

Educated Pass Football and Education Initiative



Annual Report
August 2009

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opening the doors to higher education
student recruitment & admissions

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Educated Pass – Football and Education Initiative Overview of outcomes August 2008-2009

- Biannual management group meetings, comprising of representatives from each of the partner institutions:
 - University of Edinburgh
 - Scottish Youth Football Association
 - Stevenson College
 - Telford College
 - West Lothian College
 - Jewel and Esk Valley College

- 12 squads of youth footballers, in the under-14 age bracket, engaged in the initiative (consisting of 150+ boys).
 - 4 local youth football clubs maintained involvement from previous season:
 - Dalkeith (1 squad)
 - Edinburgh City (3 squads)
 - Salvesen (2 squads)
 - Seton (1 squad)

 - 2 additional West Lothian youth football clubs (2 squads) identified and targeted:
 - Blackburn United (1 squads)
 - Pumpherston United (1 squads)

 - 1 local youth football club, previously involved (2006-07), reengaged:
 - Musselburgh Windsor (3 squads)

- Database of participants developed, including post code data to be cross referenced with the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation for reporting purposes.

- Programme of activities updated and delivered; including on-campus sessions hosted and conducted by partner institutions.

- Introduction of 'Language of the Game' and 'Medical Physics' on campus session.

- Role model students enlisted to assist with delivery of activities; including current HNC/D students and members of the University of Edinburgh football squad.

- Second annual Educated Pass 'Golden Goal' conference held; delivering a positive education message through renowned and credible football guest speakers.

- Local professional club support and facility provision obtained from Hibernian FC

- Ongoing evaluation of content, delivery and impact of the initiative.
 - Pre and post initiative attitudinal questionnaires

1. Educated Pass

1.1 Background

The University of Edinburgh's Widening Participation (WP) team obtained funding from the South East Forum to run a pilot year of the Educated Pass initiative (2006-07). During the pilot year 5 clubs, comprising of 10 squads and over 150 boys were engaged in a series of 5 sessions delivered throughout the football season. Since then the project has been developed with funding from the Sutton Trust.

The current report documents the third full season the Educated Pass initiative, which for the second successive year has built upon the number of clubs and players initially involved during the pilot year.

The initiative is partner driven; led by the University of Edinburgh and supported by Stevenson College, Telford College, West Lothian College, Jewel and Esk College and the Scottish Youth Football Association (SYFA),

The project team is grateful to the Sutton Trust and the partners in the Colleges, the Physical Education Sport and Leisure department at the University of Edinburgh and the SYFA for their ongoing support and assistance in the delivery of the project objectives.

1.2 Initiative Rationale

Educated Pass aims to address the academic underachievement of boys in the 13 to 16 year-old age group¹. A shared passion of this group is sport and in particular football. The project works with local youth football clubs to engage the boys, their coaches and their families in educational opportunities in order to raise aspirations. Working via local youth football clubs brings added credibility to a message which can often be lost in the school environment.

Boys who struggle academically or who come from backgrounds with low aspirations can easily feel excluded from a young age. Aspirations, expectations and the whole frame of reference for boys come from the wider community in which they grow up. 'Educated Pass' is innovative in that it does not rely on working through schools; but by targeting boys and in particular those from under-represented groups through their local youth football clubs and coaches. It builds upon their commitment to sport in order to generate a similar interest and commitment towards their education. While giving generic advice on school, college and university pathways, the initiative initially uses sport related courses as a 'hook', remaining careful however, to demonstrate that educational and career opportunities also exist outside the sporting sphere.

1.3 Key Aims and Objectives

Address the academic underachievement of boys in the 13 to 16 year-old age group.

- Work with local youth football clubs, using engagement and dedication to sport as a lever to introduce boys to educational opportunities via school, college and university.
- Deliver a series of activities using facilities, expertise and role model students in sport related courses at the University of Edinburgh, Stevenson College, Telford College, West Lothian College and Jewel & Esk College.
- Provide the boys, their parents and the coaches with information on school course choice through Standard Grades, Highers and unbiased routes into further and higher education.

¹ Scottish Funding Council 'Gender in Scottish Higher Education: what's the issue? (July 2006) www.sfc.ac.uk/publications/SFC_Gender_Report_July_2006.pdf

- Continually strengthen the initiative model by revising and updating the content and delivery of the sessions where appropriate.

2. Project Management

2.1 Funding and Resources

Educated Pass is now its second year of a 3 year funding cycle provided by the Sutton Trust. The Sutton Trust is an educational charity which aims to provide educational opportunities to young people from non-privileged backgrounds.

Further information on the Sutton Trust can be obtained via the website:

www.suttontrust.com

2.2 Partners

Educated Pass continues to be managed and led by the University of Edinburgh and supported by 5 partner institutions: the Scottish Youth Football Association (SYFA), Stevenson College, Telford College, Jewel & Esk College and West Lothian College.

As lead partner of the initiative, the University of Edinburgh provides in kind support for the initiative in the form of management, an office base and computer systems. The other partner education institutions provide in kind support through housing and hosting the 5th session which involves on-campus activities, while the SYFA provides a consultative and advisory role on the most appropriate clubs to target.

2.3 Steering Group

An updated membership list of the Steering Group is provided in **Appendix 1**. The Educated Pass Steering Group consists of representatives from the Sutton Trust, each of the partner education institutions, along with the National Secretary of the SYFA.

2.4 Staffing

The initiative is managed from within the University of Edinburgh's Student Recruitment and Admissions (SRA) by Kathleen Hood, Widening Participation Manager, who is responsible for providing regular progress and financial reports to the Sutton Trust. Joe Meloy, the Widening Participation Officer responsible for the development of the initiative, is also based in SRA and is line managed by Neil Speirs of the WP team. The existing experience, expertise and networks which have been built up within the WP team have proven invaluable to the progress and development of the initiative.

2.5 Initiative Timeline

An initiative timeline and the Key Performance Indicators are provided in **Appendix 2**.

3. Clubs

3.1 Clubs Involved

Following consultation with the SYFA, David Little the National Secretary, provided a full list of contact details for all the local youth football clubs in the East of Scotland. He specifically highlighted those clubs with a reputation of community excellence, who produce confident and responsible young men.

Consequently, the clubs engaged in the initiative for the 2008-09 season were as follows:

Club	Squads	Location	Involvement
Seton Boys Club	1	East Lothian	Continued
Musselburgh Windsor	3	East Lothian	Re-engaged
Salvesen	2	Edinburgh	Continued
Edinburgh City	3	Edinburgh	Continued
Dalkeith Boys Club	1	Midlothian	Continued
Pumpherstoun United	1	West Lothian	New for 2008-09
Blackburn United	1	West Lothian	New for 2008-09

Community based youth football clubs draw their squad members from a widespread catchment area and so the composition of the final target population consisted of boys from a diverse range of social, cultural and economic backgrounds.

A database of participants has been developed, detailing information such as school attended and residence post code data. This information has been cross referenced with the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation, and is reported in section 7 for initiative evaluation and reporting purposes.

3.2 Club Continuity and Gaps

Educated Pass aims to motivate boys and raise their academic aspirations. In order to have maximum impact while doing so, a strategic decision was made to specifically target the under 14s age group allowing Educated Pass to coincide with the boys Standard Grade selection – a time when information and guidance on the academic options available to them would be most relevant.

For continuity, Educated Pass seeks to maintain the involvement of each successive U14s cohort from previously engaged clubs (i.e. Edinburgh City 06-07; 07-08; 08-09). However, depending on the number of available boys, there may be gap years when certain clubs do not have U14 squads. This was the case for the following 3 clubs throughout 2008-09:

<u>Club</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Previous Involvement</u>
Broxburn Athletic	West Lothian	2007-08
Polbeth United	West Lothian	2007-08
Preston Athletic	East Lothian	2006-07; 07-08.

Each of these clubs has indicated a willingness to reengage in Educated Pass for the 2009-2010 season, when they will once again have teams in the U14 age group.

3.3 Club Feedback

Following completion of the initiative each season, the team coaches are consulted on their views on Educated Pass. The following quotes obtained at the Golden Goal Conference 2009, reflects the wide-held opinion of the coaches that involvement in the initiative had been beneficial for the boys:

“Overall we thought it was an excellent idea - tying up Football and education to bring home how important education is. Hopefully you will have got the message through to all of the boys about the importance of their education, whilst continuing with their football aspirations.”

David Scott, Edinburgh City Coach

“The Educated Pass initiative has been a terrific experience for our young players and thoroughly enjoyed by players, coaches and parents alike. I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the players, their parents and our club to thank you for your efforts and giving the boys unique opportunity”

Brian McCathie, Dalkeith CYP Coach

The current cohort of coaches (2008-09) will be consulted at the ‘Golden Goal’ conference event in February, with their responses reported at the next steering group meeting.

