

## INQUIRY REPORT Evidence from NASSA

# Newham All Star Sports Academy

### 1. Introduction

The Newham All Star Sports Academy ["NASSA"] wants to develop good basketball players, but its primary goal is to mature good people. To achieve this aim, NASSA believes that communication is everything.

At NASSA, which is a grassroots community initiative based in the London 2012 Olympics borough of Newham and runs its own national league teams, there are many opportunities for young people to learn and eventually earn, starting as basketball table officials and progressing to training as basketball officials and coaches. These programmes are seen as providing life changing opportunities.

### 2. Background

NASSA was founded through the vision of a mother of two boys, who wanted to teach her sons the game of basketball at a local park in Newham in 2005.

She gave her sons an impromptu coaching session one day. They enjoyed it so much that she offered to make it a weekly treat. Her sons decided to invite their friends along. Word of mouth swelled the numbers still further and within a few weeks, the mother was running a session for nearly 30 local youngsters between the ages of 8 and 16.

Three older youths, aged between 18 and 20, used to hang around the park with nothing to do. They saw what was happening and asked to join in. The mother, who by this time needed help because there were so many kids at the session, invited them to do some of the coaching. Neither they, nor she, had any formal qualifications or experience but the potential of the players was obvious to everyone - as was the demand. These young people were craving to have some fun in a safe environment.

The mother saw it as her duty to bring basketball and sport into a community where gang culture and knife crime was on the increase. She wanted to offer a sporting alternative for local young people in the east end of London. The problem was that basketball was known as an indoor sport and there was no indoor facility available locally and free-of-charge.

In spite of this, and with just £20 spare to open a new bank account, the mother decided to set up the Newham All-Star Sports Academy charity. In 2006, she did just that with the help of a £4,000 funding grant from the London Borough of Newham.

Her aim was to set up a basketball charity which could offer competitive basketball to local children and youths, as well as a safe haven to play sport away from the lure of anti-social behaviour, alcohol, drugs and crime in one of London's most deprived boroughs.

She also wanted the charity to offer advice and to educate local young people to know that through sport in general and basketball in particular; they could find an outlet for their energy and passion.

NASSA enrolled all of its coaches on accredited training courses to gain basketball coaching qualifications; and at the same time, the charity approached a local school - Cumberland School in Plaistow - to offer its pupils extra-curricular basketball taster sessions in return for use of the school's gym facilities.

This has always been the NASSA way: In order to get something - in this case court time - you have to give something back.

Sessions were held for school Breakfast Club members, at lunchtime and after school. NASSA coaches took the sessions and mixed basketball skills training and mini-tournaments with talks about the dangers of knife crime, mentoring, as well as a question and answer time during every session.

So successful were the sessions and so deep was the impact on the pupils that within weeks, 16 other schools in the Borough of Newham, the equivalent of 480 young people per week, asked NASSA to provide sessions for them.

## INQUIRY REPORT

### Evidence from NASSA

Within 18 months of its creation, NASSA was reaching out and offering community sports as an alternative to a lack of opportunities and the anti-social behaviour that it fostered.

The mother who founded NASSA is Natasha Hart, who runs NASSA today and who has provided and presented NASSA's submission to this APPG Inquiry. One of her sons who she took to Balaam Park in Plaistow nine years ago is Anthony Okereafor, who later features greatly in the story of NASSA.

### 3. NASSA Today

NASSA grew from 37 members in 2006 to 425 in 2011, and now has 518 playing members registered with England Basketball ["EB"] and 5,000 young people are at grass roots level and 2,000 regularly participate each week. The club won 14 EB National League titles across all age groups of both genders last season. NASSA now reaches out to 1,950 youngsters with 25 coaches holding training sessions at 65 primary, secondary and special schools within the Borough of Newham every week. It has secured the support of local MP, Stephen Timms, and the Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, as well as Sport England ["SE"] and EB.

Players come from just about every ethnic background possible. Showing how diverse NASSA is, the 518 playing members speak a total of 151 different languages and dialects between them.

Just as importantly, NASSA reaches out into the community by running extra-curricular basketball taster sessions, mixing basketball skills training with fitness drills, mini-tournaments and talks about the dangers of knife crime and gang culture, every day of the week. Over the school year these sessions are attended by more than 78,000 young people.

When developing the schools project, NASSA was adamant that clear pathways were established to encourage the young people involved in the sessions to become involved in sport and, in particular, basketball. From the children attending the extra-curricular school sessions, a total of 140 young people are now involved in the NASSA club programme and are training three or more times per week.

