

Project not punishment

1 Work with a partner. Look at the quotes and answer the questions.

- 1 What do the quotes mean?
- 2 Do you agree with them? Why/Why not?

2a Read the web article about youth crime and possible ways to reduce it. What do you think about the projects in Honduras and the UK?

“Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.”
— Proverb

“By working together and realising the potential power of sport, we can break the cycle of violence once and for all.”

— Daley Thompson

Where there's hope, there's a future

Youth crime is a problem that occurs alongside a growing population. It is a particular problem in areas with high unemployment rates on account of the lack of opportunities for young people. Many people believe that punishment is not the answer because it doesn't address the cause. They have established programmes designed to keep youths active and off the streets. The programmes vary between countries and regions because the problems vary in different places. Here are two examples.



Many countries in the world suffer difficulties. Honduras is one of them. In San Pedro Sula, for example, people face poverty, a struggling economy and a high unemployment rate. These problems have resulted in the growth of gangs who now outnumber the police, and it can be hard to avoid contact with them. Coffee vs Gangs is a project that was set up in 2015 by Kenco coffee company. Kenco spent a year training 20 youths in all aspects of coffee farming. The group included men and women who felt threatened by gangs and were struggling to make ends meet. Some of them were a little daunted at the beginning, wondering if they had the ability to write a business plan or make a presentation. However, they all enjoyed their training and they plan to start their own businesses.

It's not surprising that this initiative sprang up in the coffee industry as coffee is now the most important cash crop in Honduras. In addition, coffee is produced by a lot of small farms and has become central to many communities. The new trainees hope to help others in their communities by offering them employment and passing on the skills that they have learned. Both the participants and Kenco believe the project will help future generations find a life outside of the gangs. It may be a small beginning but it has created hope, and where there is hope there is a future.

In the UK, a very different programme is going from strength to strength. Kickz is a national programme, funded by the Premier League and the Metropolitan Police, which believes that sport can break down barriers and bring people together. It uses football to work with youngsters in deprived areas. In addition to football coaching twice a week, there is a third night which offers different activities depending on the needs and preferences of the people in each community. For example, motorbike maintenance proved popular in Middlesbrough and female wrestling took off in Bolton. On top of this they offer workshops on topics such as healthy eating.

The programme started in 2006 with four clubs, and soon grew to 39 football clubs that offered coaching to over 30,000 children. Arsenal FC runs a group in Elthorne Park, north London. A few years ago Elthorne was an abandoned park where crime was rife; now it's an active football centre. It is difficult to provide specific evidence of the programme's success, but youth crime in the area has dropped considerably over the past few years, with around a 60% reduction in anti-social behaviour in Kickz areas. Kickz may not have been responsible for the entire reduction, but it has certainly helped to lower the figures. By keeping the children busy playing football and giving them an interest to follow, they are far less likely to commit crimes. In addition, they develop relationships with the volunteer helpers and have a place to voice their hopes and fears. Many youngsters who took part in Kickz now volunteer or work full-time for the project. With their vested interest, they will be ensuring the success of the project for years to come.



2b Read the article again and circle the correct alternative.

- 1 Youth crime is a particular problem in areas with low unemployment/few job opportunities.
- 2 In Honduras the number of gang members exceeds/diminishes the number of police.
- 3 Some of the trainees weren't sure they had the time/ability to do the course.
- 4 Many of the trainees are keen/don't want to share their new knowledge with others.
- 5 Kickz offers football classes/workshops to young people several times a week.
- 6 In addition to sport, Kickz offers the chance for children to confide their feelings/have counselling.

2c Read the article again and match the two halves of the sentences.

- | | |
|---|-------|
| 1 A lot of people believe that punishing youngsters for their crimes | |
| 2 The participants believe the project | |
| 3 The project trained participants in the different aspects of coffee farming | |
| 4 The idea behind Kickz is that by offering youths football lessons | |
| 5 Elthorne Park was a rundown area with a lot of crime; | |
| 6 A lot of youngsters who played football with Kickz are | |
| | |
| a they stay away from the streets and don't commit crimes. | |
| b now volunteers for the programme. | |
| c will offer opportunities to people away from the gangs. | |
| d so they could then run their own business. | |
| e now it is a busy area with lots of sporting activities. | |
| f is not the answer – it's the roots of crime that need to be addressed. | |

Gateway to culture

3a Work with a partner and discuss the questions.

- 1 Why do you think youth crime is high in some places?
- 2 Do you believe that punishment is the answer to youth crime? Why/Why not?
- 3 Do you know about any projects to create opportunities for young people in your area?

PROJECT

3b You are going to prepare a presentation about a programme fighting against youth crime. Read the questions and prepare your research.

- 1 Work in pairs and brainstorm different youth crime programmes.
- 2 Choose a project and find out more about it. Answer the following questions:
 - Where is the project and who is it aimed at?
 - What does the project do?
 - What is the evidence of its success?
 - Why is it successful in this country? Would it work in other countries?

3c In pairs, use your notes to give a presentation to the rest of the class on your programme. Your presentation should be around three minutes long.