

Barriers to Delivering Extracurricular School Sport and Physical Activity in Wales: A Qualitative Study of 5x60 Officers' Views and Perspectives

Paul Rainer, Robert Griffiths, Brendan Cropley, and Stuart Jarvis

Background: In light of recent reports, schools must be realistic in that physical activity recommendations cannot be met through curriculum PE alone. However, extracurricular PE and school sport has the potential to further promote physical activity in adolescents. Consequently, the Welsh Government, UK, proposed through its Climbing Higher strategy (2006) for secondary school children to achieve 60 minutes of physical activity a day. This was implemented through Sport Wales and the 5x60 scheme. **Method:** This study aimed to examine the experiences of the 5x60 officers responsible for implementing the program, with a view to gain an understanding of the barriers associated with increasing participation in physical activity. Officers from 14 unitary authorities across Wales were interviewed using a socioecological approach that considered the impact of: personal behaviors, physical environment, social environment, and policy. **Results:** Participants reported a number of challenges affecting the delivery of the program, including: availability of facilities, lack of support from senior management, time, and conflict with PE staff. **Conclusion:** This study suggests that current methods used by personnel to facilitate extracurricular school sport may not be the most appropriate, and future direction should consider the place and contribution of physical activity to young people's lives.

Keywords: young people, physical education, behaviour, environment and policy

In spite of the growing evidence highlighting the importance of physical activity to young people's health, there continues to be concerns about the activity levels of young people today.^{1,2} Although the importance of physical activity to young children has been widely acknowledged, a number of barriers and challenges exist that prevent children actively engaging in the current United Kingdom (UK) recommendation of an hour per day of physical activity on most days of the week.³

Schools are important physical, social, and normative environments in which students observe, imitate, and practice health behaviors and have a great opportunity to positively influence levels of physical activity.⁴ This potential has remained largely limited however, due in some respects to the provision of opportunities potentially not being inclusive, with a traditional emphasis on games (eg, soccer, field hockey) favored by pupils who are already active.⁵ Physical education (PE) is commonly regarded as the major vehicle for the promotion of physical activity in schools, and recent studies have suggested that quality PE programs can result in increased physical activity,^{6,7} although schools must be realistic in that physical activity recommendations for children and adolescents cannot be met through PE alone. One school context, which has remained largely under-resourced is that of extracurricular PE and school sport,⁸ with recent studies suggesting that it can significantly influence young people's physical activity participation.⁹⁻¹¹

Defined as, "the provision of activities outside of the formal PE curriculum, most often after school and at lunch times, but also in

some schools at weekends and/or before school,"¹² extracurricular PE and school sport is frequently presented as a fundamental link between curricular PE and young people's participation in sport and physical activity in their leisure time.¹³ Additionally, extracurricular PE and school sport programs have the potential to promote and increase physical activity through structured and unstructured play,¹⁴ provide fun and enjoyment,¹⁵ and enhance academic attainment.¹⁶

While much of the previous literature has focused on the influence of extracurricular school sport on youth physical activity patterns,^{14,17} increasingly researchers have sought to identify the extent of modifiable environments within schools and communities that encourage youth to become physically active.^{18,19} Essentially, youth seek supportive environments within school that are inclusive, accessible, and provide choice and freedom in physical activity participation.²⁰ A number of after school programs (eg, Active After Schools, Australia; Active Schools, Scotland; School Sport Partnership Program [SSPP], England; Dragon Sport, Wales) have encouraged young children to become involved and extend their physical activity beyond the school day and stimulate increased participation within their community. These programs have tended, however, to be constructed and implemented without consulting young people's views on the nature and purposes of activities they would like to participate in. As such, many programs have been criticized for offering 'much of the same' in terms of the types of activity on offer, which has influenced their overall efficacy.¹² It has been suggested, therefore, that physical education and school sport should draw from youth culture to engage young people and ensure that such environments are aligned to the preferences and desires that the youth of today seek.²¹

To address physical activity participation, the Welsh Government (WG), UK has targeted extracurricular activity participation of 11- to 16-year-olds through its 5x60 extracurricular PE and

Rainer (prainer@glam.ac.uk) and Jarvis are with the Dept of Health Exercise Science and Sport, University of Glamorgan, Cardiff, South Glamorgan, UK. Griffiths is with the Dept of Faculty Business Studies, University of Glamorgan, Cardiff, South Glamorgan, UK. Cropley is with the Cardiff School of Sport, Cardiff Metropolitan University, Cardiff, UK.

