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# Youth Work in Sport Evaluation: Final Report

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Brief

# The Robertson Trust

## Youth Work in Sport Evaluation

### Final Report

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# Executive Summary

## Introduction, Aims and Method

In early 2014 Substance was appointed by The Robertson Trust to provide an evaluation of the Youth Work in Sport (YWiS) Initiative, a partnership programme between The Robertson Trust, The Rank Foundation and YMCA George Williams College ('the programme sponsors').

Off the back of growing interest in and commitment from the programme sponsors and an emergent Sport for Social Change sector to the role that sport might play in the achievement of a range of social improvements in Scotland, YWiS was originally launched in September 2011, with both The Robertson Trust and The Rank Foundation investing £750k into the programme.

The first cohort of six community sport organisations from across Scotland included Atlantis Leisure, Reach for the Sky Basketball, Spartans Community Football Academy, Street Soccer Scotland, Youth Scotland and Transition Extreme. They were joined by Broxburn United which was also supported by the same programme but with funding coming exclusively from The Rank Foundation. Whilst Street Soccer Scotland and Youth Scotland subsequently left the programme, it was expanded to include a second cohort of organisations in September 2013. These were ACE, Active Communities, Drumchapel Table Tennis Club, Factory Skatepark, Forth Valley Disability Sport, High Life Highland and Inch Park Community Sports Club.

The YWiS programme hypothesis was that by investing in youth work training for a staff member at community sports organisations, trainees would help those organisations adopt practices and embed learning that would encourage the broader take up of youth work approaches and a focus on wider social outcomes alongside the sporting offer.

As such, the overall aims of the research were to assess programme achievements in terms of:

- Increased skills, confidence and opportunities amongst trainees
- Sports organisations' ability to better engage, retain and develop young people who are regarded as 'hard to reach'
- Improved outcomes for participants (and their communities)

whilst also surfacing learning from these assessments to inform future practice within the sector.

As with the development of the YWiS programme more generally, the evolution of the research approach was fluid and responsive to programme developments. This was reflective of an early learning point concerning the need to recognise the variable starting positions of delivery organisations, not just in terms of their capacity to embrace youth work approaches within their delivery but also to capture and reflect upon that delivery. This led to considerable early support being provided to help organisations define their own variable target outcomes and ways to monitor their achievement. These outcomes were then synthesized into common themes and aggregated to create a single programme wide outcome framework as presented at Appendix 1.

Based on this framework, a scoring matrix was developed to enable assessment of delivery organisation progress towards these targets and goals relating to Trainee, Organisation and Community outcomes as well as the strength of the evidence being used to substantiate progress claims in the organisations' annual reports. Whilst this reporting helped to highlight areas in which the programme has achieved the most success and the types of organisation and practices that have worked best, the capture of wider learning involved the use of a range of additional methods including online surveys, case study site visits, interviews, focus groups and workshops.

## Impact

At the programme level, final project reports revealed consistent progress towards achievement of the programme's target outcomes as well as an even more pronounced improvement in the quality of evidence being presented compared to the initial baseline assessment in 2014. Overall, at the final reporting stage, the average improvement in outcomes and associated evidence over the course of the research was 31%. These improvements were also consistent across YWiS, with only two delivery organisations recording a rise of less than 10% and the majority recording improvements of more than 30%.

Furthermore, positive movements were recorded in ALL three outcome areas by ALL delivery organisations. The most positive movements were typically recorded in relation to Community outcomes, followed by Organisation outcomes and then Trainee outcomes, although this pattern was far from uniform, with several delivery organisations from the second phase of the programme recording more progress amongst trainees than within the organisations. For all but one of the delivery organisations the largest contribution to these improvements in the overall scores came from the provision of better evidence to justify progress claims. Evidence improved the most for Community outcomes, followed by Trainee outcomes and then Organisation outcomes.

In terms of Trainee outcomes there was evidence of progress at six of the ten organisations that originally sought to increase the trainees' skills and knowledge to be a youth worker. Similarly, in relation to improved transferable skills, there was evidence of the programme contributing at five organisations. However, in terms of increased confidence to put the skills into practice, only two organisations provided evidence of a contribution to positive change.

In terms of Organisation outcomes, all eight delivery organisations that targeted improvements in their engagement with hard to reach young people provided evidence of having done so but only four provided direct evidence of the contribution that the programme had made to this outcome. Seven of the eight organisations that aimed to embed a better understanding of the benefits of a youth work approach in their structures provided evidence of having done so, although only three of these evidenced the direct contribution of the programme to this outcome.

In terms of Community outcomes, of those organisations that aimed to build participants' confidence and self-esteem, all provided evidence of progress with six providing evidence of the contribution that the programme made. Evidence of progress was also provided by all six organisations aiming to increase access to high quality sports/physical activity programmes, with four providing evidence of the programme's contribution. All five of those targeting the take up of further learning, training and personal development opportunities provided evidence of having done so with two providing evidence of YWiS' direct contribution.

## What Works

For the Trainee outcomes, delivery organisation reporting identified that the key drivers of progress were related to the promotion of the trainee's level of responsibility on the job; relationship building with young people, staff and partners; and progress with their training and education.

For Organisation outcomes, reporting identified that the key drivers of progress were related to internal recognition by the board and staff of the skills required to deliver quality youth work in sport; improvements in impact measurement and the sharing of wider programme learning; the quality of partnerships and external collaboration.

For the Community outcomes, delivery organisation reporting identified that the key drivers of progress were related to the number of participants from target groups taking up the positive

activities on offer; levels of engagement with other wider forms of social, educational and developmental positive opportunities; and actions taken to improve participants' 'soft skills' such as confidence, social skills and self-efficacy.

More broadly we have little doubt that the YWiS programme has helped to re-align the extent to which host organisations focus on learning and embedding youth work practice in their delivery. The extent and reach of this re-balancing is however related to:

- The pre-existing culture of the organisation and degree of commitment to 'traditional' sports models with an emphasis of sport development and participation rates
- Time restraints and other organisational commitments and levels of resourcing
- Commitment to or resistance to change
- Managers receptiveness to learning about new ways of working
- Board level buy-in to a learning oriented approach.

All the evidence we have collected is unequivocal in its acknowledgement that the YWiS programme has improved both the individual trainees and the host organisations ability to engage, build and sustain relationships with young people with the key drivers of success in this area being:

- A recognition that sport is a tool to engage people rather than an end in itself
- The development of better relationships with non-sports partners
- Pre-existing commitment to youth work approaches or willingness to adopt learning from YWiS and youth work approaches across the organisation rather than sticking to a sport first approach
- Recognition of young people's wider social circumstances
- The creation of genuine progression routes based on this learning.

In terms of youth leadership development, we found that the most effective organisations saw a trend away from sports outcomes towards a personal development paradigm although we could not say with any certainty that an existing youth work orientation was a pre-requisite for organisations' capacity to facilitate youth leadership. We also saw that well-structured but tailored volunteering and progression pathways provided the best route to personal development and the taking on of leadership roles.

## Shared Learning

In order that learning can be shared and used to influence practice more widely, it is helpful to break down the elements of organisational structure and delivery practice that were found to be most effective and which might be adopted more widely. Following Professor Fred Coalter's<sup>1</sup> consideration of the necessary and sufficient conditions for success in the sport for social change sector we identified a set of key features that emerged as necessary and key to the replication of the best elements of YWiS practice as well as a series of supplementary features we believe provide the 'sufficient conditions' for the desired outcomes to be achieved.

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<sup>1</sup> Coalter, F. (2007) *A Wider Social Role for Sport: Who's Keeping the Score*, Routledge: London

**The necessary and sufficient conditions for effective youth oriented sport for change programmes**

Necessary	Sufficient		
<b>High degree of organisational commitment to pursuing a youth work/sport for change approach at Board and Senior Management levels</b>	Board members with a diversity of backgrounds and experience beyond sport	Personal engagement with programme and key personnel within the Board and/or SMT	Previous experience of use of and/or partnerships with youth work approaches within the organisation
<b>Clear alignment with organisational goals and target outcomes</b>	Development of logic model, theory of change or delivery plan	Development of an outcome framework	Identification of related indicators
<b>Strong commitment to being a learning organisation</b>	Understanding of how to utilise internal and external data sets and the benefits and limitations associated with different approaches	Active use of insight and guidance to adapt and improve programmes of work and how they have shared this knowledge internally and externally	Making time to share learning from programme in a structured way across the organisation to drive adoption of sport for change approaches
<b>Deep, long standing connections and engagement with target communities</b>	Staff who come from the areas being targeted and share aspects of the social and demographic biographies of those being worked with	Organisations that have a track record of work with trusted partners and which are 'connected', providing access to onward sporting, developmental and employment pathways	Organisations that are well thought of and 'respected' by local people
<b>Participation in peer support networks by individuals at different levels of the organisation</b>	Having a cohort of organisations following the same programme at the same time	Participation in open forum discussion and shared learning events	Site visits and bi-lateral communication between organisations and trainee youth workers to observe and share practice
<b>Access to structured, detached, formal education and training</b>	Access to dedicated youth work courses and qualifications tailored to sports organisations and coaches	Patient and sensitive recruitment of trainee youth workers who may well have had negative prior experiences of the educational system and sport	Recognition of need to balance trainees work and study commitments to create the space for educational progress and application in practice
<b>Commitment to the use of long term, developmental youth work approaches</b>	Willingness to be flexible and innovative in the design and delivery of new programmes	Adoption and development of tiered personal progression and youth leadership pathways	Recruitment of resilient and persistent individuals to champion the cause of youth work approaches within
<b>Sponsorship by influential stakeholders able to provide funding, guidance and support</b>	Public promotion of initiatives to raise their profile and status	Provision of financial and physical resources to facilitate development of learning events and resources	Appropriate and proportionate reporting requirements geared to the generation of learning

## 1.0 Introduction

In early 2014 Substance was appointed by The Robertson Trust to provide an evaluation of the Youth Work in Sport (YWIS) Initiative, a partnership programme between The Robertson Trust, The Rank Foundation and YMCA George Williams College ('the programme sponsors').

Off the back of growing interest in and commitment from the programme sponsors and an emergent Sport for Social Change sector to the role that sport might play in the achievement of a range of social improvements in Scotland, YWiS was originally launched in September 2011, with both The Robertson Trust and The Rank Foundation investing £750k into the programme.

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Through the initiative, these organisations received funding to employ a young person as a trainee youth worker, who studied for a formal youth work qualification up to degree level with the intention that they would use their learning and sports activities to develop relationships with young people within their community. Ultimately, the programme sponsors hoped that this activity would contribute to the achievement of three core outcomes, namely that:

- Trainees have increased skills, confidence and opportunities
- Organisations are better able to engage, retain and develop hard to reach young people
- There are improved outcomes for participants (and their communities)

Critically, it was hoped that through this process, youth work approaches might be embedded within the host organisations, leading to a lasting change in the way that sport is delivered and used to engage hard to reach young people and thereby having a positive impact on wider neighbourhoods and communities.

One of the founders and inspirations for the programme, Chris Dunning from The Rank Foundation<sup>2</sup>, talked about YWiS as being the 'pebble in the pond' and explained how:

*"It's a bit like the Trojan horse, you know it's wheeled into the organisation. And then suddenly all these things creep out and the questions go on and they have to commit time and resource and they have to do all sorts of things whilst this person internally is being questioned and challenged."*

However, the programme was always about more than delivering these outcomes. It was hoped that, through the process of delivery and programme evaluation, learning could be generated about what makes these outcomes more or less achievable for the participating organisations. The purpose of this evaluation then, itself a follow up to an initial light touch overview covering the first two years of the programme, was to provide both an assessment of impacts at the trainee, organisation and community levels as well as this wider learning. In turn, it is hoped that these elements will inform the programme sponsors and other stakeholders about what works when using sport to work with young people and provide learning about how to better support organisations delivering this type of work in the future.

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<sup>2</sup> Since retired.



## 2.0 What Did We Do and Why? Research Aims, Objectives and Methods

### 2.1 Research Aims, Objectives and Questions

As stated previously the overall aims of the research, which covered the period from late February 2014 to October 2016, were firstly to assess programme achievements with regard to:

- Increased skills, confidence and opportunities amongst trainees
- Organisations ability to better engage, retain and develop young people who are regarded as 'hard to reach'
- Improved outcomes for participants (and their communities)

Secondly, and relatedly, the intention was to allow learning to surface from these assessments of what might enable or hinder programme achievements in order that it might inform future practice within the sector.

The stage of organisational development of many of the participating organisations and their lack of prior exposure to systematic evaluative processes had implications for the research objectives and how we achieved these aims. It soon became clear that the effective measurement of outcomes would require an extensive programme of active support and capacity building in how to capture and report the impact of their work. It further became apparent that, with an experimental programme of this type, embracing a diverse range of organisations with different histories, governance arrangements and scale of operation, it would be difficult to provide consistent measures of success.

As such, in order to assess programme achievements, we pursued the following research activities:

- Provision of support for delivery organisations to help define target outcomes and theories of change
- Development and sharing of monitoring and evaluation resources
- Design of measurement and reporting framework
- Deployment of questionnaires with line managers and trainees
- Site visits to observe delivery and meet different stakeholders
- Review and assessment of and feedback on delivery organisation's annual reports

We then achieved the aim of determining what contributed to these achievements, and how, by pursuing the following additional research activities:

- Completion of a policy and literature review to provide broader context and draw learning from related programmes
- Identification of key success stories and evidence of critical success factors from delivery organisation's annual reports
- Case study field research focused on key learning themes
- Distillation of key learning points

Together, the fulfilment of these activities helped us to answer the following key research questions:

- What is the effect of governance structures and organisational buy-in to allow the organisation to meet its central aim of 'increasing the youth work skills and experience of working with hard to reach young people'?



- How has the programme supported the organisations to integrate formal learning, and continual development into the delivery of youth work? What barriers have prevented this?
- How has the organisation been able to facilitate youth leadership in order to meet the central aim of ‘making a difference with young people in the community?’
- How has YWiS allowed the organisation to build relationships with more and previously un-reached, hard to reach young people?

## 2.2 Defining Delivery Organisation Outcomes

As with the development of the YWiS programme more generally, the evolution of the research approach was fluid and responsive to programme developments. At the start of the evaluation each of the participating delivery organisations was encouraged to identify a range of target outcomes based on a Theory of Change (ToC) approach<sup>3</sup>. This involved the organisation of a workshop session when the principles of the approach were introduced and delivery organisations were encouraged to map out their goals and the activities that might lead to them. The selection of outcomes was informed by the original guide to YWiS<sup>4</sup>, guidance from Substance and the delivery organisations’ own internal reflections but, in the absence of the resources to deliver full bespoke ToC processes for each organisation, ultimately relied upon Substance’s interpretation and related preparation of Theory of Change (ToC) diagrams on behalf of the projects.

This process was intended to identify and present back to the delivery organisations the pathway they were taking from identification of needs, to the delivery of activities, to the achievement of outcomes and demonstration of impact. The ToC’s were not in and of themselves intended to be templates for successful development, although the process did help to move delivery organisations along their reflective journey and encouraged them to not only shape delivery to address their goals but also to consider how they could evidence connections between outputs and outcomes.

