-determined steps towards a positive future, steering them towards educational and employment opportunities.

3.12 The link between participating in sports activities and developing life skills is especially valuable for girls. Girls and women are particularly vulnerable to AIDS – Kofi Annan declared in 2003 that “the face of AIDS is clearly a female face”. World Health Organisation surveys in seven countries in sub-Saharan Africa found that 15-24 year-old women were 2.7 times more likely to be HIV-infected than men of the same age. UNAIDS estimates that HIV prevalence is five times higher in girls than boys under the age of 18 in Sub-Saharan Africa and the increase in the proportion of women being affected continues<sup>17</sup>.

3.13 Sport can address both the need for the education and prevention of HIV/AIDS and the social isolation caused by the disease by providing girls with a secure and welcoming social environment, friends with whom they can discuss previously taboo topics and female role models. Playing sport also helps girls to build a social status and healthy self-image based on something other than traditional gender roles. It promotes equality by challenging stereotypical perceptions that girls can't take part in the same kind of activities as boys.

*“Since GO Sisters came to our school we participate in sport twice a week  
and are feeling very active and happy”*

*– Chola, Clara and Lister, GO Sisters participants, Zambia*

3.14 Sport has traditionally been viewed as a male domain, especially in sub-Saharan Africa however, evidence from policies implemented in the developed world, and the early findings from pilots in developing countries, demonstrates that young women who participate in sport learn crucial life skills and develop greater self-esteem and confidence. Peer leaders in the Go Sisters programme in Zambia comment on their new found self-confidence from the role and the subsequent sense of self-worth, which makes them less likely to indulge in risky behaviours. Research in the US shows that girls who regularly participate in sport tend to begin sexual activity later, have fewer sexual partners, use contraception more (particularly condoms) and are less likely to get pregnant.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> *Sports Activities and Youth Offending*, 2005. Joint paper produced by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, Youth Justice Board, Department for Culture, Media and Sport and Sport England.

<sup>17</sup> *AIDS Epidemic Update*, December 2005 Joint paper by WHO and UNAIDS

<sup>18</sup> Women's Sports Foundation

### **Case study 3: Engaging out-of-school girls through sport in rural Egypt**

As part of a wave of interventions specifically designed to reach the most vulnerable girls in the poorest countries with the highest fertility rates and the highest rates of HIV infection, the Population Council ran a pilot sports-based project in rural Upper Egypt.

Sport was incorporated into the programme in direct response to the needs of the target group (out-of-school adolescent girls at risk of early marriage) identified in the baseline survey. This found that out-of-school girls in the region had low self-esteem, describing themselves as “ignorant” and “doing nothing” with their lives. Whilst they rarely played sport they were enthusiastic about doing so if a programme was offered in their village. The inclusion of sport in the project not only offered the girls the chance to do something active, it also challenged the traditional concept in rural Egypt that sports activities and clubs are only appropriate for men. This was an important part of the process of changing both how the girls perceived themselves and how their community perceived them.

Nearly 300 girls aged 13-15 participated in the project. Evaluation by the Population Council showed that it had had a significant impact on them. Participants’ literacy levels improved and 92% of those who subsequently took the government literacy exams passed<sup>19</sup>. Levels of self-confidence also improved dramatically and 52% of participants believed themselves to be “strong and able to face any problem”<sup>20</sup>.

The evaluation also found that sport was an integral part of the project: 95% of participants said they would encourage other girls to play sports; 99% would encourage their daughters to play sports; 95% said that boys are wrong to believe that girls can’t play sport and 88% thought that sport had changed them positively (measured by feeling healthier, having more social confidence, increased self-esteem, and new friendships). More than half of the participants said that without the sports component they would not have enjoyed the classroom aspects of the programme as much<sup>21</sup>.

