On Wednesday, 26 September sportanddev hosted a Q&A with experts on the joint report recently published by the Commonwealth Secretariat and Laureus Sport for Good Foundation. Below is a summary of the discussion.

Read the full report:

Sport for Development: The Road to Evidence | sportanddev.org

Across the review we found that many similarities exist between SfD interventions and youth development interventions not using sport, both in terms of potential and...
The team of experts included:

**Dr. Meredith Whitley**, a researcher at Adelphi University, who teaches at the university's Sport-Based Youth Development Specialisation and was the head of the research team for this report.


**Morten Schmidt**, Director of Programmes and Grants at Laureus Sport for Good Foundation.

Members of the community were also encouraged to leave comments and interact during the live sessions, which led to some interesting points.
Welcome to the #RoadToEvidence Q&A! Joining us are @thornhilljanine representing @CommYouthSDP, @mosch65 with @LaureusSport for Good Foundation and researcher @DrWhitley to answer questions about the recently launched report: bit.ly/2N32Qkf

2:01 PM - Sep 26, 2018

Question 1: What is the rationale behind this work, and why did The Commonwealth and Laureus Sport for Good Foundation decide to undertake this effort?

Morten Schmidt @mosch65 · 18h
Replying to @sportanddev @thornhilljanine and 2 others
Drive behind research is to take our anecdotal evidence to the next stage, better understanding of how #SportforDevelopment works and why, and compare youth focused SfD interventions and non-sport interventions #RoadToEvidence
From the community

Question from Brian Wesaala, Founder of The Football Foundation for Africa:

Was there any work carried out to understand the intersection between #SportforDevelopment and #socialenterprise as a way of analysing stakeholder impact? #RoadToEvidence
Question 2: What was the methodology and approach behind this research? Why focus on the regions/cities selected?

Janine K. Thornhill @thornhilljanine · 18h
Replying to @sportanddev @DrWhitley @mosch65
These regions/cities were selected in the #RoadToEvidence review to showcase the diversity of contexts, especially as it symbolises the diversity of the Commonwealth youth population. #SportForDevelopment

Meredith Whitley @DrWhitley · 18h
Replying to @sportanddev @thornhilljanine @mosch65
Search strategy for #SportForDevelopment systematic review: database searches, manual searches of select journals, reference lists of recent reviews, and published/unpublished documents requested from scholars and organizations in/connected to 6 cities #RoadToEvidence
From the community

Question from Skateistan:
@sportanddev Thanks for this great report into measuring the impact of #SfD! What were the most interesting or unexpected results from the research? #RoadToEvidence

2:30 PM - Sep 26, 2018

Meredith Whitley @DrWhitley · 21h
Replying to @Skateistan @sportanddev
One of most unexpected findings: research from non-sport youth development did not provide clear blueprint for #research and M&E in #SportForDevelopment programs. Possible that SfD needs to continue to develop our own rigorous assessment models and practices. #RoadToEvidence

Meredith Whitley @DrWhitley · 21h
Or look to fields beyond youth development for potential models/practices to consider, revise, etc. for #research and M&E in #SportForDevelopment programs. #RoadToEvidence

Morten Schmidt @mosch65 · 21h
Replying to @Skateistan @sportanddev
@LaureusSport : the need for working towards initiatives with broader youth development and social policy interventions... if you will, a more integrated approach both enabling and empowering #RoadToEvidence

Question 3: What are the key findings of the research?

Meredith Whitley @DrWhitley · 18h
Replying to @sportanddev @thornhilljanine @mosch65
Critical appraisal findings: few quantitative studies w/ moderate evidence, few qualitative studies w/ aligned/appropriate purpose, philosophy, methodology, & methods. #SportForDevelopment is on #RoadToEvidence, with opp. to enhance methodology for researching/reporting impact.
Question 4: What are the critical takeaways for different stakeholders in the SDP field?

**Meredith Whitley @DrWhitley · 18h**
Replying to @sportanddev @thornhilljanine @mosch65
Methodologies in non-sport youth development interventions demonstrating similar challenges as #SportForDevelopment interventions, with need to improve quality of evidence. Still on the #RoadToEvidence in both fields.

**Janine K. Thornhill @thornhilljanine · 18h**
Replying to @sportanddev @DrWhitley @mosch65
Understanding that sport is just one element for driving social change and may not always work. Strategic workforce development is a key part of the @commonwealthsec in supporting national #SportForDevelopment strategies #RoadToEvidence

**Meredith Whitley @DrWhitley · 18h**
Replying to @sportanddev @thornhilljanine @mosch65
All (practitioners, researchers, policy makers, funders) need to prioritize rigorous, appropriate (and relatable) methodologies when researching/evaluating #SportForDevelopment programs, as could improve quality of evidence – and knowledge about best practices. #RoadToEvidence

**Meredith Whitley @DrWhitley · 18h**
Replying to @sportanddev @thornhilljanine @mosch65
Context is critical, and yet rarely analysed in #SportForDevelopment intervention research, with need to understand social, political, and other climates within which interventions operate. #RoadToEvidence

