

# **Evaluation of the New Opportunities in PE and Sport programme**

**Working Paper:**

**Evaluation of ten Football Foundation projects  
Key findings and lessons learnt**

**Ruth Jeanes and Mary Nevill  
Institute of Youth Sport  
School of Sport and Exercise Sciences  
Loughborough University**

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## **1.1 Introduction**

In 2003 the Big Lottery Fund devolved funding of £30 million to the Football Foundation to support capital projects for schools and the community. The Football Foundation encouraged applications from schools and local education authorities for innovative football projects that fulfilled BIG's six key outcomes (do we need to say what these are?) and reflected the Football Foundation's five key areas of work: improving health and well being, encouraging education and lifelong learning, promoting social inclusion, developing equality and respecting the environment. Projects were able to apply for revenue funding of up to 20% of the capital bid. This revenue funding could be used to provide an officer to work within the new facility or to finance community coaching schemes, volunteer training or employment of outreach workers.

The Loughborough Partnership was commissioned by the Big Lottery Fund in 2003 to undertake an evaluation of the impact of the Football Foundation programme. Similar to the main evaluation of the New Opportunities in PE and Sport (NOPES) programme, a case study approach was adopted working with 10 projects. The purpose of these case studies was to gain a greater understanding of how the funding had impacted on partnership development, school and community participation and on any wider social outcomes.

This paper provides an overview of the successes and challenges faced by the Football Foundation projects, examines the value of devolving funding through external agencies and discusses the lessons learned by staff involved in the projects. A boxed summary of key findings is presented at the start of each of the three sub-sections (partnership effectiveness, impact on participation and impact on wider social outcomes). Examples of effective practice are also included within the boxed sections of the report. The report concludes with recommendations based on the lessons learned for future roll-out of similar programmes.

## **1.2 Overview of the Football Foundation projects involved in the evaluation**

A comprehensive process was used to select the case studies which included assessing projects using the following criteria:

1. Classification by demographic indices: Urban high population, rural low population, areas of high deprivation and areas of high ethnicity. Selected projects were required to fulfil at least one criteria.
2. Analysis of Grass Roots Assessment: Each project produced a 'grass roots assessment profile' undertaken by a Football Foundation assessor and an Football Association (FA) regional facilities manager. These provided more specific details on the application for each project. The profiles were analysed to assess interesting detail particularly in relation to the Big Lottery Fund's aims. From this, twenty five projects were selected for final short listing. The ten case study projects are briefly described below.

## **Project A**

Project A is based at a specialist sports college located in the south of England. The school is situated in an urban community consisting of a predominantly white population of average affluence. Capital funding from the Football Foundation of £482,000 was used to build a new, full sized, floodlit synthetic turf pitch and provide an access path to the facility.

## **Project B**

Project B is based at a specialist sports college located in the north of England. The school is situated in an rural, ex-mining community consisting of a predominantly white population. The local area has an above average level of unemployment compared to the immediate surrounding areas and the national average. A high percentage of the local population have no qualifications. The school is close to a large housing estate in a non-affluent area. Funding from the Football Foundation of £552,556 was used to build a new full sized floodlit synthetic turf pitch, changing rooms and to provide three years of revenue funding for a football development officer position.

## **Project C**

Project C is based at a specialist sports college located in the Midlands. The school is situated in a city with a high ethnic minority population (22%). The ward the school is located in is ranked in the 12% of most deprived wards in the country and the catchment wards include several in the top 5% most deprived wards in the country. Funding from the Football Foundation of £215,703 was used to build new changing rooms and to provide revenue funding for a girls' football coach.

## **Project D**

Project D is located on the playing field of a high school located in the North West of England. The school is located in an extremely deprived urban ward which suffers from severe economic problems. Capital funding from the Football Foundation of £1,000,000 has been used to build an outdoor soccer centre including drainage of three full-size pitches and 1 junior pitch, the development of 8 mini-soccer pitches, floodlights and fencing, changing rooms within a pavilion and car parking. The project was unusual in that multiple funding streams have been drawn upon to build a full sports park on the school site including an indoor leisure facility. The Football Foundation project has been developed alongside the sports park facilities.

## **Project E**

Project E is located in a city centre on the site of an old stadium and playing fields surrounded by a community park. The local area is extremely deprived. The local authority is one of the most deprived in England and the ward where the facility is based is in the top 1% of most deprived wards in the country. There is a high Asian population in the area and a high youth population. 24% of the community are under 16 and over 50% of these are Bangladeshi young people. The local authority has been identified as one of the worst in the

country for health, unemployment, overcrowding and crime levels. Funding of £995,956 has been provided by the Football Foundation to assist with building 6 team changing rooms, 6 individual changing rooms with private showers, 7 mini synthetic turf pitches with floodlights and revenue funding for 5 years for a schools education and development officer.

### **Project F**

Project F is based at a school for young people with autism in the south of England. The school has 64 pupils in total, all of whom are on the Special Educational Needs (SEN) register. Pupils are aged between 5 and 19. Capital funding from the Football Foundation of £57,826 has been used to transform existing waste land into a small enclosed grass football pitch.

### **Project G**

Project G is based at a specialist sports college located in the north west of England. The school is situated in a rural, ex-mining community consisting of a predominantly white population on the outskirts of a large city. The school is located in a relatively affluent residential area but draws 25% of its pupils from a ward ranked in the top 10% of the most deprived wards. This ward is also the highest for anti-social and violent behaviour in the county. The school is a mixed high school and takes pupils from Year 9 up to Year 12. Capital funding from the Football Foundation of £747,391 was used to build a new full sized floodlit synthetic turf pitch, changing rooms and additional car parking space to service the new facility.

### **Project H**

Project H is based at a community college located in the south west of England. The college is situated in a semi-urban, predominantly white community on the outskirts of a city. The college is surrounded by a number of wards with varying degrees of affluence. Nearly a quarter of the population where the college is located are under 19 years old. The college has over 1000 pupils in key stage 3 and 4 and also functions as an adult learning site offering a variety of post-16 courses. A total of 8% of pupils in key stage 3 and 4 are eligible for free school meals and 4% of pupils are on the SEN register. Capital funding from the Football Foundation of £798,910 was used to build a sports hall extension including 4 unisex changing rooms, 2 official's changing rooms, an internal and external store and 2 treatment rooms. Additional revenue funding of £23,233 was also provided for a community football development officer.

