

Impact case study (REF3)

Institution: London Metropolitan University		
Unit of Assessment: 17 Business and Management Studies		
Title of case study: Improving the Outcomes of and Justifying the National Rollout or Closure of London-based Sport-for-Development Interventions Tackling Unemployment, Physical Inactivity and Deprivation.		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2012-18		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Dr. Stephen Hills	Senior Lecturer	12 October 2009 – Present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: August 2013 - December 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		

1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)

Dr. Stephen Hills' research has improved the outcomes of and justified the national rollout (or closure) of London-based sport-for-development (S4D) interventions tackling unemployment, physical inactivity and deprivation; football-based employment programme [text removed for publication], American football-based physical activity intervention [text removed for publication] and Magic Bus' Explorer intervention in primary schools in areas of deprivation. Including:

- a 123% increase in [text removed for publication] participants gaining employment or going into formal education.
- [text removed for publication] being rolled out nationally to over 300 schools with more than 20,000 participants and [text removed for publication] being expanded to a Premier League-wide programme delivered by 25 clubs, reaching at least 500 individuals per year.
- established that Magic Bus's intervention was not effective in achieving its desired outcomes leading to GBP60,000 being redirected to settings where the programme could be more effective.

2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)

Following social programme evaluation guidelines from Walker and Hills [R4], Dr Hills led three mixed-methodology evaluations of [text removed for publication] football-based employment training called '[text removed for publication]', the [text removed for publication] American Football-based physical activity intervention, '[text removed for publication],' and the award-winning Indian S4D charity Magic Bus's 'Explorer' intervention. Recommendations on how to maximise beneficiary impacts targeted small or statistically insignificant effects and were developed by cross-referencing qualitative findings with theoretical best practices.

1: '[text removed for publication]' Evaluation: Dr. Hills was the lead investigator and co-writer of the study [R1], collaborating with Dr. Matthew Walker of Texas A&M University and Dr. Bob Heere of the University of Texas. This study went through peer review and was published in 2017 in the Journal of Business Ethics. Initial findings from this study were presented at the 2013 Sport Marketing Association Conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

In 2012-2013, [text removed for publication] partnered to deliver a football-based employment training called [text removed for publication] to help 86 London-based NEET (not in employment, education or training) individuals (63% of whom were Black and Minority Ethnic). [text removed for publication] was found by Hills et al. to have statistically significant but small effects for eight variables (e.g., self-mastery, employment ambition and employability skills) and a statistically

Impact case study (REF3)

significant and moderate effect for perceived marketability [R1]. Only 40% (34 out of 86) participants went on to gain employment or go into formal education within a year of completing [text removed for publication]. Thematic analysis of the qualitative data found that small effects and lack of hard outcomes were due to (1) conflicting understanding whereby [text removed for publication] envisioned [text removed for publication] as using football to achieve employment in any sector, but [text removed for publication] were focused on employment in football, (2) a lack of focus on the skills needed for employment, (3) a need for greater focus on attitude change, and (4) absence of a pathway to translate positive attitudes into enduring outcomes [R1].

2: '[text removed for publication]' Evaluation: Dr. Hills was the lead investigator, lead writer and first author of the study [R2], collaborating with Dr. Walker and Dr. Barry, both of Texas A&M University. The peer reviewed study was published in *Sport Management Review* and presented at the 2017 North American Association of Sport Management Conference in Denver, Colorado.

In 2014-15, the [text removed for publication] piloted an American Football-based physical activity intervention called '[text removed for publication]' for 223 8 to 11 year old children (57% BAME) primary schools in deprived areas of London, at a time when only 24% of boys and 22% of girls in London met recommended levels of physical activity (British Heart Foundation, 2015) and when one in three children in the UK were overweight or obese (King's College London, 2015). '[text removed for publication]' was evaluated through a shared value lens by studying beneficiary impacts and business impacts. In terms of social impacts, there were significant but small effects on vigorous and moderate intensity physical activity and physical activity commitment and a significant and large effect on physical activity enjoyment, but no statistically significant effect on character development. In terms of corporate impacts, there were significant and large effects on team identification, sport identification, league identification and sport participation, but no significant effect on advocacy or patronage [R2].

