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The central graphic consists of two large, overlapping abstract shapes. The larger one on the left is teal, and the smaller one on the right is grey. The teal shape has a circular cutout at the top, which contains the title text. The grey shape has a circular cutout at the bottom, which contains the date.

**Impacts of the
Commonwealth
Games 2014 on
young people in
the East End
of Glasgow**

October 2016

GoWell is a planned ten-year research and learning programme that aims to investigate the impact of investment in housing, regeneration and neighbourhood renewal on the health and wellbeing of individuals, families and communities. It commenced in February 2006 and has several research components. This paper is part of a series of Briefing Papers which the GoWell team has developed in order to summarise key findings and policy and practice recommendations from the research. Further information on the GoWell Programme and the full series of Briefing Papers is available from the GoWell website at: www.gowellonline.com

Key findings

- A longitudinal qualitative study was undertaken with young people living in the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games (CWG) core hosting zone to examine legacy impacts with regard to changes in their social and spatial horizons up to one year after the Games. Expanded horizons is associated with altered aspirations and improved life chances for young people.
- Drawing on official legacy documentation and known legacy projects, a hypothetical Logic Model identified four mechanisms considered most likely to impact on young people's horizons: Place Transformation; Education & Learning; Engagement & Participation; and Inspiration.
- Of these, place transformation was the most salient, with recent physical changes viewed positively by young people and directly attributed to the CWG. A desire for a reversal of the negative image of the East End reflected the self-perception of its young residents, who felt in need of improved self-worth and renewed hope.
- Nearly all young people supported the hosting of Glasgow 2014 in the East End, but only a few, the so-called 'obvious people' (for example, those with prior achievements in sport or the arts) actively participated in CWG-related projects before the event. Those who might have gained most from CWG-related projects were the least likely to have engaged with them. All agreed that there had been inadequate prior engagement with young people.
- During Games time, the 'feel good' atmosphere brought unprecedented opportunities for social interaction with other people, including overseas visitors. The usual spatial constraints and social distinctions that existed for many young people were temporarily suspended at this time.
- The study highlighted the inherent tension between the short-lived thrill of the 'spectacle' and the anticipated longevity of its impacts. The consensus among young people was that normal business had resumed swiftly post-event.
- Only a small minority of young people attributed recent changes in personal goals or in lifestyle behaviours directly to the CWG, and there was little indication of long-term changes in spatial horizons.
- A sizeable minority of young people reported the assimilation or reaffirmation of values of achievement (ambition, endurance, striving towards excellence) from either the athletes' accounts of their progress and success, or from the performance and achievements of the city of Glasgow during the Games.



RECOMMENDATIONS

- Hosting sporting mega events might not be the most effective means of delivering social change. Aspirant host cities should conduct an objective impact assessment prior to bidding and consider more socially equitable alternatives to sporting mega events. Future host cities should engage purposefully with a more socially representative group of young people over a longer time frame.
- In the post-event period, policymakers and city leaders in Glasgow should maintain their focus on the East End and redouble their efforts to engage with young people throughout the city. Indeed, the social renewal of the East End depends on its young people believing in a positive trajectory for the area so that they might be encouraged to 'opt in', rather than 'opt out' or simply stay there by default.



INTRODUCTION / STUDY CONTEXT

Glasgow hosted the 20th Commonwealth Games (CWG) from 23 July to 3 August 2014. This multi-sport event, involving over 6,500 athletes and officials from across 71 nations and territories, was the largest that Scotland had ever staged and the very first time that Glasgow had hosted the CWG. The event itself was universally praised as the 'Best Games Ever'¹.

However, the hosting of the CWG was framed by policymakers and city leaders as more than just 11 days of sporting spectacle and cultural entertainment. Indeed, the primary strategic justification for the substantial investment involved was the delivery of a bundle of positive and enduring benefits, commonly referred to as 'legacy'. Although legacy has become the central focus of contemporary hosting bids, the literature has drawn attention to the lack of clarity and precision in the meaning of legacy and a lack of evidence in support of the prevailing rhetoric²⁻⁴.

