

New Deal for Communities

The National Evaluation

Research Reports

NDC Involvement in Arts, Leisure and Sport

Research Report 23

The Neighbourhood Renewal Unit is currently sponsoring the 2002-2005 national evaluation of New Deal for Communities. This evaluation is being undertaken by a consortium of organisations co-ordinated by the Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research at Sheffield Hallam University. The views expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect those of the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit.

Those wishing to know more about the evaluation should consult the evaluation's web site in the first instance
<http://ndcevaluation.adc.shu.ac.uk/ndcevaluation/home.asp>



Sheffield Hallam University

NDC Involvement in arts, leisure and sport

Research Report 23

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Key Findings

In all eight partnerships reviewed, (three of which received field-work visits), a wide range of sports, arts and leisure activity is being undertaken. There does appear to be strong evidence that arts and sports projects:

- genuinely get people involved, including (and perhaps especially) those who wouldn't get involved in more formal aspects of partnership activity
- are extremely popular

In all categories, programme and project rationales claim contributions to a wide (not to say comprehensive) range of outcomes, across virtually all neighbourhood renewal policy objectives. It is too early to judge whether these claims are justified, but since monitoring largely focuses on the numbers participating, it will remain difficult to assess wider contributions. Although potential claimed benefits are wide-ranging, most of the emphasis in practice (at this stage at least) is on 'social inclusion, community cohesion and participation'.

Those programmes that at this stage appear to be working best are those which:

- are specifically linked to existing mainstream provision
- are clearly community-driven: although in other instances this has become a platitude, in the arts and sports fields it has real meaning

These types of projects and programmes appear to have the greatest chance of post-NDC survival.

Generally partnerships have tried to place their interventions in some kind of strategic framework: in the case of sports, one partnership decided to operate within the structure of a Sports Action Zone strategy since the whole of the NDC area sits within the SAZ. Strategies for both arts and sports (though arts in particular) stress the cross-cutting nature of the activity. There are variations in the processes by which strategies have been developed: generally they have been consultant-led (since partnerships have felt they lack the specific expertise); not all have been implemented, but those that have had significant community involvement, providing continuing 'champions' to ensure continued focus. The use of evidence in strategies is variable, mostly generic and highly selective.

Although the character of partnership intervention varies, in most there is a mix of small-scale (typically small grants programmes) and large-scale, and a handful of large-scale capital programmes.

Some key issues

- mainstreaming is difficult generally: but in arts and sport there is no local agency with statutory responsibility, in the way that for example PCTs have for health: councils only have *power* rather than *duty* to promote well-being, so arts and sports are the first to go if there are cuts
- succession: much depends on the presumption that sustainability can be achieved through building more capable group of volunteers, able to retain focus on sports and arts development once funding is complete
- participation and enjoyment may be enough to justify the investments; but lack of sophistication in understanding how real linkages can be built (eg to community safety or better educational attainment) may mean there are wasted opportunities - but this is a general problem of neighbourhood renewal: developing the logic that runs from problem diagnosis through causal explanation to plausible intervention
- there's still relatively little hard evaluation planned - which is needed among other things to persuade the unconverted of the value of investments in these areas
- what opportunities are there for mainstream arts and sports funding bodies to target neighbourhood renewal partnerships? The three partnerships visited for the study report only reactive responses

1. Introduction

The New Deal for Communities (NDC) national evaluation is being undertaken by a consortium led by the Centre for Regional, Economic and Social Research (CRESR) at Sheffield Hallam University. The evaluation work programme focuses principally on annual reviews of the activities and progress of the 39 local partnerships, studies by specialist teams of partnership activities under the five major policy themes addressed by the neighbourhood renewal strategy, and two household surveys designed to provide a longitudinal picture of change within the NDC neighbourhoods. All this work is underpinned by the compilation of a variety of secondary statistics drawn from official sources, including the Census of Population 2001.

It was always recognised however that there would continually be issues arising within the programme which may not be adequately tackled through the evaluation's main methodologies. Provision has therefore been made for a series of *policy studies* designed to provide the NRU and the evaluation team with the flexibility to address specific issues as they arise. This paper completes a three-phase policy study intended to review activities undertaken within the NDC programme across the variety of fields included in the remit of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). The study has been commissioned by NRU but in close collaboration with officials from DCMS.

The three phases of the assignment were as follows:

- a preliminary review of the broad range of activities undertaken across the 39 partnerships, on the basis of the annual reports of partnership activity undertaken by the national evaluation team
- a more detailed but still desk-based review of delivery plans, strategies (where they had been produced) and project appraisals and other documentation in a sample of eight¹ partnerships, selected from the first phase
- field-work in three partnerships, which included reviews of specific case studies and interviews with NDC staff, stakeholders and project beneficiaries. The three partnerships were:
 - Ocean Estate
 - Bradford Trident
 - Bristol's Community at Heart

The research team is grateful for the time afforded to us by NDC and project staff in the three areas, and we hope that some of our findings and conclusions will help these and other partnerships develop sports and arts interventions that meet partnership objectives.

The report:

- sets out the context in which sports and arts projects have been developed in neighbourhood renewal partnerships
- provides a broad overview of the range of DCMS related activities undertaken in the case study partnerships
- describes how partnerships have addressed arts and other creative activities
- gives an account, similarly structured, of the sports and physical activities undertaken
- identifies some of the key issues raised by the study for partnerships wishing to introduce sports and arts activities

¹ We approached 11 but three did not respond.

