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Case study

EduSport

Beginning with embeddedness
and partnerships

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The contextualized and embedded approach taken by The BREDS Treasure Beach Foundation with EduSport meant that the programme has been able to scale up to a national level, help a larger number of children and meet an important and specific need in communities. Partnerships with existing stakeholders, including government through the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information (MOEYI), UNICEF and other civil society organizations has not only strengthened its position but has also contributed to the improvement of the programme itself (e.g., training in psychological first aid through Fight for Peace [FFP]) and put in place the conditions for the intervention to be sustained in time.

Overview

In 2012, Jamaica had a poverty rate of 19.9 per cent (at the national poverty line) but has high educational achievement and high completion rates at all levels.^{1,2} In 2014, while stunting and wasting in children under the age of 5 (6 per cent and 3.6 per cent respectively) was lower than the Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) region average, more children were overweight, 8.3 per cent (compared to 7.5 per cent in LAC)³. Violence is prevalent in Jamaica, which had the third highest homicide rate globally in 2009, with significant declines since then, and high levels of gang-related violence. Schools are not exempt from this, with high levels of violence including fights, robberies and homicides linked to gang violence.⁴ Violence is also prevalent in the home environment. The Jamaica Reproductive Health Survey 2008 found that:

Prior to age 15, nearly 1 in 5 (18 per cent) Jamaican women witnessed physical abuse between their parents and two-thirds (61 per cent) were physically abused by their parents ... 55.8 per cent of women also believed that physical punishment is necessary to raise children. (ibid., p. 27)

In Jamaica, sport can be a ticket out of a poor community and into school, a way to move away from violence, an avenue for leadership and a chance to feel

included. However, these opportunities are out of the reach of thousands of children. Nationwide access to physical education (PE) at the primary level is largely unstructured or non-existent. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Information (MOEYI) has not had the resources to equip all primary schools across the country with trained PE teachers. This means that, in many schools, class teachers are left to deliver the PE curriculum to an average class size of 25 children, often resulting in children being sent outside to play while teachers take the opportunity to mark schoolwork for the other 13 subjects they have to deliver.

One of the reasons EduSport was of interest to us is because many of our primary schools were without a PE teacher... So, we were very happy to know that there was a group that wanted to assist in this area.

So, when the idea was pitched to the Ministry, there was no hesitation to facilitate this partnership.

EduSport was created in 2012 by the BREDS Treasure Beach Foundation (BREDS) and has been implemented since 2015. BREDS is a local NGO that “carries out a variety of programs designed to enhance the livelihoods of Treasure Beach community members, and care for the surrounding natural environment”.⁵ EduSport is just one of their programmes,⁶ focused on children aged 3–12 years and designed to address the need for structured physical education where it has not previously existed.

Initially, the founders “were encouraged to meet with UNICEF because of its focus on Sport for Development”. Since the goal of the programme was to fill gaps in primary schools and the fact that any child-focused grassroots sporting development initiative has to be sanctioned by the MOEYI, MOEYI was a clear third partner in the venture. This partnership has now resulted in EduSport being taught in more than 120 primary and infant schools (having started with 9 schools) in four parishes (St Elizabeth (58), Manchester (57),

Westmoreland (4) and Kingston (6)) through EduSport coaches, and since 2019 has expanded to 236 primary schools (136 schools in 2019 and 100 schools in 2020) in other parishes where PE teachers have been trained in the EduSport methodology. The aim is to have EduSport implemented in every primary school in the country.

Methodology

EduSport is a game-based methodology that includes an academic component linked to the Jamaica's national school curriculum (e.g., literacy, numeracy, social studies and general knowledge) as well as elements of life skills, non-violent conflict resolution, anger management, teamwork, responsibility, respect, personal hygiene and discipline. The EduSport curriculum was tailored to work with mixed ability classroom settings, because some special needs children are left undiagnosed and remain in regular classroom settings. Thus, the EduSport games are a blend of fun, exercise and education. Some of the games included in the curriculum are very clearly linked to learning outcomes, such as:

- Mr Wolf: to learn how to tell the time
- Hopscotch: the coach writes words in the squares and the player cannot move from the spot if they cannot read the word; they must break it down into syllables until they get it
- Simon Says: in which the player who loses has to do a math question or say their times table
- Road safety game
- Mosquito tag game to teach about insect-borne diseases
- Virus game to teach about viruses.

EduSport sessions typically last half an hour for children aged 3–5, and 45 minutes for those aged 6–12. As in many other S4D programmes, each session is broken down into three main parts: warm-up activities (e.g., Do As I Say, Not as I Do or Team Squat), main activities (e.g., Mr Wolf) and cool-down activities (e.g., Simon Says). The games are easily tailored for each age group, level of ability and school terrain, and addresses any topic that the child participant may have difficulty

Box 1: Children enjoy the sessions

We feel safe and comfortable during the EduSport sessions because the coach is nice to us, answers our questions and makes everyone wait until their turn comes.

