



Summary Report: November 2012

Fight for Peace in Rio and London – assessing their progress and impact

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KEY SUMMARY FINDINGS

The challenge for the research is to find out if any changes in the lives of young people can be attributed to the FFP/LPP programme. This study has found that:

The organisational values, the holistic Five Pillars approach, the organisational structure with young people participating in decision-making through the Youth Council and as trainee coaching and support staff, professionalism and commitment of staff, all contribute to creating a social environment that enables young people to make positive changes to their lives.

As an organisation FFP/LPP has an excellent reputation amongst partner agencies and in local communities and this benefits young people; they are offered good services by partner agencies and this helps them achieve longer term goals.

The interaction of the FFP values and each of the Five Pillars enables young people to disclose their problems and concerns, reassess their situation which, in turn, changes their self-perceptions and responses, and as a result of this new 'logic' young people make different choices and chose an alternative life course.

The key mechanisms that explain how young people are effectively supported through these processes include: changing body image; learning to listen; respect rules; self-control; proving one's self in the ring, rather than on the streets; using punch bags to release aggression; learning to talk about problems and express oneself better; learn to be caring; feel better about one's self and take responsibility for their life; and, have increased expectations about what is possible to achieve.

As a result, young people at Fight for Peace:

1 Resist becoming involved in crime, and desist from criminality and drug trafficking;

between 60% and 70% say they are less inclined to commit crimes, carry weapons and join a gang; about three quarters say they have stopped getting into trouble at school, and 82% in Rio, and 93% in London say they have stopped getting into trouble on the streets. According to official records 74% in London on intensive programmes have desisted from crime and 47% in Rio.

2 Contribute to overcoming divisions and creative positive relationships in local communities;

this is most apparent in Rio where there are divisions across drug factions and 59% say they feel safer in other communities and there is evidence that divisive community values are being challenged by young people's actions.

3 Learn and practice conflict resolution and peace making skills;

well over 80% in Rio felt more able to cooperate with others, accept those who are different and have more respect for others, and 71% said that their relationships with their family has improved. In London 46% say they have improved family relationships and 59% better relationships with adults.

4 Attend education courses, and take examinations:

a pass rate of 70% and over for young people who are mostly NEETs, and without formal education qualifications; 73% NEETs progressed to education, training and employment in London and 64% of Pathways students progressed in Rio. In Rio 41% found work and 46% in London were employed six months after the end of their courses.

5 Improve their fitness and to lead a healthy life-style so that they can improve their boxing and martial arts skills, and get fitter;

96% in London, 82% in Rio say they are fitter, and most feel differently about their health.

6 Train harder and to a high standard;

some young people compete locally, others nationally and one young person competes internationally, this inspires FFP members, and enhances the reputation of FFP/LPP.

This summary report presents the main findings from research conducted by the Centre for Institutional Studies, University of East London between April and November 2012 to independently assess the affect of the Fight for Peace (FFP) Academies on the lives of young people in London, UK, and Rio, Brazil. Factors which explain how FFP programmes impact upon the life course of young people and the main outcomes are summarised.

Research approach

This study takes a problem-solving approach that 'tests' the theories that are embedded in the FFP model, and provides information to build stronger theories to contribute to improving practice. It identifies generative causal mechanisms that explain effects, and recognises that these mechanisms are not always 'active', and therefore seeks to understand the circumstances and situations within which FFP is effective, and when it is not. ⁱⁱ

The research activities included:

- Review of the academic literature on youth transitions, the effects of sports, youth work, education and employment, and personal development on the lives of young people, and evaluations
- Monitoring data from FFP/LPP Academies
- Young people's self-completion questionnaires (London 2011; Open Access n=119; Intensive group n=70; Rio 2012; Open Access n=86; Intensive group n=83)
- Youth Council self-completion questionnaires (Rio n=11; London n=11)
- Staff self-completion questionnaires (Rio n= 37; London n=16)
- Face-to-face interviews with young people (21 in Rio and 37 in London)
- Face-to-face interviews with partner agencies (14 in Rio and 10 in London)
- Interviews with staff (3 in Rio and 3 in London)
- Observations of sports sessions

About Fight for Peace

Founded in 2000, FFP uses boxing and martial arts combined with education and personal development to realise the potential of young people living in communities that suffer from crime and violence. The first FFP Academy was founded by Luke Dowdney in Complexo da Maré favela, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

At the heart of FFP are five values which express the organisation's commitment to young people. They are well-publicised within the organisation, integral to the delivery of services and incorporated into youth participation. These values offer an alternative *modus operandi* to violence, conflict and crime as a way of life, encourages young people to participate in education, training and employment, and promotes an ethos of striving to do one's best.

The FFP values are:

Embracing: to accept everyone without judgement

Solidarity between staff and young people

Champion: aim to be the best in all we do

Inspiring: aim to inspire and to be inspired

Fearless: stand up for peace

These values inform how FFP delivers services and they are integrated into each of the Five Pillars that provides young people with opportunities to influence their life course by participating in: boxing and martial arts, education, access to work, support services, and youth leadership. These activities offer a set of solutions to problems that are typically experienced by young people living in areas of poverty and conflict. They offer emotional and practical solutions within a framework of striving for excellence.



FFP's Five Pillars

Boxing and martial arts: attracts young people, provides role models, channels aggression, builds confidence and self-discipline, responsibility and identity

Education: numeracy and literacy classes, qualifications for those who left school without qualifications, personal development and life-skills classes

Employability: access to formal employment opportunities through job skills training, partnerships with companies providing internships & employment, careers advice

Youth support services: mentoring, case work, targeted support, home visits and community outreach

Youth leadership: accredited courses, youth council participation in programme strategy and development

FFP is inclusive. It engages with young people who are committed to becoming professional boxers or Muay Thai experts, those who would like to lead a better life-style and to be fit and healthy, those who have become de-motivated, withdrawn and are NEET (not in education, employment or training), and those with a criminal record.