school sport program. This program aims to increase the number of secondary school pupils (those aged 11 to 16 years) participating in sport and physical activity for 60 minutes at least 5 times a week, in particular focusing on under-represented groups (eg, girls, ethnic minorities, underactive).²² The 5x60 program also aims to allow young people to express their views on physical activity and become empowered to be active agents in the design of physical activity choices in activity-friendly environments within and out of the school environment.^{22,23} In addition, the vision of the 5x60 program aims to encourage diverse and engaging opportunities, identify and remove barriers to participation, and ensure young people are at the heart of developing and promoting sporting opportunities.²⁴

The 5x60 program is managed by 5x60 officers who are employed by unitary authorities (Welsh county and county borough councils) and based in designated schools (sometimes within more than 1 school). The role of the 5x60 officer is to develop opportunities for young children to become involved in extracurricular school sport and physical activity and source *facilitators* (eg, sports coaches) who assume responsibility for the delivery of activities.²² They are responsible for working with local stakeholders to create opportunities within: competitive sport, informal activities (eg, dance, aerobics), coached activities, and outdoor activities (eg, climbing). The role of the 5x60 officer is independent of that of the PE teachers at the schools where they work in that they are not responsible for delivering curriculum lessons. However, they are tasked with complementing the PE program to ensure integrated extracurricular provision of physical activity.

The WG aspires by 2020 that 90% of secondary school children will participate in physical activity 5 times a week for an hour at a time and that this will be incorporated within extracurricular school sport. However, current reports highlight that only 35% of secondary school children currently meet these recommendations.⁹ The 5x60 program has been in operation since 2006 and recent reports suggest that secondary school participation is increasing.^{9,22} These reports have, however, been very much influenced by the requirement to achieve targets established by Sport Wales (the national organization responsible for developing and promoting sport and physical activity in Wales, UK). In addition, the reports that are available have failed to consider the experience of the 5x60 officers who implement the associated sports programs and therefore have an immediate impact and insight into the barriers and aids associated with the 5x60 program delivery. Given that critical to the success of physical activity programs, such as 5x60, is the ability of those managing the program to improve accessibility of extracurricular sport and physical activity opportunities to all youth on a regular basis, regardless of socioeconomic stature, race, culture, ethnicity, or gender,^{19,25} it would appear imperative to explore the experiences of these personnel who have been charged with achieving such high targets.

In light of the preceding discussion, the aim of this study was to gain a better understanding of the complexities of supporting the sustainable provision of extracurricular PE and school sport by examining the challenges experienced by 5x60 officers. Specifically, although the 5x60 program has considered the determinants of physical activity environments for young people, it appears that a number of contextual and structural barriers still exist. If the program is to achieve its aims and meet the targets for youth participation set by the WG, such barriers need to be understood from the perspective of those involved at management level. To do this, a *socioecological* approach to research²⁶ has been suggested as a way of interpreting the barriers that exist to participation in physical activity.¹⁸ Specifically, a socioecological methodology recognizes the interwoven

relationship that exists between the individual and their environment, providing a more holistic exploration of the interaction effects that may create barriers to the success of extracurricular activity. Although a number of socioecological models have been presented in other areas (eg, violence prevention), this study used the findings of recent research that advocates highlighting socioecological interactions between intrapersonal (individual), interpersonal (social), community and environmental, and organizational (policy) levels of influence on physical activity.¹⁸

Methods

Participants

All 5x60 officers working within the 22 unitary authorities across Wales were contacted and invited to participate in the study, with a total of 26 officers accepting the invite (covering 14 of the unitary authorities). The participants were located within secondary schools that were situated in a range of diverse socioeconomic areas and were categorized as schools located in metropolitan Wales, Rural North, Rural Heartland, and Valleys regions.⁹ There was an equal representation of female ($n = 13$) and male ($n = 13$) participants, who ranged in age from 23 to 38 (mean = 25; SD = 7.8). Many of the participants ($n = 18$) were full-time 5x60 officers, with the remainder ($n = 8$) being part-time, and many ($n = 16$) were responsible for more than 1 secondary school. Participants had been in post ranging from a period of 1 to 5 years (mean = 3; SD = 0.6) in duration and all had experience of previous employment within sport coaching, sport development, or teaching. Each 5x60 officer had various responsibilities dependent on the local unitary authority in which they were located, although their main responsibilities were to increase school sport and physical activity participation within the school where they were located and its surrounding community. Overall, the sample represented a group of experienced respondents who were able to provide rich, credible information.²⁷