### **Social inclusion and support for children affected by AIDS**

3.15 UNICEF estimates that 3 million children under the age of 15 are living with AIDS (of whom 2.7 million are in sub-Saharan Africa). Another 14 million have lost one or

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<sup>19</sup> *Ishraq: Safe Spaces to Learn, Play and Grow - A 3-year intervention research project for out-of-school girls in four villages in Minya, Upper Egypt*, Briefing Sheet #6, July 2004

<sup>20</sup> *Ishraq: Safe Spaces for Girls to Learn, Play and Grow - Expansion of Recreational Sports Program for Adolescent Rural Girls in Egypt*, Nadia Zibani, Population Council 2004

<sup>21</sup> *Partnership in Support of Adolescent Girls - Promoting healthy, safe and productive Transitions into Adulthood*, Population Council, Narrative report to DFID for grant AG2599

both parents to AIDS (of whom some 11.5 million are in sub-Saharan Africa). *Taking Action*, the UK's strategy for tackling HIV and AIDS in the developing world, identifies meeting the needs of these children as one of the UK's top priorities.

3.16 Participating in sport creates a supportive environment for children and can be a way of providing structure in an uncertain or de-stabilised situation. It engages children in planning and implementing activities, working in groups with their peers, decision-making and playing a part in their community.

3.17 It can therefore contribute to young people's psychological and social well-being by re-connecting them with a network of relationships and teams. It is also a simple displacement activity for children that are burdened by adult responsibilities and the consequent isolation from other children. More than this, it provides a space for children to behave like children.

*"Youth need to be strong to achieve... if you aren't strong you can fall victim to a lot of vices. I built my strength through being busy with sport"*  
– Patrick, EduSport Peer Coach & Outreach worker, Zambia

#### **Case studies 6: Fountain of Hope (Zambia) & Magic Bus (India)**

Sport in Action, a Zambian NGO pioneering the use of sport in development, has introduced sports activities to the Fountain of Hope orphanage and outreach centre in Lusaka. Here sport is utilised as an outreach initiative, as well as an activity for children already living in the orphanage. Staff at the centre believe that sport helps children to forget about their lives on the streets and can also be helpful in keeping them off the streets.

Sport in Action has invested in building new sports facilities at the orphanage which have been opened to for use to the local community. Shared use – with street kids from the centre and other children from the community playing alongside each other – has contributed towards breaking down the stigma attached to the orphans and street children by the local community.

Magic Bus is a Mumbai based NGO which uses sport to reach out to street and slum children and the children of sex workers in a society which would rather ignore them.

Through sport Magic Bus teaches the children important protective life skills including teamwork, inclusion and respect for themselves and others

Through the creation of positive recreation habits Magic Bus believe there is less opportunity for the children in the programmes to fall prey to destructive behaviours which harbour inherent risks, such as drug abuse and sexual relations.

#### **Sport as a point of access to health services**

3.18 The popularity of sports activities, especially organised sports activities, means that they can offer a very effective point of access for introducing people of all ages to health services. This can be achieved by conveying information about why people should find out their HIV status and providing practical advice about where to get tested, or by being used as an inducement to receive health services.

#### **Case study 7: Vaccinating against measles in Zambia**

Posters and billboards featuring Zambia's most famous footballer, Kalusha Bwalya, formed part of a major campaign to promote a measles immunisation programme in Zambia in August 2003.<sup>22</sup> Sports coaching sessions were also offered at a number of vaccination centres where children could play only after they had received their vaccination. Nearly 5 million children between the age of 6 months and 14 years were successfully vaccinated, **achieving 108% of the campaign's target.**<sup>23</sup>

UNICEF's evaluation of the campaign found that the inclusion of sports activities had a spectacular impact on turnout at vaccination posts. On the first day of the campaign children were seen running to posts to get their jab so that they could join in the sports activities.<sup>24</sup>

#### **Harnessing sport's media profile and the interest of the private sector**

3.19 Sport has an almost unrivalled capacity to attract media attention. As in the developed world, newspapers in Africa devote several pages every day to sports news. Public information messages based around sports events or promoted by sportspeople can reach a wider audience than those immediately present. This power to harness media attention could be vital; UNAIDS identifies media's potential role in tackling AIDS as "virtually unparalleled".<sup>25</sup>

3.20 The evaluation of the visit to Malawi by England footballers to promote HIV prevention and awareness found that "the amount of media coverage the visit engendered had, for a while, put the issues of sports and HIV and AIDS in the national limelight".