Rio

Situated between two busy highways with marshland in one corner and a main road at the other edge, Complexo da Maré is a *favela*¹ close to the international airport at Rio de Janeiro. Three drug factions dominated the favela at the time of research. These factions fiercely protect and defend 'their' territory with somewhat military-style planning, patrols, guards who are 'watchers', with a clear hierarchy and a system of patronage and favours. AK47s and handguns are used during the day as well as at night to protect territory and drugs. The drugs on sale are usually cocaine, marijuana and more recently crack cocaine.

Trafficking is attractive to young boys and their identity becomes inextricably linked with the social organisation of drugs. Regular meals, money, and status within a male society, results in them perceiving themselves as a drug trafficker. As soon as this happens the movement of these children is restricted to the territory of their faction.

Community justice is administered by drug traffickers and is integral to maintaining their business. Severe and sometimes brutal punishments – referred to as "medieval" by one of our interviewees – are used against those who violate the rules of the trafficking faction. The police are also responsible for homicides in Maré and during our research they killed two teenagers, one of whom had attended LPP. Their previous victim was a three year old girl. During an interview one young woman summed up the views of others when she asked: "*if policemen and criminals kill and steal alike, what is the difference between them?*" (Female, 13).

Mothers live in fear of their children becoming members of 'life' ("entrar pra vida"), signing up to become part of the social organisation of drug trafficking from aged 11 years that leads to a life of violence, and experiencing intimidation and coercion. Stories of mothers' locking children in rooms, tying them to furniture, and having fierce arguments with their children abound.

Another trigger for violence and aggression within the home is school attendance. When children do not attend school and when parents do not attend school meetings then their welfare payments are withdrawn.

The following are examples of the effects of violence associated with drug trafficking: interrupted schooling, a presumption that young children under 12 years living in Maré are difficult, and poor learners; young children 'act out' violence as well as fighting for real; at secondary school young men are traumatised by their experience of being the 'son of a trafficker' and typically have neurological problems, short attention spans, and often mental health difficulties; and, a second rate education for the sons of traffickers because of 'who they are', which traps them in a life of drug trafficking.

However, almost all of the young people who were interviewed said that the only aspect that they do not enjoy about life in Maré is the violence. Only four out of the 21 interviewed young people said that they would like to leave Maré. Young people wish to bring up families in Maré '*free from violence*'. Young people like the vibrant community and the communal spirit, as typified by the fireworks that are let off in the evening as an invitation for everyone to join a party – usually known as Baile Funk – and to dance together until dawn.

LPP has an excellent reputation within the local community. LPP is perceived as a strong partner and an active member of a network of non-government organisations. Furthermore, LPP is seen to promote leadership amongst young people themselves, which inspires other institutions, for example, Observatório de Favelas.

LPP is upheld as a good example of how to work collaboratively, and interviewees felt that other NGOs and local associations could follow their example and work more closely with the community to have a greater impact on the lives of its people.

Interviewees mentioned that when a student from LPP needs assistance, s/he receives special attention until the issue is solved. The procedure of contacting and involving the families is also highly appreciated for its effectiveness. There are 58 staff at LPP carrying out this work; 33 are male and 25 female, and many are local people who understand the culture of Maré.

¹ Although generally considered to be a favela (or a slum), it Complexo da Maré holds many different social-economic profiles. Favela dwellers are considered to be low-income families, in so-called irregular occupations in the city, with very restricted access to social service.

Newham

FFP in London is situated in the south of the London Borough of Newham in an area that is isolated, and which young people describe as 'grey' and 'boring'. The borough is one of the most disadvantaged in the country, ethnically diverse with a high proportion of young people. It has high unemployment and crime rates for London. Crime is however falling in London and whilst it fell in Newham last year, there were last year 98 gun crimes, 400 rapes and sexual offences and a total of 6,509 violent incidents against the person. During the last 12 months gangs linked to criminal activity have been identified as a problem and the Metropolitan Police have established a Newham Gangs Unit and the Home Office allocated £277 thousand to tackle gangs and serious youth violence in the borough.

Those attending FFP live in many different places. In 2012, of the 495 Open Access participants, just over a quarter live in the immediate area, and a further third from other areas in East London, and the rest from all parts of London. Most are aged 17-25 years old, often described as a neglected group.

Young people who attended the one-to-one sessions since January 2011 show a significant increase in economic, housing, social and economic problems, including unemployment, family relationships, depression, anger, and self-harm. These problems are responded to within FFP or referrals made to other services which include housing, mental health, and employment agencies.

Partner agencies who make referrals to FFP and those who FFP makes referrals to, held FFP in high regard, and was described by one as '*one of its kind in (London Borough of Newham)*'. Partners commented on the staff professionalism, their responsiveness to young people, young people being well-prepared and well-mannered at job interviews, a belief in the value of participating in boxing and martial arts for young people and the inspirational coaching, and that sport and youth leadership enables them to 'sell' FFP positively to parents. Partners appreciate receiving the FFP newsletter.

FFP has 28 members of staff that includes a manager, youth workers, education and training staff, and coaching staff, 9 of whom are women and 19 men.



Delivering the FFP model

FFP has a strong and robust delivery structure in place in London and Rio. As a result of the following practical actions the implementation of the FFP model is rigorous: the articulation of the Five Pillars Model in all annual reports, on the website and on large posters in the Academies, the production of videos for the induction of young people, at personal development sessions, by ongoing meetings within each Academy and across the Academies about the model and its relevance to changing community situations, the routine analysis of monitoring data for performance purposes, regular supervision of staff and training.

Findings from self-completion surveys show that staff are very supportive of the Five Pillars Model:

- ▶ 100% of the staff in London are committed to the Five Pillars model
- ▶ 92% of the staff in Rio are committed to the Five Pillars model

Staff are confident in their work (87% in Newham feel confident all the time, and 86% in Rio) and often feel valued (75% in Newham and 65% in Rio).