Interview Guide

A socioecological approach that recognized the factors affecting participation in physical activity was used to develop the semistructured interview guide.^{1,18} The socioecological approach was deemed appropriate as it provided an opportunity for in-depth analysis of the complexities of physical activity behavior and how this is influenced by the social and physical environment and policy and regulation. Based on a socioecological model advocated in previous research,¹⁸ a semistructured interview protocol was used to explore the barriers experienced by the participants in implementing the 5x60 program based on: personal behaviors, physical environment, social environment, and policy. Structuring the guide in this way allowed the exploration of the interaction of these factors and thus provided a more in-depth examination of the factors related to the aims of this investigation. Specifically, guiding questions were designed to understand: the participants (eg, "What are the main roles you fulfill in your position?"); their thoughts (eg, "What are your perceptions of the values of the 5x60 program?"); attitudes (eg, "What impact does the relationship you have with the teachers at the school have on the implementation of the 5x60 program?"); and experiences (eg, "What factors have hindered you in improving participation to date?") of the 5x60 program and the barriers they have faced. To enhance the flow of the interview and to gather rich, in-depth data, a number of probes (eg, "Can you provide an example?"; "Why?") were also adopted.²⁷ A copy of the guide is available upon request.

Procedure

Departmental and university ethical approval was gained from the corresponding author's institution before participants were contacted, asked to take part, and provide written, informed consent. The interviews were conducted face-to-face in a neutral setting to reduce the likelihood of environmental influences on the honesty and depth of participant responses. All interviews were recorded using a recording device and lasted between 45 and 60 minutes. These were then transcribed verbatim yielding more than 1000 pages of text.

Data Analysis and Trustworthiness

Due to the exploratory nature of this investigation, a combination of inductive and deductive content analysis procedures was employed to address the research questions. In accordance with recent work,²⁸ the data analysis was conducted in a directed process that followed a number of steps in an attempt to enhance the trustworthiness of the data and their interpretation.

First, all interviews were conducted by the same researcher (first author) using the previously devised interview guide. While this allowed the researcher to explore different avenues of discussion, the main topics were covered with all participants to ensure dependability in data collection.²⁹ Second, to enhance credibility²⁹ all participants were sent the transcript of their interview for confirmation that it represented their experiences; all participants agreed with the transcript. Third, all interviews were independently analyzed by the research team to ensure content familiarity before common underlying trends from the transcripts were clustered deductively into the socioecological themes identified before the study. The research team then went back through the transcripts to inductively code any data that did not fall into the main themes but was deemed relevant to the research question. Fourth, the research team engaged in a process of peer debriefing where the individual analyses were discussed. Themes and underlying threads were only included in the final analysis once full agreement had been reached. Those themes that were contentious were either discussed further and included independently, placed within another theme, or excluded from the final output.²⁸ All decisions were recorded in the form of a meeting log so that the discussions were transparent for each member of the research team. Fifth, it was decided to provide thick description of the participants and methods so that readers can judge whether the findings are transferable to their own context. In addition, in line with previous qualitative research, it was decided that the reader should be given the opportunity to interpret the data in a manner that may be more meaningful to them.³⁰ Data gathered, therefore, are reported in the form of direct quotes from the transcripts to enable the reader to empathize with, and immerse themselves in, the participants' experiences while illustrating important points.³¹ Finally, criteria for confirmability were met through the coding and organizing of data so that themes could be tracked back to the original data source.²⁹

Results and Discussion

Due to the complex and detailed nature of this investigation, the results are presented with accompanying discussion. In this way it is thought that connections can more readily be established between the findings of this study and the extant literature and thus best explicate some of the challenges faced by the 5x60 officers in delivering the 5x60 program. For clarity, the results and discussion are presented under the sections that support the socioecological

model: personal behaviors, physical environment, social environment, and policy (organizational), and reflect the views of the 5x60 school sport officers.