### **Project I**

Project I is based at a specialist sports college located in the north east of England. The college is situated in an ex-mining community consisting of a predominantly white population on the outskirts of a large city. The area suffers from high levels of social and economic deprivation. The college is not located in an area of high deprivation, but is surrounded by a number of highly deprived areas. One fifth (21%) of the college's population are eligible for free schools meals. The school is a mixed secondary school and takes pupils from

Year 9 up to Year 12. Capital funding from the Football Foundation of £144,680 has been awarded and contributed to building a new full sized floodlit fenced third generation artificial grass pitch.

## Project J

Project J is based at a specialist sports college located in the south of England. The school is situated in an urban inner city ward ranked in the top 11% on the indices of multiple deprivation. The school has a roll of approximately 1200 students of whom 35% are eligible for free school meals. The ethnic profile of the ward where the school is located is predominantly white (63%) but has a relatively large Black or Black British community (19%). Unemployment and crime levels are well above the national average across the borough where the school is located. Capital funding from the Football Foundation of £953,000 has been used to build a changing facility and a third generation all weather pitch.

## 1.3 Methodology

All ten projects received an initial visit where key stakeholders were interviewed to discuss the management and development of their project. At the first visit the person responsible for developing the project application and any other key stakeholders including local authority sports development officers and county football development officers were interviewed. Subsequent visits were undertaken to all projects 12 months after opening. At these visits repeat interviews took place with key stakeholders, as well as any revenue-funded officers in position. Focus groups were undertaken with young people using the new facility and interviews also took place with representatives from community groups using the facilities where appropriate.

Table 1 below summarises the evaluation visits to the projects and includes opening dates for the projects.

**Table 1: Summary of evaluation visits and opening dates**

	<b>Initial Visit</b>	<b>Facility Opening Date</b>	<b>Follow-up Visit</b>
Project A	July 2005	November 2005	June 2006
Project B	July 2005	July 2005	May 2006
Project C	November 2005	July 2005	November 2006
Project D	August 2005	March 2006	December 2006
Project E	May 2005	October 2005	May 2006
Project F	May 2006	September 2005	May 2007
Project G	May 2006	September 2005	May 2007

Project H	May 2006	November 2006	May 2007
Project I	June 2006	January 2006	May 2007
Project J	June 2006	January 2006	June 2007

### **Summary of key findings: Partnership Effectiveness**

- The partnership between the Football Foundation and the Big Lottery Fund has been successful for identifying projects specifically developing football, but also achieving BIG's key outcomes.
- The County Football Associations have been a valuable resource for encouraging project applications, determining priorities and allocating funding to projects capable of delivery.
- Funding has been awarded to a number of projects where staff were known deliverers and had existing structures in place. This has resulted in well-managed projects, limited issues with administration and activities organised quickly.
- Revenue funded officers have been essential in ensuring project development plans are delivered and that facilities contribute to meeting wider social outcomes. Staff at school-based projects with no revenue funding had encountered difficulties extending their current provision, despite the new facility, due to limited staff capacity.
- Appropriate management structures were developed for small and large projects. Small operational management groups were organised at school-based projects usually consisting of PE staff, business and administration staff and an advisor from the County FA. The two larger projects were both local authority managed and developed broader management groups with a range of representatives from schools, community groups and football and sports development professionals. The larger management groups were effective for guiding and supporting the more ambitious aims of these larger projects.
- Most school-based projects had other facilities that were already used by the local community. This existing community use meant that projects were well equipped managerially and administratively to deal with the additional demands of community use at the new facilities.
- Experience of generating and managing community use was felt by project staff to be important due to the speed with which management responsibility had been devolved to project level once funding had been agreed. Whilst they generally considered that the application process had been effective, staff questioned the lack of accountability at a local level and felt there were limited systems in place to ensure they were delivering their development plan and using the facility appropriately.

- Staff believed projects had helped strengthen links with community groups and other schools and to provide a better quality of service to external users. Revenue staff were again considered important in creating more robust formal partnerships with school and community groups and also in supporting them with developing their provision.
- There were several examples of innovative design at projects, particularly with changing facilities.
- Demand for new facilities has been high. As a result few projects have encountered difficulties with income generation and projects have been able to sustain revenue funded officers through profits made and sourcing further external funding. Early planning and commitment to continuing the posts was essential for this process.

## 2.1 Partnership Effectiveness findings

The partnership between BIG and the Football Foundation has been an effective one. It has allowed funding to be targeted at projects fulfilling key outcomes whilst also enhancing provision for football in schools and local communities. The Football Foundation, through their own staff and the county football associations, had in place an effective network to encourage applications, assess the strategic position of existing facilities and to ensure that funding was devolved to areas of need. The involvement of county football development managers in the selection phase resulted in a high number of 'known deliverers' within local communities being selected as project sites. These projects were often undertaking an extensive range of activities, but were limited in the quality and quantity of what they could offer by poor facilities. This approach ensured many projects were able to achieve a noticeable impact within the first year due to having appropriate systems in place to organise activities.

Once the application process was complete and the funding secured, management responsibility was devolved to individual projects. There was no structure in place for local authority wide strategic management groups to oversee projects, as occurred with the NOPES portfolios. Each county FA had some responsibility for overseeing projects but this was informal and varied greatly. Some project staff discussed having limited contact with their county football development manager once funding had been granted. This had some implications for project accountability with some projects considering there had been limited systems in place to check they had used the funding correctly and were delivering on their business plan. The system had, however, resulted in a straightforward and relatively quick application process which the projects had appreciated. Projects had liaised directly with the Football Foundation and had generally been satisfied with the service they

received, the speed with which their application was processed and the funding made available. The exception to this was project H where staff felt their Football Foundation liaising officer had communicated poorly and this had led to several delays in the application process and securing funding which had resulted in the scale of the project having to be reduced due to rising costs.