Staff are also clear about what changes in young people FFP aims to achieve; 100% in London and 97% in Rio.

The Youth Councils in London and Rio have a key role to play in the implementation of the FFP model and they are all clear on their roles and responsibilities. In Rio all youth council members say that they can influence how FFP is managed and 90% in London feel that they can influence the direction of FFP. In Rio and London all council members say that issues raised by young people at meetings are taken seriously all or some of the time.

The successful implementation of the FFP model means that:

- Young people are offered the activities and support that they are promised
- Partners including other community organisations, schools, social services, youth offending teams, can expect the young people they refer to receive the services they are promised, and for the activities to be delivered to a high standard
- Funders can be certain that their investments will be spent as specified in funding applications and young people will receive a high quality service
- There is greater certainty that the FFP programme is a cause that has an effect, that it has the potential to make a difference to the lives of young people.

Assessing the FFP model

The FFP vision has two aims:

1. To overcome division and violence
2. To promote the potential of young people

The research has found that the FFP model achieves these goals by being:

Attractive to young people

Using boxing and martial arts to attract young people living in poor areas prone to violence:

For the sessions which are open to all young people:

- Over 90% in Rio and 85% in London said that they joined FFP for the boxing and martial arts
- Over half the young people in Rio and over three quarters of those in London joined to get fit

Young people also find the values that inform how FFP staff work attractive and factors related to FFP as an organisation, including:

- The symbolic significance of FFP buildings as safe places
- Free training and education classes makes it possible for young people to attend
- The friendliness, warmth, and approachability of staff; and,
- Use of professional coaches and high standard of training, are all part of the attraction of FFP

Enabling young people to re-assess their situation

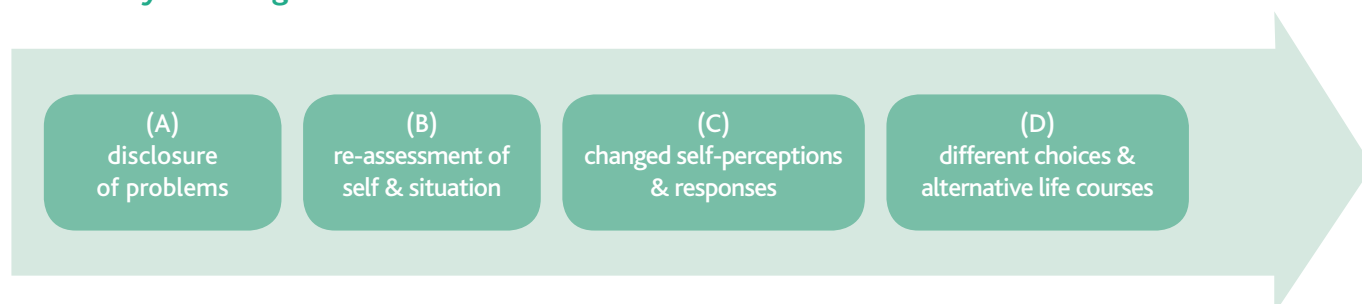
This research, like previous studies, has found that young people typically strive towards conventionality and aspire to have secure paid employment, a house and family.ⁱⁱⁱ In Rio young people's biggest desire was to live '*free from violence*'.

Young people often wish to make changes to their lives but do not know to:

***'I would say when I was in jail, that's when I went to know that I wanted to change. But then I was thinking how, I didn't know how to...'* (Male, 17)**

Supporting young people to move from 'one state of affairs to another' is the central task of FFP and young people make this transition through the following processes:

FFP Theory of Change



Disclosure of problems (A)

90% of those who attend Open Access admit to having some problems and the overwhelming majority feel able to talk to the staff.

This young man has a criminal history and complex problems and he describes how talking to his youth worker has helped him think about his situation and how he could change it:

'[name of youth worker] was my one-to-one mentor, a great guy... So you just put it all on the table and you sift through it a piece at a time... he pointed me in different directions, he reflected, he empathised with me...' (Male, 18)

Staff commented on how young people often do not take responsibility for their actions. Part of the reinterpretation of a young person's situation therefore includes 'taking responsibility'.

Reassessment of self & situation (B)

To reconstruct their lives young people problematise things that were previously unproblematic, reassess their position and then to make different choices from their newly interpreted situation.

Young people talk about how the sport and one-to-one sessions together enable them to change their self-perceptions and reassess their situation:

'I used to get angry easily but by doing Muay Thai and speaking with [name of youth worker] who is one of the mentors, it made me grow up and change my mind, and see things in a different way.' (Male, 20)

Some identified the friendliness and kindness at FFP as a motivator to change their situation.

One young man explains:

'The friends outside that I used to have, they used to be on smoke and stuff like that, as with the friends in here, they're not like that... now it's different because I'm trying to make a change in myself, and in FFP they're just friendly, very friendly, they're kind people and I like them...' (Male, 15)

Different self-perceptions and responses (C)

The research has found that since joining FFP many young people have reinterpreted their lives and to take different actions.

For young people attending Open Access programmes, they say that they think differently about their:

- health (67%), themselves (59%), their future (50%) what they want from life (49%) in London
- future (62%), health (56%), what they want from life (50%), and themselves (42%) in Rio

These changes are associated with an increased likelihood of preventing gang affiliation, committing crime and disrespecting someone.



In London, where a young person felt differently about themselves, their future, and what they wanted from life (33 young people)

- 85% said that they were less likely to be a member of a gang
- 79% said that they were less likely to commit a crime
- 70% said that they were less likely to disrespect someone

For those who said that they had stopped getting into trouble at school 70% felt differently about their future.

For those who said that they had stopped getting into trouble on the streets 67% said that they felt differently about themselves, and what they wanted out of life (59%).

FFP friendships support young people to make different life choices

Young people talked about their new friends, and how they have made a significant contribution to improving their lives.