However, whilst this process played a role in helping many delivery organisations reflect on the change journey and the evaluation process, ultimately it became apparent that several of them had found the process of linking outcomes to existing activities challenging. Many of them struggled to engage with the static diagrams that the ToC process generated and found it hard to iterate the story they told due to a variety of technical, cultural and resource limitations. At this point, there was a recognition that delivery organisations might be better placed to measure progress if they were given more support to take ownership of the outcomes and activities they were delivering, outside of the false confines of a ToC model.

Accordingly, delivery organisations were then supported by The Robertson Trust and Evaluation Support Scotland using problem trees and logic models to identify their own and often entirely new outcomes at the trainee, organisation and community levels, which were then used to help define individual organisation plans. These distinct delivery organisation outcomes were then synthesized into common themes and aggregated to create a single programme wide outcome framework as presented at Appendix 1.

This framework was built from the bottom up and was more reflective of practice on the ground, based as it was on a distillation of the delivery organisations’ *own* targets and local plans and an alignment with the three programme strands within this framework. Subsequently, individual delivery organisation progress was assessed against the outcomes *they* selected alongside the identification of wider programme trends and learning using a mixed method approach which

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<sup>3</sup> A theory of change is a comprehensive description and illustration of how and why a desired change is expected to happen in a particular context.

<sup>4</sup> The Robertson Trust (2013) ‘Appendix F: Outcomes and potential indicators’, *A Guide to Youth Work in Sport*, Glasgow: TRT

was centred around three key activities, namely: local delivery organisation monitoring; reporting against the outcome framework; and thematic research.

This approach was designed both to capture learning but also to build the capacity of the organisations to understand, reflect on and share their own achievements, progress and learning in a sustainable way.

## 2.3 Measurement of Impact

### 2.3.1 Delivery Organisation Monitoring

Delivery organisations used their local plans as templates to help them monitor progress towards achievement of their target outcomes. We did not wish to be overly prescriptive about how they chose to monitor and evidence progress. Rather we set out to identify a suite of straightforward processes, tools and solutions which the delivery organisations could pick from, test and refine to suit their delivery style. This evaluative support was delivered in three ways: firstly, through provision of access to the Views monitoring platform; secondly, through development of a YWiS Evaluation Methods Resource; and thirdly through direct support and advice from Substance, The Robertson Trust and Evaluation Support Scotland.

Six delivery organisations chose to access and make use of the Views monitoring platform, which was configured in accordance with the programme's outcome framework, to facilitate comprehensive and consistent data capture, monitoring and reporting. Training and ongoing telephone support was also provided to these delivery organisations. Those not making use of Views were required to demonstrate that they had adequate alternative arrangements in place for collecting relevant programme reporting data. These included the use of internal monitoring systems by three organisations, an alternative external monitoring system by one and use of spreadsheets by two.

The YWiS Evaluation Methods resource is a 33 page 'how to' guide aimed at supporting delivery organisations to evidence their individual progress. A group workshop was held in February 2015 where The Robertson Trust presented a session on the 'Plan, Do, Reflect, Review' development model, illustrating the importance of measuring impact. Substance provided guidance and examples of how to embed methods into delivery and examples of how data can help shape delivery.

### 2.3.2 Reporting Framework

Substance developed a scoring matrix which has been used to conduct periodic assessment of each of the funded YWiS delivery organisations against the outcomes and indicators they selected for inclusion in their local plans. The purpose of this exercise was to enable assessment of delivery organisation progress towards declared targets and goals as well as the strength of the evidence being used to substantiate progress claims.

Through reference to delivery organisations' annual reports; trainee and manager responses to our surveys; interviews with line managers; and review of other organisation materials, progress was assessed based on the indicators for each target outcome and assigned a score using the following six-point scale:

- 0 = No progress
- 1 = Some progress
- 2 = Reasonable progress
- 3 = Significant progress
- 4 = Target met
- 5 = Target exceeded

Using the same source material, we then assessed the strength of the evidence used to substantiate these progress claims for each outcome and assigned a score using the following scale:

- 0 = No evidence
- 1 = Limited evidence
- 2 = Multiple evidence
- 3 = Evidence of change
- 4 = Evidence of contribution
- 5 = Independent validation

Based on this scoring, for each delivery organisation, we were then able to present:

- Progress scores based on the scores for each indicator
- Evidence scores based on the scores for each outcome
- Total scores based on a combination of progress and evidence scores

Importantly these scores are themselves presented in relation to each of the three programme level trainee, organisation and community outcome areas, helping to provide a picture of the extent to which delivery organisations contributed to programme level outcomes and the extent to which:

- Trainees have increased skills, confidence and opportunities as a result of taking part
- Organisations are better able to engage, retain and develop hard to reach young people
- There are improved outcomes for participants (and their communities)

Over the research period three sets of delivery organisation reports were assessed: baseline reports in the autumn of 2014; annual reports in the summer of 2015; and final reports in the summer of 2016. Overall progress across the three outcome areas through this period is presented in section 4.2 although it should be noted that the individual outcomes in each of these areas differed from the baseline assessment due to the shifting arrangements for outcome selection discussed in section 2.2 above and subsequent refinement of selections from that list which are discussed in section 4.1 below.

## 2.4 Surfacing the Wider Learning

Whilst the delivery organisation reporting itself helped to highlight areas in which the programme has achieved the most success and the types of organisations and practices that have worked best, the capture of wider learning involved the use of a range of additional methods including online surveys, case study visits, interviews, focus groups and workshops.

### 2.4.1 Online Thematic Survey and Manager Interviews

In 2014 all trainees, line managers and a selection of board members completed on-line surveys which centred on the key benefits the organisations *hoped* the programme would deliver to the trainee, the organisation itself and the wider community. A follow up comparative survey was released in the summer of 2016 which asked the organisations to reflect upon the programme's subsequent *impact*. In addition, a bank of thematic questions was included in the follow up survey to explore four key research themes further, namely:

- Governance and organisational buy-in
- Managing delivery pressures, learning and development
- Relationship building with young people
- Facilitating youth leadership

The follow up survey was completed by all trainees and all but one of the line managers, although in two cases the trainee and in four cases the manager had changed. Due to these changes and the response profile of individual respondents some of the tabulated survey results in section 4.3 show different response rates.

In addition to these surveys, at the start of the research, all the line managers were interviewed.

### 2.4.2 Case-Study Research

In order to explore the research themes in greater detail, we visited the following delivery organisations over a period from February 2015 to September 2016:

- Active Communities
- Atlantis Leisure
- Drumchapel Table Tennis Club
- Factory Skatepark
- Reach for the Sky Basketball
- Spartans

The organisations were selected to reflect the range of participating organisations in terms of size, organisational status, history and geography. In each of these settings the research team observed YWiS delivery, interviewed key stakeholders, staff and participants and, where possible, met with senior management and board members. A list of those who participated in the research and the dates of visits is provided in Appendix 3.

### 2.4.3 Focus Groups and Thematic Workshops

To test emergent themes and allow for wider reflection the research team led five key workshops with the full-programme staff team of trainees and line managers focused on a range of subjects including, outcomes and reporting; evaluation methods and Views; programme learning and best practice; the four key research questions; and final reflections on the research.

## 3.0 What's the Context? Policy and Literature Review

The YWiS programme emerged at an interesting moment in the development of sport related social policy in Scotland. This has been characterised by an emerging debate between the merits of promoting active lifestyles, including through the staging of major events such as the Commonwealth Games, and the wider range of social impacts that sport might advance.

This is particularly significant in the context of the Scottish Government's wider and overarching aim to achieve sixteen national outcomes<sup>5</sup> over the next decade which are intended to help Scotland become a better place to live and a more prosperous and successful country. These national outcomes include delivering high quality public services, tackling inequalities and creating strong and resilient communities where people live longer and healthier lives and which improve the life chances for the poorest and most disadvantaged. The Scottish Government is also committed to developing a health system focused on prevention, anticipation and self-management and supporting earlier intervention to reduce risks associated with obesity, poor mental wellbeing and physical ill health.

As the national agency for sport, **sportscotland** has aligned itself with these objectives through a Corporate Plan<sup>6</sup> which contends that sport makes a positive and valuable contribution to the national outcomes described above. *Raising the Bar* describes a country where sport is a way of life, is at the heart of Scottish society and has a positive impact on individuals and communities and promotes the contribution of sport to wider social and economic outcomes. Delivery of the plan will encourage and enable the inactive to be more active and support improvements in well-being and resilience in communities by driving increased participation in physical activity and sport programmes.

Within this context, and to support its vision of a Scotland where more people are more active more often, the Scottish Government has designed the Active Scotland Outcomes Framework which describes Scotland's ambitions for sport and physical activity and how it contributes to the delivery of the Government's national outcomes. The framework has been developed collectively with partners through the National Strategic Group for Sport and Physical Activity chaired by the Cabinet Secretary for Health, Wellbeing and Sport.

These developments suggest a shift of emphasis from the more exclusive focus on support for participation and activity in the 2014 Commonwealth Games legacy strategy<sup>7</sup> and the sport strategy for children and young people<sup>8</sup>. This reflects a wider trend, with the UK Government's new sport strategy<sup>9</sup> also emphasising the importance of activity, but with a primary focus on five wider social outcomes including physical wellbeing, mental wellbeing, individual development, social and community development and economic development.

The commitment to these outcomes is indicative of an increasing interest in the benefits that sport can deliver beyond participation itself. Whilst longstanding, such approaches have increasingly taken on the characteristics of a sub-sector or 'movement' which has variously come to be defined under the banners of 'Sport for Development', 'Sport for Good', 'Sport Plus' and, particularly in Scotland, 'Sport for Change'. Importantly, **sportscotland** now agrees that

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.gov.scot/About/Performance/scotPerforms/outcome>

<sup>6</sup> **sportscotland** (2015) *Raising the Bar: Corporate Plan 2015-2019*, Glasgow: **sportscotland**

<sup>7</sup> The Scottish Government (2014) *A More Active Scotland: Building a Legacy from the Commonwealth Games*, <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0044/00444577.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> The Scottish Government (2014) *Giving Children and Young People a Sporting Chance: Scotland's sport strategy for children and young people*, <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0045/00453122.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> Cabinet Office (2015) *Sporting Future: A New Strategy for an Active Nation*, [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/486622/Sporting\\_Future\\_Accessible.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/486622/Sporting_Future_Accessible.pdf)

sport can be a way of reaching people and engaging them in activities that support them to achieve outcomes beyond sport. They acknowledge that there are a wide range of partners who use sport in this way: to reduce crime, improve health, and promote employability and will continue to advocate for 'sport for change' as a growing area of expertise that is particularly well positioned to tackle inequalities and contribute to the regeneration of poor neighbourhoods.

These developments align with our previous re-working<sup>10</sup> of Hylton and Totten's<sup>11</sup> invocation of Raymond Williams's (1977) work in relation to considerations of community sports practice. According to Williams, at any given moment within a culture, there is a 'dominant' culture, an 'emergent' culture, and one that has past, but still leaves its 'residual' marks on the current forms of culture. Hylton and Totten used this model to develop a taxonomy of influences within the 'culture' of community sports development. For us it is possible to distinguish between a 'Dominant' approach characterised by a participation led sports development perspective and a 'Residual' approach whose legacy derives from the Victorian Rational Recreation and Muscular Christianity movements, leaving the social inclusion and youth and community development approach associated with Sport for Development and Sport for Change as a new 'Emergent' force.

Table 1: Typology of Community Sport		
Category	Approach	Characteristics
Dominant	Sports Development	Participation and performance led. Highly structured/standardised. Fixed term. 'Expert' driven. National/regional programmes. Institutional
Residual	Victorian	Authoritarian moral and social development. Commitment to Rational Recreation perspective. Disciplinarian approaches and values
Emergent	Sport for Development	Addressing social disadvantage. Personal and social development approach. Flexible, long term participant focused work. Local

Of course, the whole point of Williams' work is that rather than these cultural influences being distinct and separate, the dominant, residual and emergent forces are seen to straddle one another, denying each a final sense of hegemonic authority. In this sense, the categories cannot be applied to specific programmes or periods in the way that Hylton and Totten suggested. The sports development model cannot be seen in isolation from the influences of the Victorian sports project just as much as it is now getting pulled in new directions by shifting Government, funder and policy agendas.

The Robertson Trust has defined Sport for Change as being 'where sporting activities are intentionally used to deliver social impact for individuals and communities beyond increasing participation in sport', with impact specifically referring to changes beyond increased participation and performance in sport. Under this model sport is not offered as an end in itself or to promote physical activity per se, but as a means of connecting with individuals and communities to facilitate access to wider layers of support and personal and community development opportunities. Whilst, in Scotland, the sector is relatively underdeveloped the coming together of a coalition of youth, sport and community development organisations to form the Sport for Change Network; increasing interest from the Scottish Government; leadership and policy changes at **sportscotland** reflected in the suggestion that the Sport for Development sector will make a valuable contribution to delivery of their Corporate Plan; and the commissioning of new research by The Robertson Trust, aimed at exploring how sport for

<sup>10</sup> Crabbe, T. et al (2006) *Knowing the Score: Positive Futures Case Study Research: Final Report*, Home Office: London

<sup>11</sup> Hylton, K. & Totten, M. (2001) Community sports development. In K. Hylton, P. Bramham, D. Jackson & M. Nesti (Eds.) *Sports development: Policy, process and practice*. London: Routledge.



change as an approach to delivering social impact can be developed and supported within Scotland, is indicative of growing momentum.

This is helpful since although many commentators continue to make the case for sport's wider social impact, definitive independent evidence of a direct causal relationship between involvement and the achievement of wider social benefits is still lacking in the UK. Whilst Long and Sanderson were 'persuaded that there is sufficient cause to believe that community benefits can be obtained from sport and leisure initiatives'<sup>12</sup> they recognised that these may be small scale, exclusionary and isolated. More recently, Coalter's exploration of the political and historical context surrounding increased interest in this area found the claims made about sport's impact to be 'not proven'.<sup>13</sup> What was perhaps most significant about this assessment though was a recognition that weaknesses in the evidence base were undermining efforts to make the case for sport. He suggested four broad factors were at play<sup>14</sup>:

- Conceptual weaknesses relating to definitions of sport and associated outcomes
- Methodological weaknesses relating to a focus on delivery rather than outcomes and a lack of data, measurement and validation of results
- Non-consideration of the 'sufficient conditions' or 'non-sport' related variables associated with effective delivery
- Reliance on inconsistent summative literature reviews.

