

USING THE POWER OF A MAJOR SPORTING EVENT TO STIMULATE COMMUNITY REGENERATION: FOOTBALL'S COMING HOME WOMEN'S EURO 2005 LEGACY PROGRAMME

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Context

Following the success of the legacy of the Commonwealth Games, Sport England and the Football Association have sponsored a social legacy programme to support the UEFA Women's European Championships 2005. The programme is aimed primarily at the North West of England, but also looks to engage participants from around the UK and from the participating nations.

The programme

The underlying principle is that Women's Euro 2005 is 'more than 15 days of elite football', and subsequently looks to develop opportunities for wider participation across 6 structured themes:

- Football and sports development
- Education
- Health
- Volunteers
- Business and Tourism
- Special projects.

Active participation is a recurring theme across these streams, driven by both the FA's and Sport England's commitment to *Game Plan*, the government's (DCMS, 2002) blue-print to drive forward sport and recreational activity as a means of addressing other key social issues such as health, social deprivation and the skills agenda. Focal to the legacy programme is its association with a sports event featuring successful women; role models who portray achievement. Despite giant strides being made in terms of gender equality, parity between males and females in the workplace and sport is still an aspiration. The tournament provides a valuable opportunity to highlight areas both where commendable progress has been made and where barriers are still clearly evident.

Working in association with the Local Organising Committee's marketing department, the programme raises general awareness of the event and develops projects that are linked to tournament attendance. The North West Development Agency is a key partner to the Legacy programme emphasising the mutual benefit to be gained through raising the profile of the Region and the tournament; it links to the NWDA Regional events strategy.

Results

Early indications of the success of Women's Euro 2005 are reflected in the following statistics:

- 115,818 spectators at the 15 matches of the tournament (UEFA, 2005)
- 9.3 million viewers watched the 3 England games and the Final on BBC2 (UEFA, 2005)
- Women's Euro 2005 Legacy programme, to date, attracts partnership funding from nine additional public and private funding sources
- There has been an unprecedented rise in interest in women and girls football participation in the NW, stimulating additional regional FA Level 1 coaching courses.
- 250 volunteers work on the vastly oversubscribed Women's Euro 2005 Volunteer programme
- 40,000 of 'Passport 2005' were issued, linking active community-based participation to discounted attendance at matches
- 18,000 FA Women's Euro 2005 education packs were distributed to schools across the country
- 10,000 CD Roms *Football's Coming Home* were distributed to young people in the NW linking the tournament and wider messages on health, sports participation and NW sporting events

- 120 attended an inaugural NW Women in Business Conference linked to the Opening Ceremony
- 70 delegates, including 18 from overseas, attended an IFI Women, Europe and Football Conference at University College of Lancashire, Preston
- 800 children were involved in a 'Euro Hakka' project and a further 1,000 cheerleaders, both involved in performances on the Opening Day and at the Final.

References

Department of Culture Media and Sport (2002) *Game Plan* London: DCMS
UEFA (2005) *data on Women's Euro 2005*

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