

# ACADEMY OF SPORT

*An independent gathering place for communities to meet, develop, influence, exchange, advocate and make a difference.*



## ABOUT THE ACADEMY OF SPORT (AoS)

### In Brief



**"Given the serious challenges we face, we all must commit to working to ensure that our current and future leaders at every level put human rights at the heart of the decisions they make. That includes leaders in the world of sport."**

*-- Mary Robinson, Former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and Chair of the Centre for Sport and Human Rights*



**"The Academy of Sport is unique. Its researchers perform cutting edge, rigorous scholarly work on a wide range of topics on sport. It brings together scholars from around the world to develop projects that enhance the role sport plays, e.g. battling racism, sexism, and poverty. It has created innovative community programs that increase access to education and democratize learning."**

*-- Professor Lucia Trimbur "The City University of New York" (CUNY)*



**Founded in 2014, the AoS is an independent think tank that was born from a desire to serve communities locally and globally.**



**We are a network of collaborators both within and external to the University of Edinburgh that exchanges knowledge and enables advocacy in and through sport. At the heart of an international sporting landscape that provides a home for ideas, solutions, students, staff, sporting communities and organizations to meet and to make a difference today.**

### OUR VISION

That sport plays its part in addressing the challenges that face humanity in the 21st Century and is seen to be actively addressing such challenges by working with and in communities.

### OUR PURPOSE

- To advance knowledge and opportunity for the benefit of the public by enabling impact, study and dialogue in and through sport.
- To exchange and disseminate information and knowledge about and through sport.
- To provide a space for dialogue and outputs that supports social and civic responsibility through sport.
- Activate the potential of sport to deliver outcomes that reach, work for and with marginalised communities.
- To widen access to study.
- To open access to research and expertise.
- To sustain a community of collaborators that seek to partner with us to help realise our vision.

### WHAT DO WE DO?

All that we do is guided by the contribution that we can make to the [University of Edinburgh Strategy 2030](#).

No list of local and global challenges is exhaustive but we invite students, postdoctoral fellows, sports writers in residence, practitioners, researchers and activists to join us to help forge a common good through sport

If collectively we are going to realise our vision. We need to work openly with communities through participatory knowledge exchange, research, study and impact.

To this end our work is organised around three pillars of activity: Study, Impact, Dialogue.

# Study and Widening Access



*“Edinburgh University rightly deserves much acclaim for being a world-renowned teaching and research institution. Striving for this success, however, has not come at the expense of supporting local communities. The Academy of Sport ‘Football: More than a Game’ highlights how a highly successful university can work in partnership with local communities. The initiative is research informed knowledge exchange that widens access at its best “*

— External Examiner 2020 – Loughborough University.



The Academy of Sport provides opportunities to access study at one of the world’s leading universities. We work with our partners Moray House School of Education and Sport, the Centre for Open Learning and the Open University to support University commitments to widening access to education. We have a great relationship with [the University Centre for Sport and Exercise](#).

See: [A testimony to our work in the local community](#).

See: [Watch a video testimony to our widening access impact through sport in the local community](#).

We are supported by and work with the University widening participation team and strategy. Every year we have contributed to [Education Pass](#).

In 2020 the AoS received an Edinburgh University Local Community Award in recognition of its pioneering work supporting widening access to education.

Our research, networks and experience of delivering digital education sport offerings led to the development and delivery of the first massive open online course on [Sport and the Sustainable Development Goals](#). More than 2,000 people across 140 countries accessed the course on its first run.



*“This course provides an exciting opportunity for all those in the Pacific and around the world interested in learning how to take action and use sport to make a positive impact. In the Pacific sport is being used by governments, organisations and communities as an enabler of change.”*

— Fiji’s Dr. Robin Mitchell, President of the Oceania National Olympic Committee (ONOC) and Executive Board Member of the International Olympic Committee (IOC)

Whether it be enabling access to online courses, delivering in local communities, supporting, developing, and providing opportunities for the many doctoral students who have been attracted to Edinburgh because of what we do or facilitating international capacity and capability in and through sport and education – we seek to work with, support and develop those studying with us.

**We welcome the support of both Edinburgh Global and our Vice-Principal International for our partnership with [FC Barcelona](#).**



**PARTNERSHIP**

# Impact



*“Every week we see excellent examples of organizations delivering models of best practice in helping disadvantaged communities to access and make use of sport. These are projects that can inspire the way for new projects across the country. But they must be underpinned by evidence which makes this book so important. Publications such as this give us the road map to how we can use sport for social transformation. The challenge for us now is to read the map and walk along the path it shows us.”*

--- Andy Cook (CEO) and Edward Bailey (Director of Policy), Centre for Social Justice, London, UK.