Management arrangements varied according to project size. The two largest projects, D and E, were both managed by local authority leisure services departments which proved to be effective practice for the size of the project. Project D was located at a school site, but the Head Teacher did not feel the school would be able to effectively manage such an extensive project. Project E was not attached to a single school and was managed by the local authority as part of their wider facility strategy. The remaining projects were all overseen and managed by school staff, usually the director of sport or head of PE, with support from existing facilities or business teams within the school. Most school-based projects had other facilities on site which offered community use. Systems were therefore already in place to deal with the general management and administration at no additional cost to schools. Project H in particular successfully utilised the school's business management team to market the facilities within the local community and a profitable range of community activities were developed using the new facility. Having systems in place to encourage and manage community use was extremely valuable and ensured that projects were able to both generate and manage substantial community use in a short space of time.

Most of the projects involved in the evaluation received revenue funding to employ officers with dedicated development roles. In all cases these positions were integral to developing activities using the new facility and ensuring the implementation of project development plans. Interviewees felt revenue staff had helped to develop links between school and community users and provided an obvious point of contact and support. Revenue officers had also been involved in extending curriculum and community provision and generally 'get things up and running'. Many of the interviewees felt that their projects would have been unable to generate the range and extent of activity, particularly targeting hard to reach groups, without a dedicated staff member to lead on this.

Staff at the projects generally found that because facilities had been placed in areas of high demand they had encountered little difficulty with generating income from them. Several projects had successfully developed business leagues which provided a reliable source of income. As a result most projects were able to continue to employ officers after the revenue funded period with income generated by the facility. All projects had funds in place for ongoing maintenance that were incorporated into school and leisure service budgets on an annual basis. Sustaining the facility was not considered to be problematic by any of the projects. In particular, at project H, staff had developed their community programme to such an extent that they were making a profit which had been used to improve other sports facilities at the school.

## **2.2 Links with other strategies, plans, programmes and structures**

The interviewees felt that the Football Foundation projects had linked with a number of other strategies and programmes. Several projects had also received funding from the main NOPES programme. Staff at the projects receiving main NOPES funding discussed how the Football Foundation programme had enabled them to develop an extensive range of new facilities at their school. Project E had effectively drawn together multiple funding strands to develop a sports park with indoor and outdoor facilities at a school site. The Football Foundation funding has provided an outdoor all weather pitch, but the project manager discussed how this funding also attracted other investments in the site, as well as providing one of the sports park's core facilities. Project H had received NOPES funding to build an all weather pitch. Project staff discussed how funding from the Football Foundation had been used to provide new changing rooms which complemented the new pitch and ensured the school was able to accommodate the increase in community use generated by the all weather facility.

The development plans for all projects linked with broader county FA programmes and strategies. The facilities at several projects were used by county FA's for the delivery of coach education and training programmes. In addition, much of the targeted work that has taken place as a result of the new facilities has helped county FA's achieve broader aims and objectives. Project B and Project D used their new facilities to deliver the FA FUTSAL initiative (a 5-a-side game used to encourage younger players). Officers at these projects had used the facilities to hold several FUTSAL leagues and tournaments to encourage participation in their local primary schools. Projects E and G had also used the new facilities to improve links with local Football in the community schemes. In project E the delivery of the development plan had been undertaken solely by the local community scheme who were known and trusted deliverers. This link had been of great benefit to the local authority who did not have to recruit and employ new staff to deliver their extensive school and community programme.

A number of the interviewees at school based projects discussed how their new facility had linked with their specialist sports college status. Project staff felt the new facilities had enabled their schools to offer high quality provision whilst revenue staff had allowed projects to extend the amount of support and delivery offered to their feeder schools. Project G and I had used their new facilities to deliver their schools' young sports leaders programme. The new facilities were used during student training and also for tournaments organised by the pupils.

The business manager at project H felt that the project had supported the school's delivery of the extended schools agenda. The new facility had allowed to school to offer a range of activities for pupils beyond 6pm and become recognised as a school with genuine community focus.

## **2.3 Outcome 4: Improved collaboration, co-operation and partnership between schools and their communities**

Staff at all sites perceived their projects had strengthened their partnerships with other schools and community groups to some extent. Most projects felt

they had good existing links but the Football Foundation programme had assisted them with developing and improving these collaborations.

Consultation work with key users was undertaken by each project. These consultation methods included surveys with user groups, working with community clubs to help them achieve National Governing Body accreditation, undertaking consultation simultaneously and setting-up community forums or steering groups. Thus community groups had some input into the development of all facilities and helped projects develop community use once open. Interviewees from Project D described their community forum as being a 'key voice' providing information from the community during initial project development. Once the project was open the size of the group was reduced and a much more 'hands on' forum was developed where representatives were responsible for leading and developing particular target areas contained within the facility development plan.

The majority of projects used their new facilities to host festivals and tournaments for feeder primaries. Facilities at projects E and G were also used by local primaries for curriculum PE. Interviewees felt this had enhanced the relationship between schools, assisted primary pupils with familiarising themselves with the secondary school and improved the quality of provision in primary schools.

Projects C and I had successfully used a girls football project to develop links with local community clubs. The revenue officers at these projects organised coaching sessions for girls at the new facilities and invited local clubs to use these to recruit new players. The coach at project C felt this had provided a 'bit of a springboard', assisting the school with developing partnerships with local clubs. He believed that the girls' community sessions were able to offer a tangible benefit to clubs to encourage them to work in partnership with the coach and the work being undertaken at the college.

Project H was operating an extensive community programme prior to the new facility being built. However, the interviewees felt during the first evaluation visit that they were not able to cater for clubs at a desired standard. The business manager felt, however, the new facility had 'transformed' their community programme and provided a base for customers. She felt the facilities had professionalised the services the college offered to partners:

"The office has just allowed us to have a relationship with the people that we are serving now, the coaches report there, parents come and talk to us. It's just a focal point and we have much better customer relations and communication with our user groups"

**Effective practice example: Linking with local initiatives Project D & E**

The two larger projects (D and E) have used the new facilities to develop employment schemes targeting local people. Both projects had developed policies of only employing staff who lived in local area. The football in the community scheme at project D recruited coaches from housing estates in deprived areas and provided continued training and employment opportunities for them. All staff at the sports park in project E are required to live within one mile of the facility which was located in an extreme area of deprivation. The development officers felt the use of local staff had encouraged people from the local community to use the facility because they felt the staff were welcoming and familiar.

