



## THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH Academy of Sport

### *Widening Access to Education through Sport – 22 March 2018*

#### **Introduction**

1. The University of Edinburgh Academy of Sport, as one of the few international and national think tanks dedicated to observing sport, is pleased to respond to the **Scottish Parliament's Education and Skills Committee inquiry** into the impact of experiencing poverty on the attainment and wider achievement of school aged children.
2. The brief for the Academy of Sport is built around two premises: that sport has a part to play in addressing the challenges that face humanity in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and to be seen to be actively addressing such challenges by working with and in communities.
3. Since the Academy's mission includes widening access to the University of Edinburgh and activating the potential of sport to reach disadvantaged communities, it is well placed to make a contribution to this inquiry.
4. This short briefing limits itself to sharing information and tracking data from our education through football programmes that have been taken up both nationally and internationally. The three interventions are: (i) Football More than a Game (non-credit but certificated); Football More than a Game (with SCQF credit) and Educated Pass.

#### **Sport, Poverty and Education**

5. International evidence shows that sport can help with education outcomes, engaging disenfranchised learners, help with educational infrastructure and develop capabilities.
6. Our move to develop targeted education through football interventions emerged in 2004 when the University of Edinburgh was approached by Ayr United Football Club which wanted to engage its youth squad players in education. Subsequently the Scottish Funding Council's report on Gender in Scottish Higher Education: 'What's the Issue', highlighted a concern about the under achievement of 13-16-year-old boys. In 2006 we secured one year's funding from the South East Forum and were able to advance the Educated Pass initiative.
7. Educated Pass addresses the academic underachievement of boys aged 13-16. It builds upon the boys' interest in football to generate interest in, and commitment to, education. The University of Edinburgh leads the programme which has received funding from The Sutton Trust since 2008 and works in partnership with local colleges, boy's clubs, football clubs and the Scottish Youth Football Association.
8. In 2014 we launched *Football More than a Game*, probably the world's first football Massive Open Online Course (MOOC). More than 40,000 learners have taken the course, engaging communities, widening access locally and internationally and creating opportunities for people from all walks of life. Its reach and development encourages participants into other forms of educational provision.

9. In December 2015 the University, through the Academy of Sport, was invited to host the World Sports Values Summit in Cape Town. Kids from one of the local township football teams excitedly reported that they had taken the football MOOC as part of an offering provided through their local community education programme.

10. This is free access to education, facilitated through the Football MOOC, taken up in some of the world's most challenged communities.

11. It has led to a number of sports leaders and community activists from, for example, Egypt, Palestine, Ecuador, Chile, South Africa, India, and Scotland coming to Edinburgh for post-graduate study through the MSC in Sports Policy, Management and International Development; also the summer school on the Global Impact of Sport.

12. For the Scottish 2016 elections we provided a briefing paper on *Sport, Poverty and Education* aimed at highlighting and evidencing sports contribution to both formal and informal education.

13. In 2017 we piloted a face to face version of Football More than a Game carrying 5 SCQF credits at level 7.

### **Educated Pass**

14. The decision to develop tracking data was taken early on. A series of annual reports are produced with the latest available report being for 2015 (the data analysis for 2016/17 is almost complete).

15. The key findings that might be of interest to the Education and Skills Committee are as follows:

- The Educated Pass cohort had a higher staying on rate at S5 (87%) than the rate for male pupils across Scotland (84%).
- The same was found for S6 where again the Educated Pass cohort had a higher retention rate (61%), compared with male pupils across Scotland (55%).
- 27% of the Educated Pass cohort who reported their S5 grades achieved 3 or more A-C Highers, which was greater than the 24% of males across Scotland gaining 3 or more SCQF level 6 qualifications.
- The proportion of the Educated Pass cohort in positive destinations (98%), which include Higher and Further Education, training/apprentice or employment, was higher than for Edinburgh City and Scotland as a whole (both 91%). This was also higher than for the proportion of males across Scotland in positive destinations (89%) and females (92%).
- The cohort maintained a strong interest in both education and sport with 75% taking PE as a Standard Grade in S4 or a Higher in S5 and 47% still playing competitive football.
- Educated Pass participants were approximately 10 times more likely to study at degree level than become a professional footballer.
- A total of 24.3% of Educated Pass participants were from SIMD40. This is comparable to Edinburgh city SIMD40 of 26% - which is the geographical location of the participants in this tracking report (i.e., before we expanded to north Lanarkshire).
- 25% of educated Pass participants attended a LEAPS group 1 school.

### **Football More than a Game**

16. The investment in developing resources for the non-credit bearing version of Football More than a Game (MOOC) was made in the full knowledge that these could be accessed by local authorities, colleges and the public. The materials have been used to facilitate other access courses, for example at Newbattle College in West Lothian.

17. The original intention was always to make University of Edinburgh credit and non-credit bearing education available through football in local communities. In 2015 we validated a credit bearing version of Football More than a Game and have been working with local football clubs to deliver this for (a) adult learners; (b) girls and (c) cohorts from SIMD 40 identified through the local football clubs. The programme, for example, was delivered in November 2017 to a cohort of 20 adult learners through the learning centre at Easter Road – the home of Hibernian Football Club.

18. The credit bearing version of Football More than a Game can be delivered through football grounds in or close to areas of multiple deprivation in Scotland.

19. The 6-9-week course facilitates the development of digital literacy, data literacy, health education, finance and social inequality messaging. So, for example, we use the examples of the Men's World Cup, the Women's World Cup and the Homeless World Cup to develop data analysis skills, IT skills and challenge stereotypes.

### **Sport, Equitable Quality Education and Agenda 2030**

20. The United Nations Agenda 2030 has given sport a significant mandate within the delivery of the 2030 sustainable development goals. A mandate to actively contribute to social change. A mandate that is outcome driven with SDG 4 being to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

21. An evidence base for policy makers seeking to use sport as a social tool to advance education outcomes is provided in *Sport for Development and Peace and the 2030 agenda for sustainable development* produced by the Commonwealth Secretariat (2015). We commend its reading to the committee.

22. One of the few robust, comprehensive and recent studies of the challenges in accessing sport for youths who live in poverty can be found in the London School of Economics Report *Moving the Goalposts: Poverty and Access to Sport for Young People* (2015). We commend it to the committee.

### **Conclusion: Moving Forward**

23. Edinburgh's capacity to open up opportunities and provide alternative education through football and sport is popular and is making a difference. It offers opportunities on to the [Global Impact of Sport Summer School](#) and other education pathways into University. It can assist the Edinburgh City Deal to advance digital and data literacy for Edinburgh citizens. The University of Edinburgh community engagement provision provides an avenue for community led groups to access modest funding. We work closely with the Scottish Football Association to assist with the good work that goes on accessing education through football. Internationally we continue to work with the Commonwealth Secretariat to advance outcomes through sport.

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