Boy participant

He will correct you if you are doing something wrong like pushing down someone.

Boy participant

From Monday to Friday is only work we're doing in the classroom, so we get to run up and down outside in EduSport session and we enjoy ourselves.

Girl participant

It's fun and we get to exercise and learn things at the same time. If you don't know how to do division, addition or multiplication, you can learn in EduSport.

Boy participant

grasping in the classroom. The session teaches life lessons such as listening, taking turns, patience, teamwork and problem-solving skills. Importantly, focus group discussions with children and parents show that children find the sessions fun, they feel safe, and they look forward to these sessions every week.

From what I've observed, they learn better when using exercises or singing a song. The children learn to identify colours and shapes with the cones the coaches use.

Mother

All essential equipment (first aid kits, balls, cones, dominoes to play maths games, jump ropes, etc.) were originally supplied by BREDS but schools are now taking over that responsibility. Many schools lack sufficient outside space for a proper playing field and the hilly terrain in some areas does not provide the ideal surface for a formal PE class. However, the flexibility of EduSport enables the children to play appropriate games on these surfaces, allowing them to still get the exercise, learning, stimulation and fun they look forward to each week.

Embeddedness

BREDS wanted to provide employment for people in the community who had the coaching skills and experience. EduSport coaches go through a normal recruiting process (interviews and police record checks in compliance with Jamaica's Child Care and Protection Act to ensure that they can work with children) and most coaches have previously worked in the schools or community centres in various sporting programmes. All EduSport coaches are trained in games-based delivery, child protection and safeguarding in sport, conflict resolution, human rights, handling special needs children, and medical and psychological first aid. The coaches have become more than just instructors; they are mentors and role models for children, some of whom are fatherless or at risk of neglect and abuse.

He is loving and he cares for us. He doesn't let you get into trouble.

Boy participant

Coaches are deeply involved in the life of the school. They are required to attend PTA meetings where they highlight to parents the health and educational benefits of having their children engaged in the physical activities offered by EduSport. They are invited to demonstrate games and to attend school functions, for example, during Parent Month in November, and are instrumental in organizing the schools' Annual Sports Day. They may also observe classes at the school to understand what children are taught and to help support learning. However, it appears that the value

that the school leadership places on EduSport makes a big difference in whether coaches feel seen and appreciated. If they do not feel valued, they may be less engaged in school life.

I either talk with the class teachers or sometimes, observe what is being taught in class and then structure my sessions around that. Certain things are taught at certain times of the school year so after a while you get to know what is being taught. There are also basic general things like times tables, reading the clock, knowing the parishes and their capitals which they need to know especially for revision at exam time.

Male coach

EduSport coaches deliver the programme to schools on a rotating basis to ensure that they reach more children. This is possible as the programme is only delivered once a week at each venue. This model has had other positive outcomes, as schools that share the same coach have started to work together where they would not have done so before. For example, the principals of St Mary's Primary and Infant, and Top Hill Primary schools, in St Elizabeth, liaise with each other and plan together when attending the same function or sporting competition.

Additionally, to support the sporting and educational needs of the Treasure Beach community, BREDS developed the BREDS Treasure Beach Sports Park and Academy, which gives youth the opportunity to improve their skills in football, cricket, tennis, basketball netball and swimming. EduSport provides local and international summer camps where EduSport coaches deliver development courses on the physical, nutritional and psychological aspects of sports, while honing leadership, teamwork and other life skills. Some examples of these courses include:

- one-week PMBL basketball camp
- one-week All Boys overnight summer camp

- one-week My Yute soccer camp
- one-week Lennox Lewis boxing camp
- six-week swimming camp.

In the case of swimming, BREDS considers this a life skill, given that Treasure Beach is a fishing village, and the risk of drowning is very high. With UNICEFs support, a swimming pool was built at the sports park and some 250 children have been properly trained in swimming over since 2018.

Scaling through partnerships and contextual knowledge

MOEYI, UNICEF and BREDS

Based on a Memorandum of Understanding between MOEYI and BREDS signed in 2018, EduSport now aims to scale up to national level to deliver the EduSport methodology in all primary schools as a timetabled, co-curricular PE subject. As part of the integration process, EduSport’s manual was reviewed and aligned with the MOEYI PE curriculum and methodology to fall within the three strands of the PE curriculum: games and sports, movement education, and health, safety and well-being.

Although our school is involved in several sporting activities like cricket, football and athletics, EduSport is the only activity that is timetabled.