NASSA's club training sessions also end with a mentoring session during which social issues affecting the young people are discussed openly with the emphasis on helping them to avoid conflict and gang-related conduct.

NASSA also provides similar sessions in the boroughs of Leyton, Redbridge, Tower Hamlets, Waltham Forest and Hackney.

### 4. NASSA Philosophy

The NASSA message and the message from the sport of basketball in general, is that strong academic results come first. Young people are consistently given the message that good reports, completed homework and hard work are the key to the future. The emphasis on "whole person" development is really strong at NASSA, a view always towards the well-being of club members and their families. The first impressions of the ethos at NASSA is of a very strong organisation that understands that without academics, good health and well rehearsed social skills, even the most talented basketball player will not be well equipped for life.

Although, winning National titles and aiming for the England squad is everything too! This provides the core motivation for the team.

Every NASSA training session starts and ends with players circulating, outside their comfort zone, and shaking hands with parents. Making eye contact, making a formal greeting and breaking down barriers to communication is really an important social message at the club. It's a great chance to practice a skill that will be of great use when eventually attending meetings for college places and at job interviews. Each session is seen as an opportunity to widen social circles and learn the important social skills of meeting and greeting adults.

Positive health messages are also given about healthy eating choices, hydration, rest, recovery and healthy lifestyle choices are also part of the formula used by NASSA coaches and parents. Many of the NASSA players participate in the EB regional performance centre programmes, whose pathway curriculum places the same value on giving young people information to learn about the importance of healthy choices.

At most NASSA practice sessions there are new parents who have come with their son or daughter for the first time. Many of us have the same experience of our children not engaging with any other sport until coming to

## INQUIRY REPORT

### Evidence from NASSA

basketball. Welcoming new players and families, offering equal opportunities and access to affordable basketball participation is a real strength of NASSA.

Further, 70% of the NASSA club members are classified as disabled because of learning difficulties or behavioural problems - many of them are affected by Autistic Spectrum Disorder. They find the school approach too prescriptive. That is why NASSA devised its innovative practice of incorporating discussions about social issues, particularly the dangers of knife crime and gang culture, into its basketball sessions.

For the school sessions, many of the children are aged 11 and 12. At this age, the mentoring talks by NASSA coaches focus not only on the dangers of knife crime but also on life skills support to help the young people recognise and avoid awkward and potentially dangerous situations.

The college sessions are attended by 16 to 19 year-olds. The knife crime talks with this age group often develop into more two-way discussions with the NASSA coaches answering many questions posed by the young people on real-life scenarios and implications. At this age, some of the young people and their families have already been affected by knife crime. The teenagers can be angry with life and need to rationalise it in order to control their emotions.

NASSA also invites the young people attending these sessions to become NASSA volunteers as well as offering them advice on gaining coaching qualifications.

Since its formation, NASSA has launched a number of events to show that the club cares for the wider issues in the community, outside of the remit of basketball. These events range from collecting new toys for a local children's charity before Christmas, responding to the Philippines' hurricane disaster by collecting tinned food and financial donations from players and parents on special charity game days. This good work is really inspiring; it echoes the message from many of the elite basketball role models who have their own charitable foundations, such as GB's Luol Deng, whose own charitable foundation is very strong. He has recently put his backing towards a new school academy in Brixton.

An example testimonial from NASSA programmes is as follows:

*"Following instructions from coaches, learning to trust and communicate with team mates within a set of rules is a great skill my son has learned from playing basketball, and has given him a set of skills which help in school." My son often says "Mum, when I make it and earn some money from playing basketball I will start my own foundation to give back".*

That type of message needs to be learned at grassroots level, inspired by the founders of NASSA and by the positive role models that basketball offers.

#### 5. Why Basketball?

Basketball is a year-round, weather-proof sport which is very socially diverse, with boys and girls playing together. It offers the chance to travel, to learn about other places and people. Players at NASSA often play with teams from all over London and the UK. Some members have studied in Spain and the USA. The role models within the club are an inspiration to others who want more from their lives and want to travel and represent their national team. Many sessions take place on the University of East London's SportsDock campus or at leading secondary schools where young people can see both academic progress and achievement and are inspired to see that learning and staying in education is a viable option.

Basketball also has the power to promote reading for boys, which is a strong programme running for many years in the USA. Reluctant readers often don't want to put down a book written by Michael Jordan, reading for hours. Inspiring books written by basketball coaches and mentors give positive life messages to young people and are a unique part of basketball's message at NASSA.