### **Effective Practice Example: Value of Partnerships Project E**

Project E was unusual in that multiple funding streams were drawn upon to build a leisure facility within which the Football Foundation project was located. The leisure facility included a district standard athletics track, a rugby training pitch within the centre of the track and a large sports pavilion which was the 'hub' of the new facilities. The pavilion housed a number of development officers and also contained a rehabilitation centre for patients with coronary problems. Funding for the site was obtained from the NOPES initiative, Active England, the local primary care trust, neighbourhood renewal funding and the local authority, which, together with the Football Foundation funding, had developed an extensive new leisure facility on what was previously a run down public area next to the school site. The lead manager of the project was originally the head of sport and recreation. He was central in drawing the different funding streams together and working with the different services and partners required to submit the project applications. The project linked together children's services and leisure services departments in the local authority, but it was largely driven through leisure services in partnership with the high school where the project is located. These partnerships were considered as essential to the development of the project and the extension of the original scope to include multiple funding streams.

The head of sport and recreation discussed how it had been a 'complicated cocktail' to pull together all the major funders and different strategies and programmes that the project could potentially impact on. However, he felt there were a number of common goals and objectives central to all these initiatives, including social inclusion, health, and young people, which had assisted with connecting the various programmes and strategies to achieve a holistic delivery of these through the project. As the Football Foundation bid suggests, it was anticipated that "through these programmes the project team will be able to deliver substantially more than just the physical infrastructure that is proposed for the hub site". The effective practice was thus the integrated approach to the project and the identification of common goals and objectives central to each initiative.

## **2.4 Outcome 6: Innovation and best practice in the design and management of facilities**

The majority of the projects were happy with their facilities and considered they were both fit for purpose and value for money. Several project staff had visited the sites of similar facilities before finalising their own project and they felt this had been useful in learning what was successful and what to avoid. Project J has encountered some difficulties with the quality of their all weather pitch surface and had yet to address these at the last evaluation visit. Staff felt that, when problems had occurred, there had been limited support from the Football Foundation and the project staff had been left attempting to chase contractors and identify what had caused the problem. The head of PE felt it would have been helpful to have received some support and guidance from the Football Foundation on how to resolve the issues and determine how the problems with the surface had occurred.

Several interviewees felt their project was an example of innovative design or management. Projects C, B and E had included sliding door systems as part of their new changing rooms which had enabled maximum space to be made available and alteration of the facility to suit community or pupil needs. Changing rooms could be extended to accommodate large classes or reduced to allow separate changing areas for different community groups. Project D had also developed individual changing rooms as part of their new facility which had been invaluable for encouraging and allowing Asian girls to participate in activity.

**Effective practice example: Innovative management of programmes  
Project D**

Staff at project D had approached the development of their extra-curricular/youth community programme in a particularly innovative way. A 'free and active' holiday programme was initially organized during the summer of 2006. An extensive marketing campaign took place and the activities attracted over 2000 children and young people over the summer. Staff then developed a data-base of young people who were targeted to attend the after-school sessions. In addition, sports park staff consulted with young people during the initial activities to find out what sessions they wanted to be made available during term-time. Staff subsequently built their programme around the young people's responses. This ensured buy-in and interest from young people and high attendance at community sessions.

### **Key Findings: Impact on Participation**

- All project staff felt their new facilities had improved the quality of PE provided. Impact on the quantity of curricular provision was less evident, usually because school already had extensive provision.
- Projects had enabled PE and extra-curricular activity to take place all-year-round. Pupils felt safer on all-weather surfaces and enjoyed not getting muddy. New changing facilities were felt to have enhanced pupil experiences, lessened behaviour problems and provided a calmer start to lessons.
- The new facilities had also encouraged staff development. Revenue officers had played a key role in providing on the job training and support for teachers at both project schools and feeder primaries. Staff felt the quality of teaching had improved a great deal and female staff in particular had gained more confidence in teaching football.
- A number of projects had provided young people with more extensive and regular extra-curricular provision. In particular, informal activity was felt to have increased significantly at a number of projects. Lunch-time and break-time 'kick about' football was felt to have increased and there were fewer behavioural problems during these times and more pupils active as a result.
- Projects had encountered few difficulties encouraging community use of new facilities. However, project staff felt there was some conflict between the need to generate revenue and to ensure the facilities were available for target groups. Several projects had ring fenced time for junior teams and development sessions for the early evening, and had focused on revenue generating users, such as men's business leagues, after 8 pm.

### **3.1 Impact on participation**

#### **3.2 Outcome 1: Improved physical education and sport in schools**

Staff at all projects felt that their new facilities had improved the quality of PE. A number of staff felt their school was already offering an extensive PE curriculum and that the facilities had not impacted on the quantity of PE. Project D was also restricted by a small teaching staff which prevented them extending the time available for PE despite not meeting the target 2 hours. In project E primary school teachers who had brought their pupils to regular coaching sessions at the new site felt that it had helped them to extend the

amount of time available for PE and to formalise PE lessons as an important and valued part of the curriculum.

Staff at projects generally felt the new facilities had helped raise the profile of PE within school. They thought the new facilities had improved pupils' experiences and enjoyment of PE and this was reflected by fewer absentees since the facilities opened. All weather pitches were felt to have improved the quality of PE by offering better surfaces, allowing outdoor PE to occur all-year-round and offering pupils a more realistic sports experience. The football coach in project J discussed how different it was for staff and pupils having 'proper' line markings and goals which had enabled him to teach more specific tactical and set piece drills. As he explained

“Before you couldn't teach them things like defensive moves, like get to the edge of the box because there was no box. We'd just have cones and they'd be looking around going which cone is that then? Now I can say ok we want to do this attacking move, you need to get to the corner then put it into the edge of the box and they can do it because they can visualize what I am talking about. It has just improved their football literacy.”

Project staff felt that the all-weather surfaces had given pupils more confidence for skills such as tackling because pupils knew they would not hurt themselves if they fell over. Pupils were effusive about the merits of the new pitches. They discussed feeling safer playing on these pitches and enjoyed not getting dirty or wet. Comments included:

“It's amazing, when you fall you practically bounce back up.”