The overwhelming majority of young people who attend the Open Access programmes said that they find it easier to make friends since joining FFP:

- 86% in London and 87% in Rio

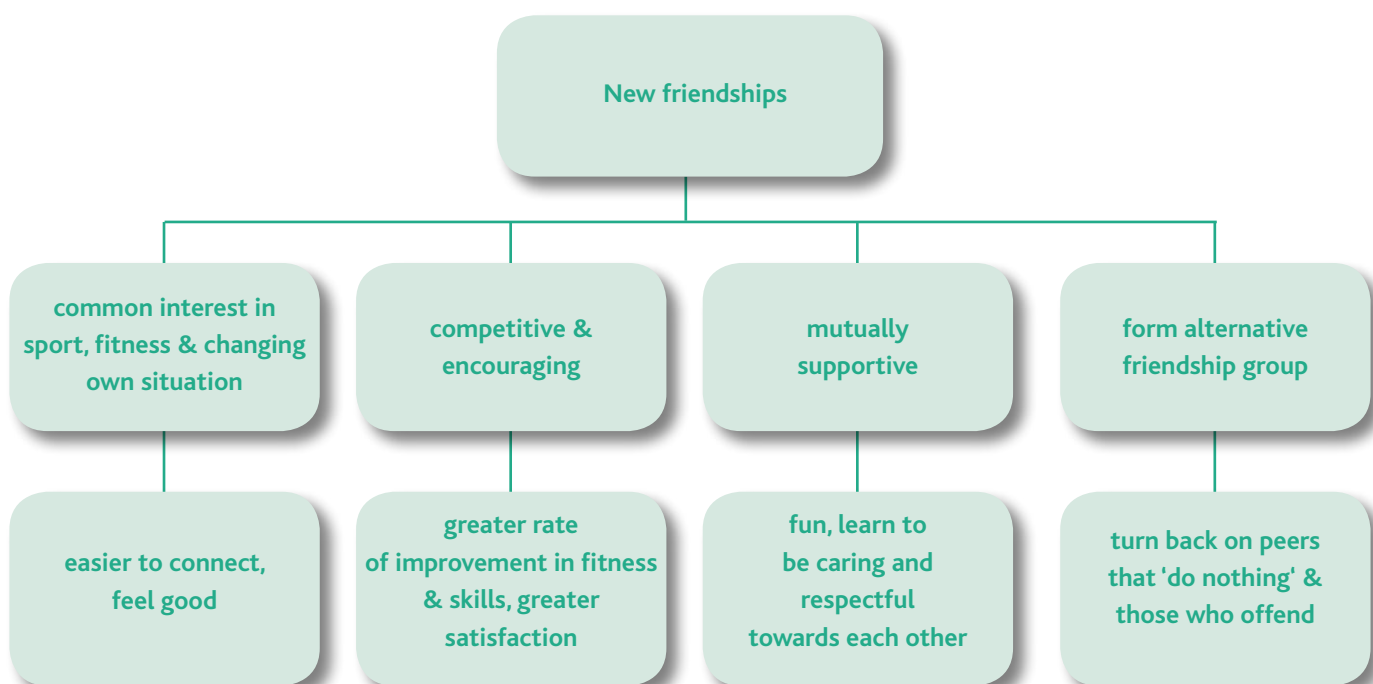
Friendships at FFP affect young people's self-perceptions, motivations to achieve, and enable them to have positive relationships. These friendships are an important aspect of making alternative life choices:

During training these friendships provide support and encouragement to train harder:

'Yeah good relationships, we're friendly with everyone, especially when it comes to training everyone wants to push you further, your friend sees you slacking behind he'll tell you, 'Push harder, you can do it.' (Male, 21)

Young people also learn to care about other people outside FFP. One young woman explains:

'At home for example, before I listened to my mum but I couldn't really hear, but then when I started coming here, I started caring, I helped with her problems, if she needs any paperwork or something... I think it's because people care about each other, in here they take care of each other, it's how people act around you, or that's what I think, that's how it happened for me.' (Female, 14)



Conflict resolution and peace making skills make a difference

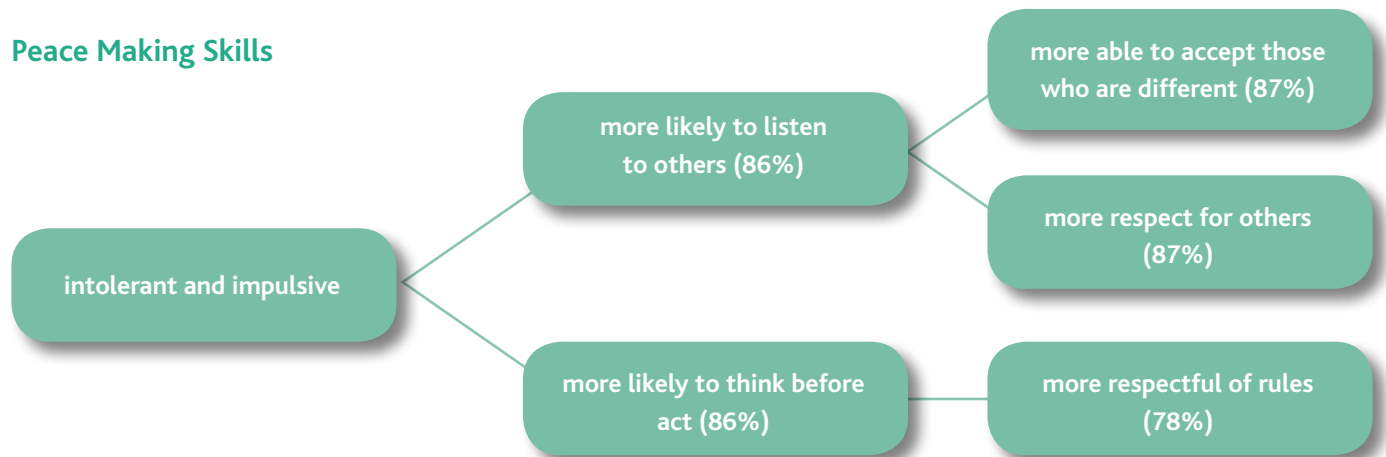
The findings show that the majority of young people have improved these life-skills which are likely to contribute to peace making.