3: Magic Bus 'Explorer' Evaluation: Dr. Hills was the lead researcher, lead writer and first author of the study [R3], collaborating with Dr. Walker and Dr. Dixon, both of Texas A&M University. This study was published in 2019 in the peer-reviewed *Journal of Sport Management* and presented at the 2019 North American Association of Sport Management Conference in New Orleans, Louisiana.

In 2015-16, Magic Bus, an award-winning Indian S4D charity (Laureus, 2014), piloted their 'Explorer' intervention in primary schools in deprived areas of London for 134 6-10 year olds (69% BAME). Hills et al.'s evaluation of the Explorer programme found it had no statistically significant effect on social competence, conflict management, diversity awareness and attitudes, bullying, sense of community in school, emotional awareness or goal-setting. Lack of effect can be partly attributed to high baseline measures, indicating that assumed deficiencies were not as present in the UK context as Magic Bus had assumed. Furthermore, thematic analysis of the qualitative data found that absence of beneficiary impact was due to (1) a lack of focus on a clearly defined and measurable social needs, attempting to validate the Magic Bus model in London rather than identify and tackle an evidenced social problem, (2) misalignments whereby some outcomes were not supported with programme mechanisms and some programme mechanisms did not correspond to an outcome and (3) a lack of programme clarity in terms of its fit with meeting schools' physical education (PE) and personal, social, health and emotional education (PSHE) curriculums [R3].

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

R1. Walker, M., Hills, S., & Heere, B. (2017). Evaluating a socially responsible employment program: Beneficiary impacts and stakeholder perceptions. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 143(1), 53-70. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-015-2801-3>

R2. Hills, S., Walker, M., & Barry, A. E. (2019). Sport as a vehicle for health promotion: A shared value example of corporate social responsibility. *Sport Management Review*, 22(1), 126-141. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.smr.2018.10.001>

R3. Hills, S., Walker, M., & Dixon, M. (2019). The Importance of Theorizing Social Change in Sport for Development: A Case Study of Magic Bus in London. *Journal of Sport Management*, 1(aop), 1-

Impact case study (REF3)

11. <https://doi.org/10.1123/jsm.2019-0013>

R4. Walker, M., & Hills, S. (2017). Social program evaluations: Strategies and shared value. *Sport and Entertainment Review*, 3, 65-71. <https://serjournal.files.wordpress.com/2020/01/ser-3.3.pdf>

R5. Hills, S., Gomez-Velasquez, A., & Walker, M. (2018). Sport as an analogy to teach life skills and redefine moral values: A case study of the 'Seedbeds of Peace' sport-for-development programme in Medellin, Colombia. *Journal of Sport for Development*, 6(10), 25-37.

<https://jsfd.org/2018/03/01/sport-as-an-analogy-to-teach-life-skills-and-redefine-moral-values-a-case-study-of-the-seedbeds-of-peace-sport-for-development-programme-in-medellin-colombia/>

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Hills et al's research informed improved delivery and outcomes for both [text removed for publication], justifying and evidencing their national roll out and ongoing delivery, and also established the limitations of the Magic Bus programme, leading to funds being redirected more effectively.

1: [text removed for publication] **Evaluation:** In its first year (2012-13), the [text removed for publication] programme delivered by the [text removed for publication] Foundation and funded by [text removed for publication] for £350,000 [C2] provided a 10-week employability programme for 86 London-based 16-25 year old NEETs. To counter the programme's limitations [R1], Hills recommended to [text removed for publication] that: (1) The use of football be extended beyond being used as a 'hook' for recruitment and incorporated into employment training, such as through sport analogy-based training [R5] and that the expertise of [text removed for publication] be leveraged more, so as to provide employment through sport, rather than employment in sport, as the intervention had initially achieved. (2) That the learning outcomes be more realistic for a 10-week intervention, such that greater effect be achieved over fewer outcomes. (3) To develop an exit strategy to translate the 'soft' outcomes of attitude change into 'hard' outcomes of skills and employment.

