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Northumbria University plays important role in developing sport in Zambia

Staff from Northumbria University have attended the first ever conference discussing how to develop sport in Zambia this week.

The University has played a significant role in the development of the conference, which took place in the country's capital Lusaka on the 27 and 28 July.

Attended by senior Government ministers and officials, the event represents an important step in making development work both sustainable and of

lasting benefit to the lives of young Zambians. Sport can have a hugely positive impact on impoverished communities and can be used as a tool to empower young people and educate them around issues like HIV and AIDS.

The conference also marked the tenth anniversary of the Zambia IDEALS (International Development Through Excellence and Leadership in Sport) project – a UK Sport funded initiative which aims to establish high-quality sports leadership development exchange opportunities for young people through short term volunteer placements with local grassroots sports organisations.

Over the last decade, Northumbria University has sent several students to Zambia each year for six-week periods during which they work with sports leaders in the local community and coach sessions with youngsters in various sports including football, netball, basketball and volleyball. Students studying Architecture and Built Environment courses have also taken placements in Zambia to renovate a set of tennis courts providing a long term, high quality facility open to the whole community.

Commenting on the success of the conference, Colin Stromsoy, Northumbria's Head of Sport, said: “The conference brought together representatives from Government, education, national sport federations and local communities, to jointly plan for the country's future sporting needs.

“After a decade of hard work by my colleagues and our students, I am delighted that we have seen this come to fruition. This is a landmark moment for sport in Zambia and we are proud to be playing our part.”

All of the students who participate in the IDEALS programme are volunteers and are required to fundraise to fund their placements and ensure the project remains sustainable over the long term.

Chelsea Barker was part of the Northumbria IDEALS team in 2014 and spent the summer coaching in Lusaka.

She said “The opportunity Northumbria University gave me to volunteer in Zambia was one of the most enjoyable and rewarding experiences of my life. I thoroughly enjoyed immersing myself into all aspects of Zambian life from riding the buses to singing and dancing with the children every single day.

“This experience helped me become a much better leader and coach and has made me more globally aware giving me the drive to want to continue to help others. I thoroughly enjoyed coaching the happiest children on the planet and I cannot wait to visit my second home again.”

To find out more about sport at Northumbria, visit www.northumbria.ac.uk/sport

[Click here](#) for more information on the Zambia IDEALS project.

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