4. Activities

4.1 Learning Outcomes

A series of interactive sessions has been developed which use the medium of football to raise the academic aspirations of boys by engaging them, their coaches and their parents in the educational opportunities available to them. Each session has its own set of specific objectives and learning outcomes. A full list of these sessions and outcomes is available in **Appendix 3**.

The content of the presentations is deliberately football driven; drawing on quotes and examples from role model players, managers and prominent figures in the professional game. The purpose of which, is to harness the inspirational status that these individuals have achieved on the football pitch, and project it onto attainment in the classroom.

Session 1 - *Coaches Corner* – is a new session introduced for the 2008-09 season and is aimed specifically at the coaches of all the squads involved. The purpose of this session is to outline the content of Educated Pass for the forthcoming season and answer any questions the coaches may have. This session also serves to set dates with each team for sessions 2 and 3.

Session 2 - *Educated Pass* - is aimed specifically at the parents. The typical academic progression from S2 to S6 is discussed and generic advice is given on school, college and university pathways. The information provided allows the parents and coaches to reinforce the ethos of Educated Pass to their respective sons and players, and introduces Educated Pass as a reliable source of guidance for future advice on academic progression.

Session 3 - *De Toekomst* - involves an interactive presentation which brings credibility to education through the medium of football. The overlap in skill, attitude and commitment between the class and the pitch are examined and the possibility of academic achievement leading to alternative, non-playing careers in sport is explored.

Session 4 - *Football and Education* - comprises an informal presentation, followed by an hour of fitness based work, both of which are delivered in the University’s Centre for Sport and Exercise (CSE). The presentation includes a question and answer session with current student members of the University football team, who study a wide array of subjects both sport and non-sport related. The fitness session is conducted by one of the CSE’s Sport scientists.

Session 5 - *On Campus* - is hosted in turn by each of the institution partners. This session provides the boys with an insight into College and University based learning, where they can make use of the facilities and benefit from interaction with experienced staff and students.

Session 6 - *Hall of Fame* - serves an evaluation purpose, providing information on the success of the initiative in expanding the knowledge and changing the attitude of the boys towards their education. The venue for these sessions is Easter Road stadiums, home of Hibernian FC. As well as generating extra excitement in the boys, the use of facilities in this location demonstrates the support of a professional club for the Educated Pass initiative, which adds further credibility to the educational message being given.

Session 7 – *Le Tournoi* - is a summer tournament event celebrating the success of the Educated Pass initiative. The tournament is open to all the clubs engaged in the football and education initiative throughout the preceding season, and serves as a motivational reminder for every boy to give their all throughout the coming year; both in the classroom and on the pitch. Members of the University football team assist in co-ordinating the event, and a prominent guest speaker from the football world is invited to attend and address the boys in an opening presentation.

Session 8 – *Golden Goal* – is an evening conference delivering a positive education message through renowned and credible football guest speakers. This session serves to re-engage the teams who were involved in Educated Pass during the previous season (now U15s). It is held in one of the main University of Edinburgh lecture theatres and involves a breakout session, during which information stands provide guidance on the subjects and routes of study available at each of the partner education institutions.

A breakdown of the dates, venues and accompanying statements for each session can be found in **Appendix 4**.

5. Barriers and Challenges

5.1 Maximum Limit of teams involved

Upon completion of the current, 3rd year of the initiative, Educated Pass will have engaged over 500 boys, drawn from 33 teams affiliated to 11 youth football clubs throughout Edinburgh and the Lothians.

Each successive year of the initiative has seen a progressive increase in the number of teams and boys engaged; with the 2008-09 season targeting over 180 boys from 12 teams. Consequently, the 2008-09 season required a record number of sessions, 47; with the Golden Goal Conference still to be arranged.

With Joe Meloy and Neil Speirs being the only 2 members of staff delivering the sessions, the initiative is approaching capacity level with regards to the number of teams who can be accommodated. One suggestion which has been proposed to overcome this issue is to further develop the involvement of the University of Edinburgh Football team (EUAFC).

Representatives from EUAFC already contribute to the session based in the Centre for Sport and Exercise, providing an insight in to University life and the rigours of balancing studying with playing football. By providing these representatives with further training, EUAFC players can then deliver specific sessions on their own. This is an option that will be utilised during the 2009-10 season.

5.2 West Lothian Clubs

Owing to the work commitments of coaches and insufficient number of players to form U14 s teams, there has been an issue in maintaining the involvement of West Lothian based clubs. This is in contrast to the Edinburgh, East and Midlothian Clubs whose involvement in Educated Pass has become an established aspect of their U14s age group.

A concerted effort was made during the 2008-09 season, via the Scottish Youth Football Association, to identify West Lothian clubs who would become consistent participants. With Blackburn United having confirmed their involvement in Educated Pass for the forthcoming 2009-10 season, they will become the first West Lothian club to maintain their involvement across consecutive seasons.

In addition, Educated Pass has benefited from raised awareness in West Lothian via the West Lothian Youth Football website (see Publicity/PR section), which posted an article on the involvement of Pumpherston United throughout 2008-09.

6. Associations and Collaborations

6.1 University College London

Having established a robust and effective model, the logical progression of Educated Pass is to roll out the initiative beyond the Edinburgh and Lothians region. One possible avenue for pursuing this expansion would be for the Educated Pass team to provide materials, training sessions and consultancy which would enable other organisation to deliver the football and education initiative throughout other areas of the country.

Another Russel Grup University University College London (UCL). has expressed an interest in developing a football and education initiative similar to Educated Pass. Representatives from UCL met with the project team (Aug '09) to discuss consultancy and the the possibility of reproducing the Educated Pass model in central London. This opportunity will be investigated further over the coming months with a view to piloting a London based initiative in 2010.

6.2 University of Edinburgh Association Football Club (EUAFC)

6.2.1 Involvement in CSE

EUAFC maintained their involvement in Educated Pass through their contribution to the University's Centre for Sport and Exercise (CSE)based sessions. Altogether, 15 EUAFC players attended across 10 CSE sessions offering an insight into University Life, Studying and representing the University football teams. With many of the EUAFC players coming from similar backgrounds and football teams as the Educated Pass players, they were perfect role model students to motivate and encourage the U14s age group.

6.2.2 Academic Work

Several members of the EUAFC requested further details on Educated Pass in order to reference the initiative as part of their own academic work. Indeed Steven Maxwell, former EUAFC club captain, discussed in his Law dissertation, the moral obligation of grass roots sport to encourage and promote academic success.

6.2.3 EUAFC Coaching Week

Members of the EUAFC invited Educated Pass clubs to attend a fundraising Easter coaching week delivered by EUAFC players. Members of Dalkeith CYP were among the many players to attend this event which provided further interaction with role model students via football activities.

6.3 City of Literature

Edinburgh City of Literature aims to capitalise on the prestigious UNESCO designation awarded to the City of Edinburgh, and raise awareness of books and literature in everyday life.

In collaboration with Educated Pass via the Golden Goal tournament event (Feb '09), the City of Literature sought to promote reading to all the youth footballers and their families engaged in the initiative. As well as delivering a talk about their work, the city of literature provided each player with an abridged version of 'The Lost World' adventure novel by Sit Arthur Conan Doyle.

Educated Pass capitalised on the collaboration by using the Golden Goal event to highlight the favourite book of each of the guest speakers, as well as numerous players from the English and Scottish Premier Leagues; all of which helped promote reading to an often cynical group,

Educated Pass will build on this collaboration further by developing a section on the website which promotes reading.

7. Publicity/PR

7.1 Principal's Dinner

Neil Speirs and Joe Meloy were invited to give a presentation on the Educated Pass initiative, at a dinner event held by the University of Edinburgh's Principal (Professor Sir Timothy O'Shea). Guests included the Principals and/or Assistant Principals from the Further Education Colleges in Edinburgh and the Lothians; including the Educated Pass partner institutions. The event took place on 12 March 2009 and provided an opportunity to outline the work of Educated Pass, thank the partners for their continued contribution and further raise the profile of the initiative.

7.2 Golden Goal Conference

The 2008-09 Golden Goal conference was the second annual Educated Pass event of this kind. The conference is a culminating event aimed at the U15 youth footballers who have been engaged in Educated Pass throughout the previous 18 months. The guest speakers for this year included Pat Nevin (BBC pundit and former professional player), Professor Stuart Hillis (Scotland National Team doctor) and Colin McLelland (Hibernian FC Head Physiotherapist). Given the prestige of the guest speakers, the Edinburgh Evening News ran a short article raising awareness of the event and the aims of Educated Pass and generated a full page article in the Times Education Supplement Scotland (see Appendix 6).

7.3 West Lothian Youth Football Websites

The West Lothian Youth Football (WLYFC) website posted an article about Pumpherston United's engagement in Educated Pass throughout the 2008-09 season. The article can be viewed via the following link: <http://www.wlyfc.org/wlyfc08/pumpherston.html>

With all club coaches regularly visiting this website for league news and updates, the inclusion of this article on the WLYFC website will help to further raise the profile of Educated Pass with the football clubs in this area.