The findings from questionnaires completed by the Intensive group in Rio (n=83) show that key mechanisms that explain changes are:

- listening and being heard
- being able to express oneself and feeling understood
- being calmer
- thinking before taking action

One example of how different types of conflict situations may be averted or diffused due to changes in young peoples' attitudes and understandings, is:

Peace Making Skills



Improved self-worth and trying new activities

The overwhelming majority of young people attending Open Access programmes feel more positive about themselves since joining FFP:

- 87% in London, and 86% in Rio

For young people attending Intensive programmes:

- in Rio, the overwhelming majority feel better about themselves (92%), more confident (94%) and more motivated (84%)
- in London, two thirds feel better about themselves (66%), more confident (66%), and more motivated (66%)

Three types of inter-related causal patterns are identified that link improvements in self-belief to taking positive actions, and doing things differently. These are:

Increasing potential: FFP values and ethos impact upon how young people feel about themselves and the friendliness and equality of treatment affects young people positively. Two young people explain:

'I'm 17. I think that FFP is good for me, it makes me think of life differently, it makes me think that there's more choices after just secondary school and it feels like it's given me more confidence to do different things.' (Female, 17)

'Yeah, the Muay Thai has a big effect 'cause it teaches you that discipline, motivation to push on, the coaches and the staff members help you to push on and reach a goal not only in the sport but in your life ... discipline to stick with my studies, not to drop out and stuff like that...' (Male, 21)

Another theme reflected in the interviews with young women is that FFP broadens their perspective about 'what is possible' for them as a young woman, and they realise that they can participate in a 'male' sport, and it benefits them too. This young woman is learning Muay Thai:

'Yes, normally we girls in East London, we just care about beauty and clothes and go out, and for us, exercise is just for men, but they show it's different, not just for men. Because exercise is not just for being a nice body, I think inside is the most important, and the exercise can help the inside to feel better.' (Female, 25)

Broadening the horizons of young women is made possible by the non-judgemental approach:

'I thought it was only for boys, but then when I came here, they changed my mind... when I came here, I learnt to listen to people a little more, I learnt to respect their opinions and their point of view, it's just like people treated me equally, they didn't care how old I am, they didn't care how I look, where I'm from, and that made me feel very good.' (Female, 14)

Boxing and martial arts driven virtuous circle: the boxing and martial arts 'discipline' has a key role in explaining how young people alter their self-perceptions and reinterpret their situation which motivates them to make changes to their lives. The 'discipline':

- energises and calms
- changes young people's body shape, they feel stronger, and their improved body image is encouraging
- teaches young people to work hard, to learn from mistakes, and that persistence is necessary to progress
- increases young people's willingness to learn harder boxing and martial arts techniques and to try other new activities

- increases young people's self-reliance and gives them an expanded belief about 'what is possible'

The following accounts by young people describe some of these processes:

'I do gym and sometimes Muay Thai... it makes me better physically, like mentally as well innit? I've been more motivated instead of feeling lazy and that.' (Male, 17)

When young people say that they feel better about themselves and more confident, these feelings are rooted in self-reliance and self-worth. This young woman emphasises how the discipline of boxing teaches self-reliance:

'... whereas boxing, the only person you can rely on is yourself which I think is really important.' (Female, 17)

Some young people linked life skills they learn from the 'discipline' to other aspects of their life including doing homework, and for others in meant staying on at College and not dropping out:

'Yeah, the Muay Thai has a big effect 'cause it teaches you that discipline, motivation to push on, the coaches and the staff members help you to push on and reach a goal not only in the sport but in your life ... discipline to stick with my studies, not to drop out and stuff like that...' (Male, 21)

Discussion driven virtuous circle: conversations between staff and young people and amongst staff assist with processes of self-re-evaluation, and give young people a realistic perspective on life. The social processes are:

- being able to talk to staff and raise concerns
- discuss doubts about current life style and question current situation
- develop agreed actions to change and improve certain attitudes and behaviour
- praise, encouragement and a positive environment within FFP encourages further changes
- young people have a different 'mindset', are motivated to learn new skills and to realise their goals

A young man with complex needs explains that weekly meetings are particularly helpful:

'... we just basically go through the week, 'What have you done this week; what are your targets for next week?' Set little targets, that's what has been helping me as well, tick off targets what I will do during the week...' (Male, 20)



Feeling safer on the streets

Another consequence of changed self-perceptions and re-evaluation of their situation is young people's different response to being on the streets in their local community.

Those young people who say that they are much fitter since joining FFP are more likely to say that they feel a lot safer on the streets. These young people explain the reasons for these feelings:

'I think it makes me a bit more relaxed to feel like I know that I can defend myself if I had to.' (Female, 17)

'Yeah it makes me handle the situation better, ... if two people came and confronted me, I'm not saying I would attack them but at least I feel more confident knowing that I can defend myself.' (Male, 21)

Different choices & alternative life courses (D)

Six indicators represent the alternative life courses chosen by young people. Each is discussed in turn, and the mechanisms that link young people's decisions to the outcomes are also identified:

1 Sports-related: to compete, work towards becoming a professional sports person, and/or a coach

One defining characteristic of the FFP model is that young people are encouraged to 'aim to be the best in all we do', and some young people chose to compete in boxing and martial arts. To realise this aim high quality coaches are employed who are, or have been, champions themselves and this inspires young people, and makes them feel valued.

The high standard of coaching affects: the reputation of FFP, encourages young people to excel, and makes young people proud to be associated with an organisation that produces champions.