Woodward on the other hand has questioned the very basis upon which sport's role, meaning and purpose has been assessed. She suggests that sport is not just another domain to which existing social theories can be applied. Rather, she sees it as distinctive and generative of new ways of thinking about social issues. For her:

*'Sport is particular in its combination of personal pleasures and pain, embodied practices, collective commitment and globalised politics and conflicts. Sporting events are also sites of resistance and protest as well as the reiteration of traditions and conformity. Sport is divisive and collaborative, conflictual and democratic; it combines people in very particular, positive and energising ways, but also re-creates tensions, ambivalences, hostilities and conflicts.'*<sup>15</sup>

Considered in this way it might also be argued that whilst conventional images of sport stress its wholesome and socially cohesive nature, for the participant, it is precisely sports' legitimisation of the spectacular and what might otherwise be regarded as 'deviant' which is often most compelling.<sup>16</sup> As Christopher Lasch commented, 'games quickly lose their charm when forced into the service of education, character development, or social improvement'.<sup>17</sup>

Nevertheless, even at a time of economic austerity, there remains a powerful narrative capable of sustaining public, commercial and political support for the social benefits of sport. It is clear then that if a robust and consistent evidence base can be generated to substantiate this narrative, a compelling case for further investment might be made. The failure to provide policy makers with this information has been attributed to many factors, the most pertinent of which relate to the limitations of existing research and evaluation models. This problem is by no means exclusive to the Sport for Change sector and in his review of approaches to the

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<sup>12</sup> Long, J. & Sanderson, I. (2001) 'The Social Benefits of Sport: Where's the Proof?' In C. Gratton and I. Henry (eds) *Sport in the City*, London: Routledge, p201

<sup>13</sup> Coalter, F. (2007) *A Wider Social Role for Sport: Who's Keeping the Score*, Routledge: London

<sup>14</sup> Coalter, F. (2007) *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> Woodward, K. (2012) *Planet Sport*, Routledge: London

<sup>16</sup> Blackshaw, T. & Crabbe, T. (2004) *New Perspectives on Sport and Deviance: Consumption, performativity and social control*, Routledge: London

<sup>17</sup> Lasch, C. (1978) *The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations*, Norton & Company, p.100



measurement of sport and social impacts Coalter draws attention to Pawson's broader distinction between 'meta-analysis' and 'narrative review' based evaluations.<sup>18</sup>

Meta-analysis, based on the synthesis and review of numerical data to establish correlations between programme delivery and end outcomes, are criticised for ignoring the critical process elements that lead to different outcomes in different contexts. By contrast, narrative reviews that seek to describe these process elements are criticised for the lack of reliability associated with the selection of what elements are included and a propensity to focus on 'good' or effective practice rather than failure.

Coalter goes on to advocate Pawson's 'realist synthesis' approach<sup>19</sup>, which seeks to address both the effects of programmes as well as the process elements that contribute to those effects. Interestingly, what follows from this is the potential to establish the sufficient conditions necessary for sport to have positive outcomes. Ultimately such knowledge can be used to generate transferable 'theories of change' that outline a sequence of causes and predictable effects as well as a structure around which to build measurement and evaluation.

The need for such an approach has been widely acknowledged amongst those concerned with the assessment of sport programme effectiveness in the UK<sup>20</sup>, but rarely practised. It is in this context that learning from the YWiS programme and its particular interest in identifying 'what works' and the critical success factors that contribute to success that has the potential to build on the learning from other studies and wider sport for development practice.

In general terms Coalter's review of the research literature found that sport appears to be most effective when used as part of broader development and prevention programmes.<sup>21</sup> Similarly, in their review of the evidence of what works when using sport to tackle youth crime, New Philanthropy Capital identified four key features of effective projects, which they argue should be:

- Targeted at areas where there is little or no existing sport or activities provision for young people, and a high level of youth disengagement
- Run by credible staff who are not just sports coaches but trained and supported youth workers whose purpose is to understand and respond to the issues faced by the young people they work with
- Long term and built on trust
- Able to provide opportunities such as volunteering and work experience, so that young people can raise their aspirations, gain qualifications, enter employment and move away from crime.<sup>22</sup>

More particularly and in line with YWiS's desire to influence the way sport is delivered, Positive Futures, a UK sports-based social inclusion programme delivered through local partnership projects across England and Wales from 2000 to 2011, sought to embody a youth-work oriented developmental approach by engaging target groups, building relationships and identifying developmental pathways. At their most effective Positive Futures projects played the role of 'cultural intermediary', where success lay in the potential to help generate a class of

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<sup>18</sup> Coalter, F. (2007) *Op cit.* p.27-30

<sup>19</sup> Pawson, R. (2006) *Evidence-Based Policy: A Realist Perspective*, London: Sage

<sup>20</sup> Bailey, R. (2008) 'Youth sport and social inclusion'. In N. Holt (Ed.) *Positive Youth Development Through Sport*, Routledge: London; Coalter, F. (2007) *Op cit.*; Nichols, G. & Crow, I. (2004) 'Measuring the Impact of Crime Reduction Interventions Involving Sports Activities for Young People', *Howard Journal of Criminal Justice*, 43(3): p267-83; Tacon, R. (2007) 'Football and Social Inclusion: Evaluating Social Policy', *Managing Leisure: An International Journal* 12(1): 1-23

<sup>21</sup> Coalter, F. (2009) *A wider social role for sport: Who's keeping the score*, Routledge: London

<sup>22</sup> Laureus Sport for Good Foundation (2010) *Teenage Kicks: The value of sport in tackling youth crime*, Laureus Sport for Good Foundation: London

professionals who were able to collapse the barriers between the socially 'excluded' and the 'included'.<sup>23</sup>

In many ways the programme evaluation conclusions that:

- Whilst sport has social value, that value can only be fully realised within a social and personal development approach, and that
- Effective projects employ management teams with appropriate frontline experience of grassroots youth work and prioritise outreach rather than formal referral-based engagement.<sup>24</sup>

...have more in common with the Scottish Government's National Youth Work Strategy<sup>25</sup> than its Sports Strategy, which makes little mention of specific activities, focusing instead on the rights of young people, improving their life chances and recognising that the embedding of youth work practices in the way public services are delivered is key to achieving that outcome.

In this context and in light of the YWiS programme's interest in learning more about whether and how the embedding of youth work practice in sports organisations' delivery might enable better outcomes for Scotland's young people it is interesting to consider the Young Foundation's framework of outcomes for young people.<sup>26</sup> This framework attempts to draw out the clusters of social and emotional capabilities that might be delivered by a youth work approach and provides the evidence base to demonstrate their link to outcomes such as educational attainment, employment and health improvement. More specifically this framework has recently been adapted by the Sport for Development Coalition<sup>27</sup>, which whilst ostensibly concerned with England and Wales includes organisations operating on a UK wide basis, to help programmes using sport for a social purpose to demonstrate their purpose, impact and value.

Building on this and with a view to informing future commissioning it is also worth considering learning from the UK-wide Big Lottery funded Realising Ambition programme. This five-year learning programme is seeking to identify ways to replicate the best practice of projects that have a strong track record of helping young people to fulfil their potential and avoid pathways into offending. As part of that mission it has developed an 'Evidence-Confidence Framework' that identifies five key 'ingredients' (on the left of Figure 1) of programmes that might be successfully replicated as well as four related indicators (on the right of Figure 1) for each of these features, which were fed into considerations of the necessary and sufficient conditions of effective practice that are addressed in the concluding section of this report.

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<sup>23</sup> Crabbe, T. (2006) Avoiding the numbers game: Social theory, policy and sports role in the art of relationship building. In M. Nicholson & R. Hoye (Eds.) *Sport and Social Capital*, Routledge: London

<sup>24</sup> Crabbe, T. (2006) *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> APS Group (2014) Our ambitions for improving the life chances of young people in Scotland: National Youth Work Strategy 2014-2019,

[http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/YouthWorkStrategy181214\\_tcm4-823155.pdf](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/YouthWorkStrategy181214_tcm4-823155.pdf)

<sup>26</sup> McNeil, B., Reeder, N., & Rich, J. (2012) *A framework of outcomes for young people*, the Young Foundation: London

<sup>27</sup> An informal network of charities and NGO's operating in England and Wales with an interest in the practice and promotion of sport for development approaches

**Figure 1: Realising Ambition Evidence-Confidence Framework<sup>28</sup>**

<b>A tightly defined service</b>	Supported by a strong logic model	The "core" of the service is well defined	There are clearly specified activities	Delivery supported by manuals and training
<b>That is effectively delivered to those that need it</b>	Eligible individuals in need are served	Realistic delivery targets can be met	The "core" is delivered with fidelity	Service delivered by motivated and qualified staff
<b>Evidence is used to learn and adapt, as required</b>	Outcomes are routinely monitored	Engagement and retention are routinely monitored	Flexible components are identified and adaptations tested	Learning is translated across the delivery organisation
<b>There is confidence that outcomes will improve</b>	Evidence from elsewhere that outcomes improved	Delivery organisation able to effectively gather, analyse and communicate evidence	Evidence from current replication area that outcomes improved	Evidence of wider positive impact
<b>The service is cost-beneficial and sustainable</b>	Analysis of costs and likely financial return on investment	Compelling business case supporting replication	Service fully integrated into core business	Financial and organisational structures sufficiently robust to support replication

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.catch-22.org.uk/services/realising-ambition/learning-far/evidence-confidence-framework/>

## 4.0 What Difference Has It Made? Research Findings, Programme Outcomes and Impacts

### 4.1 What Was Expected?

As noted in the research aims in section 2.1, at the outset of the programme the three programme sponsors hoped to achieve the following outcomes, namely that:

- Trainees have increased skills, confidence and opportunities
- Organisations are better able to engage, retain and develop hard to reach young people
- There are improved outcomes for participants (and their communities)

These aims were nested within a broader hypothesis that by investing in youth work training, trainees would help delivery organisations adopt practices and embed learning that would encourage the broader take up of youth work approaches and a focus on wider social outcomes. In this context, there was a further and related hope that by monitoring the achievement of target outcomes reflecting these aims, the programme would reveal where the greatest difference was made and what contributed to those successes in terms of organisational characteristics and delivery profiles. In this way programme partners and other funders might better understand what makes these outcomes more or less achievable.

To help us monitor and measure the achievement of these outcomes, individual delivery organisations were invited to submit annual reports based on the target outcomes they chose to pursue as discussed in section 2.2. The final outcome selections (see Appendix 2) were all included in the wider YWiS programme outcome framework presented in Appendix 1 which has been shaded to provide an indication of their relative take up across the programme with the darkest shading for those outcomes selected by the most organisations and the lightest shading for those selected by the least.

Encouragingly, the most commonly selected outcomes were reflective of the wider programme goals in each area, as illustrated in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Most Commonly Selected Outcomes	
Outcome Area	Specific Outcomes
Trainee	Trainee gains the skills and knowledge to be a youth worker
	Trainee has improved transferable skills
Organisation	Organisation improves how it engages with (hard to reach) young people
	Organisation has a better understanding of the benefits of a youth work approach and has embedded this within its structures
Community	Increase access to high quality sports/activity programmes for young people who would not normally have access, or who are considered to be vulnerable or at risk of offending
	Participants build their confidence and self esteem
	Young people take up further learning, training and personal development opportunities

Initially the number of outcomes being pursued was broader, with delivery organisations seeking to cover the widest possible range. As the programme matured they became more discerning in their selections, as a consequence of being given support and time to identify their own aims and through recognition of the need to, and challenges associated with, evidencing the achievement of those outcomes. For example, whilst Transition Extreme dropped two Organisation outcomes and five Community outcomes representing bringing more focus to their work, Factory Skatepark reworded six of their target outcomes and added another to ensure a better alignment with their work.

#### 4.2 Programme Level Achievements

To help us assess the achievement of these aims, an initial baseline report was submitted by each delivery organisation in the autumn of 2014, followed by an interim report and final report in the summers of 2015 and 2016. Based on the Reporting Framework presented in section 2.3.2, variance in the progress, evidence and combined scores for each delivery organisation from their baseline to final reports are presented in Appendix 4 in the three outcome areas of Trainee, Organisation and Community. Alongside the headline scores, shading is used to indicate progress with shades of red used to indicate negative movement and shades of green to highlight positive movement. The darker the shading the greater the movement.

As well as revealing progress towards achievement of the programme’s target outcomes the annual reports submitted to The Robertson Trust in July 2016 showed an even more pronounced improvement in the quality of evidence being presented compared to the initial baseline assessment in 2014. Overall, following an average improvement of 4.25% and a total improvement of 51% across the programme for combined progress and evidence scores at the interim reporting stage<sup>29</sup>, at the final reporting stage the average combined improvement had risen to 31% with a total improvement of 376 percentage points across the programme. These improvements were also far more consistent across the programme, with only two delivery organisations recording a rise of less than 10% and the majority recording improvements of more than 30%.

Table 3: Cumulative Improvements in Reporting and Evidencing of Outcomes					
Reported Progress towards Outcomes			Evidence of Progress		
Trainee	Organisation	Community	Trainee	Organisation	Community
					+536% pts
		+530% pts			
			+457% pts		
				+354% pts	
	355% pts				
281% pts					

Interestingly, and in contrast to the interim reporting stage, for the combined scores, positive movements were recorded in ALL outcome areas by ALL delivery organisations although one

<sup>29</sup> Substance (2015) *The Robertson Trust York Work in Sport Evaluation: Interim Report*, Unpublished.

recorded a negative movement with regard to trainee progress and one recorded a negative movement for evidence of both trainee and organisational progress. The most positive movements were typically recorded in relation to Community outcomes, followed by Organisation outcomes and then Trainee outcomes, although this pattern was far from uniform, with several Cohort 2 delivery organisations recording more progress amongst trainees than organisationally.

For all but one of the delivery organisations the largest contribution to these improvements in the overall scores came from the provision of better evidence to justify progress claims. Whilst progress was reported from the start, this was not always backed up by evidence. By the time of the final reports, there was reporting of further progress but backed up by high quality, reliable evidence as is illustrated in Table 3 below. Indeed, for The Robertson Trust's Innovation and Learning Manager Linda Macdonald, who had day-to-day responsibility for the programme, these results confirmed a big improvement in the participating organisations' capacity to capture evidence of their achievements and share it:

“In terms of the reporting coming out, there is certainly better evidence about the difference they're making. For some of those organisations who were probably making that difference anyway, they just weren't able to evidence that. So there's a question of how much is this about them being able to talk about it better, and evidence it better. How many are actually doing it. I think there are a number of organisations who... are certainly able at this point to, talk better about the difference they want to make and how they're doing that.”

In other cases, such as High Life Highland, the scale of positive variance is more reflective of their low starting position in terms of the scores they achieved for delivery and evaluation as reported in their baseline report. However, in some ways the radical improvement they experienced still reflects a wider learning point from the programme relating to the nature and scale of support required to enable delivery organisations to perform effective monitoring which we will reflect upon later.

### 4.3 Where, What and Why Progress was Achieved?

#### 4.3.1 Trainee Outcomes

Most of the twelve delivery organisations involved in the programme reported against each of the three outcomes that related directly to Trainees, namely that:

- Trainees have increased skills and knowledge to be a youth worker (8 delivery organisations)
- Trainee gains the confidence to put the skills into practice and has opportunities (to use sport as a tool) as a result of taking part (6 delivery organisations)
- Trainee has improved transferrable skills (8 delivery organisations)

At all the delivery organisations and for all of these outcomes there was at least some evidence of positive change. At six of the organisations that sought to increase the trainees' skills and knowledge to be a youth worker, there was evidence of the programme contributing to this outcome which was independently validated in one case. Similarly, in relation to improved transferable skills, there was evidence of the programme contributing at five organisations, with one of these independently validated. However, in terms of increased confidence to put the skills into practice, only two organisations provided evidence of a contribution to positive change.

