A systematic overview of sport for development and peace organisations

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ABSTRACT

The boundaries of Sport for Development and Peace (SDP) encompass many stakeholders attempting to leverage sport for achieving various development outcomes. This has attracted researchers to systematically review the SDP literature during recent years. What remains largely unknown, however, is where SDP organisations are located, what these efforts are focused upon, and the sport and physical activities used to deliver such programming. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to review SDP practice and provide an overview of the current state of the field. A total of 955 entities involved in SDP grassroots practice were identified based on a systematic review of 3,138 organisational entries in SDP databases. The majority of organisations operate programmes in Africa, but hundreds of entities are also found across Europe, North America, Asia, and Latin America. Of these, more than 80% are headquartered within the same region. Education, Livelihoods, and Health emerged as the most common thematic areas, while Disability and Gender were the least represented. A total of 32 types of sports were identified, with one-third relying solely on football. Implications of these findings for SDP practice and research are further discussed.

INTRODUCTION

Organisations are increasingly mobilising sport and physical activities in efforts to fulfil various development and peace-building goals in communities across the world.[1] As a result, governments, nonprofits, corporations, sport governing bodies, and multi-lateral agencies are now more involved than ever before in so-called Sport for Development and Peace (SDP). The United Nations has designated April 6th as the International Day of Sport for Development and Peace; national sport entities such as Commonwealth Games Canada have revised their mission statement to emphasise SDP efforts; and corporations are expanding their involvement beyond financial donations. Nike, for example, started the collaborative Sport for Social Change Network for SDP organisations in Africa.[2] These developments have also attracted the attention of researchers from diverse disciplines including sport sociology,[3, 4] sport management,[5, 6] health,[7-9] geography,[10] anthropology,[11] religious studies,[12] and psychology.[13, 14] Collectively, researchers across these and other disciplines have produced hundreds of academic publications related to SDP.[15]

Several scholars have attempted to synthesise the SDP literature. Bruce Kidd and Peter Donnelly published an extensive literature review of extant SDP knowledge prior to 2007 on behalf of the Sport for Development International Working Group.[16] More recently, Cronin[17] examined SDP research between 2005-2011, Van Eekeren, ter Horst, and Fictorie[18] conducted a similar analysis over a longer time period from 1988 – 2013, and Schulenkorf and colleagues[15] reviewed SDP scholarship published from 2000-2014. In addition, Langer[11] examined evaluation studies specially focused on African SDP initiatives. Combined, these reviews provide valuable insight regarding the state of SDP research and offer important implications for advancing the field. However, little

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remains known about the current state of SDP practice. Developing a better understanding of the practical landscape is important for several reasons. First, identifying the scope and diversity of SDP initiatives can help pinpoint if the literature is representative of SDP practice. Second, a systematic overview of the location and types of programmes also allows policymakers and funders to identify where capacity-building initiatives are needed. Third, identifying the types of sports and activities used to deliver programming can indicate viable areas for future research. In other words, mapping out SDP practice is critical for identifying future directions for researchers, practitioners, and policymakers. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to conduct a systematic analysis of SDP organisations. We believe these efforts complement emergent reviews of SDP research. Findings from this study highlight where nonprofit SDP organisations are located, the foci of SDP programmes, and the sports used to deliver such initiatives.

BACKGROUND

The proliferation of SDP efforts during the 21st Century has attracted increased attention from the academic community. As a result, there are now hundreds of peer-reviewed studies examining various aspects of SDP. Most scholars have relied on the International Platform for Sport and Development to reflect the current state of organisations operating in the SDP sphere.[19-31] Others have cited the existence of hundreds of SDP organisations without specific references.[32] However, as Donnelly and colleagues[23 (p. 593)] noted in reference to the International Platform for Sport and Development, "there is every reason to suspect that these represent the thin end of the wedge." Several scholars have attempted to synthesise SDP research and to identify areas for future research.[15, 16, 33] Others have systematically reviewed the literature to evaluate existing 'evidence' of how SDP initiatives contribute (if at all) to desired development outcomes.[11, 17, 18] Further, a few researchers have tried to map out some aspects of SDP practice. Hillyer and colleagues,[34] for example, visited 13 countries and identified 26 entities actively involved in sport-based peace-building efforts. We commend these researchers for undertaking such imperative initiatives and contributing to the advancement of SDP. Yet, a systematic overview of the global SDP landscape is not found in the academic literature.