Sports pages in printed and online newspapers need to have basketball news more at the forefront of their sports coverage as this exposure would increase the reach of the sport and attract funding from wider sources.

The club now needs urgent funding to enable the booking of basketball training venues at SportsDock; for providing new basketball team kits; to keep subscriptions for the basketball sessions at an affordable level; to maintain basketball-related projects involving the promotion of reading; and for trips to other countries to play

## INQUIRY REPORT Evidence from NASSA

basketball teams and to hold basketball camps and events. All of these basketball-related activities are seen as a vital part of keeping NASSA's contribution to the community as strong as ever.

### 6. The Fight against Knife Crime - "Carry a Basketball, not a Blade"

In the fight against knife crime, NASSA has an amazing project entitled "Carry a Basketball, not a Blade" ["CABNAB"], which brings together a wide cross section of the community at an annual event where the police and leading members of the community play basketball with the NASSA teams.

In 2008, NASSA player Anthony Okereafor (yes, the boy playing basketball at Balaam Park in Plaistow nine years ago), then aged 19, set up this awareness campaign after the sudden and tragic death of two of his friends from knife crime. Anthony wanted to do something to tackle the growing issues of knife crime, gang activity and anti-social behaviour.

CABNAB encourages youngsters from the age of 8 upwards to play basketball competitively while learning from the Metropolitan Police about the grim statistics and consequences of knife crime in London. There is even a chance to play against a team of officers.

*Anthony says: "It's all about breaking down divisions between youngsters from different postcodes and between youngsters and the police. We are trying to use the popularity of basketball to give them something to do after school and keep them off the streets. However, it is not just about stopping people carrying knives. It is also about trying to save lives. I used to carry a knife and have had friends who were stabbed. I live because of basketball. There are too many young people dying just because they happen to walk into the 'wrong' area. If we can get those who might slip into gangs or are already in them to do something positive and constructive like basketball instead that would be a great result."*

FIBA Secretary General and International Olympic Committee ["IOC"] member Patrick Baumann praised Okereafor and NASSA for their efforts to positively impact and affect their community. *"This initiative is truly inspirational and shows clearly the social power that basketball has to encourage respect, channel rivalry and build communities"* he said.

NASSA director, Natasha Hart, says that *"'Carry a Basketball Not a Blade' would be beneficial to the participants in more than one way. The aim of the project is to engage young people, allowing them to participate in a sport that encourages them to develop both physically and socially. Basketball offers the opportunity to develop key life skills and creates a strong team ethos as well as educating about health and nutrition. But most importantly, it removes young people from the streets and away from the persuasion of becoming involved in knife crime. 'Carry a Basketball Not a Blade' is about giving young people opportunities, creating role models and developing their self-belief."*

Through the Newham Junior Citizens programme - a safety awareness event organised by the Metropolitan Police locally and hosted by one of NASSA's local partners, Tate & Lyle Sugars, NASSA now delivers a CABNAB workshop to 3,000 primary schoolchildren from four local East London schools each year, and the CABNAB talks are given to more than 1,950 young people each week. However, through monitoring of the young people who come to NASSA for the first time each year, it is clear that there is still a lot to do.

In the year to September 2013 alone, 11 young people in London lost their lives as a result of knife crime. The London Borough of Newham is a high crime rate area with a large number of disaffected young people at risk of succumbing to the temptations of crime.

NASSA organised a school tournament in May 2013 and the 220 young people who took part were asked to fill in a questionnaire anonymously:

- To the question: "Do you carry or have you carried a knife?" 8 out of 10 answered: "Yes".
- To the question: "Why?" The most common answers were: "For protection" and "Because of bullying at school".
- To the question: "Do you know the consequences of carrying a knife?" almost all of them answered: "No".

CABNAB talks and discussions are led by the NASSA coaches and by Anthony. They are held at the end of every session, whether that is a NASSA club training session or after every one of the basketball sessions provided in the schools and colleges of East London. - And they work.

## INQUIRY REPORT

### Evidence from NASSA

The players involved in the project attend workshops that look at various topics, such as the consequences of being involved in knife crime, how to deal with peer pressure and the importance of taking responsibility for your actions. Following the workshops they then get to showcase their skills on the basketball court which gives them the opportunity to build strong relationships with the other players.

The young people respect the coaches because of their ability to lay on fun basketball sessions. They are therefore more likely to listen to their advice when it comes to subjects and situations that affect them.