Delivery organisation reporting identified that the key drivers of progress in these areas were related to professional responsibility, relationship building and education with the indicators showing the highest overall level of achievement across the delivery organisations being:

- Level of responsibility on the job (runs own sessions or assisting at a higher level)



- Trainee relationship with young people, staff and partners
- Progress with education and training<sup>30</sup>

#### 4.3.1.1 Level of responsibility on the job

When considering the types of delivery organisation that enabled trainees to develop a high level of responsibility on the job we found they tended to have a commitment to lateral team decision making. At Spartans for example, the Board of Trustees welcomed the input from the trainee on both an informal and formal basis. The trainee was active in team meetings and YWiS has a standing item at the Board meeting. Similarly, at Transition Extreme we saw a commitment by the higher management team to empower the trainee and encourage transparency and communication across the team. This was witnessed and evidenced through the CEOs commitment to being updated by the Youth Team and associated scheduling of regular meetings with them.

#### 4.3.1.2 Trainee relationship with young people, staff and partners

Relationship building lies at the heart of what Chris Dunning refers to as the YWiS 'process'. For whilst, in contrast to the delivery of a sports session, it might feel intangible it provides a platform for wider engagement and personal development. As he explains in relation to discussions with YWiS managers and trainees:

*“When you told them to forget about activity, you know, what happens when you just meet a group of people, describe the process that you think happens, they described a whole other area that when you're really pushing them, they say “actually that's the most important bit.” And you couldn't do the activity without it.”*

And yet we know that the ability to build relationships with disadvantaged young people is not straightforward or formulaic. It can be complex, contradictory and reliant upon a whole range of nuanced social biographies and circumstances that feed the practitioners' capacity to play the role of a cultural intermediary.<sup>31</sup>

Nevertheless, all the evidence we have collected is unequivocal in its acknowledgement that the YWiS programme has improved both the individual trainees' and the host organisations ability to engage, build and sustain relationships with young people. In their responses to our survey of trainees and managers all 22 respondents indicated that their organisation had developed new relationships with young people and at the interim stage identified the key drivers of success in this area as:

- A recognition that sport is a tool to engage people rather than an end in itself
- The development of better relationships with non-sports partners
- Pre-existing commitment to youth work approaches or willingness to adopt learning from YWiS and youth work approaches across the organisation rather than sticking to a sport first approach
- Recognition of young people's wider social circumstances
- The creation of genuine progression routes based on this learning.

Equally we identified obstacles manifest in organisations' use of more traditional sports recruitment approaches, such as non-personalised mass circulation of information; over claiming or raising expectations that can't be met; partners' failure to appreciate the subtleties of a youth work approach; a lack of development pathways and, critically, lack of staff time to develop relationships.

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<sup>30</sup> Highest cumulative score by indicator across all delivery organisation reports [46/41/33 respectively].

<sup>31</sup> Crabbe, T. (2007) Reaching the 'hard to reach': engagement, relationship building and social control in sport based social inclusion work, *International Journal of Sport Management and Marketing*, 2 (1/2) p.27-40



Where we observed the trainee had developed strong relationships with young people, staff and partners we identified a number of other similarities. Having a shared set of characteristics with the young people in the community or target group was found to be hugely beneficial in facilitating relationship building at these delivery organisations. This was evidenced at Spartans, Forth Valley Disability Sport and Atlantis Leisure where all the trainees had characteristics or shared experiences with the local target groups.

For Mitch, at Forth Valley, being deaf allowed him to understand some of the barriers faced by young disabled people. At Atlantis, having grown up locally in Oban and struggled academically whilst excelling at sport, Donna understood what would engage the more disruptive young lads at the Leisure Centre which facilitated the brokering of relationships with the group. As one explained, *“Donna just knows what we want. It’s like she knows as she grew up here, doing all this so she can organise it for us.”* Her football skills also provided her with a level of respect from the group as she was regularly called upon to join in games on an even footing. Prior to her involvement in the YWiS programme she was a traditional sports coach and would organise a session in a very structured manner, noting:

*“I’d never let them turn up and just play football without the warm-up, drills and session plans. But they get that everywhere else, even here and school so they just want the opportunity to turn up and play.”*

Donna now approaches all her sessions in this manner. Building relationships and deepening her understanding of the young people’s lives and needs:

*“Basically your approach, how you approach young people. So, initially, like, as a coach, you’d just be sent out there to try and teach them how to kick a ball or how to shuttlecock, or something like that. How to do a good serve or things like that and you were just given a group of kids and then they would go away and you’d know their names and stuff, but you wouldn’t really try and build a relationship with them or, I mean, you’d have, maybe a bit of banter with them or whatever, but, you wouldn’t ever really know too much about them. And sometimes, well from a youth work perspective, that is really key to build the relationship and understand that young person, and you can actually support their needs a bit better that way, as well, and see where they’re coming from and what they’re needing from that session.”*

This is clear evidence of how the YWiS model has changed delivery style and widened the trainees’ understanding of the importance of being responsive to the needs of different groups of young people, to be attractive and inclusive to all young people.

Similarly, at Spartans, Amy had the ability to develop strong and meaningful relationships with the young people of the area because of both her lived and learned skills. Being a local girl from Muirhouse with its own challenges, struggling at school and being naturally sporty are all character traits which many of the young people in the community can relate to. This created a platform for Amy to become an inspirational role model for other young people in the area. However, this status was not secured because she was from Muirhouse but because of how she has grown as a person, taking on knowledge and responsibilities that are not typical of a person from her background. As a longstanding trustee remarked:

*“It is not a distant person. It is not a photograph. It is that woman there. [We can say] ‘She was your age when she first came along here and this is what she is doing now.’ People know her. It is hugely important.”*

These agencies also had another commonality in the form of the close working relationships between the trainees and line managers. All three trainees pointed to the daily informal interaction which no doubt facilitated a stronger relationship and better understanding of the wider purpose of the programme and pressures faced by the trainees.

#### 4.3.1.3 Progress with education and training

The delivery organisations demonstrating high levels of progress with education and training tended to create internal support structures which allowed for the trainee to not rely solely upon the college for feedback and support with their studies. At Active Communities, the team have weekly catch up meetings where they all share ideas and update their colleagues on their work and seek support. This was important in a context where Emma found it challenging to balance the workload of university, work and personal life and to apply the theory learned at College to some of her work with young people:

*“It’s quite tough, it’s like a full-time job and full time study. you have to deliver enough to justify the study - I have to be working with a lot of young people so that I have enough to write about in assignments... My volunteer and session workers I’m good at using the things I’ve learned but the staff and line managers I still struggle a bit to show them what I’ve learned. I’ll tell Susan about the importance of reflection and evaluation but I’m not sure if that’s something new I’ve taught her.”*

At Atlantis Leisure, the trainee also struggled with the pressure of formal study and the amount of additional work required, to the extent that the Chairman feels that on reflection they would not have taken up the opportunity if they had known the extent of work required both for the trainee and in terms of reporting at the start:

*“Well, absolutely nobody knew how much work was going to be involved in this, and Robertson definitely didn’t and Rank did not. Well, if they did they certainly didn’t tell you, so there was a huge amount of additional works that needed to support and was, kind of, expected to be done that they did not appreciate the amount of hours and effort and work and certainly we didn’t. And being honest, if we’d known that at the start would we have taken it on? We might not have. I rather suspect we wouldn’t have.”*

Interestingly this was re-enforced by precisely the personal attributes that helped Donna build relationships with young people. She talked of her dislike of school and enjoyment of non-academic activities, describing herself as ‘sporty’ and explained the challenge she faced when presented with the initial diploma:

*“I didn’t really enjoy school, with all the written work and things, I enjoyed being around all my friends and everything, but I never really was an academic. So, for me, to be doing a degree in the first place, or even a diploma to start off with, was a big challenge for me. I would never have thought that I would have gone through a degree, like, all the way back then, so it’s a big change that way.”*

The fact that she went on to successfully complete the degree was certainly related to the support she received from the organisation, giving her protection and the time to study. She was granted one study day per week which she spent at home to ensure she would not be dragged in to support delivery. Whilst this was a requirement of the programme this approach was not adopted by all delivery organisations in practice and Donna feels grateful that the organisation valued the learning process:

*“Comparing it to my other peers and stuff, they really struggled to get that from their managers and their organisation. Because there’s always something that somebody’s wanting them to come in and do or whatever, but no they take it quite seriously and I have appreciated that. It’s a big difference.”*

At Inch Park these pressures were also mitigated by the adoption of a flexible, supportive and responsive approach to the trainee by the host organisation, whereby she could build more personal responsibility by being given authority to select relevant training courses to improve her youth work skills.

Equally the trainee survey revealed universal appreciation of the various types of support provided by the programme in 2014 and 2016 when respondents were asked to rate their importance on a 5-point scale from 'very important' to 'very unimportant'). In Table 4 responses are presented cumulatively and scored in terms of their position on the scale from 1 to 5 for both baseline and final surveys with a net variance score in the final column. Whilst more of the types of support experienced a negative movement than positive it should be noted that most respondents reported ALL elements as 'important' (I) or 'very important' (VI) in both surveys with the lowest score being 'neither important nor unimportant' (N). Re-iterating Donna's point, networking and learning opportunities came to be seen as more important and was rated the highest across the two surveys followed closely by 'general management, support and supervision'.

**Table 4: How important were the different types of support received from The Robertson Trust, The Rank Foundation and Substance?**

	Base				Final				Variance
	VI	I	N	Total	VI	I	N	Total	Net
Induction and support	45	12	0	57	30	24	0	54	-3
Formal work based training sessions	40	12	3	55	25	24	3	52	-3
Information, training materials and packs/toolkits	40	12	3	55	20	20	9	49	-6
General management, support and supervision	45	12	0	57	40	16	0	56	-1
Networking, learning and sharing opportunities with other trainee youth workers	45	8	3	56	30	25	3	58	+2
Informal guidance from organisation staff	45	12	0	57	20	32	0	52	-5

In terms of support received from George Williams College, there was less variation between the baseline and final surveys with most respondents again rating all forms of support as 'very important' or 'important'. However, in this instance there was a trend away from networking and learning opportunities as reflected in Table 5 which perhaps mirrored some trainees' struggles with the academic aspects of the programme.

**Table 5: How important were the different types of support received from George Williams College?**

	Base				Final				Variance
	VI	I	N	Total	VI	I	N	Total	Net
Induction and support	45	12	0	57	35	16	3	54	-3
Regional study days	35	20	0	55	30	20	3	53	-2
Course materials and packs/toolkits	50	8	0	58	30	25	3	58	0
Study groups	35	12	6	53	35	12	6	53	0
Co-ordinated support and supervision	45	12	0	57	40	12	3	55	-2
Networking, learning and sharing opportunities with other trainee youth workers	55	4	0	59	35	16	3	54	-5

In their verbal responses trainees and managers alike welcomed the neutral space at programme learning events to discuss ideas, celebrate successes and highlight problems. To be part of a wider programme brought with it a camaraderie and closeness and allowed the agencies to borrow ideas and share good practice both at the trainee level but also more widely:

*"Having a learning set and being part of the learning set, I think, has been brilliant for us. To be in a room with like-minded individuals who are not competing with each other. Therefore, actually being open, honest and transparent when things go wrong but also not being frightened to say, "Look, this really worked for us," I think has been really, really helpful.*

*Also, just to be challenged by other people and broaden your horizons and open up your mind. To be part of the learning set has been brilliant.”*

All the trainees we spoke to indicated how much they valued having other trainees developing alongside them. Indeed, after attending a Rank Foundation sailing trip Donna reflected how:

*“They were all from similar projects like myself, and I was struggling to learn what youth work was initially, so going away and being on a boat with them for a whole week, we got to chat about each other’s projects and stuff, and that was a big learning point for me.”*

There is little doubt that the most significant outcomes for the trainees themselves were the qualifications, skills and experiences they have gained. As The Robertson Trust’s Innovation and Learning Manager Linda Macdonald, reported:

*“I would say, you know the clearest success will be that, pretty much all of the young people are going to come out with a qualification... Most of them are probably going to go on to more positive destinations than they would have before the training.”*

Of the five trainees in Cohort 1 who completed their degree programme this year, all were successful, with three gaining a 2i and two gaining a 2ii degree qualification. As we have seen, these achievements did not come without their own internal pressures. In their responses to the baseline and final surveys, trainees suggested the primary and increasing challenge they faced was the need to manage the balance of youth work and coursework. The need to manage expectations of employers also became increasingly challenging as the programme went on. In Table 6 we present and score these findings on a scale where ‘Not Challenging’ (NC) responses scored 5, ‘Slightly Challenging’ (SC) responses scored 4 and ‘Very Challenging’ (VC) responses scored 3.

**Table 6: How challenging did trainees find the following aspects of the programme?**

	Base				Final				Variance
	NC	SC	VC	Total	NC	SC	VC	Total	Net
The diploma formal written work	0	44	3	47	15	36	0	51	+4
Delivering sessions with young people	35	20	0	55	20	28	3	51	-4
Managing the balance of youth work and coursework	5	28	12	45	10	16	18	44	-1
Deadlines and timeframes	5	24	15	44	5	36	6	47	+3
Managing expectations of employer	30	25	3	58	15	28	6	49	-9
Travel	30	16	6	52	25	24	3	52	0
Engaging with different organisations and people	40	12	3	55	30	20	3	53	-2

Despite these pressures, responses to the baseline and final survey question focused on the trainees’ motivations for involvement in the programme did reveal further progression in terms of the trainees’ ongoing aspirations. Table 7, which ranks the importance of different motivating factors for becoming involved in YWiS, reveals that whilst the desire ‘to gain new skills and experiences’ consistently ranked highest across the two surveys the biggest positive movement occurred in relation to the desire ‘to gain paid employment’.

This increased interest in gaining employment is not surprising as some of the trainees come to the end of their current roles but it is interesting to note that the desire ‘to begin a career in sport’ dropped to last place in the rankings with five respondents indicating that this was neither important nor unimportant. This is an important finding in as much as it reflects the programme goal of shifting the focus in participating organisations from sport to the outcomes that sport can help to deliver.

**Table 7: What motivated trainees' interest in being part of the YWiS initiative at the time of the baseline and final surveys?**

	Baseline Ranking	Final Ranking	Variance
To help out in my community	4	2	+2
To gain new skills and experiences	1	1	0
To gain an accredited qualification	1	3	-2
To gain paid employment	7	4	+3
To begin a career in youth work	3	5	-2
To begin a career in sport	5	7	-2
To meet new people	6	5	+1

**Trainee Snapshot: Spartans**

Spartans was a top performing delivery organisation in relation to Trainee outcomes. Whilst we have observed huge changes both in character and professional outlook across all the YWiS trainees, one in particular has been transformed over the five year programme.