In addition, the Pumpherston United parents and coaches posted regular updates and forum discussions on their own website, about the U14s team involvement in Educated Pass. The Pumpherston United website can be viewed via the following link: http://pumpherston-united.co.uk/Educated_Pass.aspx

7.4 Scottish Funding Council Short Film

As part of the Scottish Funding Councils 'Learning for All' Conference event, a short film was produced highlighting successful WP initiatives which promote education and academic achievement to under represented groups. Based on its recognised success and innovative approach, Educated Pass was selected for inclusion in this short film. Joe Meloy, along with the coaches and players of Musselburgh Windsor were filmed during a team training session, speaking about the benefits of engaging boys in their education through their love for football. The film was screened at the start of the 'Learning for All' conference in March 2009.

8. Evaluation and Findings

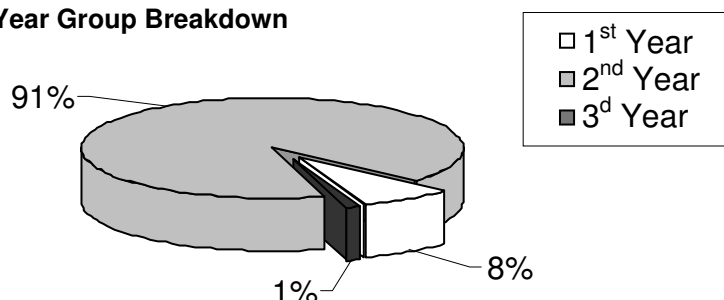
8.1 Target Population

Details such as school attended, residence postcode and favoured subject were incorporated into the registration sheet. These details help profile the composition of the target population.

8.2 School Year Groupings

The school year group breakdown of the boys engaged is illustrated in *Figure 1* below:

Figure 1 – School Year Group Breakdown



8.3 School Category Breakdown

In line with the stated key objectives, Educated Pass aims to target boys who attend schools supported by the Lothians Equal Access Programme for Schools (LEAPS). LEAPS categorise each school based on the progression rate to higher education. The school categories are as follows:

Group 1

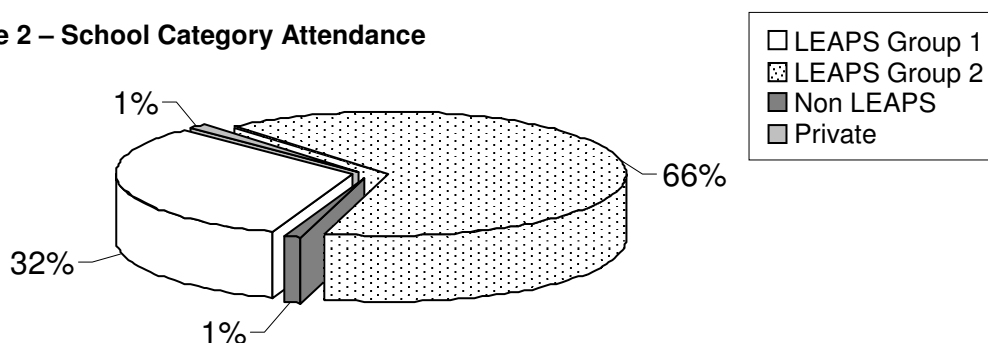
Schools in which a higher than normal number of pupils are from deprived backgrounds with little or no direct family experience of participation in higher education, and from which a lower than average number of pupils will progress directly to higher education in a typical year.

Group 2

Schools with an established tradition of pupil progression directly to higher education, but where individual pupils may have had their potential to participate in higher education reduced by adverse socio-economic or personal circumstances.

The percentage breakdown of boys attending each school category is illustrated in *Figure 2*:

Figure 2 – School Category Attendance



In line with the stated key objectives, Educated Pass has been successful in targeting boys who attend LEAPS graded schools; which will ultimately lead to the enhancement of existing outreach work by LEAPS and other Widening Participation activities.

8.4 School Subject Preferences

The percentage responses given by the boys to their favoured school subject indicate that the top 3 most popular are:

- Physical Education 91%
- Craft Design & Technology 24%
- Art 10%

Given their interest in extracurricular sporting pursuits (i.e. football) the dominance of PE as the most popular subject may be unsurprising. However this does provide credibility to the rationale of using sport as the initial hook for engaging these boys in their education.

8.5 Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation and Postcode Analyses

The residence post-code data obtained from each boy enabled cross referencing of their residence details with the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). The percentage breakdown of participants in each SIMD category for the entire target population, ranging from 1 (least deprived) to 10 (most deprived), is illustrated in *Figure 3* and table 1 below.

Figure 3 - Percentage SIMD category breakdown of target population.

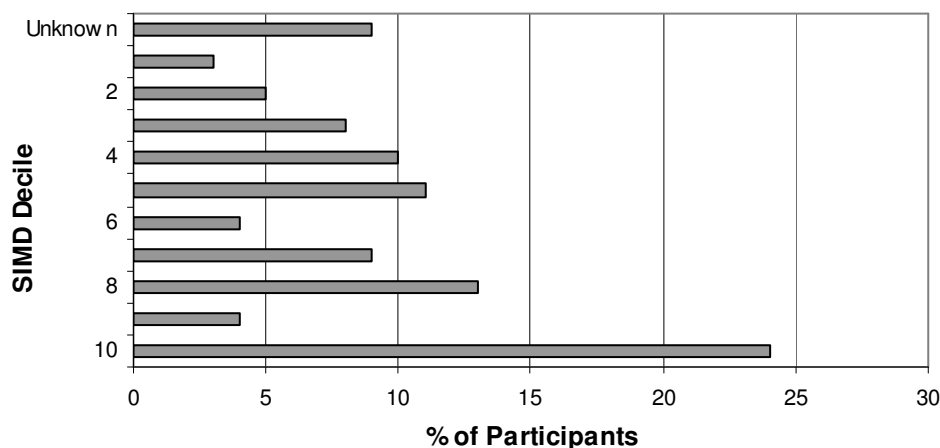


Table 1 - 2008/09 target population SIMD data

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Unknown
No. Participants (n=183)	5	10	15	18	21	8	16	23	8	43	16
%	3	5	8	10	11	4	9	13	4	24	9

As indicated in table 1, 54% of the Educated Pass participants (55 individuals) were drawn from deciles 6-10 (most deprived) as defined by the SIMD. This is an increase on the 35% drawn from this group during last season (2007-08).

The spread of participants throughout each of the 10 SIMD deciles demonstrates the unique ability of youth football to bring together individuals from a diverse range of social and economic backgrounds. Educated Pass specifically utilises this to bring credibility to education.

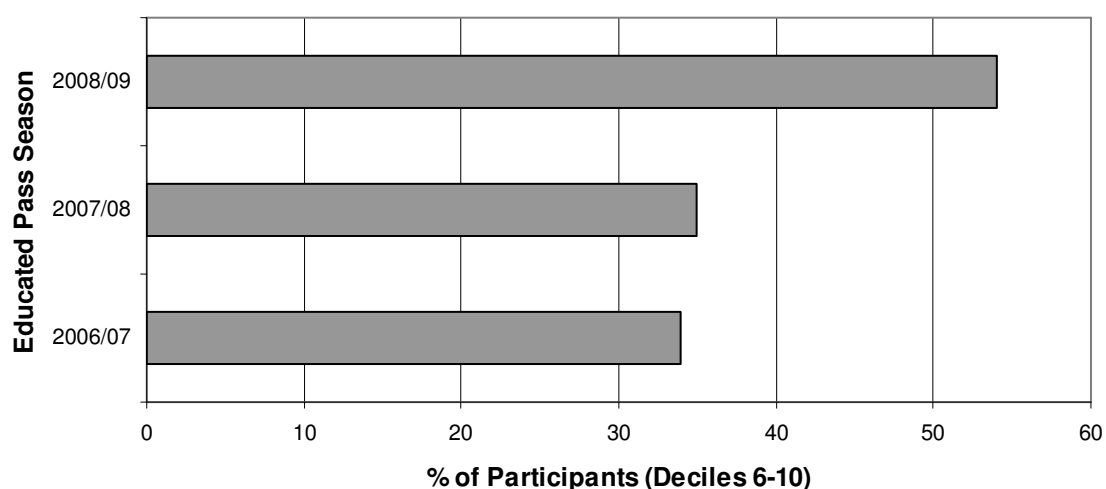
Table 2 (below) shows the percentage of participants drawn from each of the SIMD deciles, who have taken part in Educated Pass throughout the past three seasons.

Table 2 – SIMD Decile comparisons between 06-07 and 07-08

Decile	06-07(%)	07-08(%)	08-09(%)
1	33	15	3
2	6	5	5
3	8	16	8
4	13	11	10
5	8	9	11
6	7	4	4
7	11	11	9
8	9	11	13
9	6	9	4
10	1.3	0	24
Unknown	0.7	9	9

Figure 4 (below) compares the percentage of participants drawn from deciles 6 - 10 (most deprived), across the previous three seasons of the Educated Pass initiative.