The above is an endorsement of our very recent research on Sport, Physical Education and Social Justice.

We have developed a set of bespoke tools as we have strived to be open, accessible, influential and effective.

AoS seeks to bring together research and knowledge exchange to help tackle some of the most pressing challenges involving sport today.



## SPORT OBSERVATIONS

Our bespoke series of briefing and policy papers serve as a vehicle for knowledge exchange and research and support to advocacy and activism where sport for change contributes to wider social and political movements.

See: Our support for The Black Lives Matter Movement [here](#).

Our sports podcasts capture researchers and practitioners from around the world presenting their findings in Edinburgh. The outputs have benefited from our partnership with the University of Toronto. Together we make our public research seminars available through sport voices.

## SPORT VOICES

## BLOG SPORT MATTERS

Our monthly evidence-based research blogs provide regular insights into many local, national and international issues.

See: [The use of sport to support human rights in Palestine](#).

See: [Sport, poverty and women: some African American basketball voices](#).

Our new Sports News takes up a position between informed journalism and academic analysis, and provides a popular forum for dialogue between the two. Readers and contributors include journalists, students, politicians, civil servants, business people, academics, and others who take an informed interest in sport and current affairs.

## NEWS SPORT NEWS

# Dialogue



*"I want to feel like I have control in an aspect of my life again... At the moment soccer gives me this. Street Soccer believed in me until I could believe in myself."*

-- Academy of Sport Research 2019 [Female street soccer player]

The Academy of Sport actively enables critical dialogue and acts as a gathering place for the exchange of ideas and sporting enlightenment. We endeavour to connect together people striving to create a more just world in and through sport.

Every year, we have supported open access sport seminars to create a critical dialogue and open up new conversations around sport.

Every year, we have supported marginalised voices and movements in and through sport. We have hosted and supported all of the following and more.



LISTEN TO:  
(Click the titles)

- UNICEF on [Safeguarding Children, Sport and Human Rights](#).
- The Homeless World Cup Foundation on: [Poverty, Homelessness and the Homeless World Cup](#).
- Gaelic Sports Voices and Dialogue - [Guthan Spòrs Gàidhlig agus Conaltradh](#).
- Our symposia on [Sport, Mental Health and Dementia](#).
- Our partnership to support Moray House School of Education and Sport Annual Lecture on [Fresh Winds of Equity in Sport](#).

We supported the World Sports Values Summit for Peace and Development in South Africa to create a critical dialogue around the role of sport. This event that was supported by members of the Mandela family. Click on the link to view report on the [World Summit for Sport, Peace and Development](#).

We have supported governments around the world as they struggle to realise the potential of sport as a cultural asset and deliver real intentional outcomes on poverty, health, equality, and the forging of an enlarged common good.

# WHAT GUIDES US?



## Road Map

We set strategic priorities and develop activities to help us maximise our impact.

Each year we develop a road map and monitor what we do. We acknowledge the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and the challenges we face.



## We will continue within our limited resources to:

- **REACH-OUT** to deepen and broaden our connections locally and globally.
- **ENGAGE** a critical mass of knowledge, research, strategic collaboration, influence, access and opportunity in and through sport.
- **SUSTAIN** an independent think tank working for, in and through sport.
- **INFLUENCE** future agendas through advocacy and evidence based interventions.
- **ADVOCATE** the potential of education through sport to make a difference.
- **PROVIDE** widening access to the University of Edinburgh and sustain a commitment to exploring more than just the potential of sport to reach disadvantaged communities.
- **PROMOTE** the powerful synergy between evidence, knowledge exchange, education and advocacy.

## Knowledge exchange

Where our work involves knowledge exchange we will mutually support new evolving research hubs bearing in mind that sport in the world supports but is not limited to i.e. health outcomes alone.



## Transparent

The AoS is led by [the University of Edinburgh, Chair of Sport](#). Our governance structures are open and transparent. We publish our board minutes and are advised by an international advisory council. We are supported throughout by Moray House School of Education and Sport and the University of Edinburgh.

## Why not join us?

We are open to all who share our vision and who want to work with us. We acknowledge that we cannot and should not do this alone. But together we can aspire to make sports knowledge, sports research, the study of sport and advocacy involving sport, work for more people, more often and in more communities.

The output of AoS and its partners must be greater than the sum of its parts. Our best work gets done when we come together to co-produce and support outputs, voices, advocacy in support of our vision.

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## INTERESTED IN WORKING WITH AOS?

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