*"Sport is a uniquely powerful way for us to live up to our commitments and to reach and engage young people and excluded groups." - Jim Wynn, Microsoft*

3.21 The private sector too has recognised the power of sport to attract the world's attention and be a positive force. The International Business Leaders Forum in

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<sup>22</sup> Major partners were the Ministry of Health/Central Board of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Home Affairs, religious organizations, community-based organisations, media, Zambian Red Cross, International Federation of the Red Cross, Canadian International Development Agency, DFID, Japanese International Co-operation Agency, UN Foundation, UNICEF, USAID, WHO and Right to Play (a sport and development NGO).

<sup>23</sup> 4,955,647 children were vaccinated. The target was 4,600,916.

<sup>24</sup> [http://www.unicef.org/evaluation/files/Zambia\\_Partnerships\\_for\\_EPI\\_Activities.doc](http://www.unicef.org/evaluation/files/Zambia_Partnerships_for_EPI_Activities.doc)

<sup>25</sup> *Media and HIV/AIDS – Making a difference*, UNAIDS, Geneva, 2004.

partnership with UK Sport, published a paper called 'Shared Goals' highlighting the use of sport in achieving corporate social responsibility objectives<sup>26</sup>. Notable examples include the Lesdle La Bokasuma ('Look Into the Future') project in South Africa, backed by British Airways, which uses sport to install pride and self-worth in youth and help control contagious diseases. The project has grown to 14,000 members aged between 9 and 18 and has been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize.

### **Case study 8: BBC World Service Trust**

The BBC World Service Trust (WST) trains journalists in the developing world to develop the scope of their sports reporting, moving away from a results-based service to recognise the human interest and social angles of sports stories.

In March 2004, the BBC WST, in collaboration with UK Sport and The Football Association (The FA) ran a week-long workshop in Blantyre, Malawi that brought together three separate initiatives. The FA trained football coaches, UK Sport supported the training of Kicking AIDS Out peer educators and the BBC WST trained radio journalists from across Malawi on broadcast techniques.

The three separate courses culminated in a mini-football festival during which the coaches employed what they had learnt on the FA course by organising over 150 children into teams, the children took part in football matches and HIV and AIDS awareness exercises, and the journalists put their newly-acquired training into action by interviewing participants between games about what they had learnt about HIV and AIDS.

### **Sportspeople and coaches as role models**

3.22 Celebrity sportspeople are idolised by children and young people throughout the world and, consequently, have a ready-made platform from which to communicate to them – as advertisers so clearly recognise. This provides sportspeople with real opportunities to act as positive role models for change in attitude and behaviour. These role models play a leadership role in bringing issues out into the open, giving it public currency, which helps to create a climate of greater understanding, thereby reducing the likelihood of stigma and discrimination occurring.

3.23 If comprehensively briefed and prepared for such a role, sportspeople at all levels, community, national and international, can bring a much-needed focus to HIV and AIDS work already being carried out, and can enable messages on HIV and AIDS to be more widely disseminated as part of sustainable grass roots programmes. Through their advocacy of testing and support for people living with HIV and AIDS, well-known sportspeople can be powerful advocates in reducing the stigma attached to the disease and community and peer sports leaders play an equally powerful role in capturing and maintaining young peoples' attention and respect.

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<sup>26</sup> *Shared Goals*, Joint paper by IBLF and UK Sport:  
<http://www.iblf.org/resources/general.jsp?id=31>

#### **Case study 4: England footballers in Malawi**

In May 2005, DFID Malawi and the English Football Association collaborated to bring three England international footballers – Rio Ferdinand, Gary Neville and David James – to Malawi to promote HIV awareness, prevention and testing, and to reduce the stigma of AIDS.

With little advertising in advance of the visit, several thousand children turned up at football festivals in Lilongwe and Blantyre and were thus exposed to messages from their international heroes about how to prevent HIV infection, the importance of knowing their HIV status, and were encouraged to support HIV+ friends and family members. The footballers' visit and the reason why they had come were widely reported on radio, television and in the major national daily newspapers.

Independent evaluation of the visit commissioned by DFID found that it was very successful in creating awareness and adding a strong voice to the fight against HIV and AIDS in Malawi. The visit by the footballers to an AIDS clinic and their contact and discussions with HIV+ people was described as “the most valuable of all [their] activities” as it enhanced the efforts to break down stigma and discrimination.

The footballers' messages were particularly valuable because they reinforced – and made credible in the eyes of some youth – the messages that local organisations conveyed about, for example, voluntary counselling and testing. The evaluation found that a number of young people indicated that they had gone for VCT as a result of the players' encouragement.