Figure 4 - SIMD Decile 6-10 Comparisons (most Deprived)



- Overall, there has been a noticeable increase in the number of participants from the most deprived deciles. Over half of the participants (54%) for the 2008/9 season were drawn from deciles 6 - 10.

8.6 Individual Club Analyses

The percentage decile breakdown of participants within individual clubs can also be analysed. This provides further insight into SIMD category breakdown of the target population, with a view to assigning weightings to each club.

Figure 5 (below) illustrates the SIMD category breakdown for the Pumpherston United FC participants.

Figure 5 – Pumpherston United SIMD category breakdown

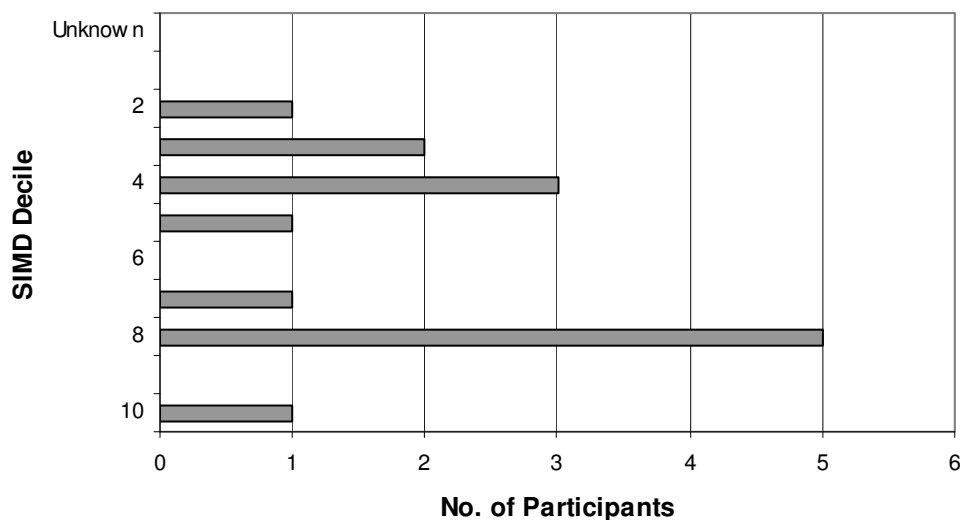


Table 3 (below) illustrates the SIMD breakdown for Pumpherston United FC participants.

Table 3

SIMD Category	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Unknown
No. Participants (n=15)	-	1	2	3	1	-	1	5	-	1	-
%	-	7	13	20	7	-	7	33	-	7	-

The SIMD composition of the Pumpherston United squad was balanced, with 47% being from the deciles 1-5 (least deprived) and 47% from deciles 6-10 (most deprived). All of the boys attend LEAPS graded schools. Table 4 (below) shows the school attendance breakdown of Pumpherston players:

Table 4

No Boys	School Attended	School LEAPS Grade
7	West Calder	2
3	Inveralmond High	1
3	Deans Community	1
2	Broxburn Academy	2

Figure 6 (below) illustrates the SIMD category breakdown for the Blackburn United participants.

Figure 6 – Blackburn United SIMD category breakdown

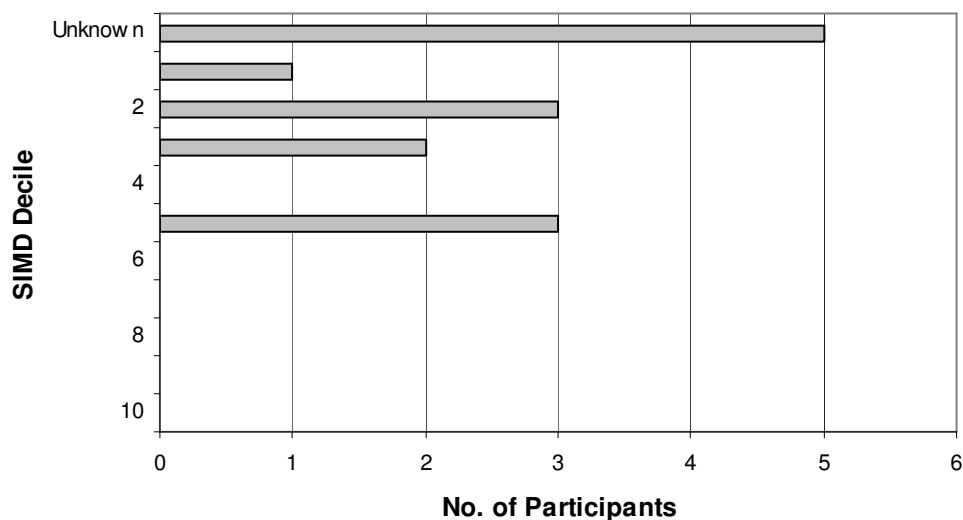


Table 5 (below) illustrates the SIMD breakdown for Blackburn United FC participants.

Table 5

SIMD Category	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Unknown
No. Participants (n=14)	1	3	2	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	5
%	7	21	14	-	21	-	-	-	-	-	37

The SIMD composition of the Blackburn United squad was heavily weighted in favour of least deprived areas, with 63% of the players residing in deciles 1-5. The remaining 37% failed to provide their post code details. All of the boys attended LEAPS graded 2 schools. Table 6 (below) shows the school attendance breakdown of Blackburn United players:

Table 6

No Boys	School Attended	School LEAPS Grade
11	Bathgate Academy	2
2	St Kentigern's	2
1	Whitburn	2

Figure 7 (below) illustrates the SIMD category breakdown for Edinburgh City FC participants.

Figure 7 – Edinburgh City SIMD category breakdown

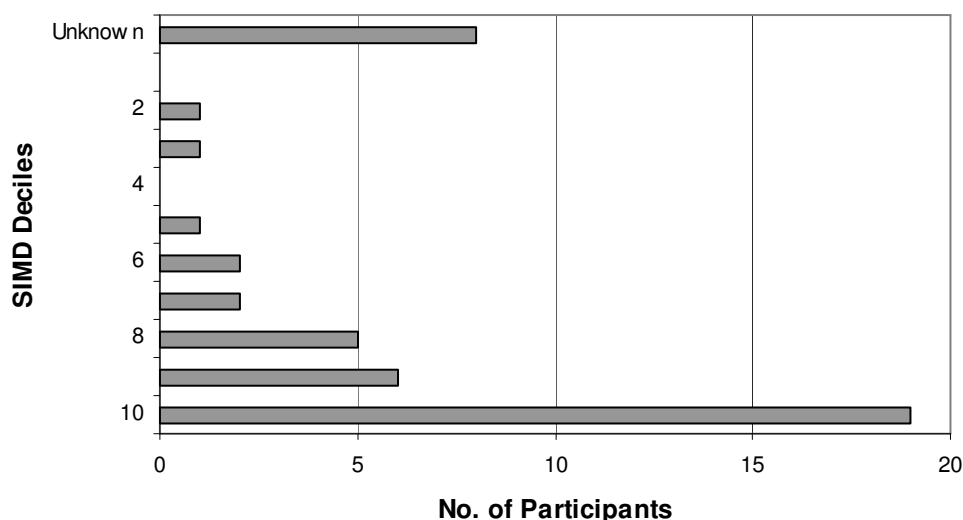


Table 7 (below) illustrates the SIMD breakdown for Edinburgh City FC participants.

SIMD Category	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Unknown
No. Participants (n=45)	-	1	1	-	1	2	2	5	6	19	8
%	-	2	2	-	2	4	4	11.5	13.5	43	18

Table 7

The majority (76%) of the Edinburgh City squad reside in deciles 6-10 (most deprived). Indeed 43% reside in the most deprived decile 10. 43 of the 45 boys attend LEAPS graded schools, with the remaining 2 attending private schools. Table 8 (below) shows the school attendance breakdown of Edinburgh City players:

Table 8

No Boys	School Attended	School LEAPS Grade
27	Craigmount High	2
2	St Augustine's	2
1	James Young	2
3	James Gillespies	2
1	George Heriot's	Private
1	Stewarts Melville	Private
4	Royal High	2
1	Boroughmuir High	2
1	Currie High	2
1	Forrester	1
2	Tynecastle	1
1	Queensferry	2

Figure 8 (below) illustrates the SIMD category breakdown for Seton BC participants.