The national and urban legacy plans for Glasgow 2014^{5,6} included the following legacy aims amongst others: attracting inward investment and increased tourism; enhancing the physical infrastructure, including the regeneration of the city's East End; and bringing opportunities for social improvement and renewal. The plans reflected important lessons from previous hosting experiences in terms of embedding legacy within existing policies; using the hook of the event to leverage additional projects and initiatives; and planning for the longer-term gain^{3,7,8}.

 RESEARCH AIM***A legacy for young people in the East End?***

Our aim was to investigate legacy impacts for young people living in the East End of Glasgow. The study was part of the 'bottom up' evidence-gathering evaluation around Glasgow 2014⁹ and was funded by the Scottish Government and the ESRC.

It is usual to think of young people as 'adults in the making' and to regard this stage of their lives as a time of opportunity and change, when important decisions and choices are made which shape future life chances and outcomes. An assumption was made within the research that young people in the East End would be well placed to benefit from Glasgow 2014 because they live within the core hosting zone.

The outcome of interest was 'horizons'. Horizons is a useful metaphor to convey the range or limit of a young person's knowledge, experience, interests or expectations. *Social horizons* are understood as young people's social relationships, for example, with family, friends, school teachers, sports coaches, and club leaders; while *spatial horizons* are located in place and are about young people's spatial identity, their spatial freedoms and their spatial behaviour. Expanded horizons are viewed as positive because of their association with upward social mobility. For disadvantaged young people, this can mean having high(er) aspirations for future; being open to new possibilities and opportunities; having access to wider social networks which grant access to advice, information, and exemplars; and enjoying greater geographical mobility¹⁰.

In accord with the overall aim, we asked four research questions:

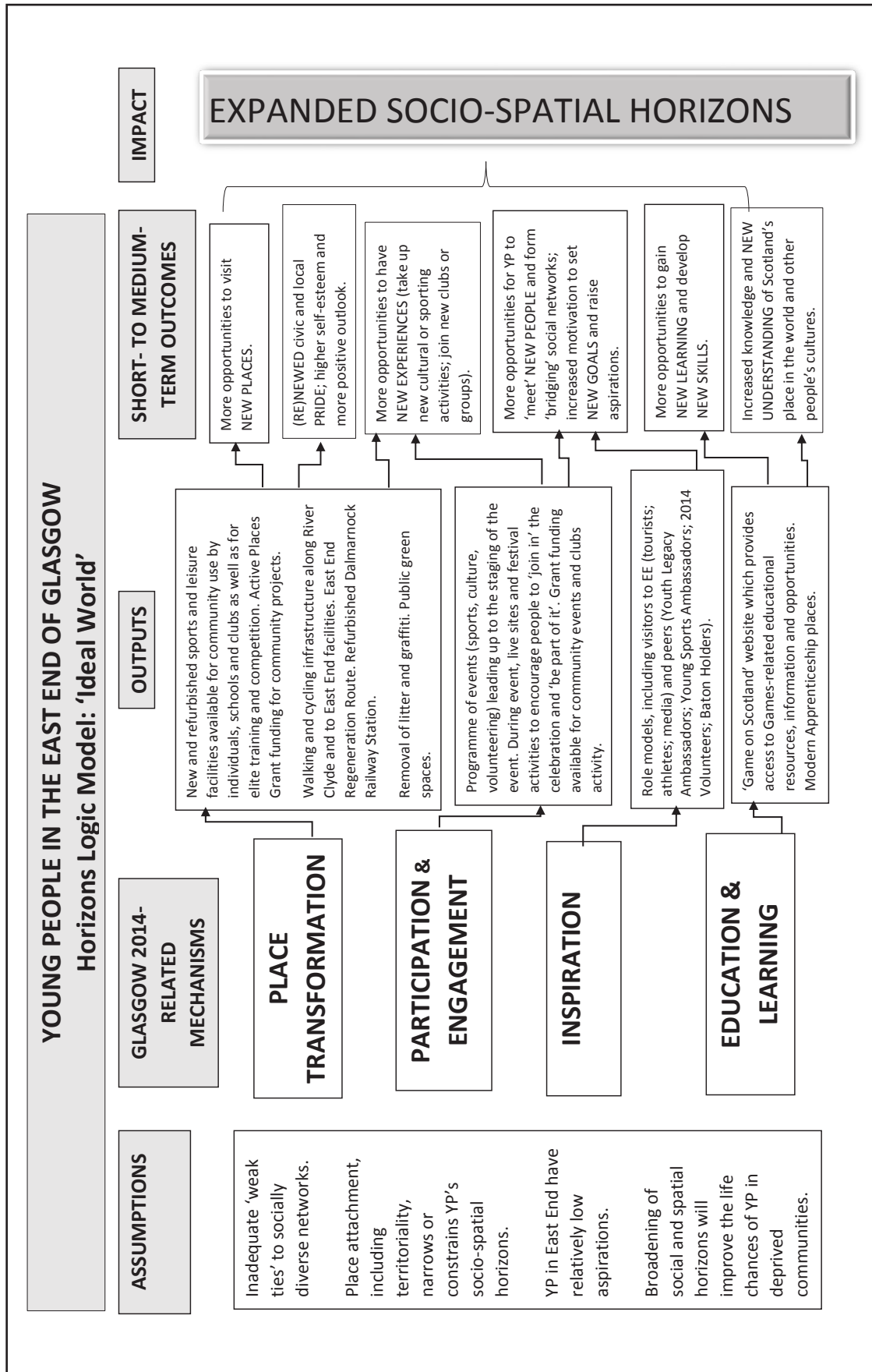
- What meanings and significance do young people, individually and collectively, attach to the hosting of the CWG in their local area?
- What are the main underlying mechanisms, or critical pathways, which might provide opportunities for young people to expand their social networks and encourage them to undertake activities or seek opportunities beyond their usual spatial boundaries?
- To what extent have young people engaged with the various cultural and sporting initiatives leading up to the CWG, and including the event itself? What are the main contextual influences which might account for their different levels of engagement?
- What are the perceived legacy impacts on young people's horizons, and how are these articulated with regard to their identity, their sense of belonging, and their future aspirations and expectations, including their perception of the pathways towards achieving these?