For Amy, the opportunity to develop herself and become a young leader stood in stark contrast to her previous life experience. She didn't enjoy school, started to attend college but dropped out as she didn't value the experience and didn't think she was learning anything. In her own words, there were a few times when she '*went off the path*'. At the time the YWiS opportunity arose Amy did not think it was something that people like her did. Being a role model in the community and studying for a degree were way off her internal sense of the future. For her this perception comes from the social conditions of her neighbourhood and is something she now sees as a barrier to people's progress which needs to be challenged but which takes time:

*"When the mentality of that community is you're worthless, your destiny is to sign on, get pregnant or go to jail, like that's what our role models were and that's what we were labelled by society growing up from like the age of five all the way through. So, to break that takes a long time. I've took five years, so..."*

The changes over that time have manifest themselves through her growing confidence, outlook, aspirations and ultimately professional achievements. One of the Programme founders, acknowledged this change:

*"Look at Amy and how she's grown in those five years. I mean, just from her physical presence now to where she was even a year ago, and I can say that because I haven't seen her for a year, nearly eighteen months, she holds herself differently, she presents and now has eye contact differently. She has moved on from where she was where she was very much a product of her manager, of Dougie, she always looked to Dougie for affirmation. Actually, I think she could now stand up to Dougie and say 'actually Dougie I don't think you've quite got that right mate'"*

Going on to reflect on recent feedback from a delivery organisation trustee:

*"She spoke brilliantly and really movingly about what she saw Amy contributing. You know that kind of duality, that breadth of recognising the business perspective but also seeing clearly that what was happening with Amy was so fundamental, so integral to Spartans."*

Amy's eventual secondment out of Spartans to take on a role as head of youth work at a brand-new sports and youth facility in the city can only be seen as a huge success and testament to the desired 'ripple effect' that YWiS aspired to create. Amy has every desire to



spread her knowledge and influence her new team to adopt the ethos, philosophy and working practices developed during her time at Spartans and as a YWiS trainee.

### 4.3.2 Organisation Outcomes

The selection of Organisation outcomes was much more mixed than for the Trainee outcomes. The most commonly pursued outcomes were however closely aligned to the core objectives of the programme:

- Organisation improves how it engages with hard to reach young people (8 delivery organisations)
- Organisation has a better understanding of the benefits of a youth work approach and has embedded this within its structures (8 delivery organisations)

At the other end of the spectrum the following outcomes were each selected by only one delivery organisation:

- Organisation has increased capacity (in terms of skills) to deliver services
- Organisation delivers higher quality services that better meet the needs of young people and are recognised for doing so

In terms of the more commonly pursued outcomes, all delivery organisations provided evidence of how they improved their engagement with hard to reach young people but only four provided the next level of evidence, as defined in section 2.3.2, in terms of the contribution that the programme had made to this outcome. Seven organisations also provided evidence of having a better understanding of the benefits of a youth work approach being embedded in its structures although only three of these evidenced the contribution of the programme to this outcome, one of which was validated independently, the highest level of evidence within our scoring schema.

Delivery organisation reporting identified that the key drivers of progress in this area were related to evaluation and learning, skills acquisition and external collaboration. The progress indicators that showed the highest overall level of achievement across the delivery organisations were<sup>32</sup>:

- Internal recognition of skills required to deliver quality youth work in sport
- Evidence of how impact is measured and learning shared
- Quality partnership working in place

#### 4.3.2.1 Internal recognition of skills required to deliver quality youth work in sport

Delivery organisations that have a strong, internal, organisation-wide recognition of the skills required to deliver quality youth work in sport understood that youth work skills acquisition must extend beyond the trainee. These organisations recognise that for there to be a true legacy for the YWiS programme the ethos must be bought in to by the wider team and Board. Successful agencies do this in a variety of ways including strong leadership, upskilling of the workforce through appropriate training and shared delivery.

At Atlantis Leisure, the wider staff team's commitment to a youth work approach is enhanced by the Board and particularly the Chairman's buy-in. At the same time, that support is itself related to the organisations' commitment to building a community leisure facility that engages with all sections of the population. As the Chairman, who acknowledges that, traditionally, large sports facilities and Leisure Trusts have struggled to engage the whole community, explained:

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<sup>32</sup> Highest cumulative score by indicator across all delivery organisation reports [30/23/20 respectively]

*"I understood it and a number of my colleagues here understood it [the point of a youth work approach]. We've been very fortunate with the people we've had... on the Board who are very long term thinking and outward thinking and prepared to look at different ideas. We very much see this as a community facility that does sport, as opposed to a pure sports centre."*

This support has fed directly into the development of many new initiatives which have been shaped by the YWiS trainee and their own learning journey including an increase in quality partnership work; more school placements and increased sports activities for hard to reach age groups.

At Active Communities, the trainee relays knowledge both formally and informally to the entire team through attendance at board meetings and influencing the organisation's business plan. Whilst at first Emma found some difficulty engaging with the Board, with support, she has begun to start sharing some of the ideas she has learned:

*"Maybe in the first year she felt a wee bit intimidated - and it's been a confidence thing for her to share what she's doing. To start with Emma wouldn't have spoken to the Board, and now when she goes to meetings she's much more confident and sharing and we're trying to do more of that."*

At Reach for the Sky Basketball learning was integrated through a number of trainee led workshops with the rest of the team focused around 'creativity and young people', 'leadership and management', 'community, learning and development' and 'professional judgement and ethics' as well as through the development of a toolkit containing approaches and techniques the trainee had learned that may be useful to service providers. Highlighting the efforts required to secure organisational buy-in and the importance of the role played by line managers Graham pointed out that this process is not without its challenges:

"I've been making a conscious effort to embed Aaron's learning but it's really difficult. That kind of came up in year 3... In year 1 Aaron was 18 and wasn't a university lecturer so he couldn't sit us down and just teach it - it's unrealistic and unfair for him to do that. I've known him since he was 16 and he looks up to me in a certain way and it might be intimidating to him. We do workshops and there were five of us talking over different scenarios, informally."

After attending one of the workshops, one of the members of staff took on a new approach to their delivery and conducted a Facebook questionnaire:

*"We had a member of staff who was very elitist and loved the competitive side of the game but not the community side. The workshop was good, he did a questionnaire on Facebook about different learning styles and it was good - what we're trying to do now is create a workbook in the office so that when the project coordinator can then deliver that workshop to volunteers or next year they can go into the workshop and deliver that to new members of staff - that's what I've taken from it, created workshops and resources to build up - after this year we'll have 10 that we can deliver."*

At Atlantis Leisure, local youth workers witnessed a change in the participant base at the Centre, citing a new engagement with non-sporty young people because of the 'relational youth work' introduced by Donna. This was related to a change in culture and attitude of staff throughout the Centre characterized by more of an open-door policy:

*"There's a much more open attitude to people generally, be they young or old, but particularly young people. And again, this knock-on effect of Donna's training and who Donna is, I think, has rubbed off on a lot of staff members."*

As the General Manager remarked:



*“Donna is ingrained within the whole team, that’s from me right down to our leisure team. She helps us better understand how to have better outcomes with young people.”* He described the way the team now communicates with young people and deal with problematic behaviour *“When we have got problems with kids now you don’t go and shout at them, you go and have a conversation about why there are problems, why are they bored, how can we help.”*

Outside observers also noticed this move from traditional sports delivery to a quality youth work approach and how it spread to the young leaders working with the trainee:

*“I think when Donna got the bug for [youth work], that was a wee bit infectious with other folk and other, I guess, sports leaders. I think they sensed it and saw a change in her, particularly younger ones, wanted some of that, whatever it was that she’d discovered”.*

More broadly the eleven line managers responding to the baseline and final surveys noted a modest increase in the understanding of youth work across their teams as well as a reduced focus on sporting outcomes as reflected in Table 8 (where responses have been scored on a scale where ‘Strongly agree’ (SA) responses score 5, ‘Agree’ (A) responses score 4, ‘Neither Agree nor Disagree’ (N) responses score 3, and ‘Disagree’ responses score 2). There was less agreement that they were working with more partners and focusing on lifetime outcomes, whilst the lowest scores were recorded in relation to a reduced emphasis on sporting outcomes.

**Table 8: How strongly do line managers agree with these statements about changes in their organisation resulting from their involvement?**

	Base				Final					Variance
	SA	A	N	Total	SA	A	N	D	Total	Net
It has helped us to reach more disadvantaged young people	30	20	3	53	15	32	3	0	50	-3
There is a better understanding of youth work approaches across the team	25	24	3	52	30	24	0	0	54	+2
Delivery has become more young person led	15	28	6	49	15	24	6	2	47	-2
We are working with more partners	30	16	6	52	15	24	9	0	48	-4
We have a greater focus on lifetime outcomes	20	28	3	51	5	40	0	2	47	-4
There has been a reduction on the emphasis on sporting outcomes	10	8	21	39	5	16	12	6	39	0

In terms of the extent to which trainees themselves felt they could influence and have an impact on the approach of their host organisation, over 50% noted that their Board had embraced some of the ideas introduced through the YWiS programme and changed the delivery style and practice of the organisation because of the learning. However, this was to some extent contradicted by the reduction in strength of agreement trainees had with a series of statements about the influence of YWiS on the work of their organisations. In Table 9 responses have been scored on a scale where ‘Strongly agree’ (SA) responses score 5, ‘Agree’ (A) responses score 4 or ‘Neither Agree nor Disagree’ (N) responses score 3. There were reductions in agreement with all the statements although it should be noted that this was marginal with most movement being from ‘Strongly Agree’ to ‘Agree’ and the strongest agreement being recorded in relation to the statements around better understanding of youth work; more young person led delivery; and bigger focus on lifetime outcomes across both surveys.

**Table 9: To what extent do trainees agree with the statements about how YWiS has affected the work of their organisations?**

	Base				Final				Variance
	SA	A	N	Total	SA	A	N	Total	Net

There is a better understanding of youth work across the team	25	4	0	<b>29</b>	10	12	3	<b>25</b>	<b>-4</b>
There has been a change in who we work with – reaching more disadvantaged young people	5	20	0	<b>25</b>	5	12	6	<b>23</b>	<b>-2</b>
There has been a change in the way work is delivered – more young person led	25	4	0	<b>29</b>	10	12	3	<b>25</b>	<b>-4</b>
There has been an increased emphasis on sport for development	15	8	3	<b>26</b>	10	12	3	<b>25</b>	<b>-1</b>
There has been greater partnership working	15	9	0	<b>26</b>	10	8	6	<b>24</b>	<b>-2</b>
There is a bigger focus on lifetime outcomes – employment, wellbeing, health etc.	25	4	0	<b>29</b>	15	4	6	<b>25</b>	<b>-4</b>

#### 4.3.2.2 Impact measurement and shared learning

Delivery organisations that were best able to measure the impact of their work and share learning all demonstrated a clear understanding of why they were collecting the information in the first place. That understanding is founded on the belief that they can uncover trends and patterns in data which will allow them to make informed decisions on delivery. However, this was generally a position that they ‘came to’ rather than ‘started from’.

The need to support organisations to develop the skills required for effective evaluation and impact measurement was a key learning point. It cannot be assumed that in the absence of skilled and well-resourced research teams, that delivery organisations will be able to fill the gap. There is a need to equip them with sufficient training, resources and ongoing professional support to be able to respond to this requirement. Indeed, the failure of the programme to provide appropriate support at the start of the evaluation process may well have contributed to the relatively poor scores recorded by many delivery organisations at the baseline stage.

Once this was realised the programme sponsors could respond by working with the delivery organisations to help them define their *own* outcomes and to identify the best evidence for use with the programme wide monitoring and reporting arrangements. As well as simply getting better at identifying, evidencing and reporting achievements, for some, the improved performance also reflected greater buy-in to and appreciation of the process with a tightening of focus around a smaller set of more achievable and reportable outcomes in subsequent reporting rounds.

At Atlantis Leisure, whilst acknowledging that they were previously ‘not very good at [evaluation]’ the trainee and their line manager are now committed to gathering participant feedback regularly and, using simple surveys and the one-minute feedback tools provided by the evaluation team, have been able to demonstrate that 95% of their placement students gained confidence whilst also knowing which programmes young people were assigned to.

At Spartans, the Chief Executive has embraced a more systematic approach to gathering evidence and presenting the work which has allowed them to both reflect on the data internally and to articulate their work to a much wider audience:

“It was brilliant because it forced us to develop and build the model... In fact, we are inheriting this asset because we are able to articulate what we do and how we do it. I think it [a more systematic approach to evaluation] has been really, really valuable in that sense.”

Active Communities have also highlighted how these improvements in evaluation and reporting have themselves driven changes in provision and contributed to more effective practice. They developed a structured and routine evaluation process, making use of a range of methods including participant demographic data, surveys, interviews and focus groups. They now use this data through regular reviews which allow staff to influence change, stating that “informal review processes after each session and adaptations/refinements are made where necessary”.

One clear example of this refinement was illustrated through the condensing of the Young Leaders training programme which is now delivered over one day.

At Transition Extreme, the team also use data to help shape delivery. The Youth and Community Team routinely collect data from both young people and staff with young people being asked to complete morning and end of the day evaluations. The team use this data to identify trends and gaps in services to support adaptations and improvements to the programme, such as the decision to condense their full-time programme into four days to improve retention.

Similarly, at Reach for the Sky Basketball, the team have used their own monitoring data to create a new action plan with clear evaluation goals. This has helped staff to focus on the programme’s central aims and respond through changes to delivery which the organisation has observed has led to “a huge increase in terms of participants across the board”.

For line managers more generally, different challenges were noted which related more to the administrative processes involved in capturing and sharing learning from the programme. Prime amongst these was managing use of the monitoring software provided for the programme and writing of monitoring reports, although the general collection of data, getting boards to engage with the need for planning and learning and embedding this within the wider organisation also featured prominently in managers’ survey responses.

**Table 10: How straightforward or challenging did managers feel the following aspects of evidencing outcomes and planning?**

	Challenging	Fine once we got started	Straightforward	Very Straightforward
Collecting data to use in our planning and learning	3	3	5	1
Using Views Software	6	1	1	0
Conducting planning and learning exercises	2	4	6	0
Collecting data that could be used against our outcomes	2	4	6	0
Getting our board to engage with the need for planning and learning	3	3	3	3
Embedding planning and learning into our wider organisation	3	4	3	2
Writing Reports	5	2	4	1

At Atlantis Leisure, the Chairman noted that whilst a lot of delivery staff are skilled at delivery, many struggle with articulating success or writing reports, citing the challenge of managing delivery pressures and collecting data:

*“So someone like Ben, who’s a very good deliverer, it’s a struggle for him to write or... write it all up. Now, he’s taught himself over the years to do that. Part of me at times says is that a good use of his time? Maybe, maybe not. Yes, it’s bringing him on, but actually he’s so very good at other stuff that actually you’re saying 25% of your week is not doing what you’re good at. Is that sensible? Mmm. You’d ask the question that maybe you should have someone coming in who is more natural at writing and doing stuff and putting it together who will help assist in that process.”*

Indeed, he suspects that his Board would have turned the funding down given the additional hours of support spent reporting and other forms of paperwork. At one point this additional pressure became unbearable:

*“There were times when it was, kind of, breaking point for some of them who were saying, “Do you know what, I can’t do this.”*

Nevertheless, all the trainees’ line managers indicated that they used programme learning and data collected by trainees and others to help shape delivery, variously commenting that:

“We analyse the data to identify the local need.”

“We use the data to see what’s working and what’s helping achieve outcomes. if a session isn’t achieving the specific outcomes we would adapt and rethink what we’re doing the session for.”

“We use [the] information to improve and fine tune things like our summer camps.”