Figure 8 – Seton BC SIMD category breakdown

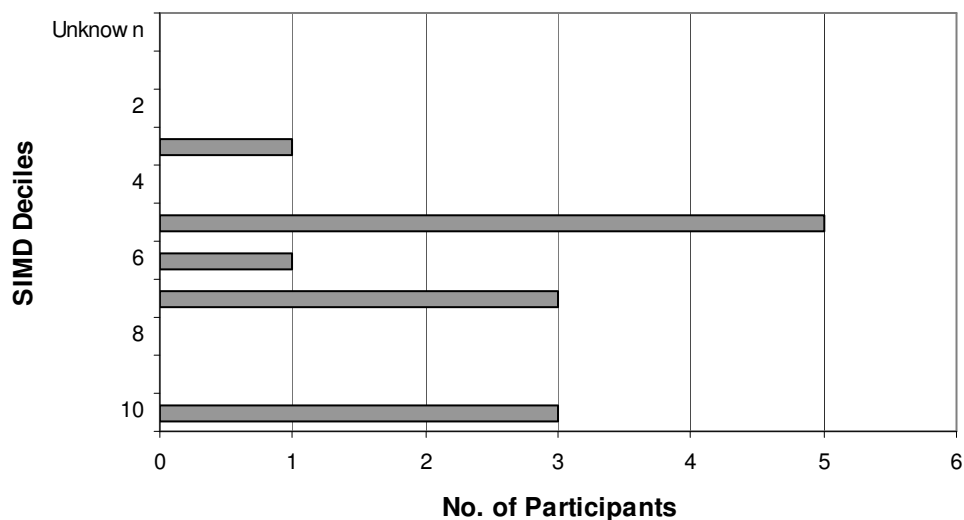


Table 9 (below) illustrates the SIMD breakdown for Seton BC participants.

Table 9

SIMD Category	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
No. Participants (n=13)	-	-	1	-	5	1	3	-	-	3
%	-	-	8	-	38	8	23	-	-	23

The SIMD composition of the Seton BC squad, was heavily weighted towards the most deprived deciles, with 92% of the boys drawn from deciles 5-10. All of the boys attend LEAPS graded schools in East Lothian. Table 10 (below) shows the school attendance breakdown of Seton BC players:

Table 10

No Boys	School Attended	School LEAPS Grade
12	Preston Lodge	2
1	Musselburgh Grammar	1

Figure 9 (below) illustrates the SIMD category breakdown for Dalkeith CYP participants.

Figure 9 – Dalkeith CYP SIMD category breakdown

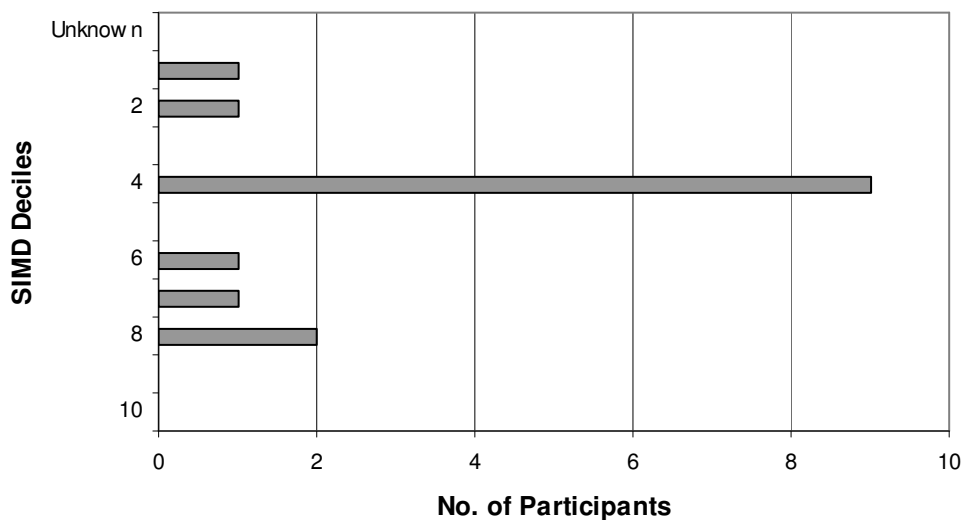


Table 11 (below) illustrates the SIMD breakdown for Dalkeith CYP FC participants.

Table 11

SIMD Category	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
No. Participants (n=15)	1	1	-	9	-	1	1	2	-	-
%	7	7	-	59	-	7	7	13	-	-

The SIMD composition of the Dalkeith CYP squad was weighted on the side of the least deprived; with 73% being drawn from deciles 1-5. All of the boys attend LEAPS graded schools. Table 12 (below) shows the school attendance breakdown of Preston Athletic players:

Table 12

No Boys	School Attended	School LEAPS Grade
14	Dalkeith High	2
2	Newbattle High	1

Figure 10 (below) illustrates the SIMD category breakdown for Salvesen FC participants.

Figure 10 – Salvesen FC SIMD category breakdown

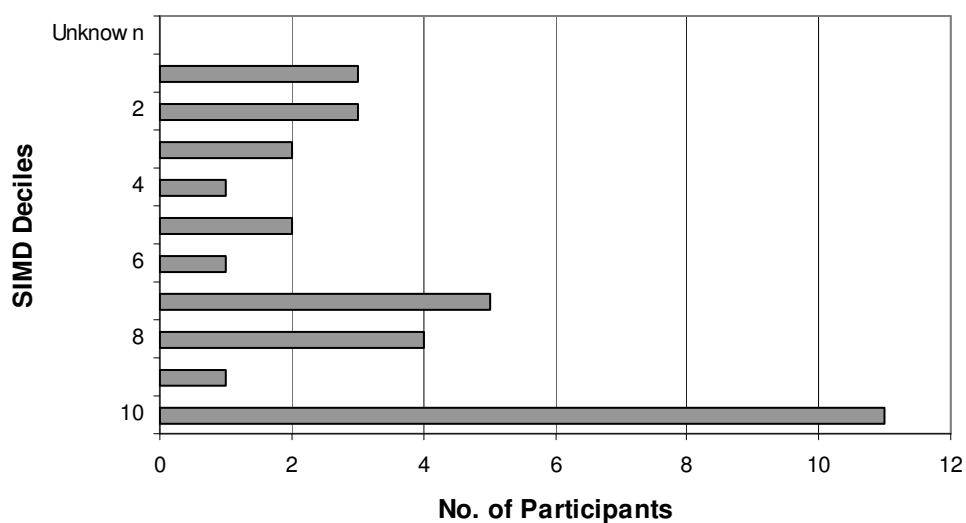


Table 13 (below) illustrates the SIMD breakdown for Salvesen FC participants.

Table 13

SIMD Category	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
No. Participants (n=33)	3	3	2	1	2	1	5	4	1	11
%	9	9	6	3	6	3	16	12	3	33

More than half (67%) of the Salvesen squad reside in deciles 6-10 (most deprived). All but 1 of the boys attend LEAPS graded schools. Table 14 (below) shows the school attendance breakdown of Salvesen players.

Table 14

No Boys	School Attended	School LEAPS Grade
3	Craigroyston	1
1	St Thomas of Aquin's	2
4	Boroughmuir	2
2	Inveralmond	1
2	Balerno	2
1	Portobello	2
4	Forrester	1
1	James Gillespies	2
2	Gracemount	1
3	St Augustine's	2
1	St Margarets	2
5	Craigmount	2
3	Beeslack	2
1	Saltergate	Non LEAPS

Figure 11 (below) illustrates the SIMD category breakdown for Musselburgh Windsor FC participants.

Figure 11 – Musselburgh Windsor FC SIMD category breakdown

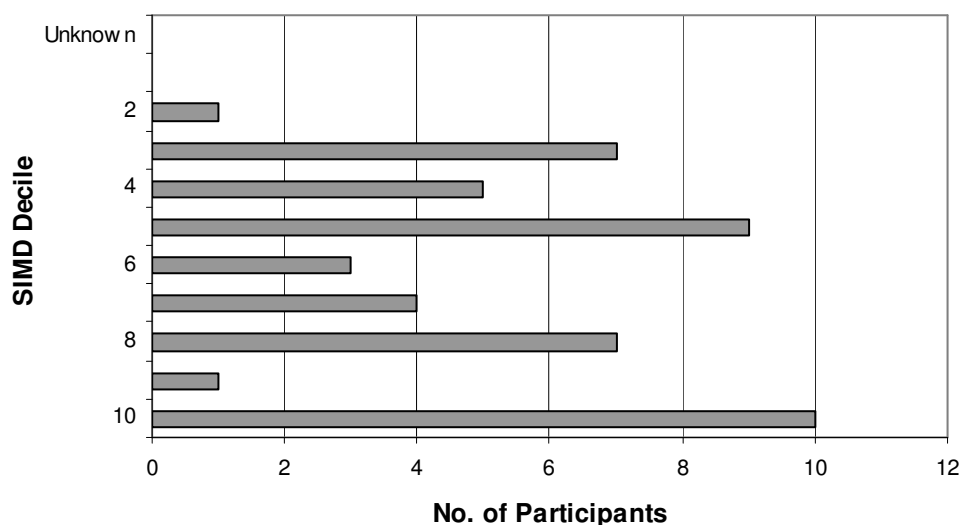


Table 15 (below) illustrates the SIMD breakdown for Musselburgh Windsor FC participants.

