

## Session Notes: **Sports for Social Change**

**Speakers /panel members-** Giles Gibbons (Good Business), Mike Brace (British Paralympics Association), Ned Wills (Laureus Project), Jason Turner (S - Team, Community Links), Thomas Godfrey (Sport England)

### **About this session:**

This interactive debating session looked at how sports can make a difference to individuals and communities, and how sport can help in bringing about positive social change. Around 30 people attended this session, of which 10 were under the age of 21.

### **The Headlines:**

**"It's not always the facilities that matter but how the talent is nurtured and the provision of a positive environment so sport can achieve social change."**

**"Sport can be very inspirational and can change people's perspectives- cost of hiring facilities can make it less accessible"**

**"Sport is a real solution in helping tackle social issues- street programmes work well to bring about social change"**

## Transcript of debate:

**Giles Gibbons:** Sport programmes to tackle a social issues include: [midnight basketball Virginia](#), '[it's a goal](#)', Aids awareness in Kampala and Football in Bosnia. These are all examples of how sport can be used for social change rather than personal benefit



**Ned Wills** - Sport provides a good foundation for change – for example, basket ball to create peace and reconciliation in Israel. One element of success of all of these projects is the nurturing and developing peer leaders. Research has shown the benefits of sport programmes in child development. You can relate this to gun and knife violence in the inner city in the UK – sports teams have many similarities to gang culture – for example, camaraderie and respect for a team, and provides a positive environment and positive role models.

**Jason Turner** – It's important to have a role model for young people and for someone to talk to them. Also to address divisions between young people that lead to exclusion, and bridge differences in the community. Jason works on estates in Newham (with 8-21 year olds) building relationships with parents and carers. No need for new facilities, need to work at the heart of the community- find the young people because of the cost of travel it has to be within walking distance. Young people plan the sports sessions to give them ownership and equip them with confidence, self belief and social skills. They deliver the Community Sports Leadership Award.



**Miles Brace** - He lost his eyesight as a child , sport helped him put his life back together and challenged others attitudes to lead to social change, meet other people and has the power to change the concept of disability 'sport can't change state but can change state of mind'.

**Thomas Godfrey** - Olympics legacy, allowing people to achieve their talents. Mayor of London should use sport as a catalyst for change – lobbying is needed. Need to use facebook to convince people of the value of sport and Olympic legacy.

## Questions and Answers to Panel

**Q: How do we tap into sport to create a feeling of belonging? To encourage young people to flourish and grow?**

A: Programmes need to be inclusive to address social isolation and lack of achievement. Government departments need to do more – there is lots of proof in the world and we can learn from the developing world.

**Q: Is there a role for business?**

A: Businesses that sell products can fund projects in return for advertising that can be either in the sports facilities or on sports websites - linking consumers to products and visa versa.

**Key question** - how do we engage more women in sport? Research shows that up to the age of 10 there's no difference in participation between girls and boys. Engagement drops during teenage years and then girls reengage in sport at ages 18/19, through gyms (non competitive). There is a real need to tackle the sharp reduction in participation of women aged 12-18.

## New project ideas or new collaborations emerging from this session:

1. Partnership between public, private and third sector, through use of brands to increase the power of sport.
2. Better use of new media – facebook, google, etc. PLINGS, govt offer. Sport England is working on this – links to brands.
3. Is there a way of using sport to address environmental initiatives?

## More Information:

[S - Team, Community Links](#)

[Good Business](#)

[British Paralympics Association](#)

[Laureus Sport for Good Foundation](#)

[Sport England](#)