2. The context: sport, arts and neighbourhood renewal

All the activities reviewed for this study start from the presupposition that cultural activities contribute to renewal objectives. In many instances, strategies or project appraisal documentation refer back to the report of Policy Action Team 10², which looked at sports and arts in the context of neighbourhood renewal, and concluded that arts, sport and cultural and recreational activity can contribute to neighbourhood renewal and make a real difference to health, crime, employment and education in deprived communities. The team suggested this was because such activities:

- appeal directly to individuals' interests and develop their potential and self-confidence
- relate to community identity and encourage collective effort
- help build positive links with the wider community
- are associated with rapidly growing industries

As we discuss in detail later in this report, partnerships' strategies and appraisals claim a wide range of potential benefits from arts and sports projects. For example Bradford Trident's³ assessment of outcomes to which the arts can contribute includes:

- reduced level of unemployment
- cleaner, safer environment
- raised achievement in schools
- improved mental and emotional wellbeing
- reduced exclusion
- increased participation in community activities
- reduced social exclusion
- similarly, the Bristol arts strategy includes the following objectives
- give people new ways of looking at their community and the wider world
- build pride and social capital within and between communities of interest and place
- increase the self-esteem, self-confidence and quality of life for individuals; promote health and well-being
- provide employment and leisure opportunities
- improve the quality of the environment

Partnerships' justifications for supporting sports activities are similarly broad. As we discuss in more detail later in this report, sports activities are frequently claimed to contribute to at least four of the five key policy objectives on which the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal is based (improved standards of health and educational attainment, and reduced worklessness and crime rates). In some cases partnerships may also claim that some types of sports interventions - for example provision of or improvements to sports pitches - may contribute to the fifth, which includes improvements to the environment as well as housing.

However, partnerships often appear uncertain about precisely *how* these benefits will accrue, or on what scale. This caution reflects the wider absence of genuinely rigorous evidence about the relationship between cultural interventions and renewal outcomes -

² DCMS, Arts and Sport, Policy Action Team 10: A Report to the Social Inclusion Unit. London: Department of Culture, Media and Sport, 1999

³ Bradford Trident NDC: *Arts Strategy* 2002

indeed a point noted by PAT 10.⁴ In part this reflects a lack of interest by many practitioners in developing sound evaluative practices. For example, in her review of social inclusion activity for the Arts Council, Helen Jermyn⁵ quotes Matarasso⁶ who suggested that, except in the very limited context of funding relationships, the arts world has shown little interest in developing evaluative systems through which to prove its value internally or externally, seemingly preferring to state that seeing is believing. This resistance to evaluation stems from many sources including lack of motivation or inclination, lack of time, lack of resources or skills, lack of understanding about the value of evaluation, and fears concerning the appropriateness of available methods.

Perhaps this does not matter, since such evidence as is available - however anecdotal, lacking in rigour or inconclusive - is broadly consistent and should not be ignored. Nevertheless, the absence of detailed and rigorous evidence limits our understanding of the mechanisms by which sports and cultural interventions make their contribution, and our ability to identify replicable good practice, and to understand 'what works', and above all under what circumstances. For example an American study⁷ claimed that the arts '...promote cognitive, linguistic, socio-relational and managerial activities.' But is this always true? Equally of all types of arts projects, and for all groups of people?

As with most types of regeneration and renewal intervention, the impacts of arts and sports interventions vary according to local context, and the causal relationships between intervention and outcome are subtle. Much of the existing work on the links between arts and sport and renewal is generic, which, according to Coulter and quoted by the HDA⁸, '...reduces the ability to identify best practice, understand processes, and the type of provision best suited to achieve particular outcomes.'

Little project evaluation has so far taken place to explore the impacts of the various sports and culture activities underway or proposed in the partnerships reviewed for this study. However, there is limited evidence to suggest that partnerships are alert to these subtleties. We return to this issue in our conclusions since it has implications for how partnerships pursue these kinds of intervention in the future.

⁴ Including DCMS: see *Building on PAT 10: the DCMS report on Social Inclusion*

⁵ Helen Jermyn, *The Arts and Social Exclusion: a review prepared for the Arts Council of England* (Arts Council, 2001)

⁶ Matarasso, F, *Use or Ornament? The Social Impact of Participation in the Arts*. Stroud: Comedia, 1997.

⁷ Heath, Shirley Brice and Soep, Elisabeth *Youth Development and the Arts in Non-school Hours*

⁸ Health Development Agency, *Art for Health: a review of good practice in community-based arts projects and initiatives which impact on health and well-being*. London: HDA, 2000

3. Overview of partnership activities

Introduction

In the second phase of the study we reviewed a variety of documentation related to arts and sports interventions in eight partnerships. These are listed in Appendix 1. Before examining each of these categories in more detail (and focusing principally on the three areas where we undertook fieldwork) we set out here a brief overview of what partnerships are currently doing. What are they trying to achieve? What's the scale of activity? How much is being spent on what, and with which partners?

Objectives

It is far from straightforward to allocate project activity to particular aspects of cultural activities, partly because in some cases (grants programmes or the development of community facilities for example) interventions are designed to support the whole range of activities. In other cases there are arts or sports components of much larger projects - a Healthy Living Centre for example. Moreover in some cases partnerships have approved a large umbrella project, with large (and often unspecified) numbers of smaller projects nested below them. Nevertheless, we can categorise the sample on which this review is based as follows:

- at the time of our review there were some 50-55 discrete arts or sports projects within the sample (with the umbrella projects counted as one each)
- of these 27 are dedicated to some aspect of the arts, and 17 to sports
- there are five small grants schemes, all but one available to support both sports and arts activities
- eight are mainly capital projects

Scale

The NDC costs of all these projects ranges from almost £3m to a few thousand (though still smaller projects are being funded either from small grants schemes or within the large umbrella schemes). In many, though not all cases, projects are largely or exclusively NDC-funded.

Nature of purchase

The main types of expenditure appear to be:

- large capital schemes - few in number, but expensive
- staff costs - for example for sports coordinators, outreach workers
- small sums schemes - dedicated 'community chest' schemes - where the range of types of activity defies classification

Partners

We do not have a comprehensive list of funding partners in project activity but the main ones include:

- local authorities – unsurprisingly the most common partner by far
- National Lottery
- European funds – mainly ERDF

- Sport England
- SRB
- Primary Care Trusts
- Local education authorities
- Regional arts bodies

In addition, a wide range of local organisations (schools, voluntary organisations, community groups, and occasionally the business sector) are involved though not usually as funding partners.

4. Arts and creative activities

Introduction

As we discussed in the last section, partnerships' activities in the sports and arts fields are varied, and seek to address a wide range of wider neighbourhood renewal objectives. In almost every case, partnerships' justification for expenditure on arts or sports activities includes (and in some cases is more or less restricted to) the right of local people to have access to appropriate facilities: art for art's sake, so to speak. This is most explicitly stated in the case of Ocean Estate, whose Arts strategy is based on the premise that "...access to the arts should be seen as a basic right for all members of the Ocean communities."

