

Strand A: International Benchmarking Discussions

These summaries provide a run-down of the key themes, questions and conclusions that arose from discussions at the BAN 'Beyond 2012' conference, 29-30 June 2010.

Strand A: Session 1 (Tuesday, 29 June, 11.45 – 1.15)

Aim 2c-d)	identifying social and personal development that the Bradford athletics network project can achieve, measuring baselines and impacts of the network's activities
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Speakers:

- Pam Essler, Non-Exec. Director, Bradford-Airedale NHS Primary Care Trust
- Trent Stellingwerff, Nestlé Research Center, Lausanne (Switz.) – paper delivered *in absentia*
- Jane Marshall, 'Healthy College' Project Manager, Bradford College
- Vicky Joel, Development Officer, West Yorkshire Sport

Main Questions:

- What barriers exist that prevent healthy lifestyles?
- How can we overcome those barriers?
- To measure or not to measure?
- How can we create continuity and provide development after initial engagement in exercise/healthy choices?

Summary of Key Speakers' Presentations:

Pam Essler:

There are many health inequalities existing among the Bradford and Airedale PCT's population: diabetes, mental health problems, heart disease are examples of some.

The collection of quantifiable data is important in order to gauge the health issues among various age-groups and demographic groups, for example. Equally important is the measurement of 'success' – being able to show that engaging in healthy lifestyle choices has a quantifiably positive effect on the health of the individual and also the collective demographic.

Evidence-based infrastructure can be lost – the PCT have a research aim to prevent this. Medical professionals are programmed to respond only to evidence-based research and so sporting bodies need to provide this.

Jane Marshall:

Small but significant changes to school lunch options are being undertaken at Bradford College (and elsewhere) – healthier food for less, and reversing the ‘cheap & nasty’ options (so healthy food is cheaper).

Teenagers are up against a culture of high-sugar, high-fat diets (energy drinks, for example) and often have little to no understanding of health and nutrition.

The aim is to embed nutritional advice and education across the curriculum.

Trent Stellingwerff:

APT = Assessment, Planning, Tuition

Assess athletes (a ‘like’ group with similar performance goals) for psychological stress, physiological data (hydration levels, iron, for example) and consider issues that may apply to them (vegetarians, women, teenagers, for example).

Establish a support network around the athletes (family, friends, paramedics, coaches)

Adapt a nutritional and training plan according to the data obtained from the assessment and monitor it.

Vicky Joel:

The aims of West Yorkshire Sports (a County Sports Partnership) are to increase participation in sport and active recreation by providing opportunities, through a network of partners, to make good-quality lifestyle choices.

WYS is involved in Sport England’s ‘one million by 2013’ goal, which is one million people taking part in more sport by 2012-13. The sports participation indicator measures the number of adults (aged 16 and over) participating in at least 30 minutes of sport at moderate intensity at least three times a week. The WYS measures this target with the Active People Survey, the latest results being available now.

Discussion:

Measurement:

We need to be careful we’re not measuring for measurement’s sake; measurements should provide impetus for action.

Schools:

There is a need to remove the barriers to developing health and wellbeing of children.

Increasing activity in curriculum and inviting coaches from all sports to engage students.

The 'magic bullet' quick-fix approach is problem in Canada as in UK. Exercise in schools decreased over time and now challenge is to increase again.

Example:

Greengate Primary: palpable increase in activity inspired by visiting coaches – better than having physical education taught by teachers themselves.

Agreed that barriers exist across compared countries: Canada, NZ, UK, Belgium – safety issues in allowing kids to walk to school.

Example:

Overcome by 'walking bus' and 'biking bus' (Belgium, NZ, UK).

Example:

'Lunch on the run' done by Dave Scott-Thomas's athletics club in Ontario: it is a requirement of senior athletes to put time aside to go into schools and promote active lifestyles (voluntary). They have seen a huge increase in activity following these 'inspirational' sessions. For example, there were 600 kids participating in athletics day.

Example:

Cycling: In the UK there has been a marked growth in the number of students cycling to school. However, safety barriers still exist (such as lack of bike paths) and that need to be overcome:

- creating better bike-ways and educating kids and adults on bike safety are the first steps.
- there also needs to be encouragement of continued participation in the sport; involvement in clubs, then competitions, then a lifestyle of activity and health can evolve around the sport.

Example:

Kids can be inspired by professionals: A six-year-old girl was inspired by a visit to her classroom by rugby league stars; she is now a regional representative in the sport (aged 16 years).

A similar story comes from a school in India – cricket starts inspiring playground activity among kids.