However, there was less consistent agreement amongst trainees for the idea that senior management and board members had the same level of support for using programme learning or that the evaluation techniques introduced through YWiS would be maintained once the funding ends given the concerns expressed by some boards about the proportionality of reporting requirements.

**Table 11: Degree to which trainees agree with the following statements about how YWiS has affected attitudes to planning and learning in their organisation**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree
I view planning and learning as important as delivery	5	6	0
Senior Management and Board view planning and learning as important as delivery as a result of the YWiS programme	2	3	6
The evaluation methods I have introduce are embedded and will be used post YWiS funding	3	5	3

#### 4.3.2.3 Quality partnership working

Interestingly, and perhaps more opportunistically in terms of organisational development, the agencies that demonstrated the strongest quality partnerships were largely found to be responding proactively to external agency skills deficits and youth sector funding shortages. Transition Extreme conducted robust market research to identify gaps in youth and community services for their target groups. In response to this they have developed a number of strategic partnerships including with RGU Streetsports Outreach team and TX Community Sports Club fund, both of which have resulted in engagement with a wider demographic who otherwise would not have been supported.

At Factory Skatepark the team responded to the lack of work placement opportunities for young people by partnering with Community Jobs Scotland and providing six-month paid placement opportunities for eight young people at the Skatepark. Moreover, this partnership led to the continued employment of these placements after the six-months funding. Another partnership which enabled Factory Skatepark to fill a service void can be seen with the Dundee Partnership which funds the youth club and homework club for the DD4 8 postcode.

Factory Skatepark have also responded to their own internal skills shortage around arts and dance by partnering with local arts and dance specialist provider ‘Command Shift’ who have developed a joint project aimed at attracting young people who may not otherwise have engaged with them. The ‘Command Shift’ session is a mutually re-enforcing partnership project delivered by a local dance school and supported by the trainee. Whilst the trainee had a good relationship with and knowledge of young people, he was keen to keep the session on track and re-focus the group if they were messing around. His authority appeared to be born of a close family like relationship rather than that of an authority figure. The dance lead valued the trainee’s relationship with the young people and his ability to manage the group:

*“Peter is incredible in helping us out in all of the sessions, he knows the young people very well, he knows their backgrounds, which we don’t necessarily know very much about, so he can help with any behavioural issues or anything like that, and he also liaises with the families of the young people as well.”*

He took a deliberately back seat, participatory role in the session, performing the challenges alongside the young people. The dance tutor saw the value in this interaction as some of the challenges involve the young people being expressive which they might not always be uncomfortable with:

*“He’s also quite great at getting involved in the project as well and, kind of, leading the way. You know, if he’s involved, everybody else should be involved, that kind of, you know, he was participating in the games, he always does that, he doesn’t just observe. He gets involved.”*

This interaction and direct involvement is something that the dance tutor sees as unique and valuable to the delivery organisation.

#### Organisation Snapshot: Active Communities

Ultimately Active Communities were the highest scoring organisation in relation to Organisation outcomes which was reflected in several organisational traits including:

Operational structures and processes such as regular board reporting, trainee attendance at board meetings, YWiS input to business development planning and individual work plans have all been important in creating a ripple effect through the organisation. These processes have helped to reduce the risk of dominant management personalities setting fixed agendas in the face of a lack of confidence amongst junior staff.

Beyond these internal processes the achievements and impact of Active Communities’ work is evidenced routinely and they openly share findings from their evaluations with partners and other stakeholders. The organisation has recently been successful in securing £200,000 of Poverty Commission funding to further develop their Peer Education programme partly because of their strong evidence base.

#### 4.3.2.4 Integrating formal learning and continuous development

At the outset of the research we posed the question as to how far the programme supported the organisations to integrate formal learning, continual development and the delivery of youth work and what the barriers to this might have been. We have little doubt that the YWiS programme has helped to re-enforce host organisations’ focus on learning and embedding youth work practice in their delivery. The extent and reach of this re-balancing is itself related to:

- The pre-existing culture of the organisation and degree of commitment to ‘traditional’ sports models with an emphasis of sport development and participation rates
- Time restraints and other organisational commitments and levels of resourcing
- Commitment to or resistance to change
- Managers receptiveness to learning about new ways of working
- Board level buy-in to a learning oriented approach.

The Robertson Trust and The Rank Foundation have played a critical role here in continuing to support trainees and managers as ‘agents of change’, particularly where there is not such a strong local organisational buy-in, by providing them with a space to share experiences and ideas and to learn from each other. The trainees particularly welcomed visits from The



Robertson Trust and The Rank Foundation as they felt it empowered them and gave weight and status to their work and encouraged management to re-focus on the YWiS model.

Line managers also highlighted the range of administrative support that proved helpful including the outcome framework and evaluation tools but more particularly the opportunities to get together for programme meetings at Robertson House and other development days. This support was also contrasted with the early stages of the programme when there was a perception that delivery organisations were 'very much left to get on with it' without guidance or access to support materials and personnel. This was perhaps most evident in the area of monitoring and evaluation where the delivery organisations had a significant skills deficit and not enough time or resource was invested to build these skills from the start. Once the issue was addressed, delivery organisations began to buy-in to the process, which led in turn to significant improvements in the standard of reporting and in the ways that learning was fed back into the delivery and programme design process.

#### 4.3.2.5 Governance and organisational buy-in

We also sought to understand the effect of Governance structures and organisational buy-in to the YWiS model in allowing organisations to meet their central aim of 'increasing the youth work skills and experience of working with hard to reach young people'?

Based on our assessment of delivery organisation reports and case study research we have found that the conditions for success are more likely to be in place when there is an active engagement with the programme and belief in the benefits involvement will have for the organisational mission amongst boards of trustees and senior management teams. For the programme funders, as The Robertson Trust's Innovation and Learning Manager Linda Macdonald explained, it is also clear that:

*"There has to be a learning culture within the organisation or at least a desire to have a learning culture within the organisation [which has] made us think about...what are the conditions, culture, whatever that we need to see within an organisation to understand whether they are maybe in the right place to be on this partnership journey with us. And for that, that's about governance buy-in. It's about there being a clear capacity and desire to do this kind of work from the board and... senior management."*

There is a recognition that this might represent something of a cultural shift for sports organisations whose boards have evolved from pre-existing committee structures involving people with more of an interest in the sporting dimensions of the organisation's work. Reflecting on the delivery models of other leisure trusts the Chairman at Atlantis Leisure recognised how they can play a role in shaping the sector, leading by example and sharing knowledge:

*"For a lot of colleagues who are involved in sports centres this is not the model that they understand. In fact, a lot of them want to come and see this as to why it is that we seem to be integrating with the community so well, where they really struggle. And we had one this week that looks a very well-run, slick operation, but they're really struggling to engage with the community, so they want to come and see us, and they're huge compared with what we are, but they're fascinated by what we do."*

He recognises that a facility alone cannot attract the wider community. For him defining centres as spaces for any defined group of people, whether disadvantaged or not, is not the way to go. Rather he defines Atlantis Leisure as a disruptive space where everyone is mixed in and is seen as the 'something else' for that reason:

*"So there's some days I'll come up here at lunchtime and the café there is jumping and there's kids running about. There may be ten or twelve disabled folks around a table with their careers and helpers in the middle of mayhem, and they're loving it, and the people who take them love it because it's very stimulating for them and they just feel part of something."*

Such an approach demands a lot of the staff who it is recognised need to be supported and upskilled to ensure they have the right skill set to support toddlers, pensioners and everyone in-between:

*“We tug and pull our staff so that actually they can cope with a three-year-old kid and they can cope with a ninety-year-old gentleman who’s really struggling on his pins. So that’s a huge learning exercise, and lots of sport centers cannot do that; just can’t do that”*

The adoption of a youth work approach requires more than a willingness and desire to engage with diverse communities however and embraces a need to think beyond sport and physical activity itself. Spartans board members display a broad range of expertise and interests with the newest member bringing with her expertise and experience in marketing. Most significantly thought she was herself drawn to the opportunity as a local mother who is motivated by the youth work engagement style at Spartans

*“The sport thing I like but actually it is more about the youth work. For me, it is the most important thing.”*

At Spartans there is a high degree of board level buy-in to a youth work approach which has been driven by a dedicated, charismatic Chief Executive who has a strong passion and belief in the benefits of developing a youth work relationship strategy, which he terms, ‘Building the Bridge of Trust’. Whilst this commitment can be a conduit for change, effective practice and personal development it is important that it does not become a mantra and that delivery organisations remain nimble and willing to adapt to changing conditions.

### 4.3.3 Community Outcomes

The choice of Community outcomes was perhaps the most mixed although with the most commonly pursued outcomes being:

- Participants build their confidence and self-esteem (8 delivery organisations)
- Increased access to high quality sports/physical activity programmes for young people who would not normally have access (6)
- Young people take up further learning, training and personal development opportunities (5 delivery organisations)

Of those that aimed to build participants’ confidence and self-esteem, all provided evidence of progress with six providing evidence of the contribution that the programme made. Evidence of progress was also provided by all organisations for the other outcomes with four providing evidence of the programmes contribution to increasing access to high quality sports/physical activity programmes and two providing evidence of YWiS’ contribution to young people taking up further learning, training and personal development opportunities.

At the other end of the spectrum, and in light of the challenges associated with evidencing such an outcome, only one organisation selected reduced anti-social and risk taking behaviour amongst the target group.

Delivery organisation reporting identified that the key indicators of progress in this area were related to participation in the positive activities provided by the delivery organisations; engagement with other wider forms of positive opportunities; and influencing improvement in wellbeing measures. The progress indicators that showed the highest overall level of achievement across the delivery organisations were<sup>33</sup>:

- Number of participants from target groups taking up positive activities

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<sup>33</sup> Highest cumulative score by indicator across all delivery organisation reports [33/27/22 respectively]



- No of participants taking up other positive opportunities (social, educational, training, community, leadership employment)
- Participants report improvements in confidence, social skills and self-efficacy

#### 4.3.3.1 Increasing the number of participants from target groups

At Forth Valley Disability Sports 60% of attendees have come from the hardest to reach groups with retention rates of around 75% and around 23% of participants going on to participate in wider opportunities, exceeding the organisation's target. One of the participants, Caitlyn, has experienced life changing developments because of her involvement. After being involved in mainstream sport up to the age of 13 she started to get bullied before joining the Forth Valley Flyers Athletic Club and FVDS events. Since then she has emerged as a young leader in her own right through an involvement in the FVDS Youth Committee. She commented how:

*"I used to be really shy. I would never talk. It would take me a whole year around people before I would talk to them, I needed to get used to them first. Now I am more confident and just go up to people and talk to them. I start a conversation much more easily... From being alone in my own world shut off to the outside world I have opened up and become open to other people."*

She is now using her knowledge to encourage other young people to get involved in the programme.

Sometimes a more informal approach can be just as successful as at Atlantis Leisure where the Freestyle Friday session was initially introduced to attract the senior year 1-2 age groups. However, an older group of lads continued to turn up at the centre and as a result of having nothing to do were proving disruptive, *"coming down, climbing on the roof and messing about"*.

The Duty Manager was not impressed with this behaviour and was keen to send the older lads away but the trainee felt the only way to stop this behaviour would be to get them involved in the session. As such a football club was introduced on the AstroTurf pitch on Friday evenings specifically for the older boys who the trainee described as *"football mad. They just love football and would play it all day if they could"*.

If it wasn't for the organisation providing this group access to the AstroTurf for free, they would organise their own football evening on a stretch of nearby open grass which is next to a very busy road and opposite a pub. The lads who are all aged 14 and attend the local high school value the session and describe the trainee's approach to coaching as *'laid back'* which encourages their wider engagement with the centre. As one put it:

*"We hang out almost every day in the café and play football. They are nice and friendly and because we come so often we know them really well. I did the Freestyle Friday, I really liked it when I was younger as everyone comes to it."*

This aligns with one of the initial drivers of the programme which Christine Scullion of The Robertson Trust reflected upon:

*"Thinking back, the trustees at that time were funding some capital sports centers and, [at] one in particular actually..., what we were hearing was that the young people were frequently just being turned away at the door, because they arrived in a gaggle or a gang or they didn't have anything booked or the sports center didn't have the expertise in its staff to know how to engage this group of young people. So that was really the catalyst, I guess, that started it off in terms of well, if we had youth workers in sports facilities, would they actually then be better at engaging with these young people who had a vague interest but weren't 'club-able' I guess was the term that we used."*

At Reach for the Sky Basketball, Aaron had the idea of young people leading other young people which, despite his backing for the idea, was hard for Graham to support given their skills set at the time:

*"When my project coordinator first started, the volunteers we had didn't know anything about basketball... and now we have loads of confident young people out there. They were really quiet and now they're being professional and talking to the parents - it's great to see. Obviously, we needed to make that leap of faith and put the trust in people - Aaron was a big part of that. The first time I covered for him and the volunteers were so involved - it was exactly what I was talking about."*

This suggests something of the chicken and egg situation that young people face all the while in terms of not getting opportunities due to a lack of experience that they are prevented from gaining. Working with peers provides an ideal gateway to bridge this gap. Building on his own experience Aaron has gone on to see the benefit that responsibility can have in helping increase young people's confidence:

*"My main work in setting up new projects has been through the volunteer trainees. We get a volunteer to study a diploma and gain work experience – put them through a night school course as well. I gave my repper the idea she had to come up with something and she's gone off and [is now] running it herself"*

Here the 'repper' Aaron refers to is one of his trainees. These young leaders have been successful not only in delivering sessions, getting a new generation of young people engaged in basketball – but in opening new career opportunities and achieving personal outcomes through the youth training academy. By working with Aaron and seeing this 'leap of faith' pay off, Graham and his team have become more confident in allowing young people to take on greater responsibility and can now see the benefits of this approach paying off, not only for the volunteers but for the organisation as it reaches out to more young people.

#### 4.3.3.2 Participants taking up other positive opportunities

More broadly delivery organisations have presented a range of volunteering opportunities to young people involved in the programme and at Factory Skatepark the trainee's manager, Mark, noted his growth from a young person to a 'manager of youth' which enabled him to break with the more formulaic opportunities. Describing this transformation, he notes that:

*"He has always got an open mind to that, because from years gone by we used to, there were certain age groups that were quite really hard in this area to engage with. Whereas Peter has been more open to want to deal with these groups"*

The older participants, not much younger than Peter himself, were provided with the opportunity to work alongside him and feel part of the Factory Skatepark team. Mark acknowledges the success of the enhanced volunteering programme, *"actually watching these young guys come in and take ownership of something, and develop by becoming part of the team"*. There were previously four young stewards which has now increased to around twelve, providing key support to the younger skaters.

The trainee developed a structured and progressive stewarding volunteer programme which involved a two-tier system with a third tier in the pipeline. The system is aimed at supporting the young leaders through skills acquisition, appropriate to their development level, providing them with key employability skills. This programme is important as it is providing real opportunities for a group of young people who were previously described by the management as problematic.

It was interesting however to note that the number of delivery organisations reporting impacts on young people's lives and the extent of those impacts declined as they became more specific, relating to aspects such as diet, anti-social behaviour, attitudes to learning and even physical

and mental health. Based on a relationship approach it may well be that this type of programme is most influential in terms of building young people's 'soft skills' such as self-confidence and associated life chances rather than 'harder' more defined outcomes such as gaining employment.