But generally partnerships justify these types of activity because of the expected impact on for example, crime, health, education, or community confidence. Our review of partnership activity was therefore designed to explore how NDCs had identified priorities, and how they thought arts or sports interventions might contribute *specifically* to any of these wider objectives.

In this section therefore we present the findings of this study under the following headings:

- partnership priorities: the strategic framework
- use of evidence
- types of intervention
- impacts to date

Partnership priorities: the strategic framework

As we stressed earlier, this study is based on a limited sample - eight partnerships, in three of which we undertook fieldwork. Nevertheless, on this evidence partnerships' approaches to their arts interventions appear more likely to be developed within a strategic framework than their sports interventions.

All three fieldwork partnerships have formally developed an arts strategy (Bradford Trident, Community at Heart, Bristol, and Ocean Estate - Tower Hamlets) while a fourth (Derwent Community Partnership, in Derby) signalled its intention to develop an arts strategy in its latest delivery plan. Bristol, in addition, has a separate 'Communications, media and IT' strategy, which includes a number of interventions that relate directly to the arts and creative theme and are therefore included in this review.

Although all the partnerships reviewed have undertaken some sports interventions, only one - Ocean Estate - appears to have attempted a strategic or co-ordinated approach, as we discuss in the next section.

The three strategies differ in detail - reflecting of course local circumstances and priorities - but there is a number of common elements:

- emphasis on the 'cross-cutting' nature of arts activities: for example "...integrate arts practice into all programme areas to ensure that the arts play a part in all aspects of the life of the community."
- all are based on some kind of audit, of both existing arts provision and 'consumer' requirements or preferences
- linked to wider strategies, of the local authority or even regionally
- provide a framework for prioritising NDC actions and expenditure

- set up small grants programmes for local groups (and in at least one case for individuals)
- proposals for capacity building to assist the maintenance of arts programmes in the longer term

As already discussed, the documentation reveals high expectations about the contribution to be made by arts programmes to partnership objectives, without necessarily specifying how or in what quantity. Both Bradford and Bristol insist that arts activities will suffuse all aspects of their activities.

The Ocean Estate arts strategy contains the most extensive account of arts activities' potential contribution to the whole range of partnership activities, listing all the main areas of partnership activity and the role of the arts within them.

Ocean Estate, London Borough of Tower Hamlets

How the arts link to other NDC Delivery Plan Themes

Arts and cultural activity is placed within the Leisure theme as a means of enabling Ocean residents to enjoy living on the estate. Without question the arts offer opportunities for both personal and community pleasure. But the arts can also contribute to the delivery of the other main objectives for the New Deal for Communities:

A place to be proud of ~ Neighbourhood Management

Involvement in arts and cultural activity can help to empower people and organizations by informing them and developing their skills, confidence and capacity.

A place to Learn ~ Education

Direct participation in arts activities can challenge educational underachievement and assist in developing key skills for learning - for example, language fluency and motivation. Arts projects can be linked to every aspect of the national curriculum but can also be a way of engaging disaffected young people in learning, motivating them and developing confidence.

A place that works ~ Employment

Participation in the arts can help to break down barriers to employment by developing confidence and a wider perspective on employment. It can also open up opportunities to jobs in the arts and cultural industries.

A place to live ~ Quality of Life

Using the arts to improve the physical environment can enhance the quality of life of those on the estate. Providing something better to do or places to go can help both them and the community.

A place that is safe ~ Overcoming poor facilities

Providing arts events and activities for young people can help to overcome boredom and reduce the likelihood of vandalism; creative design or landscaping and lighting can reduce the harsher aspects of the environment, generally help to develop a sense of pride and belonging.

A place that cares ~ Health & Social Care

Engagement in the arts can help people to develop a sense of self-esteem by giving them ways to express themselves, to make them aware of what their bodies and minds can do by exercising them. So the arts can be prescribed for health.

The strategy provides for arts activities to be directed specifically towards other programme themes over the life of the partnership, though as yet there is little detail available about how these links will operate.

The two other partnerships we visited also stress the importance of integrating arts activity across the whole range of their programmes. Bristol's Community at Heart's vision statement says that '...the arts will flow through all aspects of community life'⁹. Its Arts Theme group - drawn from a wider arts forum that consists of 75 local people, including local artists - is expected to work systematically across the partnership's other thematic groups, exploring specifically how arts-based activities can contribute to their priorities.

The first Theme Group with which it has worked is concerned with health. The early experience of this collaboration offers some interesting reflections on ways in which the general aspiration of 'integrating arts into all areas of the programme' can be translated into practice. The NDC arts co-ordinator has produced an arts strategy for the Wellspring Healthy Living Centre¹⁰. The strategy offers a number of pointers to good practice:

- it reflects a careful assessment of a variety of sources of evidence to establish 'what works'
- it seeks to build links to a variety of mainstream agencies, ensuring its activities work with the grain, and have the maximum chance of becoming sustainable in the longer term
- it proposes a rigorous evaluation strategy

But critically, it attempts to distinguish the *specific* ways in which different types of arts-based activities can contribute to the treatment or management of a *specific* range of health issues.

The draft strategy offers some examples of the kinds of activity that could be undertaken in a variety of different health contexts - not proposed as a specific work programme, but as illustrations of how arts activities can support other forms of healthcare intervention, or help promote healthier lifestyle.

