

Understanding sport for social inclusion programmes

From fuzzy snapshots to clear videos

There is nothing as practical as a good theory

**Prof Fred Coalter
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'Ill-defined interventions with hard to follow outcomes'

Fuzzy snapshots



Sport
Magic box/ social vaccine



'*Sport*' is reified and presumed to have causal powers

- ⇒ Closed system: medical/treatment model
- ⇒ Measure [poorly defined] **outcomes** and [maybe] '**impacts**'
- ⇒ Over -generalisation: "***Sport*** can....."

Measuring outcomes/impacts without understanding ***process***:

- **Cannot *explain*** success or failure ⇒ develop/improve
- Programmes may not be **designed** properly
- May not be **delivered** as intended
- Not *IF* programmes work, but ***HOW*** they work

' ...there is nothing about ...sport itself that is magical....It is the ***experience*** of sport that ***may*** facilitate the result'.

Papacharisi et al (2005)

Necessary and sufficient conditions

How does sport for change work?

‘sports are **sites** for socialisation experiences, not **causes** of socialisation outcomes’. *Coakley (1998)*

‘the success of any sports-based social intervention program is largely determined by the strength of its **non-sport components**’. *Hartmann (2003)*

social relationships experienced during involvement in physical activity programmes are the **most significant factor** in effecting behavioural change’. *Sandford et al (2006),*

‘the evident benefits appear to be an **indirect outcome of the context and social interaction** that is possible in sport rather than a direct outcome of participating in sport’.
Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group (2007, p. 4)

‘the **educational experience** within the sporting experience is the most critical space’. *Hartmann and Kwauk (2011)*

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Sport, like most activities, is not a priori good or bad, but has the potential of producing both positive and negative outcomes.

Questions like 'what conditions are necessary for sport to have beneficial outcomes?' must be asked more often. *Patriksson*



- Necessary conditions → sufficient conditions
- Families of programmes → families of *mechanisms*
- Not 'sport' → process/experience are all
- Not 'sport' → sport plus

Outcomes and Impacts are contingent.....

Programme theory

(i) Programme design and development

(ii) Basis for M&E

(i) Programme theory: **providers' presumed sequence of causes/effects ; hypothesis (Weiss)**

- ⇒ Nature of issues to be addressed: **social inclusion?**
- ⇒ **Components** of programme [relevant to these issues]
- ⇒ **Mechanisms**: how do the components work to achieve change?



Relevant outcomes (for whom?) ⇒ ⇒ ⇒ ⇒ ⇒ **impacts**

- What [cumulative] **assumptions** have you made about your programme?
- What are the **critical success factors**?

(ii) Programme theory **based on/tested against research evidence (Pawson)**

(iii) A combination of (i) and (ii)

Generative approach to causation

Pawson:

Participants; Active agents not passive participants

Programmes are conjectures/hypotheses/theories:

‘If we provide these ***resources*** to these subjects then they may ***choose*** to adopt them thus changing behaviour in a favoured policy direction’.

Resources: social/cognitive/emotional/material ⇔ ***reasoning***

Impacts are ***produced*** by the ***relationships*** and ***interactions*** between the programme content and processes and the participants’ ***responses*** and ***choices***

‘The operative ***mechanism*** of change isn’t the programme activities per se but the ***response*** that the activities generate’: reasoning/ interpretation/ action – ***Cognitive mechanisms***

Understanding the ‘architecture of choice’ → outcomes

- Programmes work by enabling participants to make different choices
- Mechanisms are embodied in the subject’s reasoning