In Rio: 90 young people take part in competitions; one participates at international level and four at national (Brasileiro) level and the others at state and local tournaments.

In London: there are 13 amateur and novice boxing competitors; 12 amateur and 3 semi-professional Muay Thai competitors; and, one Mixed Martial Arts amateur competitor.





One young person emphasises how FFP has given him a career in boxing:

It's a good place but it's just put another career in my life, it's really changed my life, I enjoy life more 'cause of boxing, 'cause I come here, I meet friends. Yeah I enjoy life, trust me <chuckles> 'cause of boxing, I really enjoy it here. (Male, 18)

Young people are also offered opportunities to take coaching qualifications and to assist the coaches in training sessions. In Newham three young men and two young women assist with training, two of whom have qualified as coaches.

2 Health-related: become healthier through improved fitness and making healthy life-style choices

Previous research has found connections between taking physical exercise and becoming healthier.

Open Access young people in London (96%), and Rio (82%) said that they are fitter; and, 56% of these young people in Rio and 67% in London feel differently about their health.

The dual approach of doing sport and promoting healthier life styles appears to be an effective approach. Young people train hard and this relieves stress and anger and the adrenaline rush from exercising makes them feel better. One young woman explains how boxing relieves her stress and anger:

'if you have a lot of stress or if you have a lot of anger, boxing is a great way to get rid of that excess stress and anger.' (Female, 17)

Through conversations and personal development sessions young people learn about the importance of a healthy diet for their fitness and performance. This information is relevant to their sporting aspirations and is therefore meaningful and relevant to them.

In interviews young people talked about giving up coca cola, cutting down on sweets, stopping smoking cigarettes and taking illegal drugs, and eating regularly. They make these choices to change their life-styles not so much because their habits are 'unhealthy' or 'wrong' but rather because they want to get fit and to be good at what they do. It is possible that choosing healthy options for positive reasons is likely to have a longer lasting effect?

3 Education and employment-related: an appreciation of the value of education and employment and motivated to gain qualifications and to find work

Two outcomes can be identified; the first, where young people's attitudes towards learning and finding work have improved – they are motivated and willing learners; and the second, is obtaining qualifications, continuing with education, doing work placements and finding work.

FFP has a strong track record in enabling reluctant learners, often with no formal educational qualifications and a history of poor experience at school, to complete a course and to pass examinations.

Attendees in London were almost always young men, and 73% had NEET status (48 young people).

London Intensive group, those 16 years and over (22 young people)

- 91% feel fitter and 86% more motivated
- 82% listen more to others, 91% feel treated with more respect
- 96% feel better about themselves, 91% more confident
- 77% say they are more ambitious

For 2010 & 2011 the pass rate for all those attending the pathways educational courses was:

- 73% for numeracy
- 76% for literacy

Progression:

- ▶ Six months after they had completed module 1 (37 young people) 86% were in education, training or employment
- ▶ At the end of module 2 (20 young people) 80% were in education, training or employment
- ▶ Of the 48 young people who had NEET status at the start of the courses, 73% (35 young people) progressed to education, training or employment at the end of the course



In Rio, in 2010 and 2011, 175 young people started the pathways education programme, and the overwhelming majority were NEETs. The pass rate was:

- 70%

The majority of these students (62%) were young women, mostly aged 16-24 years (77%), and the rest over 25 and under 30 years, and predominantly Black (41%):

- At the end of their modules 64% were in education, training or employment

FFP also has a good record of finding employment for young people, and in both Academies this is particularly difficult with the economic recession in the UK where over a million young people are unemployed and in Brazil where employers stigmatise those who live in favelas, and in a male dominated society young women find it more challenging to obtain employment.

London Pathways group:

- ▶ At the end of Module 1 almost half had found work (46%) and six months later 32% (12 young people) were employed
- ▶ At the end of Module 2 a quarter had found work (25%), and for those who had graduated six months previously, 60% (6 young people) were employed

Rio pathways group:

- ▶ 41% found work (50 young people)

How can these findings be assessed? The following issues can be considered in making a judgement:

What would have happened to these young people if FFP did not exist? As a group of reluctant learners without qualifications, it seems likely that many would still be NEET. In London there are opportunities for NEETs to join education programmes to obtain level 1 qualifications, but there are very few programmes with boxing and martial arts as the 'hook' to attract them. In Rio, those who have failed school at 15 have to wait until they are 17 years, and then have to take evening classes. LPP is local, has a crèche for children, is run during the day so students can return home to carry out their home duties in the evening. LPP therefore provides an invaluable educational opportunity which is culturally sensitive and as the graduation statistics show, attractive to young women.

The pass rates of 70% and above are high. These students are living in poverty and with violence which is stressful and difficult. The 'presenting problems' and interviews reveal experiences of domestic violence, financial difficulties, and depression, for example. The expectation would be of a high 'drop out rate', few feeling able to take examinations, and a notable failure rate, but this did not happen.

FFP, as an organisation, offers young people further opportunities once they have completed their courses. Young people can volunteer as trainee coaches and support workers, for example. Young people can also attend the Open Access programme and in 2011, of those attending the Pathways education courses, 68% said that they would continue to attend. This continuity of provision is greatly valued by young people, and contrasts with other organisations where young people have to leave once they have taken their examination.

4 Peace making and conflict resolution skills, reducing aggressive behaviour and preventing crime

Particularly impressive are changes in the characteristics of young people's relationships towards a more conciliatory and empathetic approach, and a reduction in the use of their anger. The overwhelming majority have also improved their ability to negotiate and diffuse tense and difficult situations.