- | |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. To raise and explore health issues with hard to reach groups<ul style="list-style-type: none">• specific project work will be undertaken to explore certain issues based on needs identified by local people. These projects could be performance, visual arts or media based, and with a variety of groups - such as lone parents, people from Black and Minority Ethnic groups, people who misuse drugs and alcohol, etc. etc2. To improve people's mental health by building self esteem and self confidence<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 'Arts on Prescription' - this is a recognised way of working for some GP practices, which has helped a range of patients, particularly those with mental health needs. How it would work for Wellspring Arts Programme: a GP or other health worker would refer a patient through a formal appointment process to meet someone from Wellspring Arts Programme to discuss what kind of arts/creative activity would be most appropriate for them to do; the patient would then receive help in accessing the activity, and follow-up support• Formal Arts Therapies - there will be a number of formal art/dance/drama/and/or music therapy sessions for referrals from the Inner City Mental Health Team/CAAAD/GPs etc. (Note: Art Therapy works in a medical |
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⁹ Community at Heart Arts Strategy, 2002: see www.ndcbristol.co.uk

¹⁰ Wellspring Arts Programme Strategy (draft) Community at Heart, 2003

- context with individual clients or patients and is undertaken by qualified therapists)
- Drop-in art sessions - there would be certain times during the week when anyone could drop in to the 'Art Room' to do whatever arts/crafts based work they wanted
3. To improve people's physical health through physical activity
 - dance and movement workshops - there will be regular dance and movement workshops. These could be targeted at specific age groups (such as those over 70); or at those with specific needs (for example those with restricted mobility, or for people who want to loose weight); or to serve a specific purpose (for example for parents and toddlers to encourage physical contact)
 4. To communicate health information in a lively, informal, non-threatening and participative way (particularly in relation to specific health outcomes such as reducing teenage pregnancies, stopping smoking and healthy eating). Examples of the kinds of project which might take place are:
 - a group of teenage parents might create a piece of theatre about safe sex for their peers or
 - a group of people who *have* managed to stop smoking might produce a series of anti-smoking slogans/images to be made into beer mats to go into local pubs or
 - a series of celebratory events to promote healthy eating could be promoted in partnership with a fruit and vegetable wholesaler

Use of evidence

As we have seen, partnerships' aspirations for the impact of arts interventions are extensive and ambitious. They are largely supported in a general sense by the wider literature. But how far do NDCs draw on the evidence base *specifically* in designing programmes and interventions, to understand not just 'what works', but 'under what circumstances and for whom?'

Practice varies, but in general partnerships reviewed here did not appear to draw extensively on evidence about for example, the precise ways in which some types of arts interventions can contribute to improved educational attainment or better health indicators. Rather, in addition to a general perception that arts activities *can* help achieve other objectives, their programme rationales turn on:

- audits of local provision and reviews of current patterns of participation - in each case, demonstrating unsurprisingly the inadequacy of local provision and hence the limited degree of local participation
- illustrative examples of interventions that have been tried elsewhere

There are of course some exceptions. We have already alluded to Bristol's arts and health strategy, which not only draws on but aspires to contribute to the national evidence base about what works and why. Similarly, Community at Heart NDC has been able to draw on work undertaken by the Bristol Education Action Zone, exploring the links between different types of arts activities and educational attainment. But these appear to be the exceptions. This is not entirely surprising. Although there have been some recent literature reviews (referred to elsewhere in this paper), in general detailed evidence about what arts-based activities can contribute to neighbourhood renewal (and above all how) is neither plentiful nor easily accessible. This is an issue to which we return in our conclusions.

Types of intervention: the partnership arts programmes

As we saw earlier, there are common characteristics running through the three partnerships' arts activities. All include a small grants programme at the core, typically administered through 'fast track' arrangements distinct from core project approval procedures. All attempt to integrate arts activities across the whole programme area. This also means that arts activities may be supported from other elements of programme funding in addition to the core arts allocations. We summarise briefly below each partnership's arts programmes.

Bradford Trident

The NDC has established a single, umbrella 'Arts Project', under the supervision of the Arts Manager, to implement the Arts Strategy, which has four sets of aims:

- integrate arts practice into all programme areas to ensure that the arts play a part in all aspects of the life of the community
- create high profile and ground breaking opportunities to acknowledge and celebrate the area for residents, workers and visitors
- improve community confidence and cohesion by ensuring local people are involved in the planning, development and implementation of arts projects
- encourage the development and set up of creative industries in the area

Within that framework a variety of separate strands of activity are supported, both large and small, including:

- Carnival Club
- Film Club (in association with National Museum for Film, Photography and Television)
- Web Radio
- Visual Arts Exhibition
- Banner Project (to erect community art on the CCTV poles)
- Summer Celebration Plus
- Cornerstone keyboard tuition course
- UMI garage music project
- X-plosion dance project
- Mushara (an evening of South Asian poetry reading)
- Theatre Company Blah Blah Blah

The total cost of the Arts Project is £250k, of which the NDC's contribution is £100k.

The most high profile activity has been the South Bradford Carnival. This was led by the Black community, as with all authentic carnivals, but it has engaged different communities. It has also worked actively with local schools and youth groups to develop a programme of initiatives to lead up to the carnival itself, for example in costume design and music. The Carnival received relatively little funding from Trident and is seeking to become sustainable in future years. It is overseen by a steering group which is currently investigating the establishment of a charitable trust. The steering group is also seeking to develop an annual rolling programme of activities which will lead up to the carnival. This includes working with the organisation XPllosion which runs events around Asian and Caribbean dance and music.

Bristol Community at Heart

As we mentioned earlier, Bristol's Community at Heart has developed a strategy for 'Communications, media and IT', as well as its core arts strategy, and a number of initiatives being developed under this strategy address arts and creativity themes. In this section we summarise the partnership's main arts and related activities from both strategies.

As with Bradford, arts activity in the Bristol NDC is centred on a relatively large umbrella project, the 'Arts Programme', implemented in two phases. The first phase funded the employment of the arts co-ordinator, who then worked in conjunction with the Arts Forum to develop an arts strategy that would be implemented over the remaining time of the partnership. It also provided a grants scheme through which small projects were developed, piloted and funded.

A second phase of the programme started in 2003, providing a further £120k for a small grants fund to support local artists. It also funds larger projects, for example supporting events and the employment of community arts workers. The output measures associated with the project include the number of grants given out, the number of residents involved in or accessing the arts programme, the number of events held and the number of "strategic" projects underway.