An 'ideal world' Logic Model hypothesised that the activation of four mechanisms would broaden young people's social networks and extend their spatial boundaries. The mechanisms were identified from official legacy documents and informed by social theory as: Place Transformation; Participation & Engagement; Education & Learning; and Inspiration (see Figure 1). A 'worst case' scenario' model (not shown) was also developed so that any unintended consequences or negative outcomes would be taken into account.

Given its exploratory nature, a qualitative approach was the research strategy of choice. We recruited into our study 26 young people, aged 14-16 years, from two East End schools. These young people were in the senior phase of their school education (S4 followed by S5), a stage when important decisions or commitments are made which shape future outcomes. The sample was recruited to achieve a broad representation, in terms of gender, sports participation, club membership, and anticipated leaver destinations.

The young people in our sample took part in individual interviews and focus groups, before (November 2013 to February 2014) and after (October to December 2014) the Games. Attrition at the follow-up stage was five participants, or 19.2% of the total. Interviews were also conducted during March 2014 with key informants, including Depute Heads, Pastoral Care Teachers and staff members responsible for leading legacy programmes in their respective schools, and these were useful in providing further contextual insight.

Figure 1. Young people's horizons logic model: 'ideal world'



Meaning and significance of Glasgow 2014

Most young people believed that the hosting of the CWG was a proud and defining moment in their city's history. London 2012 and Glasgow 2014 were closely linked in young people's minds (*"the CWG and the Olympics sort of merge together for me!"*), and this had the effect of adding meaning and significance. The media representation of Glasgow 2014 as a 'big thing' was justified by young people on three counts: its uniqueness (*"it's historic. I don't know the last time we done it, or if they've ever done it here"*); its scale (*"mini Olympics"*); and its global reach (*"all the world is going to see Glasgow"*). Post-Games, positive attitudes were strengthened by awareness of the universal praise heaped upon Glasgow for its staging of a 'stand out' event.