Personal Behaviors

The 5x60 officers identified themselves as a significant other in the lives of young people, and suggested that familiarity was a key consideration for young people in choosing whether to commit to physical activity. A key role in the 5x60 program required the officers to become known and visible around the schools and thus develop a presence with students. For example, one participant suggested, "You have to take your time, you must slowly integrate yourself into the school, you must get people to think that you are part of the furniture." Additionally, officers acknowledged that they had to provide opportunities for children to have a voice and identify activities they would like to participate in. While initially children would be empowered to make decisions as to what they wished to do, officers often found that this was not followed up. Adolescents require familiarity and consistency in their lives⁷ and it is likely that inconsistent delivery and inequalities within the program, as reported by the participants in this study, did not facilitate these opportunities. Those with responsibility for the delivery of the 5x60 program inadvertently serve as gatekeepers to participation through recruitment, marketing, and delivery of their activities and often their actions restrict or support admission.³ In support of this, an evaluation of Scotland's Active Schools secondary school program³² questioned the suitability of those that delivered the activities (eg, outsourced coaches), with pupils often criticizing the content and organization of the sessions, the approach of staff, and often suggesting delivery was by unskilled personnel.

It emerged that the diversity of the role stretched the time and resources of the officers and impacted their ability to focus attention on the nonparticipants. For example, "I seem to be doing more and more without really doing what I'm supposed to." It could also be that 5x60 officers' background contexts influenced the interpretation and implementation of the actual 5x60 program, a critical view previously expressed of the English SSPP program.³³ Participants expressed concerns that their expectations of their role had become constrained and somewhat blurred, with increasing pressure to maximize participation and achieve targets established by Sport Wales. Indeed, on starting within the role many officers had great ideas to target the 'non-sporty' children (eg, those young people often marginalized by the discourse of more traditional PE). However, it would appear that many officers entered the role with the perception that they could make a difference in young people's participation, although, over time they had become socialized into, and disillusioned with, a role that prioritized targets and mass participation:

The targets for my school were set centrally by senior management who discuss and look at each school based upon certain criteria and try and fit that school in a certain box. This made the role difficult at times and took me away from working to increasing mass participation.

Indeed, a preoccupation with quantitative analysis and targets has previously been a criticism of both Scotland's Active Schools and England's SSPP programs, leading to much speculation regarding the outcomes of these programs.^{32,33} In attempts to achieve targets it was evident that 5x60 officers and coaches employed to deliver activities took full control of constructing and facilitating both the context and environment that supported physical activity. It appeared that there was little opportunity for youth to negotiate,

contemplate, and question the nature of the activity and context in which physical activity took place. Indeed, involvement in physical activity for youth is not just a case of participation, but more often has to do with the quality of the relationship involved rather than activity itself,³⁴ and this seemed to be rarely addressed through the program: "Due to time constraints and a constant push to hit targets some of the choice was taken from the kids but I think this helped to get the activities up and running." In doing this, participants indicated the creation of homogenous groups to meet targets for participation. Consequently, the heterogeneity of young people and, in particular, those such as females, less able, and sedentary young people often become marginalized through a 'one size fits all' approach. In recognition of this, one participant commented

I would welcome the opportunity to work with small groups and specifically increase participation within nonactive, obese and disengaged children, but I have tried and they don't attend. I often feel my hands are tied because I have to produce monthly reports that demonstrate lots of participants.

This is certainly not a new problem and has been noted in previous programs that have attempted to increase physical activity participation in nonactive young people through PE and school sport.^{10,11,35}

The design and implementation of the 5x60 program suggests youth engagement and pupil voice in constructing environments for youth to be physically active.²² Nevertheless, as a result of the homogeneity suggested to be evident within the program and associated difficulties in considering groups marginalized within curriculum PE, the program has evolved within the constraints of bureaucratic policy designed to accommodate public sector targets for mass participation. Subsequently, factors that influence participation in physical activity of these marginalized groups appear to have largely been ignored. Indeed, for one of these marginalized groups (female adolescent girls), physical activity participation is very much influenced by gender-specific aspects of motivation, with girls more likely to participate in activities that involve socialization and boys a more competitive environment. Many youth (girls in particular) are keen to avoid highly-structured, teacher-organized, sports activities and favor adult-like sports and physical activities undertaken in contexts where teachers were more likely to treat them as adults.³⁴ Furthermore, issues related to clothing, coeducation, activity choice, and broader social discourses around gender, ethnicity, and sexuality have been reported to significantly impact girls' participation.^{36,37} Although the 5x60 program provided opportunity for girls to participate in street dance and cheerleading, these were the only activities designed exclusively for girls; little consideration of the girls as active agents in the design of their physical activity or consideration of the complex dynamic environments whereby girls experience and interpret physicality appeared to be considered. It would seem that the increasingly complex relationship between physicality, femininity, and physical activity³⁸ has been largely dismissed by the program and should be considered in the design of future programs if we are to increase participation in marginalized groups.

