



New York City Impact Report City in the Community

An evaluation of City in the Community program activities



Foreword

A message from the Director of Community Development, New York City FC

City in the Community (CITC) was founded in 2014 in New York City as the partner foundation of New York City Football Club (NYCFC), with a mission to empower children in underserved communities, using soccer to create opportunity and to be a driving force for good in our great city.

This is only possible through the support of our community partners and our team of caring, compassionate community coaches, young leaders, volunteers and mentors. This incredible network gives youth the tools they need to succeed, providing critical leadership skills and instilling lifelong values of teamwork.

Now in our fourth year of operation, we are proudly serving more than 4,000 young New Yorkers each week through these initiatives, designed to address health, education and crime by creating safe places to play and providing no-cost health, wellness and leadership development programs.

In the communities we serve, our programs have proven to be an essential need for youth where it can be easier to join a gang than a team. At our best, we can serve as a source of strength and inspiration to help youth to believe in themselves and to achieve their potential.

This research is important for many reasons. It helps us to measure our own success, and ensure we are serving people as best as we can, always learning and improving, and on top of that, it means so much to those that deliver this work every day. We also hope it will engage new people with the work of City in the Community and demonstrate the amazing value of sport to every level of society.

I hope you find this useful and inspiring. This work is only possible because of the support of our staff, our fans and most importantly, our youth.

Paul Jeffries

Director of Community Development
New York City Football Club



City in the Community (CITC) New York

Launched in December of 2014, City in the Community (CITC) New York is the 501 (c)(3) foundation proudly supported by New York City FC.

With the support of passionate fans, CITC uses the power of soccer to promote health, education and leadership development and create safe community spaces, where programming is free of charge for more than 4,000 young people each week throughout the five boroughs.

Programs at more than

20
SCHOOLS
throughout NYC



4,000+

youth served per-week through free year-round in-school and after-school programs

100+



young leaders, volunteers, teachers and youth workers trained in community soccer coaching

20+
YOUTH LEADERS

that make up the CITC Youth Leadership Council



300+

middle school and high school students served through Saturday Night Lights Initiative designed to reduce crime and youth violence

50
COMMUNITY PITCHES

throughout the five boroughs in the next five years



About the research

In 2010, NYCFC sister club Manchester City FC and the UAE Embassy partnered to build NYC's first rooftop mini-soccer pitch at Lexington Academy, a public school in East Harlem. For nearly a decade, this pitch has provided thousands of young people with a safe place to play soccer and take part in free CITC programs.

Five years later, NYCFC partnered once again with the UAE Embassy to construct a new, state-of-the-art soccer field at P.S. 24 in Brooklyn's Sunset Park neighborhood which was opened for the 2015/16 schoolyear. More than 200 kids received free access to soccer programs on this pitch in the first year of opening.

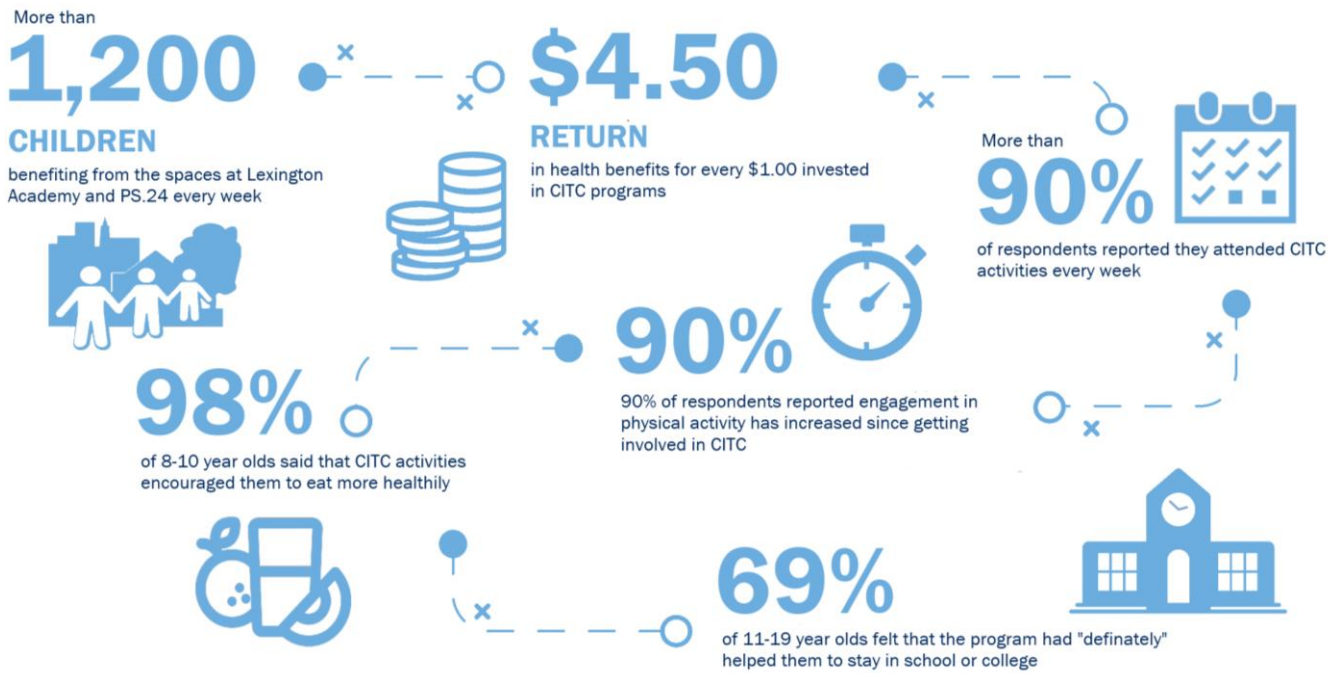
On the pitches at Lexington Academy and at P.S. 24, CITC delivers physical education, recess, after-school and summer programs, and lessons on nutrition and lifestyle, such as healthy eating and physical exercise. Participants are also referred to other CITC programs, including Saturday Night Lights (SNL) which offer soccer during peak crime hours, as well as academic support, mentorship, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and Youth Advocacy.