“It is new, it is much better, it is always clean whereas the field isn't.”

“I like not having to go on a muddy field in the winter.”

Projects that had included the development of changing facilities were felt to have greatly enhanced pupils' experiences of PE. At project C up to 80 pupils had previously had to change in one changing room with only two showers and one toilet. The director of sport felt the new facility had given pupils a much more positive experience of PE than was previously available and it was “just a more civilised environment”. Similarly in project G the director of sport felt there was a much better atmosphere during PE due to pupils having space to change, rather than 50 pupils trying to change in the confined area of the previous changing facilities. As he explained it was just a ‘much calmer start to things now’. Pupils in project D placed high value on being able to access clean, modern changing rooms. Accessing the changing rooms at the new facility had raised their expectations.

'When we went for the open day we went into the changing rooms and they smelt nice and they were all clean and when we do PE over here (school site) they are all sweaty and horrible.'

'The toilets were dead clean and in ours they are horrid!'

'The showers were warm in the sports hall and in here it takes about half an hour for the water to warm up.'

Several projects discussed how the new facilities had encouraged the development of teacher training and mentoring and this, in turn, had improved the quality of provision for pupils. The football development officer at project B had worked alongside teachers at both primary and secondary level to provide INSET training. Teachers reported that they found this INSET training very useful, particularly some of the female staff who were not particularly confident delivering football in the curriculum.

**Effective practice example: Improving quality by supporting PE staff  
Project C**

Female staff at project C were also felt to have benefited from working alongside the revenue funded officer. The girls' football coach had worked extensively with teachers during curriculum time. The director of sport felt this had provided staff with increased expertise, new ideas and fresh concepts. He felt the coach was able to offer all of the PE staff continuous professional development. Staff had felt that a number of the ideas and suggestions provided by the coach were very effective for engaging older pupils in PE and for challenging the more skilful footballers at the school.

### **3.3 Extra-curricular opportunities**

Staff at all projects were positive about the impact new facilities had on improving and extending extra-curricular opportunities. New facilities had encouraged the development of a more extensive extra-curricular programme at some projects and had improved the quality of usual activities. The female PE teacher at project D had been able to reintroduce hockey into extra-curricular provision as the new facility had provided an appropriate surface to teach on. Several interviewees discussed the value of all-weather pitches for enabling year round extra-curricular activities and particularly for limiting the number of fixtures that had to be cancelled due to poor weather. They felt the standard of competitive football had improved a great deal because of the quality of the new surface and the lack of cancellations, meaning more matches were played.

Increasing girls' extra-curricular provision was a focus for several projects. The football coach at project C had developed girls only teams across all

years. The girls involved in these teams had found them very enjoyable. Previously, most girls had only limited football opportunities and they were very excited about coming to secondary school because they knew they would have the opportunity to play. The girls' football coach had also organized a girls only club at a number of feeder primary schools. Teachers at the primary schools had worked alongside the coach during the sessions and then took over organisation of their school club after six weeks.

Due to limited staff capacity, the PE team at project D felt it had been difficult to extend the existing range of extra-curricular activities available. However, staff based at the new facility had organised an extensive after-school programme for young people staffed by external coaches. The programme started when school finished and ran until 5pm each evening. The PE staff at the high school felt that staff at the new facility (built on the school site) had been able to alleviate some of the pressures they were under to provide extensive extra-curricular provision for all groups. The head teacher at the primary school onsite also discussed how the programme had been extremely beneficial for pupils at the school who had previously only been able to access limited sports and physical activity opportunities immediately after school.

'The biggest impact for our pupils has been the after-school clubs they run there (at the sports park), lots of our kids are now going to that...they are not out roaming the streets....they have somewhere to go after-school now.'

Staff at project E also recognised that their local schools were unable to provide extensive extra-curricular provision, particularly competitive opportunities for pupils. To overcome this schools were invited to take part in after-school coaching and competitive opportunities at the new facility. Pupils were taught specific football skills such as goalkeeping and coaches continued to support pupils during competitions. Pupils who attended the after-school programme were encouraged to attend a Saturday morning open coaching session that provided opportunities for young people who were unable to attend a formal club or did not want to. Both teachers and pupils were extremely positive about the extra curricular activities. Previously the three schools involved in the evaluation had no opportunity to play any competitive matches in any sports against other local schools. The pupils all reported enjoying these new competitive opportunities and stated that their skills had improved and that their activity levels had increased. They felt it improved their skills and they were extremely active during the games. The pupils discussed how taking part in the extra-curricular activities made them feel good and was something they looked forward to doing. Some of their comments included:

"It makes me feel good, I like doing exercise. Most of the time we are at school we are inside and I can't wait for Thursday when I know we will be playing after school and I get to go outside."

“It makes me feel really happy that I am getting to go away from school and away from where I live. It is great to just get away for two hours and do something I really want to do.”

Pupils at project E continually commented that the facility was somewhere different to go, away from school and their homes. The project worked with schools with a high proportion of ethnic minority pupils and a teacher discussed the limited opportunities that pupils had to experience other environments outside of the home or school. She felt that attending the facility had widened the pupils’ experiences of other environments and had made them aware that different places existed with their local communities. Staff at project E had to work closely with parents to ensure pupils were allowed to attend extra-curricular opportunities. A number of the coaches spoke a diverse range of languages and thus were able to communicate with parents and establish a relationship and develop parental trust in the project.

Several project staff reported that one of the most noticeable impacts of their facilities on extra-curricular activity was an increase in informal activity. At project A each year group had a designated day to use the facility at lunch and break times. The interviewees felt this had helped pupils, particularly to boys, be much more active during their free time at school. A number of the pupils commented on the benefits of this opportunity:

“Everyone goes on it at lunch-time, it is something we all look forward to doing.”

“It makes school better. Loads of boys are in there now at lunch-times so there is more space for us to do things so you are not being hit by the ball all the time.”

“It has got to be better for people, they are not just sitting around, they are doing stuff they enjoy. That has to be good and they are out now and having a laugh with their mates. It is just a better atmosphere than just standing around.”