As the Assistant Vice President of [text removed for publication] described, the impact of Hills' evaluation was significant in changing both the aims and delivery of subsequent and larger renditions of [text removed for publication]: "Dr. Hills' evaluation of our pilot programme was critical in shaping the programme as it was rolled out. Based upon the evidence and recommendations provided, we repositioned our programme to be more focused on using sport to achieve employment generally, rather than achieving employment in sport, we redeveloped our curriculum and focused on the critical needs of our participants, and we created a new position where we had a dedicated person working with our participants on their exit pathways, developing networks with potential local employers and helping participants with applications for employment and education" [C1].

In the first year of the programme 40% (34 out of 86) of total participants had gained employment or returned to formal education a year after their participation. As described by [text removed for publication], in the subsequent two years (2013-2015), the renewed [text removed for publication] reached a further 214 participants. Of these, 89% (191 out of 214) gained employment or returned to formal education, an improvement of 123% [C3].

The implementation of Hills' recommendations also yielded impacts beyond the [text removed for publication] programme and its targeted beneficiaries.

First, the subsequent success of [text removed for publication], as informed by Hills' research, convinced [text removed for publication] to increase their investment in employability through football, supporting an additional 24 professional football clubs and at least 500 NEET individuals a year [C5], who participated in an expanded and rebranded [text removed for publication]. Premier League Works was launched in 2015 with 20 clubs; 17 Premier League clubs and 3 Championship clubs and initially reached 500 participants [C5]. By the 2019/20 season, 25 clubs in the top two tiers of English football were participating in the scheme [C4]. As described by [text removed for publication]

Impact case study (REF3)

publication] Assistant VP, “[text removed for publication] served as a pilot for [text removed for publication] Premier League Works, whereby we expanded the programme to initially 20 clubs and ultimately to 25 clubs via our commercial sponsorship of the Premier League. The success of [text removed for publication], as informed by Dr. Hills’ research, was a critical factor in our decision to expand our investment” [C1].

Second, Dr. Hills’ research not only contributed to justifying the funding of Premier League Works, but also informed its design and delivery, enhancing the benefits to the 24 additional clubs and at least 500 participants per year [C4]. As described by [text removed for publication] Assistant VP, “The lessons learned from Dr. Hills’ research of [text removed for publication] fed directly into the design and delivery of [text removed for publication] Premier League Works, whereby the [text removed for publication] model we developed in collaboration with Dr. Hills became the model for [text removed for publication] Premier League Works” [C1]

Third, Hills’ research benefited [text removed for publication] because, although they were no longer a Premier League club at the time of the launch of Premier League Works, the evidence of their experience and success in delivering [text removed for publication], as provided by the research, was critical for their inclusion in Premier League Works, receiving by 2020 an additional five years of funding to deliver their employability programme. As [text removed for publication] Assistant VP has said, “[text removed for publication] were able to show previous experience and success in delivering [text removed for publication] in their successful application for funding through Premier League Works” [C1].

Fourth, the Premier League Works model, informed by Hills’ research, has continued to benefit young people. While [text removed for publication] has not sponsored Premier League Works or the Premier League since the 2018/19 season, the league has continued to deliver Premier League Works in partnership with the Professional Footballers’ Association (PFA) and the Prince’s Trust [C4].

Fifth, the subsequent success of [text removed for publication] Premier League Works benefited [text removed for publication], as advised by [text removed for publication] Assistant VP, who stated: “The success of [text removed for publication] Premier League Works helped us reach our targets around supporting young people. And because at the time of creating [text removed for publication] Premier League Works, the [text removed for publication] overall CSR strategy had been more clearly defined to be employment and/or financial skills, this then became a key strand of [text removed for publication] CSR work going forward. And allowed us to connect with the commercial sponsorship of the Premier League” [C1].

2: [text removed for publication] Evaluation: In 2014-15, [text removed for publication] was delivered as a pilot to 223 8-11 year old children in 10 schools in the London boroughs of Brent and Lambeth. As a result of Hills’ finding of strong corporate impacts (i.e. fan development), [text removed for publication] was expanded from a London-based pilot to a nationwide programme, as of 2019, spreading the social benefits of the [text removed for publication] programme and developing fandom in more than 300 schools and more than 20,000 school children across the UK, as reported by [text removed for publication] International [C7]. According to the [text removed for publication]’s Head of Community “The evidence provided by Dr. Hills and his colleagues was communicated to the highest levels of our organisation and was fundamental in the decision to roll out the programme across the UK” [C6].