This research, conducted by independent research agency, Ecorys, examines the costs of delivery and the impact of the programs at Lexington Academy and P.S. 24 on participants.

In September 2017, 98 CITC NY program participants, aged 8-19 years old, were surveyed to explore their attitudes towards sport and physical activity, healthy eating and whether their engagement with the program had impacted on their schoolwork, involvement with crime or anti-social behavior and overall sense of confidence and wellbeing. A range of qualitative interviews also examined some of the broader benefits of the program, particularly around education, personal development and community cohesion.



Summary of findings



PARTICIPATION IN SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The research found an increase in overall participation in sports and physical activity amongst respondents. The vast majority of participants attributed this increase to their involvement in CITC activities.

- More than 80% of survey respondents said that practicing or playing sports was a key motivation for getting involved in CITC activities; getting fit or becoming healthier was the second most common reason.
- At least 90% of respondents in each area said that their engagement in physical activity had increased since getting involved in CITC activities.
- Nearly half (48%) of respondents in Sunset Park and just under a third (32%) of respondents in East Harlem reported that they had increased their weekly engagement in sport and exercise by between 4 and 7 hours a week.
- The clear majority of respondents said that attending the program had improved their understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle.



90%

of respondents increased their engagement in physical activity



DIET AND NUTRITION

There was encouraging evidence on the positive impact of the program on participants' knowledge of diet and nutrition. The research showed that younger children, in particular, reported an increase in consumption of healthier items and a decline in less nutritious options.

- Elementary school age participants reported an increase in the consumption of healthier foods such as fruit (62%), milk (55%) and vegetable (43%) and a drop in the consumption of soda (44%), candy (42%) and pastries (42%).
- A substantial proportion of older participants reported that they had increased their consumption of fruit (45%) and vegetables (36%). Furthermore, 54% were consuming less candy and soda and 77% reported drinking more water.
- 80% of all respondents agreed with the statement: "I think healthy eating is important for my health and I am doing something about it at the moment."
- 90% of older respondents and 98% of the younger age group said that CITC activities had helped them to eat more healthily.



77%

of older participants reported drinking more water



62%

of younger participants reported eating more fruit

43%

of younger participants reported eating more vegetables



EDUCATION AND FUTURE CAREERS

CITC activities have provided inspiration for future educational or career pathways, with many interviewees making direct reference to workshops and tutoring opportunities in helping them to form their ideas.

- 69% of older respondents and 46% of younger respondents felt that the program had “definitely” helped them to stay in school or college.
- Interviews with a range of stakeholders revealed the impact of the program activities in providing opportunities for advice and inspiration for future educational pathways or careers.
- Tutoring, workshops and visits from professional figures (e.g. police officers) were credited with inspiring participants.

“Just experiencing how to help others made me want to be in it... I’ve applied to internships... to be in pre-med and stuff like that... [before] I didn’t want to be anything... but ever since that workshop you know there’s options and I’m going to be something.”