(Year 7, 9 and 11 male and female pupils)

Other benefits of informal activities, as cited by staff and pupils, were felt to be improved behaviour and atmosphere during break times and more space for other activities due to football taking place on the new pitches.

### **3.4 Outcome 3 : Better opportunities to increase the levels of physical activity among the school age population**

Most projects felt they had good links with community groups prior to the new facilities opening. The new facilities had, however, allowed projects to offer a better quality of service to their community users and in some cases to extend the number and groups of community users. A number of the staff at all-weather pitch projects discussed the high community demand for use of the facility and highlighted the difficulties of balancing revenue generating with ensuring their broader targets and development programmes were being addressed. A number of staff commented that it would be easy to fill their pitches with male adults teams every evening, but it was important to ensure that their target groups also had priority. To achieve this balance several projects had 'ring-fenced' peak time between 6 pm and 9 pm for local junior clubs or development sessions.

Interviewees felt that community groups had benefited from having high quality facilities to use and being able to participate throughout the winter. A pupil at project G who played for a local club discussed the benefits of having high quality provision and being able to participate through the winter for his local club:

"It's really helped our club in the winter. We get much better practice now and can train properly. We had to stay indoors before and it was really small. Now we can stay outside and we are doing much better because everyone is practising properly through the winter. It has just made us play better."

A number of interviewees from community groups discussed how new facilities had improved the experiences of their members and helped attract new players.

Projects which had included new changing facilities were felt to have greatly enhanced community experiences and allowed the school to market their facilities to a much wider community audience. The previous changing rooms at project C were unable to effectively service community use at the project site. As a result of this many teams used the facilities, but were unable to access changing facilities which the director of sport felt may have limited community use. Through the new facility the school was able to offer much better service quality and provide rooms for home and away teams during competitive matches and referees' changing rooms that were not previously available. The director of sport believes that there was an element of word of mouth communication around clubs about the improvement in facilities and this had helped increase usage from clubs who may previously have been put off by the poor quality of the changing rooms.

### **Effective practice example: Working with community groups to increase and improve junior provision Project E**

Staff at project E explained that junior football provision in the local community had previously been limited. Project staff organised a Saturday morning community session to address this which was extremely successful and attracted around 100 young people on a weekly basis. In addition, project staff had started to encourage local adult teams to develop youth sections and supported them with this process. It was anticipated that once youth sections were established young people would be encouraged to move from the community sessions to the club environment. The project's revenue officer was crucial for both developing links and for building relationships with local clubs whilst also organising and running sessions for young people.

### **Key findings: Impact on wider social outcomes**

- Project staff felt that the new facilities had achieved broader benefits beyond enhancing PE and sport provision in schools. Staff felt that the new facilities had increased pupils' feelings of pride in their school, encouraged staff and teachers to view the school more positively and had improved the school's profile in the local community.
- A number of projects had used the facilities to develop activities specifically targeting disaffected and poorly behaved boys. Staff reported that these projects had been successful at connecting with pupils, engaging them back into school and in improving their behaviour within schools.
- Developing initiatives to promote social inclusion has been a high priority for projects. All facilities have been located in areas of deprivation and have provided a visible investment. Several interviewees reported a perception that areas were safer because they were well-lit by floodlights and more people were 'around' at night and taking part in activities.
- Several projects have organised midnight soccer leagues aimed at providing activity for young males in the local community. Staff organising the leagues have specifically targeted pupils on the verge of exclusion or those known to engage in anti-social behaviour in the evenings. Interviewees felt these programmes had improved relationships between young people and adults and had encouraged those boys taking part to view the school site more positively.
- Several projects have successfully used their facilities to run health improvement programmes. Rooms in changing facilities have been used for health drop in centres and revenue officers have organised activities for obese young people and for the elderly. Partnership working with the local primary care trust has been vital for developing these programmes. Revenue officers were again a valuable resource for coordinating groups and organising sessions.

## **4.1 Impact on wider social outcomes**

### **4.2 Outcome 2: Higher standards across the whole school through PE, sport and other forms of structured activity**

All interviewees felt their projects had achieved some whole school benefit. The new facilities were felt to have had a positive impact on pupils' perceptions of their school and their motivation to come to the school site. Several interviewees explained that their schools had a 'better atmosphere' and generally were nicer places to be in than before the new facilities had opened. Teacher motivation and enthusiasm was also felt to have been enhanced by the improved facilities. Staff and pupils discussed feeling an increased sense of pride in their school and felt the new facilities had helped to raise the school's profile in the local community and amongst other local schools. Pupils in project A explained:

"It is good for the school having all these clubs come in, it makes our school more popular and everyone thinks our school is better because we have an astro."

"Loads of different people use it and lots of different schools. It is really good. Everyone knows our school now."

"There are lots of schools that come here now and like clubs. I think it has given us a bit of a reputation. People are like 'oh that's a good school.'

A number of interviewees felt their new facilities had helped develop positive attitudes about the school within the local community. The director of sport at project H discussed how the profile of the school had been raised due to the quality of facilities it now offered and the range of activities provided. He felt the school had become 'well-known' within the community as a good school and much of this belief was tied into the school's high sporting profile.

Staff at several projects felt that the new facilities had contributed to improved behaviour within the school. The perception of improved behaviour was particularly strong amongst staff who had organised informal football sessions during lunch and break-times. Staff at projects A and H discussed how there were fewer behaviour problems during lunch-times due to pupils being engaged in activity and that pupils were generally more settled in class after lunch. Projects E and J had both used their new facilities to organise programmes targeting boys with behavioural problems. A teacher at a primary school using the facilities provided by project E discussed how she had encouraged boys who engaged in anti-social behaviour during school-time to attend extra-curricular sessions and found that they really enjoyed and

became engaged in the activities. She felt the coaches were excellent at engaging the pupils and teaching them to respect one another and also teachers and coaching staff. The pupils enjoyed attending the football sessions so much that she was able to use them as a reward for good behaviour. Pupils were unable to attend when their behaviour was poor. School staff noticed an immediate improvement in the targeted pupils' general behaviour during school time because they did not want to be prevented from attending the football sessions. The teacher suggested that many of the wider skills developed during the football coaching sessions could be transferred to the education setting:

“We target the children who are not performing well at school and who usually have behaviour issues and it becomes an incentive to work harder at school and to behave. It is a really good way of making them control their behaviour because they learn to be controlled on the pitch and that is transferring back to the classroom. It has been a really noticeable difference in their attitudes and their behaviour to school because they want to play football so much.”