Whilst all the managers that responded to the final evaluation survey noted that they have been able to reach more of their target group and build better relationships with young people because of the YWiS approach, reflections on the overall impact of the programme on young participants and the wider community were more mixed. In Table 12 responses have been scored on a scale of 5 to 3 according to whether respondents 'Strongly agree' (SA), 'Agree' (A) or 'Neither Agree nor Disagree' (N) with the statement. The highest overall scores were recorded in relation young people becoming role models in their community and young people having improved confidence and self-esteem whilst the lowest overall score was recorded in relation to improved educational attainment.

**Table 12: To what extent do managers agree with the statements about the achievement of outcomes for trainees and the wider community as a result of the programme?**

	Base				Final				Variance
	SA	A	N	Total	SA	A	N	Total	Net
The Trainee Youth Worker will become a role model in the community and inspire other young people	35	16	3	54	45	12	0	57	+3
The organisation will broaden the impact it has on those it works with	35	20	0	55	25	24	3	52	-3
Educational attainment will be improved	15	24	9	48	15	24	9	48	0
Participation in positive activities will increase	20	32	3	55	30	24	0	54	-1
Levels of wellbeing will increase	25	28	0	53	25	28	0	53	0
Young people's employability will increase	20	28	3	51	25	24	3	52	+1
Young people will have improved relationships with peers and family	20	28	3	51	10	32	6	48	-3
Young people will have improved confidence and self esteem	35	20	0	55	40	16	0	56	+1
More young people will gain accredited qualifications	20	24	6	50	20	28	3	51	+1
More young people will have volunteering opportunities	30	24	0	54	35	16	3	54	0

#### 4.3.3.3 Youth leadership and improvements in confidence, social skills and self-efficacy

Strong evidence of improvements in young people's lives was provided by the results of feedback tools and consultations by all but one of the delivery organisations; partner and parent feedback from three quarters of organisations; and participation records and pre and post engagement surveys from seven. For the trainees, there was a general sense of the programme generating positive outcomes for young people because of participation. Whilst the picture was relatively stable from the baseline to final surveys, Table 13 reveals net positive moves in relation to the trainees' agreement that young people from the wider community had gained accredited qualifications and who had improved their employability.

The highest combined scores over the course of the programme were recorded in relation to improved participation in positive activities; improved confidence and self-esteem; and more young people having had volunteering opportunities.

**Table 13: Strength of agreement by trainees with the statements about the achievement of outcomes in the wider community as a result of the programme?**

	Base				Final				Variance
	SA	A	N	Total	SA	A	N	Total	Net
Improved educational attainment	20	24	3	47	5	40	0	45	-2
Improved participation in positive activities	40	12	0	52	25	24	3	52	0
Improved wellbeing	30	20	0	50	25	24	0	49	-1
Improved employability	15	24	6	45	15	28	3	46	+1
Improved relationships	40	8	3	51	30	20	0	50	-1
Improved confidence and self esteem	40	12	0	52	30	20	0	50	-2
More young people have gained accredited qualifications	15	28	3	46	25	16	6	47	+1
More young people have had volunteering opportunities	45	4	3	52	30	20	0	50	-2
More young people have improved their sporting skills	35	16	0	51	25	24	0	49	-2

Whilst trainees and the young people that delivery organisations work with have access to a growing range of personal development and leadership opportunities, the pattern is far from uniform. At the interim reporting stage the strongest drivers of youth leadership development appeared to be:

- Pre-existing commitment to a youth work oriented approach, particularly at board level
- Provision of structured opportunities for volunteering, awards, training, apprenticeships and work experience
- Commitment to participant involvement in the development and delivery of activities
- Formal consultative channels and routes to share learning and raise issues with other staff and board members.

Whilst these are not necessarily all pre-requisites they are all strong facilitators of young people's development, which interviews and our wider research<sup>34</sup> suggest can also be equally limited by

- Overly restrictive health and safety policies
- Intrusion by parents, staff and 'agents of authority'
- Excessive bureaucracy and administration
- Loss of momentum
- Lack of support in managing peer-to-peer conflict.

In our on-going research, we were particularly interested to explore the extent to which effectiveness is influenced by a pre-existing commitment to youth work approaches or whether sports organisations without such a history can be influenced to adopt such an approach. We were also interested in exploring the relative importance of building strong leadership roles, capable of developing independently in contrast to a more structured and supported pathway. In section 4.3.3 we confirmed our sense that the most effective organisations saw a trend away from sports outcomes towards a personal development paradigm although we could not say with any certainty that an existing youth work orientation was a pre-requisite for organisations' capacity to facilitate youth leadership. We also saw that well-structured but tailored volunteering and progression pathways provided the best route to personal development and the taking on of leadership roles.

### Community Snapshot: Reach for the Sky Basketball

<sup>34</sup> Crabbe, T. (2006) Knowing the Score: Positive Futures Case Study Research Final Report, Home Office: London [http://www.substance.net/wp-content/uploads/Knowing\\_the\\_score.pdf](http://www.substance.net/wp-content/uploads/Knowing_the_score.pdf)

Reach for the Sky Basketball achieved particularly impressive scores in relation to their Community outcomes. Having strong partnership relationships with local community agencies, especially with the local schools enables the organisation to reach a wide audience of young people who they in turn signpost onto their academy sessions. Supporting young people and providing access to wider developmental pathways through their 'Coach and Volunteering Pathway' is an important element of Reach for the Sky Basketball's ability to impact upon wider social outcomes. The pathway provides a varied range of volunteering, work-placement and governance opportunities. The organisation understands this and illustrates the impact on the community through measuring participants' health and wellbeing, aspirations, anxiety levels and impact on youth disorder and territorialism.

## 5.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

Whilst the YWiS programme had a clear set of original objectives in relation to individual, organisational and community outcomes, as an innovation and in some ways speculative initiative with a range of delivery partners and models, it was always focused as much on identifying learning about ‘what works’ as much as overall measures of success. This fits with a wider and growing interest in ‘What Works’ approaches<sup>35</sup> which, in the context of public service reform, seek to understand why certain processes, interventions and policy approaches work and, correspondingly, whether learning about success in areas like prevention can then be spread across Scotland.

In this section then we consider a series of key themes that have emerged from the programme and which address our key research questions before going on to make some recommendations to inform future practice.

### 5.1 What Works

In Table 14 we have summarised some of the key learning from the programme regarding what works in securing organisational buy-in and enabling effective leadership.

Table 14: Enabling Effective Leadership: Key Messages	
Recognised Need for a Youth Work Approach	
Key Message	Whilst securing the buy-in and commitment of a delivery organisation’s board is critical to the embedding of youth work approaches in sports delivery it is only likely to be sustained where that board has identified and recognises the role it will play in fulfilling its wider mission. The two should demonstrably be seen to go hand in hand.
Board Experience	
Key Message	Securing buy-in from charitable boards cannot just be a rhetorical exercise. It is important that there are board members that understand what a youth work approach involves, its distinction from traditional sports based delivery and the implications this might have for the organisation.
Thought Leadership	
Key Message	The best leaders are not just concerned with their own organisational priorities and concerns but have a restless desire to find ways to do things better to share that knowledge with others.
Evangelism	
Key Message	Whilst strategic vision and the commitment of board members and senior management might be vital components of success, where that vision is fixed with a firm belief in existing practice and their ‘way of doing things’ the potential for shared learning and change maybe diminished.
Sponsors	
Key Message	Where programme funding comes from such highly respected organisations as The Robertson Trust and The Rank Foundation this can have a significant positive impact both on the commitment of trustees and also organisations’ ability to secure the buy-in of other funders and stakeholders. It is also important that delivery organisations have an internal sponsor with the power and authority to promote and drive the adoption of learning.
Personal engagement	

<sup>35</sup> <http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk>



Key Message	In a programme such as YWiS, which is both a personal development programme and a cultural change programme, it is important that the strategic and delivery elements are visibly connected. In the absence of direct and visible engagement from board members and/or senior management, there is a risk that trainees might develop a lack of belief in the path they are following whilst the work may not be valued in the eyes of other staff members resulting in a loss of momentum.
Persistence and Resilience	
Key Message	Trainees employed through the YWiS programme are placed in the challenging position of being junior members of staff with a responsibility for facilitating change within the wider organisation. In such circumstances the trainee may lack the authority to direct change and so will need to adopt subtler means of cajoling and persuasion to achieve their aims. This might be demanding and frustrating where there is resistance or a lack of interest. As such trainees benefit from having a resilient personality.

In Table 15 we have summarised some of the key learning from the programme regarding what works in embedding learning within organisations.

Table 15: Embedding Learning: Key Messages	
Alignment of Vision	
Key Message	For an organisation to truly embrace the learning and embed youth work practice within its operations it is necessary for them to have some degree of pre-existing belief and commitment to the process rather than simply pursuing funds to provide additional resources to maintain or expand the current delivery profile.
Evaluation	
Key Message	The embracement of new evaluation and feedback techniques has helped to 'make the case' for the youth work approach internally within a number of delivery organisations.
Organisation wide support	
Key Message	The buy-in of other staff members and senior management is critical to the embedding of youth work practices and the building of relationships with young people. It is not an activity that can be segmented from wider practice, as the building of relationships requires the right environment as well as the right personnel and approach.
Study Support	
Key Message	In a context where trainees may be returning to education after an absence or previous negative experiences and in light of the added pressures of their work commitments it was vital that organisations created the space and support for their study even in the face of intense delivery pressures.
Structured Dissemination	
Key Message	Whilst embedding learning across the team is an ongoing process which takes many forms the use of structured team wide events and workshops have proven to be particularly effective in both overcoming confidence barriers amongst trainees and creating relatable scenarios for staff to engage with.
Proportionate Evaluation	

Key Message	Whilst the range of evidence and quality of reporting at all the organisations has radically improved and several organisations have commented on the added benefits this has brought to them in terms of service delivery and new funding, the additional work involved has been widely flagged as a burden. It is therefore important to ensure that evaluation and reporting demands are proportionate to the scale of activity, the organisations involved and the resources provided.
Constructive criticism	
Key Message	For some the appreciation of space being created for self-reflection by programme funders also extended to the receipt of constructive criticism provided through the conduit of programme management activity including feedback on annual reports.
Continuity	
Key Message	It is important that where trainees have been supported through a training programme that organisations make provision to retain and support their ongoing development after they graduate in order that the knowledge and skills gained can be shared across the organisation at a point when their confidence is at its height.

In Table 16 we have summarised some of the key learning from the programme regarding what works in building relationships with young people.

Table 16: Building Relationships with Young People: Key Messages	
Youth work experience	
Key Message	Whilst the YWiS initiative intended to introduce and embed youth work approaches within sports organisations perhaps the greatest success was achieved at those organisations such as Active Communities and Spartans where there was some pre-existing experience of youth work practice and relationship building on which to build.
Knowing the score	
Key Message	Flexibility alone might not be enough for a successful engagement strategy since it is those staff who have a deep knowledge of the delivery areas and who have or had a similar social background or ‘cultural capital’ <sup>36</sup> that appear to make stronger connections with participants.
Recruitment	
Key Message	Whilst shared experiences and biographies are priceless assets when trying to build relationships with young people the recruitment of staff with the same background as the ‘hard to reach’ is by definition a challenge. This needs to be considered in the design of selection processes and choice of interview questions in order not to alienate potential recruits.
Demographics	
Key Message	It is important that organisations are reflective of the communities they seek to engage in terms of social background as well as shared physical proximity.
Youth Focus	
Key Message	A YWiS approach is not built around pre-determined session plans in the way that more conventional sport development is. It requires a flexible, developmental approach that begins by meeting young people on their terms

<sup>36</sup> Bourdieu, P. (1962) *The Algerians*, Beacon Press: Boston, MA

	and then building activity opportunities that fit with their interests and circumstances.
<b>Neutral Space</b>	
<b>Key Message</b>	When a neutral space is available where young people can gather and feel comfortable on their own terms it is easier to engage and build relationships in an organic and non-threatening fashion.
<b>Relationships not Friendships</b>	
<b>Key Message</b>	The sorts of relationships that can be built with young people through initiatives such as YWiS provide the space for more familial lines of discipline that transcend the conventional boundaries of authority relations typically associated with engagement with state agencies. This opens the prospect for deeper engagements with purposeful activity and subsequent personal development.

In Table 17 we have summarised some of the key learning from the programme regarding what works in facilitating youth leadership.

<b>Table 17: Facilitating Youth Leadership: Key Messages</b>	
<b>Baby Steps</b>	
<b>Key Message</b>	For many of the young people who come through the YWiS programme their first engagement may be a triumph against circumstances that typically curtail ambition and leadership. As such the journey to leadership may begin slowly...
<b>Leap of Faith</b>	
<b>Key Message</b>	At the point that young people are able to see and reach through the barriers of their personal circumstance it is vital that they are given backing and trusted to make a worthwhile contribution.
<b>Pathways</b>	
<b>Key Message</b>	The provision of opportunities to young people cannot be a blind alley if they are to fulfil their potential and genuinely impact on their communities in a sustained way. As such best practice would suggest the need for a tiered and progressive model for involvement.
<b>Adaptive and applied learning</b>	
<b>Key message</b>	One of the most significant indicators of the trainees' own growth and emergence as young leaders was provided by both their success in becoming qualified to diploma and degree levels in youth work but also by the extent to which the degree course has itself been influenced by their professional experiences. Practitioners should take this learning on board when designing accredited progression pathways for those they work with.
<b>Flying the nest</b>	
<b>Key message</b>	Whilst delivery organisations wish to retain skills and talent, building the skills and competencies of young people to become independent leaders opens the potential for them to spread their wings and seek bigger opportunities elsewhere. Such developments should be recognised and celebrated as organisation successes.
<b>Feedback</b>	
<b>Key Message</b>	Leadership and influence comes in different forms and at different stages and the best delivery organisations have adopted a range of ways to involve

young people in the design and evolution of programmes even when they are not directly responsible for their delivery.

## 5.2 What Next?

Whilst there were never plans for a wider roll out or expansion of the YWiS programme using the existing funding model, it is clear that the programme has achieved significant impacts across its target outcome areas and improvements in the evidencing of those impacts at the organisation level as well as delivering important lessons regarding what constitutes effective practice.

At the same time, as an experimental programme, delivered by a variety of disparate organisations in different locales, it is unsurprising that contributions to its impact and learning about 'what works' were equally diverse across the delivery organisations and range of outcomes. In this sense, whilst focused primarily on issues of scalability, it is still useful to consider Professor Ken Gibb's, of What Works Scotland, assertion that 'we should think of policy success and failure as a continuum' and 'recognise the likely limitations... of successful pilots'.<sup>37</sup>

This seems a particularly salient point in the context of a sports sector sitting on shifting sands that emphasise an output driven physical activity agenda on the one hand and an outcome focused behavioural change agenda on the other. What looks like success for one aspect of a sport organisation's offering might look like failure when considered through the lens of a sport for change perspective.