Physical Environment

The 5x60 program was designed to support existing extracurricular programs offered by PE, although the participants of this study reported that this often provided a contentious issue. Participants indicated that PE staff viewed 5x60 as a conflict of interest and therefore ensured that their extracurricular programs were allocated

the best facilities first, often to the detriment of the 5x60 program. One participant highlighted

So much is done by the PE staff at lunch time, such as rugby, netball, and soccer every day of the week, so for me getting access to the facilities is a major issue and severely affects the program that I can facilitate.

It would seem, therefore, that the ability of the program to provide opportunity for young children to become physically active is being hampered by the poor availability of facilities. In light of this, many officers suggested that there had been a lack of vision in ensuring adequate facilities were in place to support the provision targets of the 5x60 program:

I think in setting ambitious targets of 90% participation for secondary school children, the WG do not realize how am I supposed to support extracurricular activity in my school of 1000 pupils, when all I have access to is 1 sports hall, 1 gymnasium, and 1 swimming pool, especially when these facilities are also being used by the PE staff.

The majority of participants suggested that the geographical location, in particular those schools in a rural setting, were faced with greater challenges compared with urban schools. In rural areas many of the children lived a considerable distance from the school and therefore had to be transported in, which provided a challenge to facilitating after school activities. Similarly, studies have reported that rural schools do not provide the same extracurricular opportunities for young people as schools located in more urbanized communities.¹⁹ Indeed, one participant resigned, "You are very unlikely to get year 9, 10, and 11 [13- to 16-year-olds] kids staying after school because 70% of them are from outside the borough so we are faced with many difficulties running after school programs."

Finance was a significant issue raised by all participants. All 5x60 officers reported that they received a small set amount each year that would be used predominantly to support the provision of coaching activities. While the long-term goal of the 5x60 program is to develop sustainable human resources for the delivery of the activities set up by the 5x60 officers, currently the officers have to outsource qualified coaches. This has financial implications that causally affect the amount and types of activities that are provided, thus hindering the ability to offer innovative and appealing activities for young people. For example, one participant acknowledged

I would like to offer more opportunity for the children to do outdoor pursuits, wind surfing, trampolining, but they are too expensive and only those with parents willing to pay additional costs will attend, which defeats the overall object of the program.

In light of such substantial use of outsourced work to support the 5x60 program, it is worth considering the impact that this may have on the locus of control and designation of accountability related to schools.³⁹ It has been acknowledged that outsourcing work to external agencies will increase the possibility of conflicting agendas and interests, which was evident in the current study.⁴⁰ It was suggested that work outsourced to coaches and private organizations would often be delivered with a focus on "... technical aspects of how to play the sport and improve individuals technically rather than reflect the philosophy of the program and young people becoming more physically active through engaging and enjoyable experiences."

Despite the recognized financial burden, all 5x60 officers reported that they attempted to support lifestyle activities for young people that provided exposure to a range of activities to encourage lifelong participation. The result of this financial burden often resulted in the 5x60 officers having to resort back to delivering traditional games activities (eg, soccer, rugby), often to the extent that this discouraged young people's involvement. Subsequently, it has been reported that adolescents' beliefs and social perceptions of school sport were that if they were unable to pay for the more glamorous activities they would rather be provided with traditional team sports as an alternative.⁴¹ For example, one participating officer stated, "We've tried to put on a range of activities like rock climbing, etcetera, but this year we've had to ask that the pupils pay half as they're too expensive. If they didn't we'd have to do more traditional activities."