Overall, the feelings of young people towards the hosting of Glasgow might be summed up as qualified approval. There was a marked shift before and after the Games, as what was an abstract and general discussion about the forthcoming CWG changed into more concrete and detailed personal accounts of the lived event. Young people's positive responses were explained in terms of the staging of a major event right on their doorstep and by the media representation of the sporting event as a significant moment for the city. Negative responses arose from their perception of misplaced priorities by city leaders (*"like, I know the CWG cost big money, but if they could find the money to do it then, why did they not just do it earlier?"*); awareness of the rhetoric and hyperbole in public-facing materials (*"I think it's kinda over-rated, I think people are making a bigger deal of it than it needs to be"*); executional aspects of the event itself (*"I didn't think there was that much that actually related to the CWG. I thought it was more like money-making than anything"*); and, finally, a widely-held view that there had not been enough engagement with young people. Those who felt most positively towards the hosting of the event were regular sports participants, those not born in the East End, and existing sports club members.

There was agreement among young people that the most important legacy benefit was improved reputation and image for Glasgow and the East End. These two spatial entities were indistinguishable in young people's minds, with many young people feeling that the East End was the scapegoat for all of the social problems associated with Glasgow. A collective easing of the 'burden' of negative reputation was a recurrent theme insofar as young people hoped that the East End might be more fairly represented to the outside world after the Games. This finding suggests that the significance of the CWG is more to do with its extrinsic value, in terms of a community feeling better about itself, rather than the intrinsic value of staging a sporting event. Nevertheless, one young person made an interesting point: that, although the East End's social positioning might have been enhanced in *absolute* terms as a direct result of the CWG hosting, its relative social positioning in a city-wide context would remain the same.

Young people did not identify any 'losers' from hosting the Games, although several groups were mentioned, for whom it was perceived that the Games might hold less interest. These included people disinterested in sport, older people, host residents not living in close proximity to the CWG venues, and the most disadvantaged in their neighbourhood who struggled to meet the basic necessities of life. By contrast, primary beneficiaries of hosting were perceived to be those with vested business interests e.g. retailers, restaurateurs, hoteliers, as well as the Scottish Government and Glasgow City Council. Only a few young people anticipated a 'trickle down' effect relating to employment or improved housing for local people.

Area-based impacts eclipsed personal benefits, with discussion around the latter being relatively muted. That said, instances of personal dividends for certain groups were identified, including: access to world class facilities for competitive sports participants; higher property values for home owners; and temporary internship, employment or volunteering opportunities for a small minority of young people and their families. More generally, and irrespective of their engagement with the CWG, many talked about the value of having a personal narrative or memory (*"it's just good to say that you were there"*).

Glasgow 2014 mechanisms

Place Transformation turned out to be the most salient mechanism in young people's accounts. There are several reasons which might explain its dominance: firstly, it is the most tangible and visible mechanism, making it a relatively straightforward topic for discussion; and secondly, the regeneration catalysed by the hosting of the Games was regarded by study participants as having been long overdue.

Generally, the physical changes in the area were viewed positively by young people and were a source of increased local pride. These were directly attributable to Glasgow 2014 (*"the place looks so nice(..) like the CWG has done this for us. If it wasn't for that, then maybe the place wouldn't look so nice"*). Yet the study data indicated that the new world class sporting facilities, which accounted for a large part of event-related infrastructure, were used in the main by existing sports participants, and the improved transport infrastructure had not yet resulted in changes in young people's spatial behaviour. Rather, the value of this mechanism was that landmark attractions such as the velodrome would attract outsiders into the East End for the first time and enable them to see a *"different side to what's been publicised"*. Young people were highly sensitive to the stigmatisation and stereotyping of the East End. The main culprit in their view was the media which tended to focus exclusively on the negative aspects (benefits dependency; substance misuse; gang activity; and serious crime).

Our study highlighted the vital contribution of schools (**Education & Learning**) in relation to Glasgow 2014. Schools provided links with local sporting facilities (providing taster opportunities, hosting sports days, taking pupils to spectate at elite

sports competitions), which brought young people into the venues for the first time. Schools also introduced engagement opportunities under the banner of *Game on Scotland*, the national educational programme for Glasgow 2014. While these efforts were to be applauded, pupils were often critical of them. Some noted the absence of follow-up to visits to venues (*"nobody really tells you what to do afterwards. It's like, you just go with the school, then they say, that's the trip over, we hope you enjoyed it"*). Others felt that the pupils involved in the school programme were 'the obvious ones'. There was general agreement that the younger year groups would have had a greater exposure to the school-based programme. The need to focus on preparation for national examinations was cited by both young people and school staff in this study as the main reason for their limited involvement.