In this context, it may be useful to be guided by wider lessons on sharing the learning from new innovations in public policy, which emphasise the importance of influence and advocacy rather than position and authority, and the importance of collaboration and networks in the sharing of resources, knowledge and experience.<sup>38</sup>

In order that learning from YWiS can be shared and used to influence practice more widely, it is helpful to break down the elements of practice that were found to be most effective and which might be adopted more widely regardless of the existence of a full YWiS programme. In considering what learning is worth sharing, Professor Fred Coalter's consideration of the necessary and sufficient conditions for success in the sport for social change sector is useful.<sup>39</sup> In Table 18 below we identify a set of key features that have emerged as necessary and key to the replication of the best elements of YWiS practice as well as a series of supplementary features we believe provide the 'sufficient conditions' for the desired outcomes to be achieved.

The 'necessary' features are mostly concerned with the infrastructure required for effective practice in terms of the motivations and status of host organisations; the existence of training programmes and shared learning opportunities; and access to the necessary financial, guidance and promotional resources to secure organisations' buy-in. The 'sufficient' conditions are more concerned with the detail of organisational practice in terms of the who, how and when of delivery and organisational development.

The 'necessary' conditions identified in the previous section are suggestive of certain organisational traits which can be developed in light of what we already know about the replication of good practice in the sport for change sector. The Positive Futures strategy

<sup>37</sup> Gibb, K. (2015) *What Works and learning from failure – think piece*, What Works Scotland, <http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/WWSthinkpiece-KGibb-policy-failure.pdf>

<sup>38</sup> What Works Scotland (2015) *Scaling-Up Innovations*, <http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/WWSEB-evidence-review-Scaling-Up-Innovations-June-2015.pdf>

<sup>39</sup> Coalter, F. (2007) *Op. cit.*

document<sup>40</sup> and subsequent programme evaluation<sup>41</sup> as well as the Evidence/Confidence Framework developed for the Realising Ambition programme presented in Figure 1 on page 18 all emphasise the importance and challenges associated with selecting the right delivery agencies. Indeed, it was in this context that the recently accredited Quest Sport for Development (S4D) assessment modules<sup>42</sup> were developed to give funders and commissioners the confidence that they are investing in organisations that are organisationally healthy, have a track record and understanding of how to deliver personal and social outcomes and staff with the right training, skills and qualifications to make this possible.

The point of this is that, in line with the necessary and sufficient conditions identified in Table 18, the Quest Award provides a means to ensure organisations can provide evidence of purpose and how this will be achieved, that staff are well led, qualified and motivated, financial and organisational structures are sufficiently robust and individual programmes of work are supported by strong logic models. They should be able to demonstrate that there are a range of mutually beneficial partnerships in place with referral, strategic and funding agencies. Finally, organisations should be able to collect, manage and report the outcomes and impact of their work and use evidence to improve performance.

Perhaps more importantly, and in line with the approach adopted by the programme sponsors to supporting delivery agencies and trainees in their development, this Quest model not only reveals how strong and resilient organisations are but identifies improvement plans to address areas where weaknesses and challenges have been identified. As such, an adapted version of this model might provide a useful starting point both to identify organisations with an interest and capacity to work with more disadvantaged groups and to ensure learning from the YWiS programme is shared and taken up more widely.

Indeed, if the challenge of YWiS was to affect a change in the culture and practice of the sport sector more generally, the most promising aspect of this approach is surely its potential to identify and support the deployment of improvement plans that aim to further embed these ways of working without the need for a full programme structure. This approach aligns with Chris Dunning's highlighting of the need for a more reflective approach in the identification of agencies to deliver initiatives of this type:

*"We ought to be able now to start to invite other people with different perspectives on sport to be potential users, potential participants because it seems to me that we chose initially people that we thought already had some of that... So, the learning for me would be not to lose sight of how we achieve what we did and if we're going to change it, what would that then mean to what we were seeking to achieve by doing it differently with less money, or less resource or over shorter time."*

For us, this should be focused on the development of a range of guidance, support materials and peer mentoring arrangements designed to share the key messages about what works identified in this report, to mobilise the necessary and sufficient conditions for success when they are present and to build them when they are absent.

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<sup>40</sup> Home Office (2003) *Cul-de-sacs and gateways: Understanding the Positive Futures Approach*, London: HMSO

<sup>41</sup> Crabbe, T. (2006) *Op. cit.*

<sup>42</sup> <http://www.rightdirections.co.uk/news.asp?id=61>

<b>Table 18: The necessary and sufficient conditions for effective youth oriented sport for change programmes</b>			
<b>Necessary</b>	<b>Sufficient</b>		
<b>High degree of organisational commitment to pursuing a youth work/sport for change approach at Board and Senior Management levels</b>	Board members with a diversity of backgrounds and experience beyond sport	Personal engagement with programme and key personnel within the Board and/or SMT	Previous experience of use of and/or partnerships with youth work approaches within the organisation
<b>Clear alignment with organisational goals and target outcomes</b>	Development of logic model, theory of change or delivery plan	Development of an outcome framework	Identification of related indicators
<b>Strong commitment to being a learning organisation</b>	Understanding of how to utilise internal and external data sets and the benefits and limitations associated with different approaches	Active use of insight and guidance to adapt and improve programmes of work and how they have shared this knowledge internally and externally	Making time to share learning from programme in a structured way across the organisation to drive adoption of sport for change approaches
<b>Deep, long standing connections and engagement with target communities</b>	Staff who come from the areas being targeted and share aspects of the social and demographic biographies of those being worked with	Organisations that have a track record of work with trusted partners and which are 'connected', providing access to onward sporting, developmental and employment pathways	Organisations that are well thought of and 'respected' by local people
<b>Participation in peer support networks by individuals at different levels of the organisation</b>	Having a cohort of organisations following the same programme at the same time	Participation in open forum discussion and shared learning events	Site visits and bi-lateral communication between organisations and trainee youth workers to observe and share practice
<b>Access to structured, detached, formal education and training</b>	Access to dedicated youth work courses and qualifications tailored to sports organisations and coaches	Patient and sensitive recruitment of trainee youth workers who may well have had negative prior experiences of the educational system and sport	Recognition of need to balance trainees work and study commitments to create the space for educational progress and application in practice
<b>Commitment to the use of long term, developmental youth work approaches</b>	Willingness to be flexible and innovative in the design and delivery of new programmes	Adoption and development of tiered personal progression and youth leadership pathways	Recruitment of resilient and persistent individuals to champion the cause of youth work approaches within organisations
<b>Sponsorship by influential stakeholders able to provide funding, guidance and support</b>	Public promotion of initiatives to raise their profile and status	Provision of financial and physical resources to facilitate development of learning events and resources	Appropriate and proportionate reporting requirements geared to the generation of learning



Appendix 1: Outcome Framework

C Community Outcomes			
	Outcome	Indicators	Measurement Technique
1	Increase access to high quality sports/physical activity programmes for young people who would not normally have access, or who are considered to be vulnerable or at risk of offending.	a. No. of participants (from target groups) b. Retention/attendance rates of participants c. Participants report enjoying activity	Internal monitoring figures (views or other) Baseline and follow up with participants
2	Increased physical activity amongst participants	d. Participants report doing more exercise	Baseline and follow up with participants
3	Participants have improved health (physical and mental)	e. Participants report improvements in physical mental health	Baseline and follow up with participants
4	Participants build their confidence and self-esteem	f. Participants report improvements in confidence, social skills, self-efficacy	Baseline and follow up with participants Feedback from group leader, other appropriate individuals
5	Participants have a positive impact in their local community	g. Participants report feeling better about the place they live h. Participants report improved social networks i. Participants report being involved more in their community j. No of participants taking up other positive opportunities (social, educational, training, community, leadership employment) o. Evidence of participants having an impact on individuals/their community	Baseline and follow up with participants Group leader feedback Internal monitoring figures
6	More participants achieve positive life outcomes	g. No of participants taking up other positive opportunities (social, educational, training, community, leadership employment)	Baseline and follow up with participants Group leader feedback Internal monitoring figures
7	Participants increase their aspirations	h. Reported change in participants goals and aspirations	Baseline and follow up with participants Group leader feedback Internal monitoring figures
8	Anti-social behaviour amongst target groups/areas is reduced	i. Participants report reduction in anti-social behaviour j. Partners report reduction in anti-social behaviours	Baseline and follow up with participants Group leader feedback Internal monitoring figures Feedback from partners
9	Participants improve their social networks	h. Participants report improved social networks and connections	Baseline and follow up with participants Group leader feedback Internal monitoring figures
10	Young people take up further learning, training and personal development opportunities.	j. No of participants taking up other positive opportunities (social, educational, training, community, leadership employment)	Baseline and follow up with participants Group leader feedback Internal monitoring figures Feedback from partners
T Trainees Outcomes			
	Outcome	Indicators	Measurement techniques

1.	Trainee gains the skills and knowledge to be a youth worker	a. Progress with education and training b. Progress with employment e. Trainee relationship with young people, staff and partners	Written reports and self-evaluation Interviews with trainee and line manager Baseline information and review Interviews with relevant partners
2.	Trainee gains confidence to put skills into practice	a. Progress with education and training b. Progress with employment and delivery c. Level of responsibility on the job d. Trainee aspirations and goals e. Trainee relationship with young people, staff and partners	
3.	Trainee has improved transferable skills (e.g. increased confidence, communication, team working)	c. Level of responsibility on the job d. Trainee aspirations and goals e. Trainee relationship with young people, staff and partners	

O Organisation Outcomes			
	Outcome	Indicators	Measurement technique
1.	Organisation improves how it engages with (hard to reach) young people	a. Partners demonstrate an improved understanding of what the organisation is doing (organisation is recognised as youth friendly by outside partners – increased approaches for placements /programmes/work experience etc.) b. Number of hard to reach individuals engaged (and outcomes for these people) c. Internal recognition of skills required to deliver quality (board/staff) d. Numbers of participants involved in decision making within the organisation e. Quality partnership working in place	Internal monitoring records of participants (views or other) Identified target groups Review of services by third parties/partners Written reports and self-evaluation (trainee and line manager)
2.	The organisation has increased capacity (in terms of skills) to deliver services	c. Internal recognition of skills required to deliver capacity (board/staff) f. Management feedback on capacity (skills) to deliver and quality of delivery	Baseline review of capacity (skills) issues Targets for increased capacity (skills) Written reports and self-evaluation (trainee and line manager)
3.	Organisation has a better understanding of the benefits of a youth work approach and has embedded this within its structures	c. Internal recognition of skills required to deliver quality f. Management feedback on capacity (skills) to deliver and quality of delivery g. Evidence of how impact is measured and learning shared	Written reports and self-evaluation – staff and board Board minutes Evaluation reports
4.	The organisation is better able to measure, understand and demonstrate the impact of its youth work	a. Partners demonstrate an improved understanding of what the organisation is doing b. Number of hard to reach individuals engaged (and outcomes for these people) c. Internal recognition of skills required to deliver quality d. Number of participants involved in decision making within the organisation e. Quality partnership working in place f. Management feedback on capacity to deliver and quality of delivery g. Evidence of how impact is measured and learning shared	Review of services by third parties/partners Written reports and self-evaluation Internal monitoring records of participants (views or other) Evaluation reports
5.	Maintain/improve collaboration with local partners	a. Partners demonstrate an improved understanding of what the organisation is doing e. Quality partnership working in place	Review of services by third parties/partners
6.	Organisation delivers higher quality services that better	a. Partners demonstrate an improved understanding of what the organisation is doing	Review of services by third parties/partners

meet the needs of young people and are recognised for doing so	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>b. Number of hard to reach individuals engaged (and outcomes for these people)</li> <li>c. Internal recognition of skills required to deliver quality</li> <li>d. Number of participants involved in decision making within the organisation</li> <li>e. Quality partnership working in place</li> <li>f. Management feedback on capacity to deliver and quality of delivery</li> <li>h. awards gained/external recognition</li> </ul>	<p>Written reports and self-evaluation</p> <p>Internal monitoring records of participants (views or other)</p> <p>Evaluation reports</p>
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## Appendix 2: Organisation Outcome Selections

14-15 PLANS	Trainee	10 x 1, 9 x 2, 9 x 3
	Organisation	9 x 1, 2 x 2, 3 x 3, 6 x 4, 7 x 5, 5 x 6
	Community	6 x 1, 3 x 2, 2 x 3, 8 x 4, 8 x 5, 9 x 6, 4 x 7, 2 x 8, 1 x 9, 10 x 10
15-16 PLANS	Trainee	9 x 1, 8 x 2, 9 x 3
	Organisation	9 x 1, 1 x 2, 9 x 3, 5 x 4, 7 x 5, 2 x 6
	Community	6 x 1, 1 x 2, 3 x 3, 8 x 4, 5 x 5, 6 x 6, 3 x 7, 3 x 8, 1 x 9, 6 x 10
REPORTS	Trainee	8 x 1, 7 x 2, 9 x 3
	Organisation	9 x 1, 1 x 2, 8 x 3, 4 x 4, 6 x 5, 1 x 6
	Community	6 x 1, 1 x 2, 3 x 3, 8 x 4, 5 x 5, 5 x 6, 2 x 7, 3 x 8, 0 x 9, 7 x 10

## Appendix 3: Case Study Site Visits

The case study delivery organisations were visited on the dates listed below:

### Active Communities

24/10/2015

### Atlantis Leisure

13/05/2016

### Drumchapel Table Tennis Club

28/04/2016

### Factory Skatepark Visit Dates

07/09/2016

08/09/2016

12/05/2016

### Reach for the Sky Basketball

15/09/2016

### Spartans FC

09/10/2015

14/09/2016

Additional workshop, discussion and learning days were held with all delivery organisations on the dates listed below:

14/09/2015

27/02/2015

20/01/2016

07/04/2016

19/09/2016

Appendix 4: Recorded Improvements in Reporting Scores from Baseline to Final Reports

Key



	Progress Score Variance from Baseline				Evidence Score Variance from Baseline				Combined
Cohort 1	Trainee	Organisation	Community	Total	Trainee	Organisation	Community	Total	Total
Atlantis Leisure	+22%	+ 29%	+14%	+21%	+7%	+56%	+56%	+44%	+26%
Broxburn United	+10%	+11%	+15%	+20%	-10%	-5%	+25%	+1%	+1%
Reach for the Sky Basketball	-9%	+7%	+62%	+23%	+60%	+20%	+53%	+43%	+31%
Spartans	+31%	+45%	+66%	+45%	+43%	+63%	+68%	+58%	+49%
Transition Extreme	+8%	+36%	+55%	+32%	+40%	+15%	+38%	+44%	+35%
Cohort 2									
ACE	+17%	+24%	+33%	+28%	+7%	+40%	+30%	+32%	+26%
Active Communities	+35%	+41%	+72%	+26%	+40%	+40%	+60%	+26%	+26%
Drumchapel TT Club	+18%	+9%	+10%	+12%	+40%	+5%	+10%	+16%	+9%
Factory Skatepark	+15%	+48%	+33%	+29%	+50%	+40%	+44%	+40%	+31%
Forth Valley Disability Sport	+40%	+29%	+ 40%	+35%	+50%	+50%	+50%	+50%	+39%
High Life Highland	+67%	+56%	+93%	+72%	+60%	+40%	+80%	+66%	+70%
Inch Park CSP	+27%	+20%	+37%	+30%	+70%	+40%	+22%	+38%	+33%