It is interesting to note that NASSA initially formulated its schools taster sessions to fit into an hour, which included a warm-up, drills, practice, games, talks and mentoring time at the end. The sessions were carefully planned in order to satisfy the needs of the community. However, feedback gained from evaluation forms and discussions with the Cumberland Schools Partnership indicated that 36 of the 60 schools in which NASSA was providing the sessions asked if the running time could be extended by 15 minutes. This was because when parents arrived early to collect their children; it interrupted the knife crime talks and mentoring at the end of sessions and the pupils valued this time so highly that they didn't want to leave early.

About 11,000 knives have been found and 5,000 people arrested for knife-related crimes since the Metropolitan Police began specifically targeting such weapons in May 2008, CABNAB contributed to 46% crime reduction in the London Borough of Newham in 2012 and CABNAB's 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary was featured on BBC London lunchtime and evening news in September 2013. CABNAB has the full backing and funding from the Metropolitan Police and basketball is undoubtedly a driving force in fight against UK knife crime.

It costs around £95,000 to run the school and college basketball CABNAB sessions each year.

The original vision for CABNAB was to encourage participation across the five London 2012 Olympic boroughs, uniting the young people of East London and raising awareness of knife and gun crime. Then, the aim is to roll out the project across the whole of the capital and in other inner cities within the UK. However, because of funding cuts there is now a question mark hanging over the scheme's future. *"It would be a terrible shame if all the good work of Anthony, Natasha and the police falls by the wayside because of cutbacks"* cautioned Baumann.

#### 7. NASSA and CABNAB are Successful

##### i) Sidney Ekio

Evidence that NASSA's sessions work comes from Sidney Ekio, who is 17 and plays for NASSA's Under-18s team.

Sidney's unstable home life led to him indulging in anti-social behaviour and expulsion from school. His intelligence and talent as a leader were being wasted. Through the mentoring of NASSA coaches, Sidney's behaviour is now impeccable. He has been accepted back at school, is doing really well with his studies and he even made a speech on behalf of NASSA at the Houses of Parliament in November 2013 when NASSA hosted its Annual Achievement Awards.

This is what Sidney said:

*"When everything had calmed down in my life, what I realised was that NASSA has always been there for me. It's always been that stable part of my life that I can turn to."*

*"I used to find the coach's lectures at the end of the sessions boring. I just wanted to play basketball but now I can see what they have done for me and what they will do for the young kids."*

*"A lot of the time you see the NASSA coaches sitting the players down and giving them long lectures. To the players at the time it may not affect them that much but as you grow older, you realise what they are for."*

*"When the coaches talk to you, you learn from their experiences and their lives and you are able to put that into your life and work from there."*



## INQUIRY REPORT

### Evidence from NASSA

*"I don't look on the younger players as being younger than me. I see them all as being part of my family. When I come to NASSA and the basketball sessions, I forget everything, all of the problems that I have outside. It all goes away because I have a family here.*

*"My leadership skills have grown through basketball and through NASSA. I'm a leader on the court and when I go outside of the court now into my school and the things that I do, I'm able to be an effective leader there as well."*

#### ii) The 2011 Riots

In August 2011, thousands of people rioted in several London boroughs and in cities and towns across England. The riots generated significant debate among political, social and academic figures about the causes and context in which they happened. Attributions for the rioters' behaviour included cultural factors such as criminality; hooliganism; and breakdown of social morality. Suggested contributory factors were: poor relations with police; social exclusion; family breakdown; and gang culture. In relation to sport at the time, some of the UK's sporting governing bodies were criticised for not providing sufficiently effective programmes and campaigns to rehabilitate disaffected youth, both keeping them off the streets and providing them with life-changing sporting opportunities.

During those riots, NASSA actually extended its sessions by 3 to 4 hours each day, starting at 9:00am in order to give club members a safe, healthy environment away from the disturbances and potential diversions.

The extended sessions were advertised heavily on Facebook to ensure that all the young people knew that they were taking place - AND every young person in the local area, not just NASSA players, were invited to attend.

An average of six non-members turned up each day and the NASSA coaches took the register at different times during the day to make sure that all of the young people were all attending the basketball sessions. Attendance by club members during this period was 100%.

NASSA received praise at the time from the Newham Police Borough Commander, Robert Jones and the Rt Hon Stephen Timms MP, Member of Parliament for East Ham, which includes the London Borough of Newham.