Nevertheless, a recent review identified football as the most commonly used sport in SDP programmes.[15] The literature often highlighted the following initiatives that include football in its programmes: Football 4 Peace, which aims to bring Jewish and Arab youth together through sport-based programmes in Israel;[35] Open Fun Football Schools, which brings together divided communities in the Balkans for promoting social cohesion and peace-building;[36] A Ganar (Vencer), which operates football-based employment training for youth in Latin America;[37] and Grassroots Soccer, which aspires to promote HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention in Africa.[38] Yet, it is imperative to recognize the use of some other types of sports.[15, 34, 39-48] (See Table 1) What remains largely unknown, however, is the popularity of these different types of sports, how the organisations use them to deliver their programmes, and where the programmes are delivered. These were the questions we aimed to address in this study.

Table 1 – Type of Sport(s) and Physical Activities

Type of Sport/Activity	# of Organisations
Multiple Sports	384
Football	236
Basketball	25
Rugby	19
Martial Arts	16
Action Sports	15
Cycling	12
Cricket	11
Other Sports and Physical Activities: Dance, Equestrian, Field Hockey, Figure Skating, Futsal, Golf, Handball, Hiking, Ice Hockey, Indigenous Sports, Lacrosse, Mountain Climbing, Netball, Play, Rowing, Sailing, Squash, Swimming, Table Tennis, Tennis, Ultimate Frisbee, Volleyball, Water Polo, and Yoga	69

METHODS

The purpose of this study was to conduct a systematic analysis of SDP organisations. Specifically, we were guided by the following research questions:

RQ1 – Where are SDP organisations geographically located?

RQ2 – What type of SDP efforts are these organisations involved in?

RQ3 – What sports are used to fulfil their SDP mission?

Sample

We identified our sample by reviewing the organisational lists of the Beyond Sport Network, the International Platform for Sport and Development, streetfootballworld, the Sport for Social Change Network, and the Kicking Aids Out! Network. At the time of data collection (Spring 2016), Beyond Sport listed 2,312 organisations operating in more than 140 countries and the International Platform for Sport and Development contained 671 organisational entries. The streetfootballworld website identified 108 member organisations, the Sport for Social Change Network listed 25 members, and the Kick Aids Out! Network consisted of 22 member organisations. We expected some overlap between the data sources. However, it also quickly became apparent that many of these organisations were not directly involved in grassroots SDP activities. To be included in this study, an organisation's purpose had to be primarily focused on using sport for social change rather than traditional sport development. These organisations combined sport activities with various non-sport activities including health awareness, peace-building, career development, or academic enrichment.[4, 25, 49]

For example, these lists contained numerous marketing agencies, CSR activities of for-profit corporations, funding agencies, and professional sport teams. Therefore, any professional sport teams, national governing bodies, or government entities were excluded. Given our primary interest in organisations involved in the operation of grassroots SDP practices, international funding agencies were also excluded from the final sample. This resulted in the exclusion of 922 organisations. In addition, another 1,261 redundancies were identified and removed. One reason for the large number of duplicate entries was that many organisations had used the name of specific programs to submit multiple entries for the Beyond Sport Awards. This resulted in a final sample consisting of 955 organisations involved in grassroots SDP efforts. These entities are described in more detail in the results section.

Data Collection

We used the aforementioned online directories to identify SDP organisations. Additional information was then collected from organisational websites and social media pages. Specifically, information describing the organisation and their programs was recorded. We also took note of where each organisation operates its headquarters and where programs are delivered. All this information was entered into a digital spreadsheet to manage the large amount of data.[50] This enabled us to easily sort and re-arrange data for subsequent analysis. Program information regarding the sport(s) or physical activities used to deliver each organisation's programmes was also recorded. If available, mission statements were also collected, which helped identify the purpose of each organisation.

Data Analysis

We developed a codebook based on the seven thematic areas of the Journal of Sport for Development: disability, education, gender, health, livelihoods, peace, and social cohesion (Table 2). These SDP categories have previously been used to systematically examine the focus of SDP research in peer-reviewed publications.[15]

Table 2 – Overview of Codebook

Thematic Area	Codebook Definition	Sample Mission Statement/Organisational Description
Disability	Organisations using sport as a vehicle for development, access, inclusion and human rights of persons with disabilities.	To work towards realisation of equal rights and opportunities for children with disabilities and their families in countries where we support partner programmes.
Education	Organisations using sport to advance education, youth development, and life skills. Rather than focusing on sports education, these organizaitons focuses on the role of sport in achieving educational and social outcomes for youth.	To educate and empower promising inner-city youth to be leaders, champions and student-athletes by developing the skills necessary for success in high school, college and life.