As well as providing evidence to justify the expansion of [text removed for publication], Hills et al.’s research informed improved delivery, leading to greater social and corporate outcomes. To further enhance the significant and large effects on fandom-related variables, Hills et al. recommended that the programme should be reconceived around team (rather than league) fandom, with greater integration of [text removed for publication] team brands into schools. To overcome the small increases in physical activity and the absence of effect on character development Hills et al. recommended (1) that programme contact time should be increased to achieve greater beneficiary impacts and (2) that the curriculum should incorporate intentional design characteristics for

Impact case study (REF3)

character development supported by sport analogies and role models [R5]. As reported by the [text removed for publication]’s Head of Community, implementation of Hills’ recommendation had informed the development and expansion of the programme and enhanced content delivery: “The insights and recommendations put forth by Dr. Hills and colleagues have informed subsequent delivery of [text removed for publication]. Notably, on the basis of Dr. Hills’ recommendations, we partnered every school with a [text removed for publication] team, incorporated homework into the programme so to extend contact with participants and we redeveloped the character curriculum. Our subsequent monitoring and evaluation of [text removed for publication] has found that these changes have been effective and increased levels of physical activity in our participants and enhanced their connection to [text removed for publication] teams, although character development remains a challenge we continue to work on. [text removed for publication] remains a key element of our international strategy” [C6].

3: Magic Bus ‘Explorer’ Evaluation: In 2015-16, the Magic Bus Explorer programme was evaluated in its first year of delivery as a pilot to 134 participants. This programme used a Laureus Sport for Good award-winning methodology developed in Mumbai, India, to target 6 to 10 year old school children in the borough of Lambeth, London. Once the research identified that the Explorer programme had no significant effect on any of the desired outcomes, Hills recommended that Magic Bus completely rethink their strategy by (1) identifying and targeting a clearly defined and evidenced social problem in London, (2) to map desired outcomes and programme mechanisms and (3) consider the UK legal context to reposition as a physically active PSHE class, rather than a PE class, due to the greater flexibility in the PSHE national curriculum versus the rigid PE national curriculum that the programme does not sufficiently address [R3].

The lack of significant effects and Hills’ recommendations to completely rethink their strategy informed Magic Bus’s decision “to discontinue the entire programme at the end of the 2017 academic year. The decision was made in part to align with the older age range being targeted in India and other geographies” [C9, p. 5] and redirect annual programme cost funds of £62,767 [C9, p. 20] to India and other geographies. According to the Interim CEO of Magic Bus “Dr. Hills’ evaluation of the Explorer programme established its limited outcomes and the significant steps which would be necessary in order to make the programme work. This greatly helped us to understand the challenges of applying our India developed model to London. Considering the limited impact of our London-based programme, as evidenced by Dr. Hills’ evaluation, it became apparent to us that the funds would be better spent in contexts where needs are greater and our model has previously been effective” [C8]. As such, Hills et al.’s research benefited Magic Bus in terms of informing more effective distribution of their funds and the communities where these funds were subsequently utilised.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

- C1. Testimonial provided by former Assistant Vice President of [text removed for publication]
- C2. [text removed for publication] (2012). Retrieved from [text removed for publication]
- C3. [text removed for publication] (2015). Retrieved from [text removed for publication]
- C4. The Premier League (2020). Premier League Works. Retrieved from https://www.premierleague.com/communities/programmes/community-programmes/pl-works?utm_source=premier-league-website&utm_campaign=website&utm_medium=link
- C5. Sport Industry Group (2014). [text removed for publication] Premier League Works Launches. Retrieved from <https://www.sportindustry.biz/news>
- C6. Testimonial provided by Head of Community at [text removed for publication] International
- C7. [text removed for publication] International (2019). [text removed for publication] champions crowned at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium. Retrieved from [text removed for publication]

Impact case study (REF3)

C8. Testimonial provided by former Interim CEO of Magic Bus UK

C9. Magic Bus (2019). Magic Bus UK Signed Accounts 2018. Retrieved from <https://magicbusuk.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Magic-Bus-UK-Signed-Accounts-2018.pdf>