Causation is: Interactive /Contingent/Not guaranteed

Mechanisms are the engines of *explanation* and basis for *generalisation*

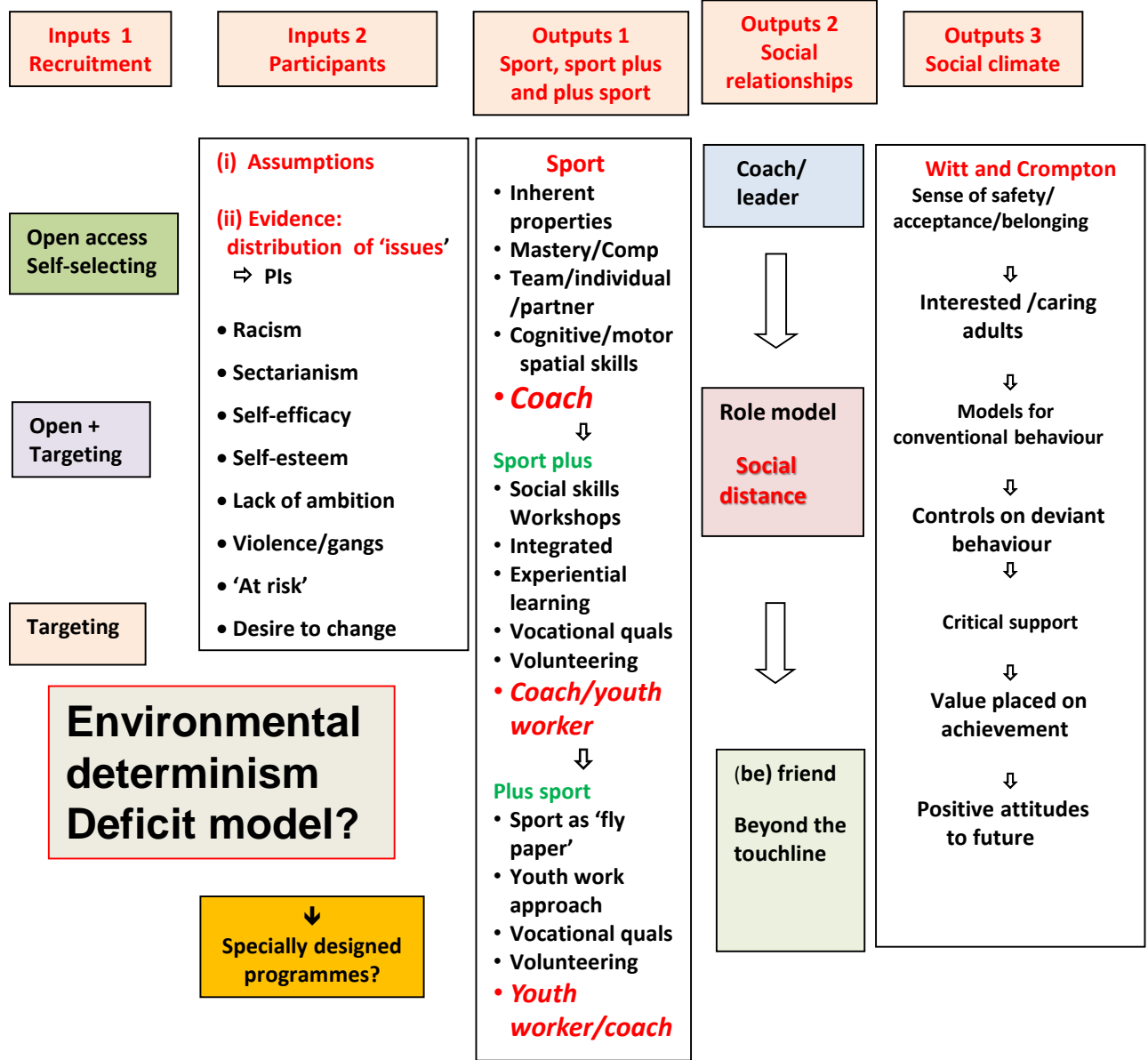
Sport, Personal Development and Anti-social Behaviour

- Belfast: Midnight Soccer/**sectarianism**
- Glasgow: Twilight Basketball /**gangs**
- Glasgow: **Drugs and gangs**
- Halifax: Football and **race/aspiration**
- Sunderland: Football and **race**
- Liverpool: Positive Futures and **gangs**
- Brick Lane: BLYDA. Bengali **gangs/drugs**

Plus sport ↔ Sport ↔ Sport plus

37 in-depth interviews 14-21

Programmes: making the connections



Mentoring :

Befriending
(Affective)

⇒ **Direction-setting**
(Cognitive)

'There is loads of relationships there'

'there's just so many people there that have got the time for you if you have got any problems, anything at all, all you've gotta do is pick up the phone or just call the office and there'll always be someone there who's got the time to look after you.'

If you don't have a personal, like friendship with the coaches, then you're not gonna go along to sessions. If you don't know them on a personal level there's not really any point in you going on because you're not gonna enjoy the session... But if you know them and you like them, then you're gonna want to go back just for the fact they were friendly, Know what I mean?

social relationships experienced during involvement in physical activity programmes are the most significant factor in effecting behavioural change'. Sandford et al (2006),

'The key mechanism?'

Respect ⇒ trust ⇒ reciprocity

'They give you a lot of respect and they always always say to you, if I give you respect, you need to give me respect back ... They demand respect from you 'cos they're gonna give you respect.'

'I talk to them about things that I would not talk to my mother about'

We like not to disappoint them like....we don't want to let them down'

What if?

