



The University of Edinburgh  
College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences  
Academy of Sport  
St Leonard's Land  
Holyrood Road  
Edinburgh  
EH8 8AQ  
Scotland, UK  
Office +44 (0) 131 651 6546  
Office: [Grant.Jarvie@ed.ac.uk](mailto:Grant.Jarvie@ed.ac.uk)

[lizzie.parker@britishcouncil.org](mailto:lizzie.parker@britishcouncil.org)  
British Council APPG

21 May 2021

### Opportunities for Global Britain Consultation

1. We value this opportunity to contribute to the Global Britain Consultation. Our response builds upon on our contribution to the integrated review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy.
2. Our bespoke response builds on our past and recent involvement in research and consultancy, for example, The Commonwealth; Secretariat, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australia) and British Council Wales.
3. ***We have currently secured the British Council tender to deliver cultural relations and sport services over the next two years.***
4. This contribution supports the proposition that (i) Universities and (ii) Sport are important soft power tools that provide significant opportunities for Global Britain.
5. The case for universities was recently made in MacDonald's work for the British Council that concluded that higher education was the UK's most significant soft power asset.
6. The focus therefore is on sport. 1 in 5 people in the world according to global impact studies connect with sport. It is a considerable but underutilized UK asset with significant global reach.
7. What are the benefits:
  - Governments are attracted to sport as a tool for diplomacy and cultural relations for several reasons.
  - Sport as a tool for dialogue and co-operation is "low-risk, low-cost and – often – high profile.
  - Informal relationships instigated through sport can lead to formal, long term relationships.

- Sports diplomacy builds familiarity, favourability, and trust, amplifying a nation's culture and values to broad overseas public audiences as well as governments.
  - The concept is innovative and generates public interest in international affairs at home and abroad.
  - Sport draws interest. It is an attractive and popular vessel through which to conduct dialogue, forge co-operation and diplomacy, with officials keen to attend events and large audiences for public diplomacy campaigns.
  - Bespoke sports initiatives offer governments a comparative advantage over similar regions or countries not using sport as a diplomatic tool.
  - Sport can create sustainable partnerships between government and national sports organisations, and encourages mutually reciprocal, win-win policy outcomes.
  - Many sports organisations already have mature and extensive international networks. Government are simply aligning interests.
  - Many sports people are “diplomats in tracksuits. They represent their country on the pitch. Why not off it too (to be ambassadors for their country, building trust and representing values – laying the foundations for diplomatic and business relations, for example)?
  - Using sports diplomacy strategies raises the international profile of a nation's cities and regions.
  - These benefits are amplified if the region, nation, or state has a strong sporting brand, presence, and capacity. The UK has invested in and developed a strong bedrock of sporting talent, culture, facilities, and knowledge exchange that can support Global Britain.
8. Sport is a tool to be exploited in the pursuit of building effective cultural relations. For this to be effective cultural gatekeepers should be less aloof about what constitutes culture and sport needs to be seen to be delivering intentional planned tangible outcomes.
  9. An extensive body of research on what makes effective sustainable political settlements around peace keeping and conflict resolution and a smaller but important body of work on sport points to need to develop a common space around which other medium- and long-term outcomes can be built. Sport can provide such a space.
  10. The idea that sport as a tool and a resource that can build capabilities, work to expand a common good is a proposition that diplomats, peacemakers, civil servants, and development actors should embrace.
  11. The sports proposition is a real one: It builds bridges for the UK because it is (i) a pillar of connection; (ii) has popularity, scale and reach - sport connects with 1 in 5 people in the world (iii) It can be philanthropy and resource re-distribution; (iv) It is not just a commodity, it can be a powerful vector of change, value, principle and solidarity, “a symbol and means,” of cultural diversity and economic but not just economic links (v) A cost-effective resource that assists with forging sustainable, lasting, mutually meaningful outcomes.
  12. Marchesseault's work on the role of the bike and the cyclist as a form of agency in the construction of a more peaceful Rwanda is fascinating work.

13. Cardenas's work on sports role in building resilience, reconciliation, and rehabilitation in Colombia.
14. Sport connects the UK to the world – see the DCMS funded work on UK Sport, or the work alluded to in paragraph two which sees sport as part of the effective delivery of a more Global Britain.
15. Many International Development Ministers recognise that sport is a language but don't fully know how to use it. The Norwegian Minister for International Development says that The Norway Cup is one of the best tools Norway has to bring the youth of the world together and if in the future these kids remember that Norway helped them that is worth more than any money that they we put in.
16. Sport can be philanthropy and resource re-distribution. Barcelona FC is one of the wealthiest clubs in the world. They have a 1% rule which means that 1% of player salaries go to their community foundation – this enables the club to deliver education in 156 countries. Something we are helping them to do.
17. For the world of cultural relations sport raises a few questions. Can sport offer a sustained continuum of solidarity, shared practice, and international fellowship? Can the cultural gatekeepers embrace a more complete world and definition of culture?
18. It is suggested that cultural relations builds bridges between nations, individuals but also communities; Is effective when focusing on non-governmental territory; Is not a short-term fix but should be long-term, increase levels of trust and build upon mutuality; In a word cultural relations needs to be seen to be forging and sustaining common ground.
19. To talk of sport and the common good means that sport is part of a set of cultural commitments aimed at delivering public goods to people, regardless of personal identity, political affiliation, or geographic location.
20. So, if sport can help with the making of safe places, magic circles, in which things happen or if you have a tool that is a language, has characteristics of scale, popularity and reach then why would you not use it to build mutuality, trust and an enlarged common good? In this way sport can position itself in spaces where cultural relations can be forged. Thus, sport and the common good is best understood as a project of ongoing political construction.
21. Thus, sport and the common good is best understood as a project of ongoing political construction and the UK should exploit it to the full to build bridges in a mutually sustainable way.
22. As others have pointed out evidence from around the world confirms that soft power involves countries working along at least two avenues (a) soft power and (b) cultural relations. See the work of Macdonald and International Cultural Relations Ltd.
23. As one of the leading international dedicated think tanks on sport the Academy of Sport at Edinburgh is happy to support the outcomes of this review where it can. Our partnership with the University of Toronto and our track record of working across the 54 countries of the Commonwealth places and beyond places us in a good position to help the UK Government develop soft power through sport.

24. Furthermore, as the successful bidders for the British Council tender on cultural relations and sport we look forward to supporting Global Britain over the next two years if not longer.

25. The Academy of sport are members of the UK Sport Soft Power Working Group.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Grant Jarvie". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Professor Grant Jarvie, MA, PhD, PhD {Hons}  
Director, Academy of Sport  
University of Edinburgh and Toronto  
Formerly University Vice- President and Acting President