Other larger initiatives, either operating or planned include:

- Youth Theatre for Young People
- Grassroots community newspaper
- Community radio
- Unit 19 (music and media facility): a music and media facility for local people to use and in which local creative businesses might rent space (either workspace or the recording studio)

Ocean Estate

Ocean Arts claims to be a broad based, innovative and sustainable programme of arts based activities for Ocean communities - that is integrated with other NDC policy and linked to local and regional agendas for the arts. It has two main parts:

- an annual small grants fund (not unlike those in Bradford and Bristol) for activities and events based around stakeholders and core agencies
- a more focused long term programme that links to the other Ocean themes - facilitated by the programme manager, but with component parts managed by individual theme managers, with day to day co-ordination perhaps delegated to relevant agencies

The principal focus of Ocean's arts and creative activities is Creative Links - the arts and culture small grants programme aiming to increase participation in arts and cultural activities, raise community self respect and develop spin-off self employment opportunities. Specific projects, either supported from the small grants fund or from other elements of the partnership's programme, include:

- the Ragged School Museum's Collections project: a collection of artefacts and oral testament, to chart the changes within the NDC area
- a video commissioned in Bengali and English, to help raise families' awareness of a variety of drugs issues

- public art around the NDC area, including a highly visible mural on the boundary of a school, which was designed collaboratively and made with tiles created by pupils and parents
- ‘Standing on Common Ground’: a programme of social, cultural and arts activities to break down intergenerational and intercultural barriers, for instance by sharing recipes and then sharing food in community lunches
- the Age Exchange, providing a range of cultural activities for parents and toddlers as well as intergenerational work such as an oral history project to capture Bangladeshi elders’ reminiscences, and which is currently being exhibited at the Ragged School Museum

Impacts

It is still relatively early in the life of these arts programmes. No formal evaluation of any of the arts activities described here has yet been undertaken. There is therefore, currently, no evidence about the wider impacts of these interventions on those other aspects of partnership objectives which formed part of the original case for investment.

The performance indicators that are being measured through routine monitoring are largely restricted to milestones, outputs and at best, intermediate outcomes. For example, Bristol is monitoring its core arts programme against the following outputs:

- number of grants
- number of residents involved or accessing events
- events held
- ‘strategic’ projects developed

There is a similar story in the other two. Bradford’s arts strategy is based upon a wide range of ‘contributions’ to other partnership outcome targets including:

- reduced fear of crime
- reduced exclusion
- increased participation in community activities
- reduced social exclusion

Its main justification however is expressed in terms of increased participation and the development of social capital - one easily measured, the other less so.

Nevertheless, even though the evidence is largely anecdotal, based on project managers’ perceptions and resident feedback, the arts projects undertaken in these three partnerships have been well-received, are popular and appear to have made a difference to at least some residents.

For example, based on monitoring data and other feedback to NDC staff in Bristol we can say that the arts programme has:

- organised arts activities in an area where there were very few before the NDC;
- run activities in which over 700 local residents have participated
- run community-led festivals and events that around 1500 people have attended
- given people the opportunity to run their own projects leading to two residents being confident enough to apply to the Arts Council for funding (applications were unsuccessful)

- given people the opportunity to develop skills in appointing and working with artists for Public Arts
- allowed residents to gain skills in arts development through involvement with the Theme Group and individual projects; and
- increased the employment opportunities for residents as community arts workers or on research work

Anecdotally the arts programme can indicate that:

- those who attended arts activities have enjoyed them
- some individuals whose first contact with the New Deal was through the arts programme have gone on to work more closely with the programme across a range of themes because of the increased self-confidence and skills developed through the arts programme
- there has been a consistently high level of engagement and interest in the programme from local residents and local artists through both the Arts Theme Group and the Arts Forum
- teachers in the local nursery and primary school report that children have better language and design skills as a result of the arts residencies; and
- parents of young people in the youth theatre project report better relationships within their families and that the young people have gained in self-confidence

What are the prospects for more rigorous evidence at a later stage? We return to this in our conclusions, since the development of an evidence base is critical, both to help partnerships make the case for continued funding to other agencies, and to assist other neighbourhood renewal partnerships design and implement arts interventions that make a real difference. But on the evidence of this study there is a number of issues to address:

- the absence of specific outcome targets against which intervention impacts can be measured
- the small scale of much project activity, especially that funded through the small grants programmes
- the limited resources currently budgeted for evaluation - for example less than 1% of Bristol's arts programme (£4,500) has been earmarked for evaluation
- perhaps most importantly, the lack of staff resource (and it has to be said, enthusiasm) to undertake rigorous outcome evaluation

5. Sports and physical activity

Introduction

The criteria by which partnerships were selected for this study were designed to ensure, among other things, that we would have access to projects across the range of DCMS policy interests. All the partnerships were planning or undertaking some sporting activity; and though the costs of interventions rivalled and often exceeded those of arts interventions (principally where partnerships were aiming to create or improve sports facilities), generally we encountered a narrower range of projects, and only one case with an explicit sports strategic framework (Ocean Estate, undertaken jointly with the London Borough of Tower Hamlets - though Bradford Trident had adopted the strategic framework of the Sports Action zone, within whose boundaries the NDC sits).

That said, as with the arts projects, the sports activities undertaken by the NDCs in the sample are above all characterised by diversity, of scale, aims and rationales. But there are a number of important and powerful similarities in partnership approaches across the 'cultural' domain:

- variety of objectives and justifications with high expectations of the potential of sports projects' contribution to renewal objectives
- lack of *detailed* analysis of cause and effect, and of how the particular intervention may deliver the anticipated outcomes
- following on from that, little serious attention to the exploration of options (even though these are more or less obligatory as part of the project appraisal process) *within* the sporting domain - a critical issue, given the admittedly limited evidence we have not just about *what* sport can contribute to neighbourhood renewal, but *how*
- limited attempts to establish measurable outcome targets

Many of these aspects of project development, appraisal and evaluation are to be observed more generally - and were reported in the latest national evaluation annual report.¹¹ They are also features of sports and regeneration activities more generally, and help explain why the evidence base about the precise connections between sports interventions and neighbourhood renewal objectives remains under-developed.