While the 5x60 program may promote inclusion, it would seem that location of the school, size or type of school, facilities, and governing local authority are factors that challenge the participation of young people. Although poor facilities, lack of funding, availability, and location have been recognized previously as barriers to participation,²⁰ it was evident that these factors had not been considered before implementation of the program. Consequently, it is essential that before implementing programs that facilitate and support the delivery of physical activity, that strategies are in place to accommodate the provision and development of a safe and comfortable environment for youth to be active.^{26,42}

Social Environment

Despite the apparent vitality of the 5x60 program measured through the quantity of provision and levels of participation,²² the range, experience, and quality of provision offered presented some concern with the participants of this study. This concern regarding the quality of extracurricular PE provision has been expressed previously,¹² although this focused on the predominant games and elitist environment that was offered. Participants in this study indicated that many of the facilitators who they employed to deliver activities on the 5x60 program were very much engrained in a sports coaching subculture that supported a very traditional method of delivery (eg, structured, disciplined, authoritarian), an approach not conducive to support developmental outcomes.⁴³ One participant highlighted, "Many of the coaches who deliver the activities in my school are well qualified but don't understand the main purpose of the program and just stick to their coaching philosophy rather than a participation one." Such issues have previously been raised⁵ and it has been suggested that school sport programs in Australia were, on the whole, delivered by nonspecialist teachers, and that without the essential skills and knowledge they found it increasingly difficult to provide the necessary instruction and feedback to motivate students. In addition, the use of school sport coordinators and sports coaches to support the SSPP in England has resulted in their ability to support similar programs being questioned.²⁵ Indeed, it has been suggested that while many coaches have in-depth specialist knowledge of how to develop performance in an activity, they do not necessarily have the inclusive pedagogical knowledge to target the participation of marginalized groups of young people (eg, adolescent girls or disengaged youth).¹¹ The use of sports coaches may facilitate a program that is the antithesis of the needs of young people and be compromised by adults' beliefs and interpretations regarding how they think things should be done. It would seem logical, therefore, to follow the so-called prevailing tide of youth culture and seek the employment of personnel empathetic toward the needs and aspirations of young people.²¹

Despite the recognizable broadening and diversification of activities within the 5x60 program, it would seem that extracurricular provision within 5x60 is still heavily biased toward team sports and competitive activity and reflects the dominant sport discourse exhibited within PE. Similar programs, such as Active Schools, have also reported an undervaluing of nontraditional activities at the expense of traditional competitive sports.³⁵ It would seem that in an attempt to appease the disjuncture that has formed between what young people desire and what PE was offering,²¹ the 5x60 program is at present only skirting over many of the issues. While there are examples that the program has recognized and acknowledged the cultural shifts reflected within youth society, it would appear that many schools represented in this study continue to reinforce a culture inhabited by young people that is incompatible with physical activity participation that encourages lifelong engagement.

A barrier identified by the 5x60 officers in this study was the inability to convince PE staff of the merits of the 5x60 program and change existing attitudes toward it. Participants reported that many of the PE staff they worked with appeared dismissive and increasingly circumspect of the program. The comments of one participant best summarize these thoughts:

The PE staff were very negative towards the program at first because they felt that the scheme was imposed on them and they already had a comprehensive extracurricular program in operation and felt 5x60 was taking the emphasis away from what they were doing.

Indeed, many secondary school PE teachers view extracurricular PE as the high point of their PE teaching lives,⁴⁴ and a position that they have fulfilled before the introduction of the 5x60 program and still continue to do so. A number of participants suggested that there was a resistance from PE staff, a result of having lost control over what has previously been identified as a favored aspect of their practice.^{25,40} This may have resulted from the PE teachers not fully understanding the philosophy and objective of the program, rather than recognizing how it complemented their role. In addition, the 5x60 program presents a perspective whereby the relationship between pupils and 5x60 officers is seen as less formal than that of the student-teacher relationship. For instance, the officers are acknowledged by their forename, pupils do not have to wear a uniformed kit, and discipline is limited based on an environment constructed around fun and play. This may have caused conflict with the ethos of more formal curriculum-based activities, as PE teachers may have felt that many of the pedagogical practices that contributed toward high-quality PE teaching were being undermined. For example, one participant acknowledged, "I get the feeling that I'm not respected by the teaching staff at the school, which makes the atmosphere at work difficult to take at times . . . this starts to detract from the work I do."