The pupils from this school confirmed that participating in football had encouraged them to improve their behaviour at school. They felt it if they behaved badly and were unable to play; not only were they missing out, they were also letting their team mates and the coaches at the facility down.

Year 7 pupils in case study C discussed how participating in activities at the new facility had helped them settle into school and make new friends. The girls involved in the focus group felt that their extra-curricular participation had helped them a great deal to settle into secondary school after moving from primary school. As one girl explained,

“I was the only one who moved from my school, I didn't know anyone but playing football gave me the chance to meet lots of other girls and we are all really good friends now. I like playing but I like being able to spend time with my friends when I play football as well. It would have been really hard for me to make new friends if I hadn't gone to football.”

Several interviewees felt the facilities had achieved unexpected benefits relating to this outcome. The business manager at project H discussed how seminar rooms built as part of the new changing facility had been used by pupils with additional needs during exam times. Previously pupils who required extra time during exams had been 'dotted all over the school' and the staff felt this had been very unsuitable, with pupils often required to undertake exams in potentially noisy environments. The seminar rooms had provided pupils with a quiet room that could be used during every exam, rather than having to move round the school wherever space was available. Pupils

commented that this was a great improvement on previous settings and felt the rooms enabled them to relax and concentrate better.

#### **Effective Practice Example: Engaging poorly behaved pupils through leadership programmes Project J**

The football coach at project J had organised a sporting ambassador programme encouraging boys with behaviour problems who were good at sport to act as role models. The PE staff worked with these pupils to provide training to encourage them to deliver aspects of PE lessons and use their sporting ability to positively influence others. The football coach felt that by engaging these pupils in delivery they had begun to realize the challenge of teaching pupils and also recognize the power they had to encourage pupils, who looked up to them and respected them because of their sports ability. It was felt pupils learnt a number of skills through the mentoring programme that were transferable to other settings in school. The football coach explained:

“We keep saying to them “look if you can be this good at sport, why can’t you do this in other lessons”. We keep telling them, through your sport you have the power to influence people, you have to be a role model for them...so they are now taking PE lessons and peer assessing and we sit down with them and talk through what they have done well, how they can improve things....we see a different side of those boys then, when they have to take control. They start to realize how hard it is to get boys to behave and do the skills and once they realize that, they make the other kids know as well, so generally the behaviour has just been much better with what were previously quite difficult groups. We’ve just got much better behaviour and cooperation and hopefully they will continue this in other lessons”

#### **4.3 Outcome 5: Promotion of social inclusion through access to and use of sports and outdoor adventure facilities**

Developing activities aimed at tackling social inclusion was a high priority for staff at all projects. A number of diverse programmes had been developed to help projects work towards this outcome and it was evident at an early stage they were achieving some success.

A number of projects highlighted the merits of football for helping to engage disaffected boys. Several projects had started evening and ‘midnight’ leagues for young males known to be engaging in anti-social behaviour in the evenings. The football development officer at project B had organized a Friday night league where pupils and young males in the community could form teams and play for free in a competitive league. The league was supported by

a local Football in the community scheme which brought a lot of status to the initiative and encouraged pupils to take part. The football development officer felt the league had had a positive effect on the pupils involved. He felt several of the more poorly behaved boys who were targeted because they were on the verge of exclusion had become re-engaged with the school and now attended more frequently and were less likely to cause problems on the school site in the evening. Pupils at the project also discussed their positive experiences:

“I don’t really enjoy school particularly, but I love football and I’ll come here if I can play football.”

“If you get referred you are not allowed to play, I don’t want to get referred anymore because I hate not being able to play and everyone else going out and playing without me. I haven’t been referred now for ages whereas last year I used to get referred every week.”

“There is nothing else to do around here at the weekend so I like being able to come down and play, there is nothing for us to do on a Friday so I’d just be hanging around if I wasn’t here.”

The director of sport at project H had also encouraged specific pupils identified as disaffected and disengaged to become involved in an evening league. The pupils have been given responsibility for organising the league themselves, which had assisted with giving them a sense of ownership of the project. The interviewees felt the programme had assisted these pupils with developing communication and negotiation skills with pupils and the college staff. Pupils paid a small fee which the business manager felt encouraged them to take the league seriously and ensured they did organise and turn up to the league fixtures. Pupils were found to have enjoyed the responsibility and a number had offered to volunteer at other community sessions taking place immediately after the league finished. The interviewees felt that they had developed a better relationship with pupils and it gave them something that pupils and staff could talk about during the school day. The business manager felt the pupils respected the facility and appreciated the quality of what was being offered to them. It allowed them to see that the facility was for them and not just external users. The director of sport felt there was also a noticeable improvement in the behaviour of these young people during school time.

Project D had successfully used football activity to encourage young people from different ethnic minority backgrounds to interact and engage with one another. The facility is located in an area occupied by numerous different ethnic minority groups. These groups tended to live in very segregated sections in the local community. The extra-curricular sessions, provided by the project’s education programme, have allowed pupils from different ethnic backgrounds and cultures to come together and participate in football.

Interviewees felt the sessions had provided the first steps towards some integration, that was not available through their school or home lives. It was noticed during the site visit that pupils from the different schools recognise and talk to one another during the sessions as well as playing competitive matches against one another. One of the teachers also stressed the importance of this for the pupils' wider education:

“We are one strain of culture at this school, so they don't really have any contact with children from different cultures or backgrounds. It was causing quite a lot of segregation when we went to the training. We noticed this and spoke to the coaches so now they play in mixed groups with other school pupils so they have to speak to other pupils and work together and mix with other cultures. It has helped them understand that there are other cultures... and now they mix in fine. It has been brilliant for their social skills and learning to get along.”

Several project staff commented on the value of the new facilities for regenerating previously run-down areas around schools or in the local community. It was felt new facilities offered communities a very visual (do they mean 'visible'?) sign of investment in the local area. The value of this was particularly noticeable at project E. Some pupils felt having activities running at night had contributed to making the local area feel safer.