Two recent reports which include literature reviews stress the limited and ambiguous nature of the rigorous evidence about the connections.¹² Both reach broadly similar conclusions: although frequently anecdotal and sometimes ambiguous, there is no doubting the potential of sports activities to contribute to renewal goals. As with arts interventions, the question is not *whether* but *how* and *in what context?* Long and his colleagues review what is known about sporting activities' abilities to contribute to four of the five sets of objectives underpinning the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal (housing and the environment being the exception, though they report favourable impacts here). Across the four, they are able to report studies showing positive links - along with others more sceptical. For example:

- education: studies differ in their assessment of the relationship between physical activity and academic results and at least one has raised doubts about the impact on academic performance of time spent on games

¹¹ Centre for Regional, Economic and Social Research, Sheffield Hallam University, *Annual Report of the National Evaluation of New Deal for Communities. 2003*

¹² Coalter, Allison and Taylor, *The role of sport in regenerating deprived areas* (Scottish Executive Research Unit, Programme research finding No 860); and Long *et al.*, *Count me in: the dimensions of social inclusion through culture and sport* (DCMS, 2002)

- crime: again the evidence is ambiguous, and may be affected by the criteria by which projects select participants - are the potentially most disruptive excluded - precisely because they may affect the 'success' of the scheme?
- health: for some groups - and particularly the least active, promoting a more active lifestyle may be more effective than offering access to conventional sports activities

This is not to suggest that sports do not contribute; but to emphasise that they do not automatically do so, and much depends on how sporting activities are designed and structured. We review the fieldwork partnerships' activities under the same headings as those used for arts:

- partnership priorities: the strategic framework
- use of evidence
- types of intervention
- impacts to date

Partnership priorities: the strategic framework

On the evidence of this sample partnerships may be less inclined to adopt a strategic approach to sports than to arts interventions. Only one of the eight reviewed has formally adopted a sports strategy - Ocean Estate, and that in partnership with the local authority, so that it encompasses the whole borough rather than just the NDC area.

It is not the case however, that the development of a sports strategy has not been considered in the other two partnership areas we visited. The Bradford Trident area is completely covered by a Sports Action Zone, (of which the NDC constitutes around 40%). The partnership therefore felt that there was no need for a separate strategy, and has concentrated instead on extending and adding value to existing SAZ activities.

There is no sports strategy in place in Bristol NDC, though at the time of the research for this study, officers from Bristol City Council were in the process of reviewing sports activities and developing a delivery plan. Earlier attempts to develop a coherent sports programme foundered, first because an initial funding application was rejected, and secondly because of the resignation of a sports development officer employed by Community at Heart. But in addition, the lack of a sustained focus on sports may reflect the absence of a resident group to champion the cause - in marked contrast to arts activities.

A formal sports strategy has been developed by the Ocean NDC, in collaboration with the local council. The process of strategy development, undertaken by consultants, included the following:

- use of evidence
- review of existing data and survey material on sports activities and opportunities in and around the target area
- a review of existing strategic plans, policies and data relating to existing and potential local sports service providers
- assessment of NDC appraisal criteria and processes, and potential sources of funding
- a peer group consultation exercise seeking young people's views, and consulting youth workers and other providers such as the Youth Action Scheme, Sports Network Council and Bangladeshi Football Association

- an examination of ways in which sport could contribute to the other NDC programme themes
- exploration of the scope for linkages with other initiatives such as Active Communities, Active Sports, the Football Foundation, Tower Hamlets Sports Council local sports clubs and the local authority
- a widespread programme of consultations, including the NDC, the local authority, the Primary Care Trust, local voluntary organisations, a range of local sports organisations and Sport England

The strategy recommended a three pronged approach to sport: investing in people, facilities and programmes:

i) People

The lack of qualified coaches, instructors, lifeguards and organisers locally was seen as a barrier to sports development, so these roles needed to be promoted, particularly - but not only - in women's sport. In particular a dedicated sports development team was required on Ocean to encourage wider participation in sport in and around the estate.

ii) Facilities

The strategy also identified the need to improve the sports infrastructure on Ocean - not through major capital investment, but by improving the facilities that are already there: improving playing surfaces and the expansion of gym facilities at a community centre.

iii) Programmes

Investment would also be needed in the existing modest range of activities eg Asian women's swimming programme and related fitness sessions.

In addition to the sports strategy, Ocean NDC developed a play strategy, which provides not only for children's play facilities but supports sporting and other leisure activities for a wider age range.

Use of evidence

The Ocean sports strategy refers to a wide range of sources of evidence about the impact of sport on neighbourhood renewal objectives including:

- an examination of ways in which sport could contribute to the other NDC programme themes
- research on the economic impact of sports investment, by the Leisure Industries Research Centre
- evidence from the British Heart Foundation and Sport England on sport's potential contribution to health
- OFSTED reports on the relationship between sports provision and educational attainment

Evidence produced in the other two was more limited, partly reflecting the absence of a strategic framework. Bristol was able to draw on the same kind of survey-based participation data that informed the arts strategy. This showed for example that in the years 1999-2002, there had been a decline locally both in participation in sports activities,

and in membership of sports clubs. Because of the connections with the SAZ, little evidence has been produced by Bradford Trident, although their project activity is based on established activity in the SAZ.

Types of intervention

Bradford Trident

Bradford Trident's sports portfolio has largely been developed in partnership with the SAZ which covers its area, and on whose board the NDC Chief Executive sits. Sports interventions focus principally on two projects: Sports for Life, and Football Association. However, as is the case with all the NDCs we visited; other programmes contribute directly or indirectly to sport and physical activity. For example both the Healthy Living and the Sure Start projects support improved play areas and community sports facilities.

We set out below a summary of the key sports projects supported by Trident. The Sports for Life and Football Association projects both operate small grants schemes which, in addition to advice and capacity building, support community, voluntary and sports organisations. The Sport Fund, the small grant scheme run by Sports for Life, has supported the following projects:

- West Bowling Cricket Club (purchase of equipment for the team, in particular for safety and first aid)
- Marshfield Youth Association (membership fees to enter a football league)
- Hutson Street Project (taking an ethnically and culturally diverse group horse riding)
- Parkside Juniors (purchase of trophies of for end of season awards ceremony)
- Council for Mosques (exercise equipment for elderly people to use)
- Chach Cricket Club (training equipment for the club)
- Dastaqari Nature Girls (purchase exercise equipment)
- Youth Teams Initiative (purchase exercise and training equipment to run holiday activities for local school children during holidays)
- Maroons Basketball Team (purchase training equipment)

Bristol Community at Heart

At the time of the research, Bristol NDC's core sports programmes were being reviewed by the Sports Development Unit of the City Council - the Sport development Programme and a Sports Grant scheme. Three schemes were in operation, two funded from other parts of the NDC budget:

- coaching in the community (funded under the Employment and Business theme): a project to develop coaching skills amongst residents in the area in a variety of sports
- redevelopment of City Academy sports facilities: a project that was initiated in partnership with the City Academy, to develop a sports hall and athletics track for the school that would also allow resident access. A proposed Sports Lottery bid was rejected, but project has been re-vitalised with funding from the University of the West of England though with the consequence that resident access will be limited for the first five years of the project
- Dings Park redevelopment (funded under the Health and Environment Theme): the re-development of a play area to include a new multi-purpose sports court, new play area and landscaping

Ocean Estate

There are two main strands to sports activities supported by Ocean NDC: involvement in a major capital project to redevelop facilities at Mile End Park, and a broad range of activities organised under the 'Out to Play' programme.