Table 2 (continued) – Overview of Codebook

Thematic Area	Codebook Definition	Sample Mission Statement/Organisational Description
Gender	Organisations using sport to promote gender equality, challenge gender norms, and/or empower girls and women in disadvantaged settings.	The Komera Project builds self-confident young women through education, community, and sport.
Health	Organisations using sport to address communicable and/or non-communicable diseases. It includes the use of sport can play in preventative education and health promotion interventions.	Grassroot Soccer uses the power of soccer to educate, inspire, and mobilize young people to stop the spread of HIV.
Livelihoods	Organisations using sport to improve livelihoods of disadvantaged people through career and economic development, this ranges from programs focused on job-skills training to rehabilitation to social enterprise.	Back on My Feet (BoMF) is a national, for-purpose 501(c)3 organisation that uses running to help those experiencing homelessness change the way they see themselves so they can make real change that results in employment and independent living.
Peace	Organisations using sport as a vehicle for reconciliation and peace building in divided communities.	A.G.S.E.P. intends to assist the divided ethnic groups of Sri Lanka to find peace by exposing the children of the island to children of other ethnic groups as part of sporting events
Social Cohesion	Organisations using sport to promote community empowerment, social inclusion, and overall community development.	To empower underserved communities through their active participation in Sport.
Infrastructure	Organisations building sport facilities and/or providing equipment and supplies for communities and SDP organisations.	love.futbol develops simple, safe soccer fields for children in impoverished communities worldwide. We envision a day when all children have the opportunity to fulfill their passion for soccer. The game itself is a catalyst for youth development, hope, and inspiration.

A pilot study was conducted whereby approximately 10% of the sample was analysed to evaluate the initial codebook. Results of the pilot study allowed us to revise and enhance the codebook for inter-rater reliability in the full sample. We observed that some organisations could be classified into more than one category. However, the decision was made to categorise each entity based on the primary area of focus (Table 2) associated with their mission statement and organisational description, rather than secondary purpose(s). This is consistent with prior literature.[15] We then both independently coded all 955 organisations using the revised codebook. The Cohen's kappa statistics was used to examine the inter-rater reliability. The final coding resulted in a kappa value of .92. Thus, meeting the acceptable standards for reliability in content analyses.[51]

RESULTS

Results from the data analysis are reported in four areas. These include descriptive statistics for the geographical location of SDP organisations, the existence of a formal mission statement, the primary thematic area of SDP entities, and the type of sport or physical activity used to deliver programming. In addition, the results of cross-tabulation chi-square analyses are also reported throughout these sections to identify any significance between frequencies across organisational variables.

Geographical Location

The geographical location of SDP programming was identified for 944 organisations (Table 3). Of these, more than 40% operate somewhere in Africa (n = 382), followed by 16.0% in Europe (n = 151), 13.0% in North America (n = 123), 12.2% in Asia (n = 115), and 10.5% (n = 99) in Latin America. A total of 2.8% in the Middle East (n = 26), and 1.3% operate in Australia and Oceania (n = 12). In addition, 3.8% were identified to operate SDP programmes in multiple regions (n = 36). Overall, SDP programs were found to operate in 121 countries. Figure 1 provides a visual overview of the location of SDP practice. The darkest shade indicates the most common country of operation.

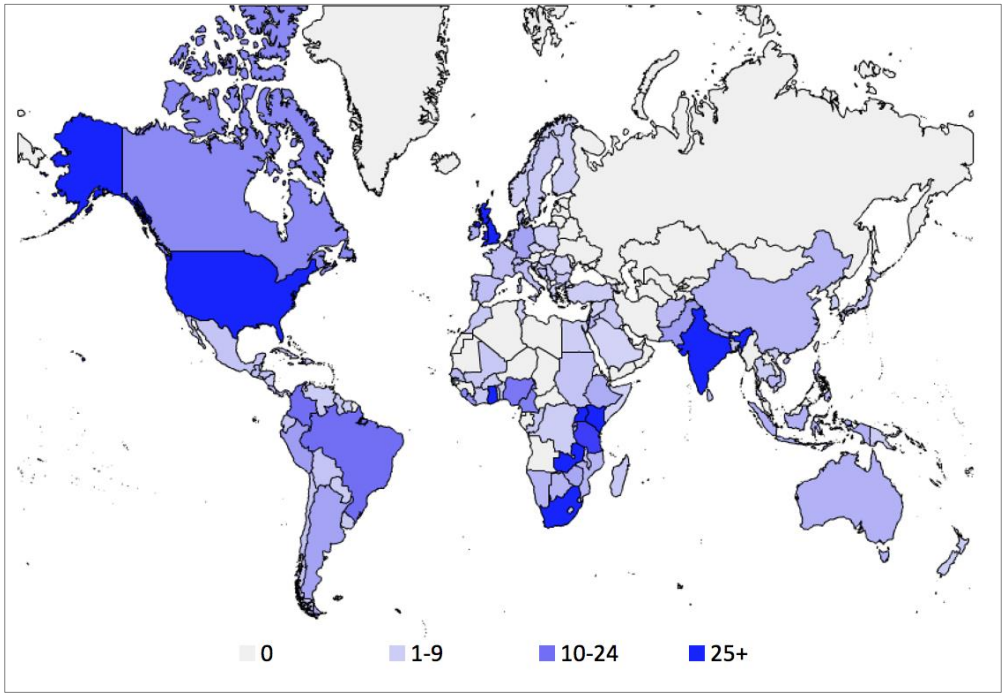
The majority of organisations were headquartered in the same region where they deliver programming (n = 822). A total of 13.0% of the organisations in this sample (n = 123) were headquartered in a different region compared to where they deliver programming. Overall, more than 33% were