This is just one example of the ways in which NASSA delivers effective and timely programmes to reflect community needs. It also demonstrates how a basketball-related initiative can make a difference to the difficult challenges that young people face within inner cities; is capable of bringing-about a reduction in serious youth violence and gang-related crime; and helps to foster a burgeoning relationship between youths and the police.

#### iii) Anniversary Event

NASSA holds a CABNAB anniversary event every September to which local politicians, councillors, head teachers, players, volunteers, parents, sponsors and community leaders are invited as well as all of NASSA's partners.

At the event, Newham Metropolitan Police Officers talk to groups of young people about gang culture and knife crime; and a basketball match is played between teams from the police and NASSA, a game which by itself goes a long way to help break down the barriers that young people feel towards police authority.

During this game, most poignantly of all, a basket is scored for each young life lost through knife crime in London in the previous 12 months. At the September 2013 event (after 5 years of CABNAB), which was filmed by BBC London, 11 baskets were scored. This act of remembrance is followed by a minute's silence.

#### iv) Better Behaviour

The impact of the CABNAB programme is measured in behavioural terms. Anecdotal evidence is essential in shaping it for the future. NASSA talks to everyone all of the time to make sure it is having the right kind of impact on the young people attending the sessions.

NASSA also measures success in the blossoming of young people into smiling, confident and ambitious young adults. NASSA is proud of the behaviour of its young people and the way in which they have embraced the culture of respect that is shown by and to every member of the organisation.

## INQUIRY REPORT

### Evidence from NASSA

#### v) Effective Community Relations

NASSA organised a consultation day with parents of local school-age young people in May 2013 at the University of East London with the intention of:

- understanding their concerns better;
- showing them what NASSA is about; and
- ensuring that NASSA's work becomes even more effective.

NASSA coaches consult with head teachers for 15 minutes every month to make sure the school sessions are relevant and effective - to find what is working, what is not working so well and what can be done to improve.

Feedback is obtained from everyone involved in NASSA to ensure that the CABNAB initiative is maximising its potential to help change and shape the local community.

A planning group made up of funding partners, teachers, police representatives, community leaders, coaches, parents and volunteers has been formed to make sure that everyone within or affected by NASSA:

- is aware of what NASSA is doing;
- can spread the word around their community; and
- can offer advice on how NASSA can improve.

NASSA attends every local function to which it is invited to tell representatives of other organisations directly of its work.

NASSA takes its responsibility towards the local community very seriously and makes sure that the relationship with its funding partners, who directly support CABNAB, is always two-way.

NASSA cannot give back money to the community because NASSA needs the community's help with money. However, NASSA can give back those things that it possesses in abundance - enthusiasm, commitment and basketball expertise. For example, NASSA supports Tate & Lyle Sugars' annual inter-departmental basketball event and their Safety Fun Day.

In addition, NASSA coaches and young people have made speeches about CABNAB's impact to managers and employees at Tate & Lyle Sugars' events.

NASSA shares its best practice and learning with other community sports groups, including Newham Swords fencing club; Genesis football club; Newham & Essex Beagles athletics club; and Fight for Peace boxing club. NASSA does this in order to give other organisations knowledge of the lessons learned and to improve the overall quality of sports provision in the Borough of Newham.

NASSA welcomes community leaders and representatives of EB to the club sessions to show them which activities work and to enable them to talk to NASSA participants and coaches.

Also, as part of the Newham Junior Citizens programme, NASSA teaches young people who are at risk of exclusion from school how to return and deliver a CABNAB workshop in their schools. This helps to spread the word about the dangers of knife crime and gang culture, and it also gives those young people a responsibility with which they are perhaps not very often entrusted.

#### vi) NASSA Codes of Conduct

When it was formed, NASSA drew up and implemented a code of conduct to which all NASSA players have to adhere during games. What NASSA didn't realise was that it would need a separate code of conduct for parents on the sidelines. Some parents became really upset during games and tried to bully officials, which then created issues around asking the players not to follow their example. NASSA asked the young people to draw up a code of conduct for their parents, which also included as a punishment a three-match ban from attending games. All parents have to sign this code of conduct, which is refreshed each year - again by the players. Since the implementation of this code of conduct, NASSA has not had a single incident involving a parent.

## INQUIRY REPORT Evidence from NASSA

### vii) Commitment of Coaches

NASSA pays its coaches for school sessions, but club sessions are coached on a voluntary basis. Each of NASSA's four coaches gives 14 hours to provide training sessions from Monday to Friday during the entire 40-week basketball season. The coaches should be paid £20 per hour, but they don't take a penny. That equates to £11,200 per annum of commitment from each of them. In addition, they all run NASSA teams at the weekend, with a lot of travel involved - again given free-of-charge.