**Meredith Whitley @DrWhitley · 18h**
Replying to @sportanddev @thornhilljanine @mosch65
Stakeholder impact (parents, community members, partner organizations, officials, policy makers, etc.) should be integrated into #SportForDevelopment intervention research. Including stakeholders leads to greater understanding about program theory and effects! #RoadToEvidence
From the community

Question from Maggy Blagrove, International Development, Active Communities Network:

@sportanddev Q: one of the teams recommendations is about prioritising hiring and retaining the right staff. Do the team have any plans to look further into workforce development to encourage pathways from grassroots all the way to senior management? #roadtoevidence

Morten Schmidt @mosch65
Replying to @sportanddev @DrWhitley @thornhilljanine
@LaureusSport critical to transparently use validated measures and assessments of actual behaviour, and supporting organisations for the long haul #RoadToEvidence @sportanddev

Maggy Blagrove @Magatronic
@sportanddev Q: one of the teams recommendations is about prioritising hiring and retaining the right staff. Do the team have any plans to look further into workforce development to encourage pathways from grassroots all the way to senior management? #roadtoevidence

Janine K. Thornhill @thornhilljanine
Strategic work force development is a key part of the @commonwealthsec in supporting national #SportForDevelopment strategies #RoadToEvidence

See Maggy Blagrove's other Tweets
See Janine K. Thornhill's other Tweets
Question 5: How will Laureus Sport for Good Foundation and the Commonwealth take forward their commitment to this research and to further developing the evidence base for the SfD approach?

Janine K. Thornhill @thornhilljanine · 17h
Replying to @sportanddev @mosch65 and 2 others
@commonwealthsec will use this to inform its work in leading the development of model indicators on sport and the #SDGs with @UNESCO in line with Action 2 of the #KazanActionPlan. #RoadToEvidence #SportForDevelopment

Morten Schmidt @mosch65 · 17h
Replying to @sportanddev @thornhilljanine and 2 others
@LaureusSport as an example, we are currently planning a 3 years research programme to evidence impact on using #SportforDevelopment to build women's and girls leadership and to facilitate equal opportunities #RoadToEvidence

Morten Schmidt @mosch65 · 17h
Replying to @sportanddev @thornhilljanine and 2 others
@LaureusSport sees research and MEL as the second of our three workstreams. To invest/support wisely, we need to know what works and what doesn’t. Therefore, we constantly commission research to build evidence base for sector.

Question 6: What is the key ‘call to arms’ emerging form the report? How can the sector help in developing the evidence base, and what are the next steps/actions going forward?
Thank you!
Thank you to @DrWhitley, @thornhilljanine, @mosch65 and to all participants for your input! For further questions or comments on topics covered today, write to info@sportanddev.org. Find the full research report here: bit.ly/2N32Qkf #SportForDevelopment #RoadToEvidence

@LaureusSport thanks to all for contributing to this launch. Looking forward to following up through research and ongoing conversation #SportforDevelopment #RoadToEvidence
From the community

Ryan Pelley
@ryanpel77

Great session and report, let’s continue to support the global #SportforDevelopment community and stakeholders in achieving positive social impact through sport. #RoadtoEvidence #SportWORKS @commonwealthsec @sportanddev @LaureusSport

3:25 PM - Sep 26, 2018

See Ryan Pelley’s other Tweets
Fantastic to see @commonwealthsec and @LaureusSport joint report “#Sport for Development: The Road to Evidence” recommends the next steps for key stakeholders involved in the SfD approach.
@sportanddev@LaureusSport @AFraser #SportForDevelopment #RoadToEvidence #CommonwealthSDP
8:13 PM - Sep 26, 2018

Some really valuable content and discussions for anyone looking to improve M&E in development projects and programmes #RoadtoEvidence @sportanddev @LaureusSport
3:15 PM - Sep 26, 2018
Maggy Blagrove @Magatronic

Congrats to the team involved on a much needed review of #sport4dev will there be spin off research projects now as a result of these findings? #RoadToEvidence
2:14 PM · Sep 26, 2018

Meredith Whitley @DrWhitley · 21h

Replying to @Magatronic

Definitely! @Laureus_USA funded a similar systematic review of research on #SportForDevelopment interventions throughout the U.S., with results forthcoming. So we are continuing to pave the path on the #RoadToEvidence.

Maggy Blagrove @Magatronic · 21h

Look forward to it! Am currently exploring ideas with several other @LaureusSport sport4dev projects in South Africa and UK looking at to what extent organisations are successfully embedding #genderequality from programming right through to organisational ethos #roadtoevidence

Meredith Whitley @DrWhitley · 21h

Replying to @Magatronic

I'm certainly using the findings from these projects to inform my current/future research efforts as well, as I (along with others) study #SportForDevelopment on the #RoadToEvidence.

Write to info@sportanddev.org with additional questions or comments about the #SportForDevelopment: #RoadToEvidence research.