



This picture is called “Witnessing Impact in Action” (Picture credit: Piaras Ó Mídheach). It depicts a moment in time in August 2015, with myself (sitting in the middle) and my two PhD supervisors (Dr Pete Coffee in the left of the picture and Professor David Lavalley on the right) in Croke Park stadium in Dublin. The Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) identified a drop-out rate of nearly 20% among 12-16 year olds in 2012, and my doctoral focused on creating sport participation experiences in-line with the needs of young participants in order to help reverse this trend. A central feature of the research was the design and testing of a new programme for the GAA called the Super Games Centre. An intervention was delivered over a 24-week period, with the timing and duration aligned with two key school semester periods (i.e., September-December 2014, and January-April 2015). Experienced sports coaches were recruited and trained specifically to deliver the programme at 10 Super Games Centre location sites across a range of community support settings in Ireland. Focus groups with participants, parents, and coaches showed that the programme modifications to the traditional sport experiences (e.g., rules were introduced that everyone must play and also that teams earned additional points for providing positive feedback to teammates and opponents) based on 6 features we called the ‘Play to Stay’ values (i.e., positive feedback, respect, belonging, empowerment, enjoyment, effort) helped increase participation and reduce dropout in the GAA. The picture was taken during an event where 200 of the study participants took part in a live demonstration of the Super Games Centre programme intervention in front of their parents and guardians, Ireland’s national media and the leadership of the GAA.