The first project - 21st Century Sports - is principally about redeveloping existing facilities and building new ones at Mile End Park to provide new sport amenities. The NDC is expected to contribute around £1.5m towards expected total project costs of some £16m. The facilities expected to be available are impressive.

Facilities available through 21st Century Sports

Competition and training swimming pools, sports hall, fitness gym, dance studio, health suite, crèche/meeting room and ten small-sided floodlit games areas for five a side football

But in addition to the creation of facilities there are two other crucial dimensions:

- providing subsidies for local residents to ensure they can afford to use the facilities, as part of the process of increasing participation in physical activity
- a local labour component, to ensure that local residents benefit from the many training and employment opportunities, both in the construction of the stadium and its subsequent management

The development is still at an early phase - construction is scheduled to commence later this year. It is not yet clear therefore how either the subsidised use component or the local labour scheme will work in practice.

The second major project, 'Out to Play' originates in the play strategy, but includes a broad range of interventions including:

- a programme of outdoor play improvements to form local safe, outdoor play space, which will give more children access to safe play space and opportunities for physical activity
- improving links to Mile End Park - upgrading the Solebay Street Bridge to improve access between Ocean and the Mile End Park facilities
- a project to create community gardens in the NDC area and provide support and tools for residents
- Ocean Activities - providing a range of activities and training courses to encourage good health and well-being. This aims to encourage participation across all age ranges, improve health and help to develop local organisations. Recent examples have included sponsorship of a football club and the women's swimming group

Impacts to date

As we said of the arts programmes, there is as yet little hard evidence available about the impacts of the various sports interventions, partly because they are of recent origin, partly because of the nature of what they seek to measure. Generally, performance indicators available so far are restricted to milestones and outputs. For example in Bradford the latest Mid Year Review (October 2003) reported that the Sport Fund had been established in March 2003, five sports courses had run and 12 groups had been supported by the Sport Fund. These are important milestones in community participation and are consistent with the rationale for the project. However, it is much more difficult, at this stage, to determine the contribution of the project to theme outcomes.

As a measure of what sports projects aspire to achieve - and of what local evaluation strategies will need to be capable of measuring - we set out below a summary of the outcomes expected, within five years, of the Ocean sports strategy:

Outcomes expected of the sports strategy

- more people taking part in some form of physical activity
- more and more varied local activity programmes
- good levels of use at the new Mile End Stadium
- more people holding sports coaching or administrative qualifications
- greater success for local teams in competitions
- more local sporting organisations especially for young people and women and girls
- the establishment of a local sporting consortium with a track record of attracting outside investment
- more people from Ocean directly employed in sports and recreation as performers, coaches, physiotherapists, managers etc or indirectly in retail, catering or equipment supply
- local people gaining jobs at all levels at Mile End Stadium
- establishment of local physical activity programmes to tackle obesity and inactivity, as well as depressions, drug abuse and other mental health problems
- falling trend in cardiovascular, respiratory disease and mental illness
- increased local and external perceptions of the Ocean as a safe, attractive and healthy place to live
- falling crime rate, especially among young people

6. Key issues for partnerships: conclusions and recommendations

Introduction

The arts and sports interventions reviewed for this study are still at a relatively early stage. Although in many cases they are expected to *contribute* to a broad range of partnership objectives, generally, projects' specific objectives (and measurable outcomes) are principally to do with participation. It is absolutely clear from this study that arts and sports provide effective tools for engaging wider sections of local communities - including those parts conventional consultation approaches fail to reach. It is also clear that sports and arts activities are enjoyed by participants, and thus may be said to improve the quality of their lives. Arguably therefore they require no further justification.

But of course, further justification is frequently offered, and these kinds of intervention have to be assessed according to their capacity to contribute to other neighbourhood renewal objectives. In these conclusions therefore, we consider:

- links to wider objectives
- mainstreaming and forward planning
- evaluation strategies

Links to wider objectives

In all the NDCs we reviewed - and not just the three fieldwork partnerships - some reference was made at some point to the links between arts and sports interventions and wider objectives. However, there was little evidence from the documentation we reviewed that partnerships thought systematically about how interventions should be structured so as to achieve (or contribute to) these wider objectives. In most cases the bulk of project delivery was secured through relatively small, often 'fast-tracked' grants, where the partnership neither had nor sought any real influence over project design.

Our brief review of the existing literature on culture interventions and renewal objectives suggests that, unsurprisingly, the extent to which interventions achieve objectives (always assuming these are sufficiently well-defined to be measurable) , depends on, among other things:

- the quality of intervention design
- in many cases the duration and scale of the intervention
- the extent to which it takes into account the specific needs of its target beneficiaries
- its effectiveness in attracting the beneficiaries for whom it was intended
- the quality of its links to other programmes and institutions

In other words, to quote Jermyn, 'Outcomes are not inevitable or guaranteed and badly planned or executed arts projects can damage personal and community confidence and produce other negative effects.'¹³

The same applies to sports interventions. For example, despite the ambiguity and lack of rigour of much of the evidence, on balance both Long's and Coalter's work suggests that sporting activities *can* distract from crime. However there are also studies reporting negative conclusions which indicate that this is not always and necessarily the case. Long

¹³ Jermyn, *op. cit.*

quotes a study by Begg¹⁴ in which he concludes: '...recreational activities should take into account the specific norms of the delinquent to have any chance of success.' As discussed earlier, much of the rationale presented by partnerships to justify projects is generic: sports interventions can help reduce crime; if we introduce sports intervention crime will decrease. Partnerships need to develop a more sophisticated approach to the analysis of cause and effect, and of the available evidence.