Through the generosity of the coaches, the quality of the experience for the young people is enhanced. This ensures that the CABNAB programme can be properly funded and have maximum impact.

NASSA's Head Coach for Junior Development, Kelvin Chris Facey, is paid for less than half the time that he commits to NASSA. In 2012, he was named EB's Volunteer Coach of the Year.

This is what he says:

*"When I met Natasha in Balaam Park, I was in a wheelchair and she told me what we could do as a club. Natasha offered to qualify me as a Coach. I started to read more and started to work with young people more on the academic side to convince them to not get themselves into trouble, which is hard to do at that age.*

*"As a child you make a lot of mistakes and I'm trying to guide them so that those things do not happen. It is hugely rewarding. The kids find a certain way to reward me. Sometimes I get a text to say: 'Done my home work', Good night' 'Coach, it's good.'*

*"That's good enough for me. There's nothing else I could want from them than to see them do well, respect what they are and where they are coming from.*

*"We are doing the right thing. It works for us. Kids are kids. They make mistakes, but if they can control their behaviour in the classroom, on and off the court, that's all we ask and we've got no trouble at all when it comes to practice. Everyone understands.*

*"We don't expect them to give us millions in the future but if there is a way they can grow up, do something good and help put back into what we do, that would be really great for us.*

*"And we have guys who have moved on and who are in the States playing basketball now. They come back every summer, work out with us and show the other kids that they have learned what we passed on to them. It's great.*

*"NASSA is still growing. The one ambition I have now is to give all I've got."*

### viii) Enoch Denkiyrah

NASSA is only as strong as its young people. And a key young man to refer to is Enoch Denkiyrah.

Enoch joined NASSA as a 10-year-old. He was being bullied at school because of his size, he stayed at home most of the time and he was painfully shy with very few friends.

Yet this is a boy who, in spite of his size, is now the star of the NASSA Under-14s side. Everybody loves him. He is the centre of attention all of the time and the confidence he has gained from NASSA's coaches and leadership in the space of three short years is incredible.

At NASSA's 5<sup>th</sup> CABNAB anniversary event in September 2013, Enoch spoke confidently about NASSA to the BBC London cameras. This, briefly, is what Enoch had to say:

*"When I first came to NASSA, people just thought I was younger than my age, but as I've grown older it has helped me as a little man that I have progressed.*

*"Through the confidence that I have, people respect me as well. If I do something good on the court, they pass to me more, so I get more involved now.*



## INQUIRY REPORT

### Evidence from NASSA

*“NASSA has given me a lot of friends in the community among people that I wouldn’t normally interact with, so I have friends now that I wouldn’t have had.*”

*“NASSA has also helped me to build my confidence and given me a thing to do apart from just staying at home and doing nothing. It has given me something to look forward to each week.*”

*“And it has given me an ambition to do something else in the future - to be in the NBA or the Euro League. Or if I don’t achieve that, then to manage either my own bank or very wealthy bank like HSBC.”*

#### **ix) Development of Young People**

What NASSA also offers to its young people is the opportunity to gain EB-recognised sports qualifications. Since 2008, 220 NASSA young people (between 40 and 50 each year) have gained official basketball officiating qualifications through the locally-run Table Officiating Course and the Level 1 Basketball Referee Course. These qualifications help to improve the employability of the young people. They also improve their self-esteem and kindle their interest in pursuing a career in sport.

NASSA gives young people leadership roles because of their behaviour. They are also invited to act as spokespeople for NASSA. The respect they display for each other is matched by improved behaviour at school while their achievements on the basketball court are also viewed positively by their peers. Because of this, they attract other participants to NASSA sessions, whilst the officiating qualifications and confidence they gain encourage younger members of NASSA to want to do likewise. The older players take on coaching responsibilities which ensures that NASSA’s next generation of coaches is already in place and that NASSA from a determination and ambition point of view is self-sustaining as a result.

#### **x) Links with the University of East London**

Since the 2012 Olympics, NASSA has maintained links with the University of East London and NASSA raised £500,000 towards the venue.

#### **8. Conclusion**

NASSA tries to develop good basketball players and Anthony, Sydney and Enoch are all very good basketball players. What makes NASSA more proud is that these young people and young leaders are even better people.

NASSA believes that: *“Playing basketball creates better citizens”* and *“Basketball saves lives”*.