3.24 In addition to the focus and attention that famous and recognisable sportspeople can bring to AIDS, local coaches can similarly provide strong and influential role models for young people. The relationship between a sports coach and a young person is often less didactic and authoritarian (at least in the perception of the youth) than a teacher-pupil relationship. However, as noted in paragraph 5, there are risks inherent in some coach-player relationships, especially for young female players.

#### **Case study 5: *Play for Life*, Mali**

*Play for Life*, an AIDS education campaign supported by USAID, took the opportunity of a captive young male audience at the African Cup of Nations football tournament in Mali in January 2002 to raise awareness of AIDS.

The campaign featured national football players from some of the competing countries promoting messages on HIV prevention and testing in spots on television and radio, as well as through personal appearances at youth clubs and schools. This was supplemented by the distribution of information leaflets to fans at matches. To link the campaign with the tournament, footballing language was used throughout the material to express the 'ABC' message in a fresh and engaging way. One slogan used was: "Playing at Home Beats Playing Away... Be Faithful to Your Partner".

The campaign was successful in reaching a wide audience of young men: an HIV/STI clinic in the capital, Bamako (where many matches, including the semi-finals and final, were staged), reported that **visits to the clinic increased by 54%** in the two months following the tournament<sup>27</sup>.

#### **4. Partnerships with the sports world and leverage of funds**

4.1 There is great willingness in the sports world to become more involved in international development activities through delivery and advocacy and by investing funding. Sports organisations, with their existing relationships with the private sector, offer an attractive opportunity to draw new players into international development and make progress towards the eighth Millennium Development Goal to develop a global partnership for development. Through successful partnerships the sports world can also contribute to the achievement of the all-important sixth Millennium Development Goal of combating HIV/AIDS if they provide funds for programme work.

4.2 Successful partnerships between the sports world and development organisations already exist. The long-standing 'United for UNICEF' partnership between Manchester United Football Club and UNICEF utilizes the worldwide appeal of Manchester United, its players' fundraising and advocacy powers, and the clubs' sports expertise to fund, develop and deliver UNICEF projects, with an increasing focus on supporting development through sport initiatives. The partnership has already funded AIDS projects in several countries in Africa and Asia and Manchester United were one of the first companies to announce their support for UNICEF's global campaign for children & AIDS, 'Unite for Children Unite against AIDS'. This commitment is a powerful example of how the sports world can contribute to combating AIDS.

4.3 The International Cricket Council (ICC) and UNAIDS have had a partnership since 2003 under which the ICC offers its cricketing activities – from test matches and celebrity players to grassroots coaching courses – to UNAIDS to be used as a platform for any advocacy or education activities that UNAIDS wishes to carry out. AIDS information booklets have been distributed at test cricket matches, the red ribbon logo has been incorporated into the mascot for the 2007 Cricket World Cup and high-profile players have been involved in advocacy and awareness raising. The Indian Network of People Living with AIDS reported that having an HIV+ person toss the coin in the test match between India and Pakistan in 2004 had more impact on discrimination and de-

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[http://www.usaid.gov/our\\_work/global\\_health/aids/News/successpdfs/westafricastory.pdf](http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/global_health/aids/News/successpdfs/westafricastory.pdf)

stigmatisation than any other activity in the last 20 years.<sup>28</sup> In December 2005 the IOC and UNAIDS published a joint toolkit on HIV and AIDS prevention for the sports community to raise awareness and to provide tools for the empowerment of coaches, athletes, and clubs to foster appropriate behaviour change.

*“Sport is a vehicle of hope...used creatively it can involve, educate, protect and mobilize” – Stephen Lewis, UN Special Envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa*

4.4 At European Union-level, the value of developing partnerships in the sports world to tackle AIDS is also growing. The European Commission has initiated the process of involving sports associations in long-term collaboration on campaigns to target the general public with messages on stigma and discrimination.

4.5 In its turn, sport offers the opportunity to engage a UK audience more widely in development work and may open access to a constituency not traditionally interested in development work.