'Just like ... if I do something stupid, like to Brian or something, it's like, what if that goes wrong and what are the consequences that could happen. Like just stuff like that.'

The operative mechanism of change isn't the programme activities per se but the *response* that the activities generate' Pawson

Programmes work by enabling participants to make different choices

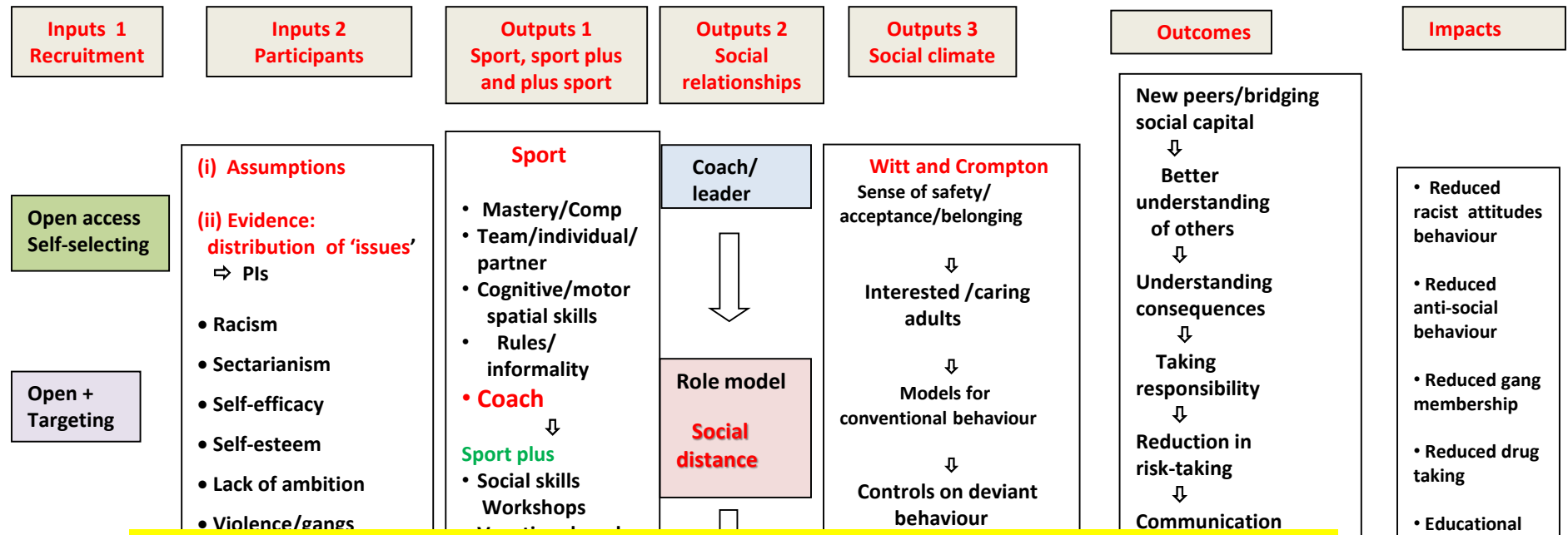
Participants who arrive with in-built resilience and a desire to change

Volunteering and 'a sense of being needed'

I think that standing in front of them... kids, trying to coach them basketball, I mean, it gives you confidence, gives you self-confidence

It's good... ... at first, it was frightening. It was standing up in front of 30 kids and giving a speech ... it was frightening, know what I mean? You need to stand, stand up and do balls in front of 50 kids, know what I mean. You're soon gonna grow up.

A Programme Theory: Improving the menu



Interventions carry not one, but several theories/mechanisms

↓
Specially designed programmes?

Mentoring :
 Befriending (Affective)
 ⇒ Direction-setting (Cognitive)
 ⇒ Coaching (Aptitudinal)
 ⇒ Sponsoring (Positional)

⇒ **Respect**
 ⇒ **trust**
 ⇒ **reciprocity**

Theory-based evaluation: M&E as programme development

Improving the menu

- Critical distinction: necessary and **sufficient conditions**.
- Identifies/resolves **different programme theories** of stakeholders
- **Capacity-building**/greater sense of ownership/understanding/integration
- Theoretically coherent/realistic **outcomes** - related to processes.
- Pinpoint the **strengths and weaknesses** of the presumed causal chain
- **Formative evaluation**: Is programme being **delivered as theoretically intended**?
Failure of theory or implementation?
- **Training/ Manage for outcomes**: deliver the programme as intended
- Generate **generalisable knowledge** about key theories of change:
cumulative understanding/transferable lessons
- **Clear stories of means and ends** to communicate with policy makers

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