School principal

BREDS agreed to train PE teachers in 236 primary schools in four education regions (most of the island) in 2019 and 2020 in the EduSport methodology. The MOEYI is also exploring the possibility of applying the current model used by EduSport coaches to its PE teachers, as well as to other teachers where specialist teachers in one subject area would deliver their designated subjects in several schools.

In addition, the MOEYI contracted EduSport coaches as ‘pre-trained teachers’ for six years, effective from 1 December 2018, during which, they must acquire the necessary qualifications to be employed as fully trained

We wanted the EduSport coaches to have at least a certification. The Ministry stipulates certain requirements that a teacher/coach must have in order to operate in the schools: training in child safety and protection, in psychology, and in the different sporting disciplines.

MOEYI representative

teachers (to qualify for a renewed six-year contract). To this end, EduSport secured partnerships with the GC Foster College (a sports college for teachers and coaches in the parish of St Catherine) and the Bethlehem Moravian College (a college offering degrees in primary and secondary education in St Elizabeth’s parish) to support this transition. MOEYI now pays the EduSport coaches’ salaries and, in the transition stage, the MOEYI team met EduSport coaches to explain changes in their ‘new’ role as government-paid personnel. The coaches’ schedule was adjusted to two (down from four) schools per coach and the schools are now responsible for appraising the coaches.

With the transition, BREDS has not lost contact with EduSport coaches. It maintains contact with them and offers teambuilding exercises and refresher training, and gives them phone credits for online teaching. They meet with them and the MOEYI for updates, to address challenges and to listen to suggestions. BREDS also continues to manage the partnership with GC Foster and Bethlehem Moravian colleges. It has already covered full funding of the courses for all the coaches for summer 2020.

A final component of this partnership will be the production of an EduSport manual with guidance for use with younger and older students to extend reach to early childhood development centers and high schools. The EduSport manual (including approximately 110 games) is to be used by all PE teachers to supplement existing methodology and to facilitate the expansion of the Ministry of Health and Wellness’s ‘Jamaica Moves’ campaign into schools. Before COVID, some coaches at St Elizabeth were delivering physical activities in their

primary schools once a week as part of Jamaica Moves, in addition to their EduSport sessions. A workshop for PE teachers was planned for early 2020 to share some EduSport physical activities; however, the workshop had to be cancelled owing to the COVID crisis. The manual will also be launched on the BREDS and MOEYI websites.

Partnerships with other organizations

EduSport's flexibility makes it easy to integrate in the wider community where games-based activities can be used to re-focus youths away from risky behaviours. For instance, facilitated by UNICEF, BREDS partnered with Fight For Peace (FFP) to implement EduSport as an after-school programme in six communities in Kingston where it is delivered in community centres and four schools. This enabled the participation of an additional

1,555 inner-city children in EduSport learning activities and saw the cross-training of both FFP and EduSport coaches in each other's methodologies. FFP trained EduSport coaches in psychological first aid, which is the mental health equivalent of first aid. It teaches youth to take a step back and to step away from violent situations. The coaches' job in this framework is to: (a) not make things worse, and (b) try to get the child further help if needed.

A similar partnership between BREDS, UNICEF and the Rockhouse Foundation resulted in EduSport being included as a part of the curriculum in four primary schools in an additional western parish, Westmoreland. The schools selected include a model mixed-ability infant school lauded as a site for teacher training, early screening, referral and intervention, whose therapeutic provision is also funded by UNICEF.

¹ Smith, A., 'Poverty Rate Fell By 40 Per Cent in 2018', Jamaica Information Service, 25 June 2020, <<https://jis.gov.jm/poverty-rate-fell-by-40-per-cent-in-2018/>>, accessed 5 May 2021.

² World Bank, 2012, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.NAHC?locations=JM>

³ Global Nutrition Report, 'Country Nutrition Profiles: Jamaica', 2020, <<https://globalnutritionreport.org/resources/nutrition-profiles/latin-america-and-caribbean/caribbean/jamaica/>>, accessed 5 May 2021.

⁴ Harriot, Anthony D., and Marlyn Jones, 'Crime and Violence in Jamaica', IDB Series on Crime and Violence in the Caribbean, Inter-American Development Bank, Washington, DC, 2016, <<https://publications.iadb.org/publications/english/document/Crime-and-Violence-in-Jamaica-IDB-Series-on-Crime-and-Violence-in-the-Caribbean.pdf>>, accessed 5 May 2021.

⁵ See: <https://www.facebook.com/pg/BredsTreasureBeachFoundation/about/?ref=page_internal>, accessed 5 May 2021.

⁶ For example, training programme in partnership with HEART Trust for youth in and around the Treasure Beach who are interested in horticulture, housekeeping food and beverage – Level 1 and 2 certificates.

for every child, answers

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