The most important mechanism in relation to the outcome of interest was **Engagement & Participation**. The proximity of the CWG staging and its incursion into the daily lives of young people meant that all research participants were obliged to take a behavioural stance towards the event (described below). By all accounts, the CWG event itself was an extraordinary time, with routines suspended, spatial constraints erased, and social distinctions removed, resulting in a 'feel good' atmosphere which none had anticipated or expected. The consensus among young people was that normal business had resumed post-event (*"it's just went back to normal. I feel that it was normal, and then it went really happy and busy, and then it just went back to normal, like as soon as it was done"*).

Inspiration was the most challenging mechanism to detect and attribute to Glasgow 2014. Pre-Games, an emotional connection to the forthcoming Games was lacking, and this meant that the mechanism had not yet been 'triggered'. The exception to this was sports participants who were looking forward to watching their sporting heroes at close range. After the Games, this situation changed because all participants could draw on their own lived experiences of Glasgow 2014.

Responses to questions about the extent to which they had been inspired by the CWG revealed that competing athletes, visitors to the East End, and Glasgow City were important sources of inspiration. These were found to operate according to different triggers. Athletes and Glasgow City portrayed hard work, determination, and resilience, with the latter receiving particular mention for having overcome its perceived 'underdog' status; while visitors drawn into the East End during the Games encouraged young people to think about Scotland's place in the wider world and the intrinsic worth of their immediate urban surroundings.

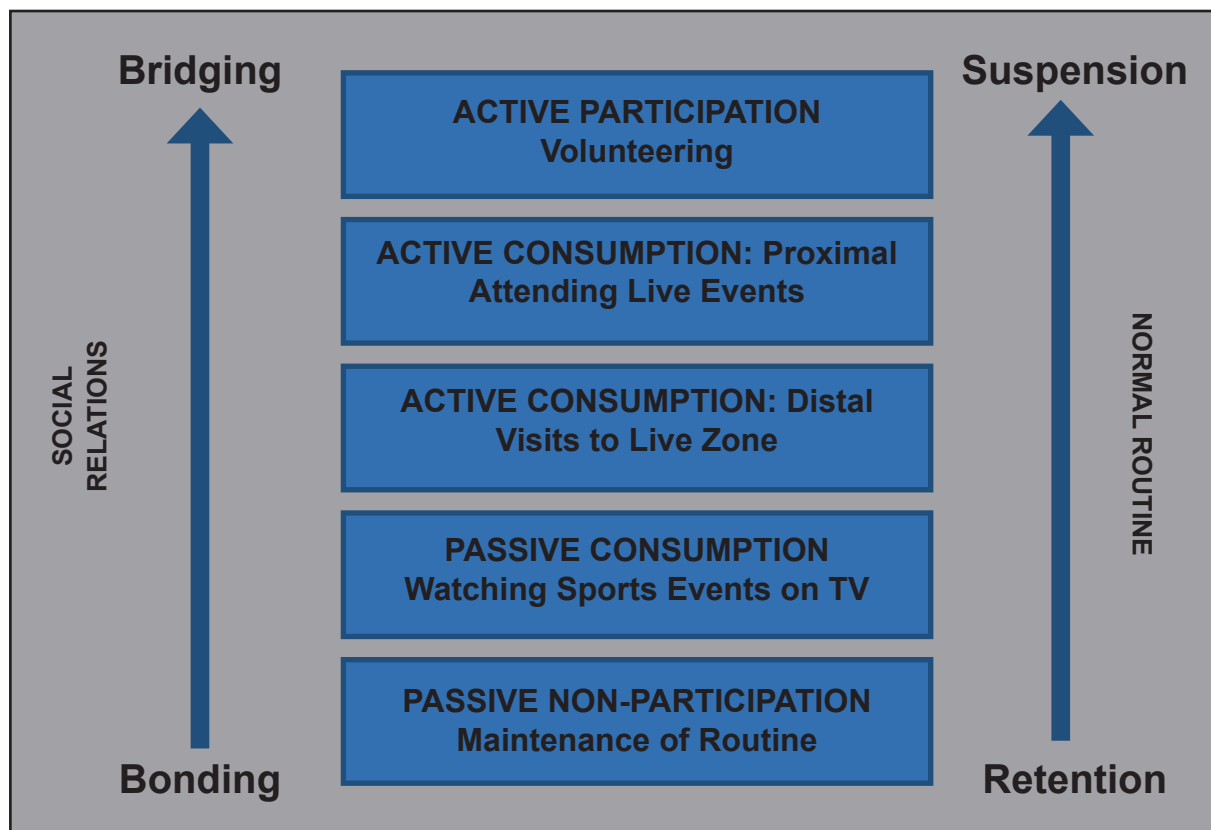
Young people's engagement with Glasgow 2014