Table 15

SIMD Category	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
No. Participants (n=47)	-	1	7	5	9	3	4	7	1	10
%	-	2	15	11	19	6	9	15	2	21

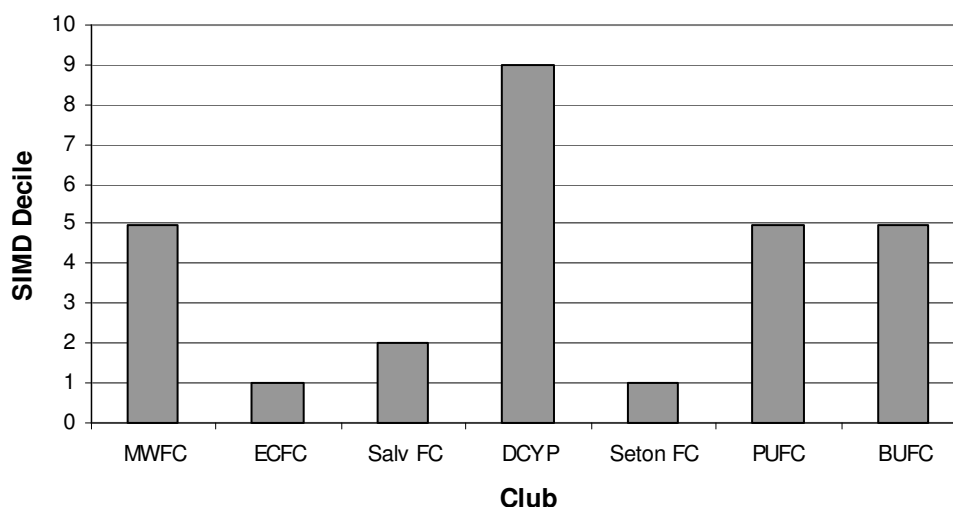
The SIMD composition of the Musselburgh Windsor squads was very even, with 47 residing in deciles 1-5 (least deprived) and 53% residing in deciles 1-6 (most deprived). However, the majority of the Musselburgh Windsor players (33) attend a LEAPS group 1 graded school. Table 16 (below) shows the school attendance breakdown of Seton players.

Table 16

No Boys	School Attended	School LEAPS Grade
33	Musselburgh Grammar	1
1	Dalkeith High	2
6	St Davids High	2
1	Royal High	2
1	Knox Academy	2
2	Preston Lodge	2
1	Portobello High	2
1	Eyemouth High	Non LEAPS
1	George Watsons College	Private

Figure 12 (below) illustrates the SIMD data for each club based on the location of their home pitch and/or club house.

Figure 12 - Club location SIMD category



Edinburgh City, Salvesen and Seton are all located in areas with least deprivation, whereas Dalkeith CYP are located in a 2nd most deprived decile area. The remaining 3 clubs (Musselburgh Windsor, Pumpherston United and Blackburn United) are located in middle of the range decile areas.

Edinburgh City FC and Salvesen FC both drew their squads from the largest range of schools, 12 and 14 respectively. Despite being located in areas with the least deprivation, these clubs had the highest representation of players from the most deprived deciles. This reflects their city centre location and emphasises the power of youth football clubs to draw boys from a wide area.

8.7 Discussion

With Educated Pass approaching the end of its 3rd full year, each successive season has engaged more clubs, more teams and correspondingly more players. Each season has also seen an increase in the number of participants from the most deprived deciles.

The data presented in the previous section outlines the case to support the argument that Educated Pass is successfully targeting appropriate boys from suitable areas, in line with the projects aims and objectives. With 86% of the target population attending LEAPS schools and 50% of the target population being from the bottom 4 (most deprived) deciles, it is clear the project is not only successful in engaging the relevant group, but also succeeds in being totally inclusive. Indeed, this targeted but inclusive community is similar in composition to the wider audience associated with football.

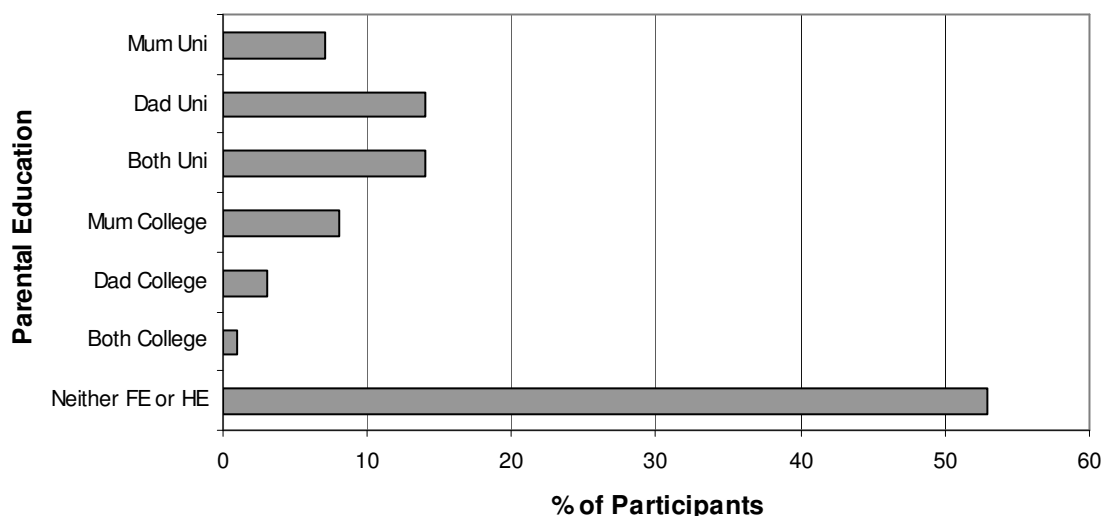
9. Attitudinal Changes

With a primary objective of the initiative being to address the academic underachievement and low aspirations of boys in the 13 to 16 year-old age group, a key measure of this initiative's success would therefore be a positive change in the knowledge and attitude of the boys towards their education. Their attitude towards education and possible academic progression was evaluated, both before and after their involvement in the initiative. Some of the more significant points are outlined below.

- The academic experience of parents is increasingly recognised as having a major influence on the attitude and opinions of children towards their own education. With

this in mind, each player engaged in Educated Pass was asked to list the academic experience of their parents – the results obtained are illustrated in *Figure 13* (below).

Figure 12 - Club location SIMD category



As is evident, the majority (53%) of the boys indicated that neither of their parents had any college or university experience. This would consequently impact upon their own attitude towards further and higher education. While this may not necessarily result in negative attitude towards education, those particular boys would be unable to benefit from the traditional source of guidance and advice offered by parents on this subject.

- Prior to their engagement, 76% of the boys indicated they had either considered going to college or university (37%) or actively wanted to go (39%). Following their engagement, all of the boys reported to have either considered going (11%) or specifically wanted to go (83%). Thus demonstrating that the boys were now open to the possibility of engaging in post school education.
- Prior to their engagement 37% of the boys felt they had the skills and ability necessary to succeed at college or University. Following their engagement this number rose to 88%. This suggests that the positive on campus experience coupled with the exploration of what is required to succeed at college and university strengthened the boys' belief in their own abilities.
- Prior to their engagement, 80% of the boys felt that school, college and university education was important to professional footballers; with 14% being unsure and 6% believing it to be unimportant. Following their engagement in the initiative 98% now believed that football was important; with the 3 main reasons being:
 - It provides valuable backup for promising young players do not make it
 - It opens alternative options for players who sustains career ending injuries
 - It provides access to other career options when the relatively short career of a professional footballer comes to an end

10. Future Recommendations

10.1 Participant Tracking

Those participants who were involved during the pilot year of Educated Pass (2006-07) will now be making the transition from 4th to 5th year in school. Depending on their Standard Grade results, this will involve progressing on to Intermediate 2 or Higher studies. Also, depending on the school which they attend they may be involved with the work carried out by Lothians Equal Access Programme for Schools (LEAPS). For this reason, the database of participants in the 2006-07 cohort could be shared with the LEAPS staff in order to track

academic achievement. Contact could also be made with the boys via the youth football clubs (if they are still affiliated), now in the under 17 age level. The information obtained could be used to assess the impact of Educated Pass, beyond the boy's direct involvement.

10.2 Research Boys Underachievement

Through engaging teenage boys Educated Pass has access to a ready made target population which could be used for further academic research into the underachievement of boys. Several new or existing theories such as Self-Efficacy, Confidence, Motivation and Future Time Perspective could be investigated further via questionnaires and/or group discussion work with the U14 boys.