Conclusions:

- youths can be inspired within schools; they need nutritional education as well as inspiration from sports stars (coaches and athletes)
- measuring the population for medical statistics is useful in providing data to prove a need for action, and also in providing proof of positive impact of those actions

- participation in sport among the wider community needs to be first encouraged and then there is a need to sustain participation; there needs to be a cohesive attempt to engage people in long-term lifestyle choices that include exercise and nutrition
- sports organisations, health agencies, schools and community groups need to work together.

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Strand A: Session 2 (Tuesday, 29 July: 15.00 to 16.30)

Aim 2c-d)	identifying social and personal development that the Bradford athletics network project can achieve, measuring baselines and impacts of the network's activities
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Speakers:

- Brian Scobie, England Athletics Area Coach Mentor for Yorkshire & Humberside
- Linda Bussey, Bradford ParkRun
- Tim Cock, Holmfirth Harriers, and Chair, West Yorkshire Athletics Management Group
- Eddy Sneyders, Belgian Start-2-Run Programme & ALV Training, Antwerp Prov. (B)

Key Themes:

Participation & Performance

Main Questions:

- How to measure performance (amateur to elite athletes)?
- How to develop pathways from non-participation, to participation, to performance?
- How to raise levels of aspiration in clubs?
- How to remove barrier of unwillingness to change and initiate a 'culture' shift?
- How to change perceptions of 'elitism' that many have of clubs?
- Do runners need clubs and do clubs want runners?

Linda Bussey, Bradford ParkRun:

This is a running event held in various national locations every week. A 5km run is marked out in a public park for anyone to join in on at no cost and use how they like (e.g., to simply run or to time-trial for training). ParkRun's goal is to have the event held in every town.

There is no profit involved – it uses simple equipment and volunteers.

Those involved in the event (participating or watching or managing) express support for the first to the last runners – community spirit of running for running's sake develops.

This is a good opportunity to feed clubs with runners from ParkRun.

There is a broad range of athletic ability attending Bradford ParkRun; from families who do it each weekend together to club runners using the course for training.

Eddy Sneyders, Start2Run (Belgium):

Start2Run is a National movement in Belgium to encourage people to start running. Anyone can access (download from the internet) a 10-week training scheme designed to help non-runners achieve 5km.

There are supporting materials for those participating: a particularly popular tool is an MP3 file – popular Flemish presenters offer guidance for training sessions – they tell you when to start running, when to speed up and slow down, and offer encouragement throughout the run.

There is a follow-up programme for those who would then want to try 10km.

Start2Run participants affiliated with ALV running club (Vosselaar) all completed the 5km and many have gone on to become full club members.

Brian Scobie:

There is clear correlation between intelligent effort and measureable results in running.

Possible to coach an elite group on the same programme: methodical progress – coaching to move beyond mental barriers.

There are indicators that can be measured and used to inform a training scheme and these will be supplied for incorporation in a BAN programme in Autumn 2011.

Discussion:

Clubs:

Clubs only cater for a small percentage of the running populations, and a minute percentage of the population in general. A lack of coaching and a lack of aspiration exists within many clubs which can result in a failure to adequately cater for a full range of athletic ability that many clubs represent.

Clubs need to have a more inspirational role: they could inspire membership by making their presence known at events like ParkRun. They could offer training advice to novice runners:

Example:

Cycle England use 'ride leaders' to help new and amateur cyclists in the SkyRide, rather than

hi-performance coaches. This creates a safe atmosphere, but also a 'fun' one, where the idea of hi-performance and competition doesn't discourage new participants.

Example:

Back to Netball is a programme by England Netball that aims to increase participation in the sport among 16yrs +. Clubs are vehicles for coach-led training sessions that anyone can attend. So far, the programme has seen a marked increase in participations and clubs have the benefit of recruiting new members.

Pathway from participation to performance:

When a casual or 'social' runner then wants to have and meet performance goals, there needs to be a way for them to receive proper coaching.

Clubs need to find ways to provide elite coaches for their own members who would benefit from that standard of coaching.

Example:

Airedale Athletics ran an experimental 13-17week coached courses. Members paid £30-£40 for quality coaching. All participants reported that the course had a positive impact on their performance and they would like to have more opportunity to do that again.

It is important to create pathways into athletics which includes breaking down the perception that clubs are 'elitist'.

Conclusions:

There is a need for social entrepreneurs, social enterprise models and funding to change attitudes.

Some specific ideas include:

- move into public spaces – accessible, removes 'elitist' connotations of using 'professional' facilities and engages clubs with wider community runners.
- pushing social benefits of joining an exercise community (ParkRun to club membership)
- engaging the existing running community with the wider community by linking up with other community organisations and agencies to reach as many as possible.