Policy and Organization

In ensuring that the 5x60 program is sustainable it is imperative that a legacy is established by the 5x60 officers that supports a comprehensive network of school and community clubs.²² The perceptions of the 5x60 officers in the current study suggested that (a) young people did not fully identify with the values of the 5x60 program or the school; (b) many young people were not fully aware of the program or indeed knowledgeable as to the aims and philosophy supporting it; and (c) many viewed the 5x60 program as an extension of physical education or strenuous physical activity, and identified the program with a strong sporting orientation

or bias.¹² One participant supported this, suggesting, "Kids are unaware of how 5x60 contributes to physical activity, they think it is going to be strenuous exercise, similar to PE, boring and structured and not an opportunity to try new lifestyle sports and activities." Extracurricular programs are often delivered using a 'one size fits all' approach. That is, the programs are delivered to clubs or schools with little or no acknowledgment of the context in which they are presented in the absence of links between school clubs and community clubs.⁴⁵ The participants in this study readily acknowledged that essential to the success of the program was "... a need to develop links within the community that are viable and ongoing." It emerged that within some local authorities there was collaboration between those participating in this study who worked in schools and community sports development. However, in a number of authorities it appeared that 5x60 programs were working in isolation from that of community sports programs. The vision of Sport Wales²⁴ to create a "shift in school based activity to developing sustainable opportunities within the community" and the need "to make the link between school and community provision stronger" was an area that the 5x60 officers reportedly found difficult to "implement and resource."

If the 5x60 program is to become self-sustaining then there is a requirement to grow community capacity and stimulate local community involvement in sport. Previous research has suggested that school-based programs are delivered in a manner that is not integrated into the broader community context and therefore have little chance of promoting sustained community level change.⁴⁶ PE and extracurricular school sport should, therefore, provide a diversity of activities to meet the needs and interests of students by establishing better links with sports and leisure and community clubs.^{34,47} Many 5x60 officers, however, found it difficult to locate that person or club in the community who would become responsible for developing and maintaining that school-club link. For example, it was suggested that, "You can get coaches in, set up a school club, but if there is no one within the community willing to take on the responsibility for the school-club link then it will not work in the long-term."

Legislation and policy enforced by local and national organizations has the potential to effect physical activity participation of young people. Sport Wales, in establishing targets for the 5x60 program, appear to have very much constrained the ability of the officers to be innovative and imaginative with their delivery. For example, many of the officers commented that they felt pressured to first and foremost achieve those performance indicators for mass participation to almost justify their existence. One officer reported that because his targets were dictated by mass participation, often he would put on activities that he knew were popular with all kids, rather than target the nonparticipants. Another suggested that

I think it [5x60 program] could definitely be improved with less emphasis on achieving mass participation. Rather than mass participation I would rather we focus on the quality, ensuring good club links are established and sustainable and that we focus on those nonsporty kids.

This concern has been echoed through evaluation reports of both the Active Schools program³² and SSPP,^{10,11} which have suggested the dominant discourse of success in such national evaluations has been centered on quantitative measures of numbers of participants, rather than the nature and quality of the program,²⁵ despite a number of programs presenting convincing arguments of the need to acknowledge the meaning and place of physical activity in the lives of young people.²⁵

Summary, Conclusion, and Recommendations

The aim of this study was to evaluate the barriers encountered by 5x60 officers in establishing supportive environments to promote school sport and physical activity. The 5x60 school sport program aims to provide an innovative and imaginative method of motivating young children to become physically active.²² While the program has influenced the participation rates of young people and made significant improvements in physical activity levels,^{9,24} the 5x60 officers interviewed in this study suggested that many barriers are still prevalent that are impacting the sustainability of participation and preventing the overall goals of the program to be achieved. Further, while officers shared "a vision for sport in Wales"²⁴ to "shift the focus from school based activity to develop sustainable opportunities within the community," the implementation of this was a major concern.

The findings of this study support those of previous literature that suggests the social, physical, personal, and policy environments impact the activity or likelihood of young people participating in physical activity,^{18,26} and this must be fully considered when implementing physical activity strategies. It is evident from the 5x60 officers' comments in this study that improving youth physical activity levels in a culture not supportive of such change is highly problematic. Many officers were faced with a lack of facilities, conflict with the PE staff, and restricted community support, and were stretched with the many roles that they were expected to fulfill. The success of the 5x60 program is therefore likely to rest on the ability of 5x60 officers to recognize the barriers that exist, listen to the voices of youth, and ensure the establishment of a safe and comfortable environment for youth to be physically active.⁴² Additionally, policy makers must acknowledge that policies are embedded within social environments and that social relations are central to their successful implementation. Consideration of the complex and dynamic bonds that exist between the many forms of heterogeneous groups within the school community must therefore be recognized and viewed as an integral factor in the design of such activities and environments.