Educated Pass Football and Education Initiative Steering Group

Chair	Mrs Kathleen Hood Widening Participation Manager University of Edinburgh
University of Edinburgh	Dr Neil Speirs Widening Participation Officer Mr Joe Meloy Widening Participation Officer Dr Tony Turner Physical Education, Sport and Leisure Mr Jim Daubney Physical Education, Sport and Leisure
Scottish Youth Football Association	Mr David Little National Secretary
Stevenson College	Mr Jonny Pearson Head of Sport and Recreation Department
West Lothian College	Mr David Murray Innovation and Enterprise Leader: Image, Beauty and Fitness
Telford College	Mr Graeme McCann Sport and Recreation Department
Jewel & Esk Valley College	Alan Clinch Sport and Recreation Department
The Sutton Trust	James Turner Policy Director
Club Representative	TBC

**Educated Pass
Football and Education Initiative
Initiative Timeline and Key Performance Indicators**

Date	Task/Process	Outcomes/ Deliverables	Measures/KPIs
2008-2009			
August - September	<p>Establish contact with new cohort of U14s from clubs engaged in initiative (08-09)</p> <p>Consult with SYFA to identify and engage new clubs from West Lothian.</p> <p>Agree ongoing programme of activities with Partners.</p> <p>Partners recruit and train students to act as role models.</p>	<p>4 Clubs committed to continued involvement.</p> <p>2 new clubs engaged in initiative.</p> <p>1 club reengaged following a one year absence.</p> <p>Partners agree to continued involvement</p> <p>Programme of activities timetabled, relevant number of students helpers recruited</p>	<p>7 Clubs engaged.</p> <p>150-200 boys targeted</p> <p>Database of Participants developed.</p>
September - June	<p>Deliver Activities (on and off campus)</p> <p>Investigate further funding opportunities</p>	<p>Series of activities on and off campus delivered by partners</p>	<p>Ongoing evaluation/feedback of individual activities.</p>
July /Aug	<p>Report/evaluation/attitudinal questionnaire results</p> <p>Final report</p>		<p>Evaluation/ agree future activities</p>

Educated Pass Football and Education Initiative Activity Learning Outcomes

Session 1 – Coaches Corner

- Engage the coaches in Educated Pass
- Outline the purpose of the football and education initiative
- Outline the content of Educated Pass throughout the coming season
- Establish dates for sessions 2 and 3
- Answer any questions the coaches may have

Session 2 – Educated Pass

- Engage the parents in Educated Pass
- Challenge the cultural perception that football and education are not compatible
- To present the statistics on becoming a professional footballer
- To illustrate the overlap in skills, attitude and commitment needed in the classroom and on the pitch
- To outline in detail typical academic progression from S2 to S6
- To illustrate educational opportunities at college or university (sport and non-sport related)
- To suggest alternative career opportunities within football and sport

Session 3 – De Toekomst

- To present the statistics on becoming a professional footballer
- To illustrate the overlap in skills, attitude and commitment needed in the classroom and on the pitch
- To bring a credibility to education through the medium of football
- To challenge the cultural perception that football and education are not compatible
- To introduce the idea that academic achievement can open avenues to alternative careers in professional sport (other than player/athlete)

Session 4 – Football and Education

- To show how the professional players union (SPFA) have acknowledged the importance of education to potential/current/former professional football players
- To illustrate the academic progression from S2 to S6 of a typical pupil
- To illustrate educational opportunities at college or university (sport and non-sport related)
- To suggest alternative career opportunities within football and sport
- To utilize current role model students and their experiences to further emphasize the benefit of education

Session 5 – On Campus Activities

- To familiarise the boys with the college/university experience
- To utilize current role model students to outline their experiences of student life
- To provide taster sessions in aspects of sport which can be studied in more depth at college and university
- To provide positive experiences which will generate academic aspirations

Session 6 – Stadium Based Session

- To further increase the credibility of education through the medium of football
- To identify role models from within the professional game who have achieved academic qualifications.
- To provide a positive and novel experience which will further strengthen the impact of the Educated Pass initiative
- To provide an evaluation opportunity of the boys and their coaches experiences of involvement in Educated Pass

Session 7 – Pre Season Tournament

- To celebrate the boys engagement in the Educated Pass initiative
- To motivate the boys for success in the coming year, both on the pitch and in the classroom
- To deliver the positive education message through a renowned and credible football guest speaker
- To re-emphasise the importance of their forthcoming Standard Grade years

Session 8 – Golden Goal Conference

- Provide a platform for 4 renowned and credible football guest speaker to outline their parallel successes in football and education
- To motivate the boys to continue their application as both athletes and learners
- To bring further credibility to education, through the medium of football, in an official setting

Educated Pass Football and Education Initiative Activity Sessions

Table 1 – Educated Pass Parents Session

Date	Club	Venue	Staff	Comments
7 Oct '08	Seton FC	Port Seton Community Centre	Neil Speirs	For convenience, the sessions were all held on evenings when the boys usually attend training.
8 Oct '08	Edinburgh City Edinburgh City 95s Edinburgh City Colts	Craigmount Community High School	Neil Speirs	For the Edinburgh City, Salvesen and Musselburgh Windsor teams, combined sessions were held for the parents of each club. All venues for each session were organised by the secretary of the respective club.
28 Oct '08	Dalkeith CYP	Dalkeith Community Campus	Neil Speirs	In all sessions the presentation was very well received. Several parents had specific questions regarding the academic options of their own son.
29 Oct '08	Salvesen Salvesen	Forrestine Community Centre	Joe Meloy	The promotional leaflet, containing website and contact details, were issued for any future enquiries which the boys and/or parents may have.
30 Oct '08	Musselburgh Windsor Colts Musselburgh Windsor Pumas Musselburgh Windsor Panthers	Pinkie Community Centre	Joe Meloy Neil Speirs	
4 Feb '09	Pumphreston United	Recreation Park	Joe Meloy	
9 Feb '09	Blackburn United	Blackburn Community Centre	Joe Meloy	

Educated Pass Football and Education Initiative Activity Sessions

Table 2 – De Toekomst Session

Date	Club	Venue	Staff	Comments
23 Oct '08	Seton BC	Port Seton Community Centre	Joe Meloy	For convenience and ease of access, the sessions are all held on evenings when the boys usually attend training.
4 Nov '08	Dalkeith CYP	Dalkeith Community Campus	Joe Meloy	
12 Nov '08	Salvesen 'A'	Forrestine Community Centre	Neil Speirs	All venues for these sessions were organised by the secretary of that respective club. In each instance the boys were initially sceptical of the presentations but quickly became very receptive and engaged.
13 Nov '08	Musselburgh Windsor	Pinkie Community Centre	Joe Meloy	
19 Nov '08	Salvesen 'B'	Forrestine Community Centre	Joe Meloy	
20 Nov '08	Musselburgh Windsor	Pinkie Community Centre	Joe Meloy Neil Speirs	
24 Nov '08	Edinburgh City 'A'	Craigmount Community High School	Neil Speirs	
27 Nov '08	Musselburgh Windsor	Pinkie Community Centre	Joe Meloy	
3 Dec '08	Edinburgh City 'B'	Oatridge College	Neil Speirs	
10 Dec '08	Edinburgh City 'C'	Port Seton Community Centre	Joe Meloy	
2 Feb '09	Blackburn United	Blackburn Community Centre	Joe Meloy	
23 Feb '09	Pumpherston United	Pumpherston Primary School	Joe Meloy	

Educated Pass Football and Education Initiative Activity Sessions

Table 3 – Football and Education Session

Date	Club	Venue	Staff	Comments
14 Jan '09	Seton	Centre for Sport & Exercise	Joe Meloy Daz Bokhari	<p>Each session comprised of an hour long informal presentation, followed by an hour of physical conditioning work delivered by Daz Bokhari (sport scientist).</p> <p>During the presentation, members of the University Football Squad spoke of their experiences and ambitions in both football and education; answering any questions from the youth football boys.</p> <p>During this session, many of the boys began enquiring into specific areas of study, entry requirements and possible career progressions.</p> <p>The club managers reported positive feedback from both the boys and coaches, following the delivery of the first session. Educated.</p> <p>The physical conditioning content of this session also provided the managers with ideas for future training methods with their squads.</p> <p>For the Pumpherston and Blackburn teams, members of the University Football squad delivered an hour of football coaching - following the presentation.</p>
21 Jan '09	Dalkeith CYP	Centre for Sport and Exercise	Joe Meloy Daz Bokhari	
28 Jan '09	Salvesen	Centre for Sport and Exercise	Neil Speirs Daz Bokhari	
4 Feb '09	Salvesen	Centre for Sport and Exercise	Neil Speirs Daz Bokhari	
11 Feb '09	Edinburgh City	Centre for Sport and Exercise	Joe Meloy Daz Bokhari	
18 Feb '09	Musselburgh Windsor	Centre for Sport and Exercise	Neil Speirs Daz Bokhari	
25 Feb '09	Musselburgh Windsor	Centre for Sport and Exercise	Neil Speirs Daz Bokhari	
11 Mar '09	Edinburgh City	Centre for Sport and Exercise	Neil Speirs Daz Bokhari	
18 Mar '09	Edinburgh City	Centre for Sport and Exercise	Neil Speirs Daz Bokhari	
23 Mar '09	Pumpherston United	Recreation Park Uphall Station	Joe Meloy Calum Erskine Jordan Roberts	
25 Mar '09	Musselburgh Windsor	Centre for Sport and Exercise	Neil Speirs Daz Bokhari	
30 Mar '09	Blackburn United	Blackburn Community Centre	Joe Meloy Callum Erskine Darren Leslie	