Before the Games, we found a gradient of planned engagement in line with sport participation, with competitive participants most likely to want tickets for a live sporting performance. As noted earlier, schools were the main medium for Glasgow 2014 under the banner of *Game on Scotland*. The two schools engaged in different ways with the CWG, with one taking a strategic and cross-curricular approach; and

the other being more tactical with a PE curricular focus. School-based programmes succeeded in raising awareness of Glasgow 2014 among young people generally. However, 'hands on' involvement in the school programme was limited to a few young people, who had already distinguished themselves within their respective schools in relation to sport or the expressive arts. By their own accounts, participation in the school programme had increased their self-confidence, broadened their horizons and provided an opportunity for the development of new skills, including leadership, communication, project management, and working collaboratively with both peers and teachers.

During the event, five different levels of participation (Figure 2) were identified, based on three dimensions: 'active' versus 'passive' behaviour; strengthening existing social connections ('bonding') versus accessing new social connections ('bridging'); and the maintenance or suspension of normal routines. The level of participation determined the likely impact on social and spatial horizons. The most fully engaged tended to be those who had both the motivation and the means to do so. They were able to 'read' the opportunities available to them through the hosting of Glasgow 2014 and had existing social, cultural and economic capital at their disposal to take advantage of the opportunities available to them.

Figure 2. Glasgow 2014 ladder of participation



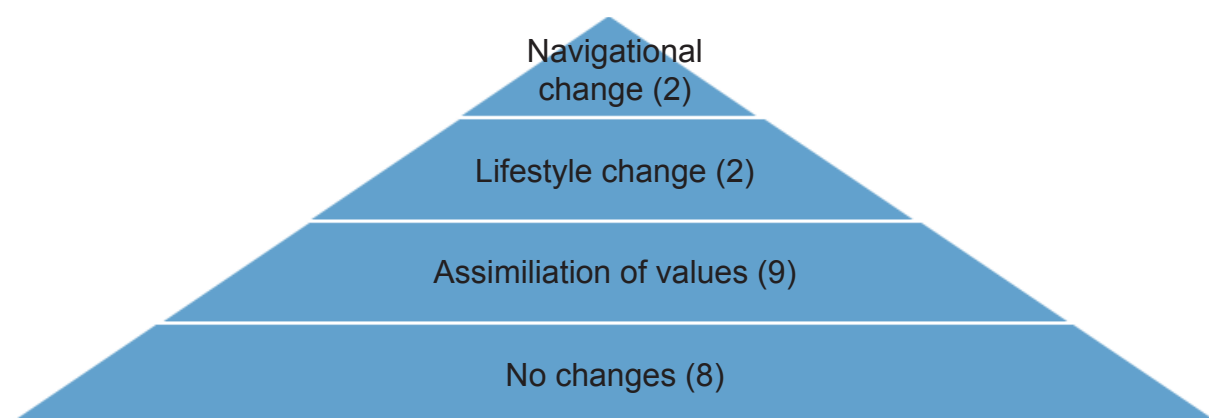
Legacy impacts on young people's horizons

We asked young people about their future social and spatial aspirations, regarded as key indicators of changed horizons. Their responses revealed four main categories of change attributable to the CWG (see Figure 3), entailing any one of the following:

- an unambiguous change in future direction ('inspirational change')
- less dramatically, a change in lifestyle behaviour
- on a more subliminal level, the assimilation of values exemplified by competing athletes and Glasgow city including, hard work and determination; resilience to overcome challenges; and the ambition to achieve their personal best
- no apparent inspirational impact.

