

## Managing „sport-for-good” clubs for disadvantaged young people in super-diverse urban settings: a mixed methods study

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### Aim

First, we will investigate how and why ‘sport-for-good’ clubs can be effective in achieving positive outcomes for disadvantaged young people living in super-diverse urban settings. Second, through this study we want to investigate to what extent predefined positive outcomes are actually achieved amongst these young people. This study provides feedback to sport managers to improve their ‘sport-for-good’ club.

### Theoretical background

Today, living in urbanised areas equals living in super-diversity (Vertovec, 2007). With regard to how societies can respond to super-diversity, various authors refer to two scenarios: one of ‘humiliation and fear’ and one of ‘hope and empowerment’ (e.g., Bauman, 2003). In relation to the scenario of humiliation and fear, societies gradually become more segregated (Putnam, 2015). On the disadvantaged end of this gap are people who are described by Standing (2011) as ‘the precariat’. With regard to young people, a significant group are at risk of leaving school early and/or becoming unemployed. This study will mainly depart from the framework of social vulnerability (Vettenburg, 1998) that has been used to analyse the distorted and precarious relations of young people with society and its institutions. The progressive accumulation of negative experiences with these institutions eventually result in social disconnectedness and an unfavourable perspective (i.e. education, employment, future ambitions). Stigmatisation, sanctioning and self-perceived incompetence are often the outcomes. Although young people from socially excluded and disadvantaged groups are less likely to participate in organized sport (i.e. Theeboom et al., 2015), under the right circumstances, it is believed that sport can be managed ‘for good’ and empower young people out of their vulnerable position (Haudenhuyse, Theeboom & Nols, 2012; Hartmann, 2003; Kelly, 2010, Coalter & Taylor, 2010). However, the assumptions underlying most approaches within ‘sport for good’ are usually grounded in a deficit-reduction model of development with people perceived to be ‘in need’ of socialization (Coakley, 2002; Coalter, 2010). Related to the framework of social vulnerability, developmental concepts such as self-esteem, perceived self-efficacy and locus of control are often used to evaluate the presumed positive outcomes of ‘sport for good’ interventions.

### Methodology, research design and data analysis

Little is known about the way ‘sport’ can be effectively managed to achieve the positive outcomes it is believed to achieve. Nor is there sufficient understanding on how sport managers can do this. Therefore, this study wants to (1) examine the usefulness of quantitative outcome measures such as self-esteem, perceived self-efficacy and locus of control in testing the hypothesis that sport-for-good clubs contribute to the personal

development of young people (14-25 years) and (2) investigate the processes by which clubs could achieve personal development and ‘empowerment’. This study uses a mixed methods design. Qualitative and quantitative data will be collected in six sport-for-good clubs located in three large super-diverse urban areas in Belgium (Brussels, Antwerp and Genk). First, focus groups were conducted with the program managers and stakeholders involved in the development and implementation of the sport-for-good programs. The aim was to gain insight on their ‘program theory’: their vision, inputs, activities/output and the predefined outcomes they pursue. Second, based on the data from the focus groups we conducted a survey on two moments in time amongst the clubs’ youth members with regard to their predefined outcomes (i.e., self-esteem, perceived self-efficacy and locus of control).

### Results, discussion and implication/conclusion

The most important results were: (1) all organisations found it difficult to outline a ‘program theory’ and formulate precise outcomes; (2) the young people had scores within the ‘normal’ range with regard to the measured outcomes (i.e. self-esteem, perceived self-efficacy); (3) changes in the scores were not unidirectional (both increases and decreases) indicating there is no consistent and predictable ‘sport-for-good effect’ in terms of personal development. The nature and extent of outcomes are largely contingent and vary between sport clubs, participants and their backgrounds. These results warn sport-for-good managers against over-generalising about personal development ‘needs’ and suggest that some managers might need to re-evaluate the nature and extent of expected positive outcomes. In addition, the results draw attention to the difficulty of trying to grasp all possible positive outcomes of ‘sport for good’ interventions through quantitative measures. Further, the quantitative method was aimed at measuring ‘what’ happened, but there is a need to develop a more in-depth understanding of the processes (‘how’ and ‘why’) in order to consider issues of sport-for-‘good practice’. In the next steps of this study, in-depth interviews will be conducted with club managers, trainers, the young people and other relevant stakeholders about these results and implications.

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