In Rio key mechanisms that explain improvements in co-operation, peace making and conflict resolution skills are:

- More likely to listen to others: 86%
- More likely to think before act: 86%
- Feel calm more often: 72%
- Feel more able to say how they feel: 69%

The findings also indicate a changing set of values that inform young people's revised attitudes and behaviour that includes greater self-respect and 'taking responsibility', that can be traced to the FFP ethos and activities. Some of these findings are highlighted from the Intensive group in Rio:

- 89% feel more able to cooperate with others
- 87% are more able to accept those who are different and have more respect for others
- 86% are more likely to listen to others and defend their opinions and attitudes

These findings demonstrate a greater willingness to listen and cooperate, a more tolerant and respectful attitude, and an improved ability to articulate their point of view which is often a source of frustration for young people.

The finding that three quarters of these young people feel better understood and 59% feel treated with respect indicates that they are successfully using their new social skills, with the consequence that they are less likely to need to resort to aggressive and confrontational behaviour.

Young people said that their relationships have improved:

- 71% in Rio, and 46% in London said that their relationship with their family had improved since joining FFP
- 59% in London said that they have better relationships with adults.

The following accounts by young people explain the changes in their behaviour. This young boxer uses her self-control, and through boxing has learnt about her potential to harm others, and now avoids fights. Again, she takes responsibility for tense situations and takes actions to stop the escalation of conflict:

'if someone does start fighting with me, not to actually use the stuff that I use here 'cause obviously I will damage them but I would control myself a little bit more as in not... like give myself, hang on I might hurt somebody badly, then you just move away from the situation so no one gets hurt. You know what I mean?' (Female, 15)

Coaches emphasise how the best form of defence is to avoid confrontation and young people explained how they are now able to 'walk away':

'it makes me feel like I'm more disciplined and I've got more control over myself and I know what I'm doing when it comes to situations, such as, when there's someone .. being rude to me, they're either calling me names or whatever, I just feel like I've got control of it. So I just pick the wise choice, because I just walk away.' (Male, 15)

Integral to understanding these changes in attitudes and behaviour are the values of FFP, in particular 'embracing', 'solidarity' and 'fearless', and the youth leadership pillar of the Five Pillars Model. These features explain the links between the changes in attitudes and behaviour. For example, young people experience;

- ▶ A warm and friendly environment that is caring and supportive
- ▶ Being accepted, whoever they are and whatever their reputation, and the acceptance is non-judgemental
- ▶ Relationships with adults which are based on cooperation and good will
- ▶ Being able to make decisions, influence what happens at FFP, and being able to portray young people at FFP positively to adult visitors from prestigious organisations

The conflict resolution and peace making skills of young people are likely to have a longer term impact on domestic violence, bullying at school and in the workplace, and tensions and violent incidents between different groups in communities.

5 Overcoming divisions and creating positive relationships in local communities

There are some very courageous young people, particularly in Rio where young people are prepared to 'cross the line' into areas that are patrolled by different drug factions. Wearing a LPP t-shirt allows young people to move back and forth between favelas within the Complexo, and participating in training sessions and competitions enables them to visit other communities without running the risk of being punished. Wearing the project's t-shirt, is described as a "free-pass" and "holy shirt" which, according to one young person, "serves as bullet-proof vest".

In Rio, the Open Access young people:

- 79% say they feel safer in other communities

The Intensive group:

- 39% feel safer in other communities



A FFP 'community effect'; that is, bridging divided communities is much stronger in Rio, and more pertinent. The following comments from young people give some insights into how FFP provides young people with an opportunity to build positive relationships:

"LPP enables me to meet people from different parts of the community that I would not meet if it weren't for the project, for it is dangerous to go to other areas" (Male, 22).

There are indications that the FFP model has enabled divisive community values imposed by drug factions, to be questioned and challenged by young people who wish to live 'free from violence'. Due to its excellent reputation and because it offers young people a safe place, and alternative way of life, drug traffickers are tolerant of young people wearing LPP t-shirts walking across drug faction 'lines'. This tolerance, dependent on the reputation of LPP, explains how the changes are coming about.

In London, 'crossing the line' between postal codes which are 'claimed' by different groups or 'gangs', is less often articulated. For those who live locally, an area which no-one seemed to like living in, the presence of FFP gives them a reason to say something positive about their neighbourhood. One young person typified these views:

'...before all we had was a park and a library, now we have a national club, so it's more known now, people actually say, 'What's in your area?' 'Oh I've got a boxing club and we do this and we do that.' You can just talk about it, what you've done, for ages, which is great I think... Definitely, it's something you can be proud of, isn't it, you can actually be proud of the area.' (Male, 16)

The circumstances in Newham, with the greater social fragmentation, young people attending from disparate places, and the FFP premise which are too small, all serve to mitigate the much stronger community effects identified in Rio.

6 Prevention/reduction in criminality and drug trafficking

Desisting from committing crime is one indication of young people making different choices. The majority of those who attended the Open Access programme and who were in trouble at school, home or in the street said that they had stopped:

- at home – 57% in Rio and 89% in London
- at school – 74% in London and 77% in Rio
- in the streets – 82% in Rio and 93% in London

Explanatory mechanisms that account for how a reduction in 'troublesome' behaviour and criminality occurs:

For example, the London Intensive group:

- Feel calmer more often (62%)
- More likely to listen to others (74%)
- Respect others (73%), tolerate difference (73%)
- Think before act more often (71%), and more respectful of rules (70%)
- Find it easier to do things on own (63%)
- Feel safer (67%)

These mechanisms explain the strong preventive effect of the FFP programme:

- In London, between 60% and 70% said that they were less likely to become a member of a gang, to commit crime, to become a victim of crime, or carry a weapon, or disrespect someone.

These rates are higher for those who:

- feel differently about themselves, their future, and what they want from life
- those who are fitter and have a changed self-perception are even less likely to be tempted into illegal activities; 77% are less likely to commit a crime, 74% less likely to be a gang member, and 65% less likely to carry a weapon

Information on offending histories is collected for those attending intensive programmes and those who are known to the criminal justice agencies. This information is an under-estimate of the number of young people associated with taking illegal drugs, and criminally active, who attend FFP. It is illegal to work with drug traffickers and no data are collected on drug faction associations.