CITC Participant,
Lexington Academy



69%

of older participants reported that the program helped them to stay in school or college



PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Engagement in program activities and critically the provision of safe and accepting spaces has impacted positively on confidence levels, the ability to work as a team and in some cases the ability to apply the lessons learned on the field (e.g. perseverance, respect, teamwork) to a classroom setting.

- Teachers at both schools emphasized the personal growth they had witnessed in many students who had engaged with CITC activities.
- Alongside the importance of physically safe spaces that can act as a focal point to engage young people, CITC can also be credited with creating figuratively safe spaces for their players.
- According to older participants, CITC programming created a space for emotional support and friendship:
 - 57% cited making friends and socializing as a reason for taking part in activities.
 - 55% reported improved confidence.
 - 40% highlighted the draw of being in a safe place after school and/or during weekends.

"We saw that there was... collaboration in the classroom, the kids would listen to each other a lot better, they were willing to take a step back and let other kids participate..."

Teacher, P.S. 24



63%

of younger participants reported that the program had a positive impact on their engagement with formal education

"I think the best thing is that it's a safe environment and everybody's really friendly and you know you can kind of like count on anybody in the program to help you out and just pick you up in times of need..."

CITC Participant,
Lexington Academy



COMMUNITY IMPACT

Many interviewees noted the value in providing a safe space – both in terms of physicality as well as the presence of a support network in the form of coaches as well as fellow participants.

- Over 90% respondents reporting that they attended CITC activities every week.
- Interviews revealed that the participation of children and young people in CITC activities was in some cases helping to bring families closer together.
- SNL activities in particular were credited by parents with bringing young people from different backgrounds together.
- Over half (52%) of older respondents from East Harlem said that attending the program had helped them to reduce or prevent their involvement in crime.
- Some older respondents also noted that CITC activities have had a positive impact on stopping, reducing or preventing the consumption of drugs (19%), alcohol (14%) and cigarettes (10%).

“We actually spend a lot more time together as a family... and you see it within our families it becomes a whole day activity on Saturdays... so it’s bringing families together.”

Parent of CITC participant and
Teacher, P.S. 24



95%

of younger respondents reported that they attended CITC activities every week

“Back then all this area... used to be horrible... there’s been a lot of gang violence, drugs...if that [CITC] wasn’t around all these kids would have been in most likely gangs... drugs, but that [CITC] opened up [a] whole new world for everybody through soccer...”

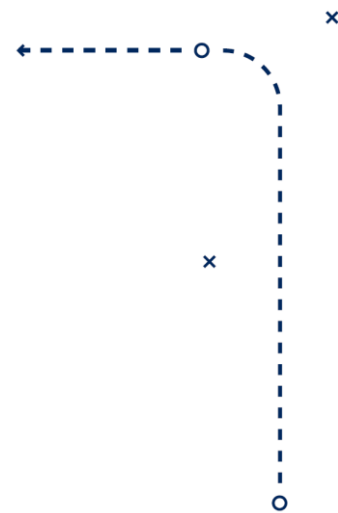
CITC Young Leader,
Lexington Academy



RETURN ON INVESTMENT

Analysis based solely on an estimate of the benefits to individuals of increased physical activity suggests a monetary social return of \$4.50 for every \$1.00 invested in running the program at the two sites.

- It is clear that there are substantial cost savings associated with the programs, although it has not been possible to consistently value the full range of benefits of CITC activities in monetary terms.
- The program would also be expected to contribute to substantial savings for taxpayer funded services by supporting improved health and educational outcomes and reduced involvement in crime.
- Assuming that any new pitches generated similar outcomes to those observed at Lexington Academy and P.S.24, then the return on investment from the creation of would be expected to be strongly positive, even when including the cost of the pitches.



\$4.50

return for every \$1 invested in the program



About the researchers

Ecorys has over 30 years of experience as an independent provider of research, consultancy and program management. The organisation has a long track record in undertaking evaluations, impact assessments and other studies related to issues of youth, sport and education along with extensive experience of developing and applying techniques to assess the effectiveness and broader value for money of publicly-funded interventions.

About New York City Football Club

New York City Football Club is an American professional soccer team based in New York City that competes in Major League Soccer (MLS) in the Eastern Conference of the league. It was announced as the League's 20th franchise on 21 May 2013 and is the first and only MLS Club located within the five boroughs of New York City. Majority owned by City Football Group (CFG), New York City FC plays its home games at Yankee Stadium, which is also home to minority owner, the New York Yankees.





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