Although the sample does not claim to be statistically representative, the numbers in each category (shown in brackets in Figure 3) tell us something about the distribution of impact. The handful of young people in the top two categories might be regarded as exceptional or atypical. At the highest impact levels, a very small number had directly attributed the alteration of personal goals or health-related behaviour to the CWG. The data indicated that the key factors which determined for whom this mechanism 'worked' were engagement in the school-based programme, active participation in the event itself, and/or being a continuing or lapsed sports participant. Beyond this, an inspirational impact was more difficult to ascertain. The data indicated residual impact for young people whereby values and attributes embodied in the competing athletes' stories (participation, ambition, endurance, and striving towards excellence) were either reaffirmed or assimilated for the first time. However, for a good many others, there was no evidence that the CWG had exerted any inspirational effect at all.

Figure 3. Types and distribution of legacy impact on young people



The study also provided insight into the extent to which young people identified with the East End and the impact of place attachment on their future spatial horizons. This is important to understand because the social renewal of the East End depends on its young people believing in a positive future for the area and ‘opting-in’, rather than ‘opting-out’ or simply staying by default.

We found that young people from migrant families aspired to leave the East End in order to continue their upward social mobility. This ambition remained unchanged over time.

For those born in the East End, the situation was more complex. A sizeable minority declared their intention to find an ‘*escape route*’ from the East End in order to live somewhere which would better match their sense of self and represent a better social and physical environment in which to raise a family. Another group worked from the belief that moving out of the East End would enhance their life chances although they found themselves conflicted about leaving behind close knit family networks and places familiar to them. A third group of young people born in the East End showed strong attachment to place. For them, a future life outside the East End was beyond contemplation. This was not always a default position – in one atypical example, one boy’s desire to remain close to his East End roots was rational and positive and sat alongside an expectation that he would be prepared to travel outside the area for employment.



CONCLUSION

Several cross-cutting themes emerged from our study. These highlight the tension that exists between the short-lived thrill of a major event and the anticipated longevity of its impact.

‘Not for our sake’

Young people perceived that the changes in the East End had been triggered for the sake of others (athletes, tourists, spectators, global TV audiences, inward investors, business), rather than for their own sake. In their view, this had given rise to ‘distorting’ influences in terms of location (remedial work undertaken in vicinity of the venues and arterial routes into the East End, but not everywhere) and timing (insofar as regeneration was triggered by a sporting event rather than unmet social needs). By the same token, the construction of a ‘niche’ sporting facility in a locale which had suffered social and physical degradation over many years seemed incongruous to many young people.

All the young people in this study distinguished between the physical and social dimensions of place, with a consensus that physical changes brought about by the CWG had not been matched by social changes (*“It’s just going to change the area*

and how it looks. It's not going to change the people in the community and stuff"). Indeed, the data indicated low expectations of social transformation among young people on the basis that community norms such as territoriality were enduring and resistant to change (*"I wouldn't think that [gangs] would go away. Because there'll be always gangs in here"*).

'Not for everyone'

This study challenges the tendency for policymakers and researchers to lump together people in disadvantaged areas as a homogenous group¹². We found that some young people in the sample were better positioned than others to grasp CWG-related opportunities. The CWG might have had the unintended consequence therefore of widening existing social inequalities within the local community. In other words, those who might have gained most from the CWG were the least likely to have engaged with it, suggesting that the hosting might be more accurately characterised as a once in a lifetime 'missed' opportunity for the most disadvantaged young people in the East End.

'Not for real'

Remarks made by some participants suggested an absence of authenticity, with several factors striking a false note in young people's minds. In the first instance, the media representation of Glasgow, and, by implication the East End, during Games time meant that young people were unable to recognise the lived reality of their place of residence. Cosmetic changes implemented prior to and during the Games were not expected by young people to last. These had the overall effect of lowering young people's legacy expectations: *"It's [change] a bit superficial, like it's not a real social legacy so much...it's more of an artificial legacy in that you've got the Emirates Arena and all that, but you've not really got a social change"*.