But there are also opportunities to simplify outcome definitions. There are numerous examples of NDC sports interventions that claim to offer contributions to a wide range of specific conditions - reducing the rate of Coronary Heart Disease for example. But these kinds of outcome target are not capable of being monitored, and any change could not be reliably attributed to a particular intervention. The NRU is keen therefore to encourage a simpler approach. The Department of Health is encouraging all adults to take exercise for five 30-minute periods a week. NRU suggests NDCs should concentrate on this *relatively* simple target, on the assumption that if it were to be achieved, longer-term health benefits would accrue.

Mainstreaming and forward planning

The National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal was supposed to differ from previous regeneration and renewal programmes in the emphasis it placed on engaging with the mainstream. This emphasis reflected an analysis which argued that past programmes had 'failed' because they emphasised the use of special (and invariably short-lived) funds, rather than the more effective and co-ordinated use of main programme resources. Ensuring that main service providers are committed to the continuation of NDC-inspired interventions - and indeed have integrated them within the framework of main programmes - is a critical component of exit or forward or succession strategies.

The main evaluation has reported the barriers partnerships face in influencing mainstream providers across the programme. Mostly of course, partnerships' mainstreaming activities focus on the main policy areas on which the neighbourhood renewal strategy rests. In each of these policy areas there is a set of identifiable mainstream agencies, with statutory responsibility and relatively large budgets. Hence, generally NDC financial resources are modest in comparison with mainstream budgets spent through these mainstream agencies.

However in the case of arts and sports the situation is somewhat different. These are non-statutory activities and services, and few arts and sports agencies receive a core budget that guarantees their existence beyond the life of the projects they are engaged in. Most arts and sports organisations are small and dependent on a shifting raft of programme-based time-limited funding opportunities made available through local authorities, business sponsorship, Arts Council and Lottery funding and charitable institutions on top of any revenues they can generate for themselves.

Nevertheless the partnerships reviewed here have all thought about the long-term when designing their arts and sports interventions, and have either sought to influence mainstream providers, or, in the case of Bradford, have made sure that their activities run with the grain of existing local provision (for example by operating alongside the SAZ) There are also signs that working in partnership with the 'mainstream' agencies gave partnerships the opportunity to influence other providers - for example, the Bristol City of culture bid for 2008 includes references to neighbourhood arts - reflecting the city's earlier involvement with the NDC.

¹⁴ Begg *et al.*, Sport and delinquency: an examination of the deterrence hypothesis in a longitudinal study, *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, 1996

But the opportunities to influence (or 'bend') mainstream expenditure in the arts and sports fields are limited. Bristol's local authority arts unit has an annual revenue budget - for the whole city - of £30 - £40k. Given the absence of genuinely mainstream sources of funds, partnerships' succession or forward strategies have focused on:

- developing capable and committed volunteers
- creating independent organisations with the capability to raise funds for themselves
- leaving local people more accustomed to participating in arts and sports

Bristol's arts 'legacy'

The lasting legacy might be thought of as 'soft' arts infrastructure:

- an infrastructure of arts provision (including public arts interventions) in the area that will have improved the physical and built environment and that makes people feel good about living in the area
- a number of local artists (not necessarily residents) who are able to sustain their own artistic work
- a group of local residents who are not only interested in the arts (and community media) but that have the skills, determination and confidence to continue to develop arts initiatives in the area through applying for project funding, working with other arts agencies (in Bristol or beyond) and organising events and activities without the need for external help; and
- a group of community development workers based in the city with an understanding and skills base to use the arts and media within community development projects

Evaluation strategies

We have discussed at a number of points in this report the absence of hard evidence about impacts, clearly associated with the inability (or reluctance) of many projects to undertake rigorous impact evaluation. There are many good reasons for this - not least the complexity and costs of so doing. But without rigorous evaluation arrangements in place, we will not be able to improve our understanding of precisely how cultural interventions can be structured to maximise their contribution to neighbourhood renewal objectives.

It is of course at an early stage; but at present it seems unlikely that these partnerships will be able to generate significant evidence about the impact of sports and arts activities on wider renewal objectives, for a variety of reasons:

- recognition of potential of sport to engage people in the community
- despite the wider claims in strategies (and sometimes in project appraisals), in practice project baselines and performance measures focus largely on participation rates and activity - not wider outcomes
- much of the activity is on too small a scale - for example that funded through the various small grants schemes - to exert any discernible effect on outcomes
- financial resources budgeted for evaluation are very small
- the absence of evaluation models used widely within arts and sports programmes

The literature suggests that arts and sports interventions *can* help with other renewal objectives, but the lack of rigorous evaluations in the past means that currently we know too little about how the impacts can best be achieved, and therefore how we should design our interventions. The NDC programme potentially offers a valuable chance to extend the

evidence base, and deepen our understanding of the links between arts and sport, and neighbourhood renewal.

Conclusions

If the three fieldwork partnerships are typical (and we have no reason to think they are not), a wide range of promising arts and sports activity is in place throughout the programme. However, this study suggests that for all the valuable contributions to be observed there is a danger that partnerships are missing opportunities.

We set out below a summary of Coalter's¹⁵ conclusions in his study of sports and regeneration for the Scottish Executive. They apply equally well to arts interventions, and partnerships should take them into account in reviewing and designing interventions in these areas.

Sport and neighbourhood renewal: some elements of good practice

- There is an urgent need to address issues of outcome evaluation
- There is a need to understand better the rationale for provision and provide clearer statements of the strategies for achieving the desired outcomes
- Projects should be based on more precise understandings of the factors underlying the various social issues to be addressed (crime, health, the needs of the long term unemployed)
- Sports' contributions to issues of social deprivation and social exclusion are most effective when they are an integrated part of wider ranging programmes and not short-term, ad hoc, schemes
- Traditional, facility-based, approaches may not be appropriate to address many of the issues. There is a need to adopt a need-based, outreach approach, using local facilities and recruiting local staff

¹⁵ Coalter, *op.cit.*

Appendix 1: Partnerships reviewed

Partnerships reviewed	
Region	Partnership
North East	Hartlepool
North West	Rochdale
Yorkshire	Bradford*
East Midlands	Derby
East of England	Marsh Farm (Luton)
South West	Bristol*
London	Tower Hamlets* Southwark

* Visited during the fieldwork phase