It is important that the 5x60 program does not inherit and reflect the same old traditional problems of extracurricular school sport, the provision of 'more of the same for the more able' and overindulge in a games-dominated provision.¹² In contrast, there is a need to amend the 'one size fits all' approach that, although appeals to mass participation, often excludes many of those that have been marginalized through traditional PE. Indeed, it was suggested over a decade ago that extracurricular school sport needs to present a more formal approach; a reorientation of the need toward a more balanced program that caters for the social needs and interests of a greater proportion of pupils and actively challenges stereotypical messages about participation.¹² It still remains to be seen if progress has been made in the way that extracurricular school sport is delivered and if the 5x60 program does challenge those stereotypical images and cater to the diverse needs of today's young people.

A confounding issue that extracurricular PE and school sport initiatives have to address is whether they can bridge the current clear disparity between what young people are experiencing in the 5x60 program and what they are choosing to do out of schools in a manner that will enhance and reinforce their continued involvement in sport and physical activity.⁴⁷ It would seem that school-based programs must be delivered in a manner that is integrated into the wider community context, provides a diversity of activities to meet the needs and interest of young people,^{47,48} and not operate in isola-

tion as experienced by many of the 5x60 officers in this study. This clearly reflects Sport Wales' vision to embrace a shared responsibility for building and maintaining pathways between schools and communities²⁴ and, in doing so, inspire people toward lifelong physical fitness. However, many of the 5x60 officers increasingly found it difficult to initiate relationships between schools and the community and as a consequence school clubs were not sustainable and diverse activities were not always provided. Notwithstanding claims that the 5x60 program supports the development of lifelong physical fitness in young people, this will only continue if opportunity for participation in physical activity beyond the school gates is fully embraced.

This study has suggested that young people are keen to avoid highly structured, coach-led, sports activities, and would rather favor adult-like activities associated with 'growing up.'³⁴ Future studies in the area of extracurricular school sport and physical activity need to allow young people to become active agents in the design of attractive, friendly environments that are diverse and engaging. Greater attention should therefore be directed toward the design and implementation of a whole-school approach to school sport and physical activity.

In conclusion, this study has provided an in-depth examination of the barriers faced by 5x60 school sport officers in the delivery of extracurricular school sport and physical activity in Wales. Findings emanating from this study suggest that there are many barriers facing the development of physical activity in youth, as well as a number of issues concerning the role of the 5x60 officer, such as: identity, role clarity, demands of the job, and lack of community support. The current Sport Wales vision to create inspiring school-owned, school-driven activity where the interests of young people are prioritized must ensure that there is a collaborative provision across the curriculum, extracurricular, and community environments. The findings of this study would suggest that, in the experiences of those charged with the delivery of the program, this is not currently being achieved. It is hoped that schools will become more community focused, enable sustainable opportunities to be provided and developed beyond the school, and ensure young people are those whose voices are heard and prioritized within extracurricular school sport and physical activity. While the 5x60 program represents a shift in philosophy for physical education and school sport, it remains to be seen whether the program has filled the void between what young people currently do and what they value, or whether the program is simply a continuation of 'more of the same for the more able,' competitive team games thwarted by adult perspectives and priorities and by public sector agreements established that are driven by government targets. Inevitably such a program provides the opportunity for pupils to have a voice, but if no one listens it reflects nothing more than a tokenistic, knee-jerk reaction and only surface-level engagement with youth culture.²¹ A number of avenues for future research emanate from such considerations including: (a) the need to examine the efficacy of the program more holistically using mixed methods approaches that allow the investigation of target achievement and inherent program quality; (b) the need to explore the ways in which the barriers presented in this manuscript might be overcome in attempts to improve the implementation of the program as well as the experiences of those working within it; and (c) examinations of whether programs designed to increase physical activity through PE and school sport are actually responsive and relevant to youth culture, and the impact of this.

Whether the 5x60 school sport program is successful moving forward will largely depend on whether the program can increase the participation of marginalized groups and promote a program

of school sport and physical activity that promotes social inclusion and encourages lifelong engagement. This will subsequently depend on resisting the temptation to continue with a sporting discourse so familiar with other school sport programs. The 5x60 school sport program has the ability to extend and support young people's school sport and physical activity, however, the direction it follows will inevitably be influenced by those responsible for delivery. Our research raises important questions for those involved in both the organization and implementation of the 5x60 school sport program.

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