#### **Case study 9: Soccer Aid**

Just prior to the 2006 FIFA World Cup, Soccer Aid engaged an audience of tens of millions across the UK for a one-week reality show on prime-time TV, watching celebrities and football legends train in preparation for England vs The Rest of the World charity match held at Old Trafford, home of Manchester United. The event raised over £2 million for UNICEF, and engaged a non-traditional charity audience (younger, more male) through football whilst exposing them to key development issues, including AIDS.

## **5. Risks and obstacles**

### **Risks**

5.1 Although sports programmes can bring great benefits, they are not without risk, especially in developing countries where the sports infrastructure is weak, facilities and health care are poor and there are a limited number of qualified coaches, particularly female coaches.

5.2 Children and young people participating in sports programmes will run the risk of injury, especially if the facilities they use are inadequate and general health care is poor. There is also a risk of abuse, especially for young women and girls. To mitigate these risks, coaches need to be well trained and the overall capacity of sports authorities in developing countries needs to be developed. UK Sport twins its approach to use sport for development with a programme of activity to develop sport itself so that it has the capacity to support wider interventions.

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<sup>28</sup> Interview with Calle Alemdal, Civil Society Department, UNAIDS.

5.3 Programmes must not be imposed by donor need but be locally driven and needs-based. Programmes must also be sustainable and those using sports popular in the western world must be careful to acknowledge and celebrate indigenous sports and games, to avoid their usurpation. The association of materialism and corruption with some celebrity players in many of the most popular sports must also be recognised and mitigated.

## **Obstacles**

5.4 The limited academic research to underpin the use of sport in AIDS work and relative lack of resources that have been able to be dedicated to thorough independent evaluations of existing interventions needs to be addressed in order to build a comprehensive evidence base for sports-based interventions. Work has begun in this area, with research projects such as 'The Case for Sport' commissioned by UK Sport to address a lack of empirical evidence to underscore claims that sport contributes to improved levels of physical and mental health, lower levels of crime, social inclusion and other government priorities.

5.5 More experimentation is also needed to compare sports-based interventions against non-sports interventions against a range of different variables such as urban or rural settings, different age groups, mixed or same sex groups, and different country or cultural contexts. Further analysis to understand exactly why existing programmes that appear to have had a dramatic impact on participants have done so would also help to develop best practice interventions.

5.6 There is widespread recognition in the sport for development movement that a comprehensive evidence base is needed and initiatives are underway to tackle this. UK Sport has commissioned work to establish a best practice guide to monitoring and evaluation and UNICEF has established an international group to consider how to improve monitoring and evaluation of sports in development programs.

5.7 Research and evaluation of sports-based interventions need to be gathered at an international level and considered within the context of wider work to tackle AIDS in order to assess how sport can strengthen and broaden existing proven methods and networks and to learn from best practice in AIDS work.

## **6. Recommendations**

6.1 Innovative methods are needed to tackle AIDS, especially amongst young people. Sport provides one such method and although still an emerging movement, is fast gaining momentum and building up its evidence base and credibility. The opportunity exists to scale up existing projects.

6.2 Sports interventions should be integrated across a comprehensive response to the needs of young people, contributing to increasing knowledge of prevention, developing life skills, breaking down the stigma attached to the disease and discrimination against those living with HIV and AIDS, and providing support and care for children affected by AIDS.

6.3 Sport is not a magic formula. Evidence to date demonstrates that sports interventions are most successful when used alongside mainstream or out-of-school

education, youth clubs or AIDS clubs, and when they reinforce and enhance existing messages on prevention, testing or de-stigmatisation.

6.4 Evidence of the impact that sports-based interventions can make needs to be situated within the context of wider initiatives to tackle AIDS. This will enable analysts to assess the most favourable conditions in which sport can strengthen and broaden those initiatives by adding value to existing networks and systems, such as youth or out-of-school clubs.

6.5 The most widespread use of sport to date has been as a medium for conveying messages and knowledge on HIV prevention. There is scope to build on these existing projects to use sport to develop life skills and challenge attitudes and behaviours, particularly amongst girls and women.

6.6 Governments and other decision makers must be made to recognise the value of sport by integrating it into their National Development Plans and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers. Investment in the institution of sport is essential for the health, psycho-social and physiological benefits that it holds in store for individuals, communities and entire societies.

*“Sport has the power to change the world. The power to unite people in a way little else can” – Nelson Mandela*