



Street cred: inner-city scheme helps improve cricket's image, engage marginalised pupils and deter young from joining gangs

Loughborough University report highlights impact of "StreetChance" on London's youth

An accessible, exciting and fast-paced version of cricket is helping to improve the image of "the gentleman's game" among young people, while reaching the most vulnerable and marginalised children, according to a report by Loughborough University.

'StreetChance supported by Barclays Spaces for Sports', is helping to "make cricket look cool" as well as instil 'a sense of civic pride' in youngsters who take part in the inner-city London cricket scheme. Furthermore, the evaluation by the University's Institute of Youth Sport (IYS) highlights that 'the sense of belonging to a team and having a responsibility towards their teammates might help to deter young people from associating with gangs'.

StreetChance is a three-year project being delivered initially across 15 London boroughs^[1]. The initiative, launched in July 2008, uses cricket to engage young people from a range of backgrounds in areas affected by youth crime and anti-social behaviour. It is delivered in school as well as out of school through regular community sessions.

End of year figures announced today show that the initiative reached 6,507 youngsters in total - 41% were girls, 62% were from black and minority ethnic communities and 4% had special educational needs. In total, StreetChance has reached 13, 603 young people since it launched in 2008.

Working in just under 100 primary and secondary state schools across London, the introduction of cricket has 'enfranchised' non-sporty pupils and given them 'the opportunity to engage in a sporting career'. Says Mike Feeley a teacher at Hackney Bridge Academy: "Quite often with our lower ability students, they're already at a disadvantage going into the lessons with other sports like football, which the other students have played lots of. But cricket, especially in this area, it's a bit of a leveller because no-one's really done it before,

¹ Barking & Dagenham, Brent, Croydon, Hackney, Haringey, Hounslow, Kensington & Chelsea, Lambeth, Lewisham, Newham, Southwark, Sutton, Tower Hamlets, Waltham Forest and Westminster.

so the more able students don't have that usual advantage and the others can come through."

In local communities, StreetChance is helping children to cross social, ethnic and religious divides. 'Young people have learned how to tolerate and respect the differences between themselves and others' according to the IYS report. It highlights the example of a community session where several Muslim boys were observing Ramadan by fasting. The non-Muslim boys of the group wanted to eat before the coaching session but deliberately avoided doing so in front of their Muslim teammates.

Donovan Miller a StreetChance community coach in Hackney says: "In this area we have the Muslim kids, the Jewish kids, the West Indian kids, the English kids, and what I've got is them coming together playing a game. Now if the cricket wasn't there, who knows what they would be doing but they definitely wouldn't be together."

Many of the coaches and teachers commented on the rarity of seeing teenagers from rival estates getting along so seamlessly in StreetChance community sessions. One of the scheme's apprentice coaches, describes his own experience of seeing the tensions ease between youths from rival estates:

"Through (StreetChance) I made new friends from the estates opposite and so barriers between the two estates were broken because we were all playing cricket together, on the same team. So you go out as a group together, whereas normally I'd see them as an enemy, saying I would not go out with them, I wouldn't want to know them, but as you're playing cricket with them you're actually getting to know that they're not too bad, you break down the barriers."

At one particularly problematic estate, the establishment of a cricket team has served to engage children with a more positive appreciation of their local identity. The IYS report explains how 'young people in those locations can be nervous of mixing with the rest of society because they feel stigmatised by the reputation of the estates in which they live.'

Another community coach, Perry Sophocleous, cited in the report, said: "One of the older guys from the estate who gets involved now and then said that if something like this had been around when he was growing up he wouldn't have got involved in gangs, wouldn't have turned out the way he did."

Special 'Peace at the Crease' events are also helping to build a foundation for improved relationships between young people and local police officers. By playing cricket against and alongside police officers, young people in vulnerable areas are encouraged to see police officers as people and not just as a uniform, helping them to get to know their local officers on first-name terms; and showing them that the police take care of their neighbourhood rather than patrol it to get them into trouble. As one 15 year-old explains: "It's better than seeing them on the streets ... you get a chance to talk to them."

Superintendent Adrian Rabot said: "The Metropolitan Police Service have seen the value of the innovative opportunity StreetChance has offered Safer

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Neighbourhoods Teams to improve the trust and confidence young people have in their local police.

"Not only does this give them the chance to learn exciting new sporting skills, young people also see the value of working as a team and have the opportunity to engage positively with other young people from different neighbourhoods, where they may have only experienced hostility in the past."

StreetChance is a partnership between the Cricket Foundation, Barclays Spaces for Sports, Cricket for Change, the Metropolitan Police Service and Positive Futures; a social inclusion project funded mainly by the Home Office. For more details on StreetChance and to read the full Institute of Youth Sport report visit www.stretchance.co.uk

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About StreetChance partners

- **The Cricket Foundation**

StreetChance is an extension of The Cricket Foundation charity's Chance to Shine model for inner-city areas, providing 25 hours of professional cricket coaching and competition during the summer term. Chance to Shine is the charity's campaign to regenerate competitive cricket in state schools. It is one of the single biggest sports development programme ever seen in this country. It aims to educate state school children through cricket by establishing high-quality, sustainable cricket-led educational programmes in a third of all UK state schools by 2015.

- **Barclays Spaces for Sports**

Launched in 2004, Barclays Spaces for Sports is an award-winning community scheme and the single biggest investment in grassroots sport ever by a private company in the UK. The programme delivers sustainable sports sites and projects to communities across the UK and overseas. It has already created 200 sustainable sports sites in partnership with the Football Foundation covering a range of sports, giving more than half a million disadvantaged people the opportunity to benefit. Barclays Spaces for Sports is part of Barclays global community programme which invested £54.9m across 31 countries in 2009.

- **Cricket for Change**

Cricket for Change has delivered Street 20 cricket over the past three years in projects in Jamaica, Sri Lanka, South Africa and London. Street 20 is a version of cricket developed by Cricket for Change. It has its roots in Pakistan where it is called tape-ball Cricket. The significant features of Street 20 are its speed, its ability to be played almost anywhere with very limited equipment, and its use of a tennis ball bound with tape. Cricket for Change has recently changed its name from the LCCA, which has over 25 years experience of using cricket to help disadvantaged young people. Targeting housing estates in deprived areas in London, Street 20 has been supported by Metropolitan Police units, including the Tactical Support Group (TSG) and Hackney Police.

- **The Metropolitan Police Service**

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The Metropolitan Police Service is committed to working with young people to make London safer. This project follows MPS involvement with other sports initiatives such as Kickz and Met-track which provide an added opportunity for police officers to meet with young people regularly and talk to them about crime and safety issues. Through investment in such projects the MPS aims to further develop confidence and trust between police and young people.

- **Positive Futures**

Positive Futures is a Home Office-funded national sports and activity-based social inclusion programme, managed by young people's charity Catch22. The programme has 118 projects across the UK and works in some of the country's most deprived neighbourhoods.

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