'Not forever'

The consensus among young people in this study was that Glasgow 2014 was an ephemeral experience. Young people talked about a temporary suspension of community norms, including territoriality, during the event itself. For example, one boy could temporarily enter neighbourhoods normally 'out of bounds' because of *"safety in numbers"*. Striking metaphors of a deflating balloon and an effervescent chemical reaction were used to convey the transitory nature of their experience and the fact that life had returned to normal for them.

 **STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS**

The main strength of this study is the attention given to the social dimension of legacy which tends to be overlooked in the literature^{4,13-15}. Indeed, the 'bottom up' approach taken placed the interests of people 'on the ground' over those of city-wide and national stakeholders, perceived by many young people in this study to be the main beneficiaries of hosting the CWG. Furthermore, the use of a qualitative strategy provided situated and contextualised accounts of Glasgow 2014. These were an interesting counterpoint to the notion of universal and homogenous good inherent in the prevailing legacy discourse¹⁶⁻¹⁹.

Another strength is the breadth of scope in the study. In the legacy literature, the few qualitative studies involving young people have focused on increased participation in physical activity and sport^{20,21}, or have restricted their investigation to the most excluded or marginalised groups²². The sample recruited to the study was not intended to be statistically representative, but it was sufficiently broad (and stable due to low attrition level) to capture a wide range of different experiences and enhance explanatory capability. At the same time, the breadth of representation meant that the voices of 'ordinary' young people²³⁻²⁵ were heard.

Nevertheless, the breadth of scope was a strength and a weakness. Discussion on any one subject was occasionally curtailed to ensure full coverage of the topic guide, with time constraints compounded by the school day being divided into subject periods of 40-60 minutes' duration.

The age of the sample might also be considered a limitation. The decision was taken to select a S4/S5 cohort on the basis that pupils at this age would be faced with decisions about their future. The selection of younger or older cohorts would most likely have told a different Glasgow 2014 story, based on the premise that younger pupils might have had greater exposure to school-based initiatives; and older pupils more opportunities for participation, not least being eligible to volunteer as a Clydesider.

The final point is that the study findings can be no more than provisional. This study examined legacy impacts within the narrow timeframe of one year, with the post-Games fieldwork conducted only several months after the conclusion of the event. Further follow-up research would be required to capture a longer-term perspective.



POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The study findings will be of most interest to cities aspiring to become future hosts of sporting mega events; cities which have succeeded in their bids to become hosts; and, finally, cities like Glasgow which have hosted a mega event in their recent past and aspire to attract further high-profile events.

The headline message is that hosting sporting mega events might not be the most effective means of delivering social change. Prior to bidding, aspirant host cities should undertake an objective impact assessment, taking into account potential opportunity costs. This would ensure transparency and provide the basis for seeking public support. Possible methods of achieving popular sovereignty include plebiscites, referenda or other forms of open public engagement, which would ensure a democratic foundation for future bidding. At this pre-commitment stage, city leaders and policymakers should also consider more socially equitable alternatives to sporting mega events. This recommendation is based on the premise that positive social outcomes might be regarded as independent of the sporting event itself and attainable with the right measure of political will. Black²⁶ suggests that a more ethical means of branding a city or country would be building superior local recreation facilities or committing to outstanding educational institutions for their own sake.

With regard to future host cities, event organisers and overseers should channel greater efforts towards 'bottom up' approaches to event planning, especially in host communities which experience the highest level of disruptions to their everyday lives. Young people are central to the notion of legacy. Yet, as far as Glasgow 2014 was concerned, study participants felt that they had not been specifically targeted by event organisers. The study also found that leveraging projects only surfaced in the months leading up to the event. Future host cities should plan engagement initiatives over a longer period of time with a broader cohort of young people.

The main challenge for cities like Glasgow which have recently hosted a mega sporting event is the maintenance of interest in legacy post-event. Although the Glasgow 2014 legacy timeframe is ten years, young people perceived that the impetus for change had been lost on removal of the event deadline. That said, Glasgow aspires to attract major sporting and cultural events because of the quality of its facilities. Future legacy plans should take cognisance of learning from evidence-based research. Most importantly, the views of young people should be sought at an early stage of planning and incorporated into legacy governance structures. After all, the very notion of legacy suggests the passing on of something to a future generation.



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