The available figures are:

In London, in 2010 and 2011, of those having intensive case work:

- 74% (20 out of 27 young people) desisted from offending
- 42% (5 out of 12 young people) stopped their gang affiliations

AND

- 75% (12 young people) who attended the Pathways programme desisted from further offending

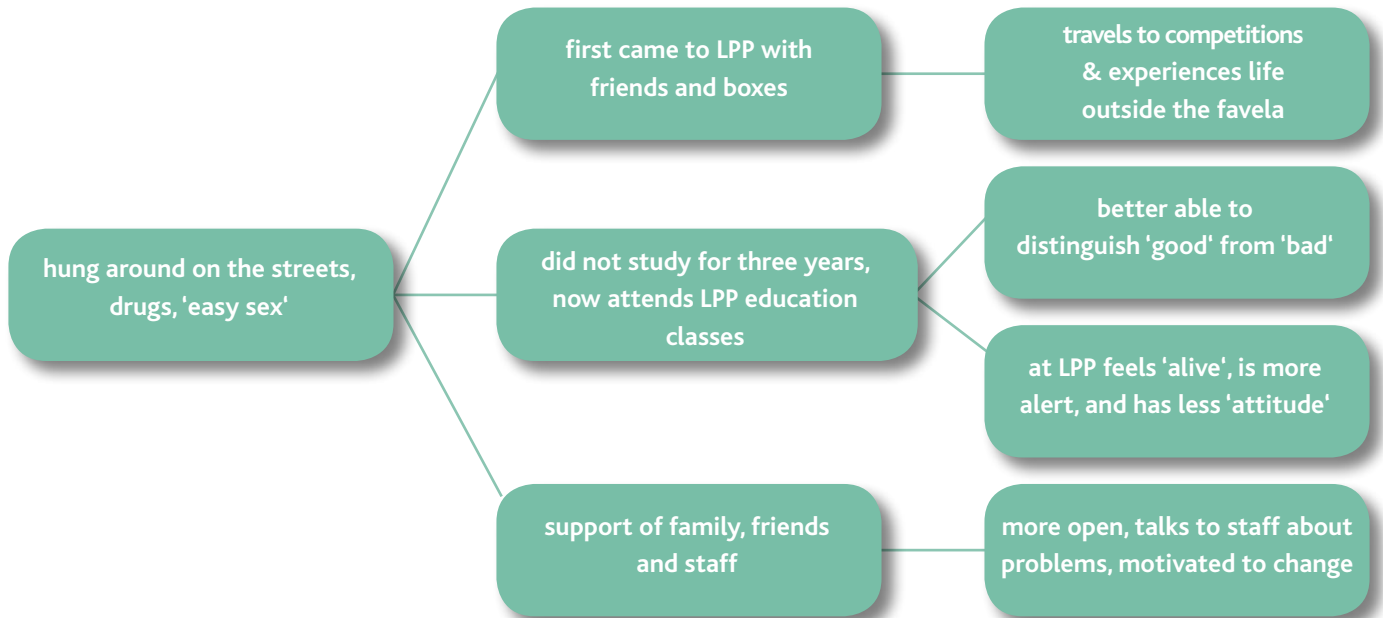
In Rio in 2010 and 2011 of those who attended the Pathways programmes, 15 young people were officially known offenders:

- 47% (7) desisted from offending



Interviews with young people show that the route out of crime in Rio has a similar pattern and can be summarised as:

Turning away from crime and drug trafficking



For these young people living in economically disadvantaged and violence prone areas, sometimes living in extreme poverty and without hope of finding secure employment, crime and drug trafficking is an attractive 'way of life' with its status, financial rewards, and 'easy sex'. Preventing the onset of criminality and reducing criminality in these circumstances

is challenging but the findings from this research suggest that the FFP model is effective, and the high profile presence of FFP in local communities gives them the added advantage of being able to work with criminals and drug traffickers for several years.



ⁱ Alice Sampson is Director of the Centre for Institutional Studies, University of East London. Maria Rita Villela is a PhD Candidate at the Department of Social Sciences at the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro. We would particularly like to thank all the young people who have participated in this research, the staff at FFP/LPP, and partner organisations. We would also like to thank FFP for funding this research and the Karl Popper Charitable Trust who funded the time of Alice Sampson to develop the methods used in this study. We would like to thank Maria Fofanah, our research assistant, for her work on the databases.

ⁱⁱ See for example: Popper, K. (1969), *Conjectures and Refutations: The Growth of Scientific Knowledge*. Third edition. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul; Pawson, R. and N. Tilley (1997) *Realistic Evaluation*. London: Sage. Granger RC (1998) Establishing causality in evaluations of comprehensive community initiatives. In: Fulbright-Anderson K, Kubisch AC, Connell J (eds) *New Approaches to Evaluating Community Initiatives*, Volume 2. Washington DC: The Aspen Institute, 221-246. Weiss, C. (1995a) 'Nothing as practical as good theory: exploring theory-based evaluation for Comprehensive Community Initiatives for children and families', in Connell, J. and A. Kubisch and L. Schorr and C. Weiss, (eds) *New Approaches to Evaluating Community Initiatives: Concepts, Methods, and Contexts*, pp. 65-92. Washington: Aspen Institute. Sampson A (2007) Developing robust approaches to evaluating social programmes *Evaluation Journal*. 13(4): 469-485.

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^{iv} Haigh, Y (2009), 'Desistance from crime: reflections on the transitional experiences of young people with a history of offending', *Journal of Youth Studies*, 12,3: 307-322. Sampson A and Themelis S (2009) Working in the community with young people who offend, *Journal of Youth Studies*, 12,2 121-137.

^v See the work of the Barrow Cadbury Foundation. Jones, G. (2005), *The thinking and behaviour of young adults (aged 16-25)* Literature review for the Social Exclusion Unit, London: Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