'My nan lives across from it and I stayed there the other night and that path I have to walk across used to be dead dark, but it isn't anymore, floodlights light it up better.'

Similarly the facility at project E has provided some regeneration in an area lacking quality community amenities. It was felt that having a regularly used facility in the park had assisted with making the area feel safer.

A number of the projects had developed activities specifically targeting health issues affecting young people and the community more generally. Project D had worked very closely with the local primary health care trust to encourage exercise for health rehabilitation and the prevention of poor health. The community officer at the project had focused heavily on encouraging activity amongst older adults and had undertaken extensive promotional work through GP surgeries. She had organized a range of activities for senior citizens during the day, offering them the opportunity to take part in some activity and join a social network. The community officer felt that it was extremely important for encouraging participation amongst this group that the activities provided a social opportunity. A 'tea and chat' session was always available after an activity and individuals were invited just to attend this if they preferred. However, all of those individuals who attended were also enthusiastic about taking part in the activities. The development manager for physical activity and health located at project E discussed how these sessions had provided an excellent exit route for patients involved in more specific coronary

rehabilitation and falls prevention programmes also organized at the sports park site.

The physical activity and health development manager at project D had also organised a programme encouraging young mothers to use the facility during the day. Project staff worked with health workers and asked them to promote sessions to young mothers in the local community. Project staff also organized a partnership agreement with an onsite child care facility to provide free crèche facilities. Children could be looked after for free in a safe environment whilst mothers were able to access the facility for half-price. The officers felt the programme had been very popular and they had succeeded in encouraging around 20 young mothers to participate in exercise regularly at the new facility.

The youth development staff at project D had also worked with PE staff and a school nurse on a programme aimed at tackling obesity in young children using a holistic innovative approach that included the whole family. The school nurse had been asked to make referrals to the sports park development team of young people who were classified as obese. Staff then targeted these young people and their families to attend Saturday morning physical activity and nutrition sessions. Parents were encouraged to take part in activities with their children, focused on using all aspects of the sports park, including walking trails and cycling, as well as more structured activities in the gym and fitness studio and on the all-weather pitch. At the time of the evaluation visit staff felt it had been too early to determine any long term impact, but they had successfully engaged 12 families in the initiative who were now taking part in the programme.

As part of the extended schools programme the college at project H had also developed a partnership with the primary care trust to provide a health drop in centre located within the new changing facilities. A nurse provided by the local primary care trust was located at the site several evenings a week. Pupils were able to drop in immediately after school with any concerns. The service had been very popular and was a well-utilised service by both pupils and the local community. The business director felt the new facility had contributed significantly to the extended schools agenda and enabled the school to be viewed as a genuine community resource by local people.

**Effective Practice Example: Utilising unforeseen opportunities to promote social inclusion**

Project H had also used their facility to develop health-focused programmes. The college had developed a partnership with the local 'slimmers world' club. Initially the club asked to use a room within the new changing facilities for their weekly meetings. The development officer built up a relationship with the organisers and developed a programme of activities which were promoted to the participants to complement their healthy eating programmes. The business manager discussed how the relationship with 'slimmers world' had been very effective, but was a partnership she had 'never envisaged occurring'. The facility was also used as a blood donation centre. This was particularly successful due to the number of parents who were onsite during the evening and weekends whilst their children were participating in activities.

## 5.1 Conclusions

The ten case study projects have all delivered successfully on both the NOPES outcomes and the Football Foundation's wider agenda. The commitment and enthusiasm of staff to their projects has been evident throughout the duration of the evaluation and has been key to projects achieving outcomes beyond increased participation. Factors that have contributed towards success have included: selecting projects with good management systems in place and staff with previous experience of delivering development work, selecting schools that already provided some community use, early consultation with potential user groups, direction and support from County FAs and larger projects drawing in appropriate partners early to establish effective partnerships. Key issues of interest to BIG and the Football Foundation include:

- New facilities have been well used by both schools and the local community. However it has been evident at all projects that personnel are vital to achieving broader impact. Revenue officers have been a key resource for projects and have ensured 'value added' beyond generating use of the new facilities. Projects that have not accessed revenue funding have struggled to develop beyond existing provision although this has been enhanced by the new facilities.
- Revenue officers have ensured that projects retain a development focus and activities have been organised to meet wider social outcomes. It has been positive to see projects actively ring-fencing time for youth activity and specific programmes rather than opting for the easier approach of block-booking adult teams at peak times on the facility.
- The County FAs have been a useful resource for ensuring appropriate selection of projects and locating facilities in areas of need. As a result of this projects have experienced little difficulty encouraging community use.
- Project staff felt that management had been devolved quickly once funding had been agreed. Whilst this had not caused case study projects any problems staff were concerned that less experienced project staff may require more support and there were also issues with accountability. As one interviewee discussed: 'we could just be filling it up with men's teams every evening and making a big profit for the school. No one has really checked-up on what we are doing or whether we are doing what we said we would'.
- Choosing projects where staff were known to have a development focus and were already involved in similar work has been useful for ensuring projects have 'hit the ground running' and early impact has been achieved.
- The value of linking the Football Foundation funding with other funding streams has been evident, both for enhancing facilities and organising a diverse range of activities. A number of projects were able to use the

Football Foundation funding to complete broader facility development at their site.

- A number of projects have been able to generate significant revenue from their facilities and this has been reinvested back into the programme. Sustainability of revenue funded officers has been achieved because of this. The officers have contributed to this by being a central part of attracting users to the facility and improving customer service for external users.

## **5.2 Recommendations**

- Dedicated staff, either through revenue funding or other sources have been vital to project success. It is recommended that subsequent programmes continue to offer revenue funding to support the development of capital builds.
- The application process was thought to be effective and quick by most project staff. However, it was felt that more support and accountability was required at local level. It is recommended that, with similar projects, consideration is given to ensuring a more formal support and assessment mechanism is implemented at local level.
- It has been evident that projects have been successful in achieving a range of outcomes and have often used innovative approaches to do this. It is recommended that effective practice be highlighted and shared. It would also be useful for any new similar programmes to be able to provide new projects with links to facilities that have delivered their outcomes successfully.