Educated Pass Football and Education Initiative Activity Sessions

Table 4 – Details of On-Campus Session

Date	Club	Venue	Staff	Comments
8 Apr '09	Musselburgh Windsor Musselburgh Windsor Musselburgh Windsor	University of Edinburgh Physical Education, Sport and Leisure Dept.	Joe Meloy Neil Speirs Tony Turner Simon Coleman Jim Daubney	The PESL based session comprised of two classroom based sessions on Sport Science in Football, and PE and Football, as well as a physical session using sprint timing gates and vertical jump mats.
17 Apr '09	Pumphreston United Blackburn United	West Lothian College	Joe Meloy Neil Speirs David Murray	The WLC session comprised of classroom based sport psychology work, gym based physical work and indoor football coaching.
21 Apr '09	Dalkeith CYP	Jewel & Esk College	Joe Meloy Neil Speirs Alan Clinch	The Jewel & Esk College session comprised of classroom based heart rate, weight, height and BMI work, followed by a strength and conditioning workout.
28 Apr '09	Salvesen 'A' Salvesen 'B'	Stevenson College	Joe Meloy Jonny Pearson	The Stevenson College session comprised of classroom based presentation followed by physical conditioning work.
6 May '09	Seton BC	University of Edinburgh	Joe Meloy Neil Speirs Medical Physics	The Telford college session involved a classroom based look at sport progression routes at college and university; a guided tour of the sport facilities available at Telford; some gym based core conditioning work and an indoor coaching session.
11 May '09	Edinburgh City Edinburgh City Edinburgh City	University of Edinburgh	Joe Meloy Neil Speirs Graeme McCann	The University of Edinburgh Sessions involved a language workshop exploring French and Italian, and a medical physics session looking at MRI, X Ray and Ultrasound. All on campus activities were overseen by qualified partner institute staff. The WLC session was also co-ordinated by current HNC/D students. The Medical Physics session was delivered by Edinburgh University PHD students.

Educated Pass Football and Education Initiative Activity Sessions

Table 5 – Details of Hall of Fame Session

Date	Club	Venue	Staff	Comments
29 May '09	Musselburgh Windsor Musselburgh Windsor Musselburgh Windsor	Easter Road Stadium	Joe Meloy	<p>Each stadium based Session involved an interactive quiz, a stadium tour.</p> <p>After each session the teams were given access to the pitchside and technical areas for photographs.</p> <p>The information obtained from the interactive quiz also provided evaluation data for analysis of the Educated Pass initiative.</p>
5 June '09	Blackburn United Dalkeith CYP	Easter Road Stadium	Joe Meloy	
12 June '09	Salvesen Salvesen	Easter Road Stadium	Joe Meloy	
19 June '09	Edinburgh City Edinburgh City Edinburgh City	Easter Road Stadium	Joe Meloy Neil Speirs	
26 June '09	Pumpherstoun United Seton BC	Easter Road Stadium	Joe Meloy Neil Speirs	

Educated Pass Football and Education Initiative Activity Sessions

Table 6 – Details of Le Tournoi

Date	Club	Venue	Staff	Comments
12 Aug '09	Seton BC Dalkeith CYP Musselburgh Windsor Musselburgh Windsor Musselburgh Windsor Salvesen Salvesen Edinburgh City Edinburgh City Edinburgh City Pumpherston United Blackburn United	Peffermill Playing Fields	Joe Meloy Neil Speirs Kathleen Hood	<p>The 7-side tournament celebrated the current cohort's completion of 12 months of Educated Pass activities.</p> <p>The tournament event opened with a presentation emphasising the key points of the boy's involvement in the initiative and motivating them for football season and school term ahead.</p> <p>The University of Edinburgh football squad helped co-ordinate and referee the tournament – interacting with the boys as role model students.</p> <p>The tournament event was also well attended by the boy's parents.</p>

Educated Pass Football and Education Initiative Activity Sessions

Table 7 – Golden Goal Conference

Date	Club	Venue	Staff	Comments
9 Feb '09	Seton BC Seton BC Colts Dalkeith 'A' Dalkeith 'B' Edinburgh City Edinburgh City '93 Edinburgh City Colts Salvesen Reds Salvesen Polbeth United Broxburn Athletic	University of Edinburgh Appleton Tower lecture theatre 3	Joe Meloy Neil Speirs Kathleen Hood Jonny Pearson, Stevenson College David Murray, West Lothian College Graeme McCann, Telford College Alan Clinch, Jewel & Esk College	The evening Conference delivered a positive education message through renowned and credible football guest speakers. The Conference event was aimed at the teams involved in last years Educated Pass activities (2007-08). The 3 invited guest speakers were: - Pat Nevin, former professional footballer and current TV journalist. - Colin McLeland, Sport Scientist and head Physiotherapist with Hibernian FC. - Professor Stewart Hillis, Cardiologist and Scotland national team coach.

Educated Pass Football and Education Initiative



Polbeth United FC club captain is presented with an SYFA certificate of participation by the Golden Goal guest speakers



Dalkeith CYP in the classroom at Jewel & Esk Valley College



Pumpherston United in the gym at West Lothian College



Musselburgh Windsor FC have a Sport Science briefing at PESL



Salvesen FC attend a session at Stevenson College session

Article Published in Times Education Supplement Scotland on 20 February, 2009 |
By: Emma Seith

Another side to the beautiful game

Not everyone can be a professional footballer. Edinburgh University wants to open boys' eyes to alternatives

When Colin McLelland broke his leg in three places playing rugby, he was warned by doctors that they might have to amputate. Shocking news for anyone, but perhaps more so for a 16-year-old on his way to becoming a professional player.

He didn't lose the leg and managed a couple of years as a semi-professional playing for the Leicester Tigers and Northampton Saints in his university years. Eventually, he was forced to retire after suffering "one injury too many". He is still involved in sport, however, as head physiotherapist at Hibernian Football Club.

Mr McLelland was addressing the Golden Goal conference in Edinburgh, alongside former footballer and journalist Pat Nevin, and Stewart Hillis, professor of cardiovascular and exercise medicine at Glasgow University and doctor for Scotland's national side.

The conference marked the culmination of 18 months of classes and events with boys' football clubs in Edinburgh and the Lothians. The aim was to try and introduce the 150 young players taking part in the Educated Pass initiative to the idea they might not make it as professional footballers, but education could be an alternative for them.

All the speakers had one thing in common. They were involved in the beautiful game - but off the pitch. Neil Speirs, a widening participation officer at Edinburgh University and architect of the scheme, explains: "The underachievement of boys aged between 13 and 16 is well documented. They are turned off school, the classroom gets no respect and neither does the teacher. They find solace in football; that's where they are comfortable. We wanted to deliver messages about participation - not in the classroom but in the clubs, steeped in metaphors, to give them more credibility."

According to Mr Speirs, there are 3,000 professional footballers in Scotland, but only around 20 will survive on the money they earn from the sport. It is vital that boys hoping to make it have other skills to fall back on, he says. "We go to the clubs and deliver the sessions with the coaches to stamp their authority on the meetings. It is a strong culture we are working against that believes things like footballers' brains are in their feet."

Nine sessions of one to two hours are delivered, some of which include coaches and parents, but the main target audience is the boys. "We become a point of contact for parents if they want advice for their son or any other member of their family," says Mr Speirs.

Each session has specific learning outcomes, but in general they take the youngsters through their chances of making it as professionals and look at the alternatives. "Lots of people go to the stadium to work - lawyers, accountants, directors, owners. We look at what skills they have."

The Edinburgh University football team gets involved. They act as positive role models, telling the boys about their own experiences in football, but also about what they are studying and why there is no shame in being academics and athletes.

Stephen Maxwell is in his fourth year at Edinburgh University, studying law, and is captain of the football team. "The boys are interested in the facilities here, which are amazing, and I tell them about my timetable," says Mr Maxwell, who played for Elgin City and briefly for Dundee United. "I have four hours of classes a week, which they are always delighted to hear."

Dougie Gunn, 15, and captain of Broxburn Athletic Colts, has taken part in Educated Pass. He realises that being a professional footballer is a "bit out of reach".

He says: "I still don't know what I want to do, but I want to try hard and get decent grades. Sports science looks like it can lead to quite a good way of life. It seems a good way of being involved in sport, even if you can't make it as a professional."

The scheme seems to have given Dougie some food for thought, but Conall Boyle, who is 15 and has also been taking part, is not convinced that the studying required to assist sportsmen off the field is for him. "I couldn't be bothered doing anything like that," admits the captain of Salvesen Reds, going on to explain life just now is about "sex, drugs and sausage rolls".

His coach Ritchie Haldane describes the scheme as "fantastic". What the boys have learnt about their options will be useful, he feels, even if they don't realise it yet.

The Educated Pass project, a widening participation initiative led by Edinburgh University, is partnered by Stevenson, West Lothian, Telford, Jewel and Esk colleges, and the Scottish Youth Football Association.

The initiative is funded by the Sutton Trust.