Table 3 – Geographical Location of SDP Programs

Region	# of Organizations	Top Location(s)
Africa	382	South Africa, Kenya, Uganda, Zambia, Ghana, Tanzania
Europe	151	United Kingdom, Germany, Netherlands
North America	123	United States
Asia	115	India, Pakistan, Nepal
South America	99	Brazil, Colombia, Peru
Middle East	26	Israel, Jordan, Palestine
Australia and Oceania	12	Australia

Note: Another 36 organizations were found to operate in multiple regions.

Figure 1 – A Geographical Heat Map of SDP Organisations



headquartered in Africa (*n* = 313), 23.4% in Europe (*n* = 221), and 18.0% in North America (*n* = 170). This was followed by 12.2% of entities based in Asia (*n* = 114) and a total of 10.2% in Latin America (*n* = 84). Less than 3.0% were based in the Middle East (*n* =25) and Australia and Oceania (*n* = 16).

Thematic SDP Area

Organisational descriptions were found for 945 organisations in the final sample. Based on the coding of this information, most organisations were identified to primarily focus on Education (36.7%, *n* = 347). The second and third most common type of SDP areas were Livelihoods (16.9%, *n* = 160), and Health (16.5%, *n* = 156). These were followed by organisations identified to primarily focus on Social Cohesion (9.6%, *n* = 91), Peace (7.9%, *n* = 75), Disability (5.4%, *n* = 51), and Gender (4.7%, *n* = 44). Another 2.2% of the sample organisations were identified to focus on a new category entitled Infrastructure (*n* = 22). Chi-square results were also significant at the 0.05 level for type of sport and thematic SDP area (X^2 =, 74.466, df = 56, $p < .05$). For example, 74.5% of those focused on Disability used multiple sports to deliver their programming. In contrast, only 46.6% of Education-focused SDP entities relied on multiple sports. Football was considerably more common among SDP organisations categorised to address Livelihoods (40.6%, *n* = 53), Social Cohesion (37.1%, *n* = 23), and Peace (35.6%, *n* = 21) compared to Education (27.6%, *n* = 81), Health (25.6%, *n* = 34), and Gender (25.0%, *n* = 9).

Mission Statement

A mission statement was identified for 48.2% of the organisations (n = 460). The majority of SDP organisations did not have a formal mission publically available (n = 495). However, the researchers also employed a cross-tabulation comparing the presence of a mission statement to the demographical variables of the sample organisations. Chi-square results were significant at the 0.05 level for formal mission statement and the geographical location of organisational headquarters (X^2 = 39.904, df = 8, p < .001). The percentage of organisations with a formal mission statement ranged from 69% in North America (n = 117) and 60% in the Middle East (n = 15) to 37.5% in Australia and Oceania (n = 6). In the remaining regions, a formal mission statement was found among 47% in Asia (n = 54), 46% in Africa (n = 143) 41.4% in Latin America (n = 41), and 41% in Europe (n = 91).

Type of Sport

A total of 787 organisations were found to identify the type of sport or activity used to deliver their programming in their mission statement or organisational description. Of these, almost half (48.8%) of the SDP organisations (n = 384) identified the use of multiple sports to deliver their grassroots programming, which includes the use of various play and physical activities. However, this category also included those that referenced the use of 'sport and physical activities' without specific details.

A total of 30% used football as their sport of choice for SDP programming (n = 236). This was followed by basketball (3.2%, n = 25), rugby (2.4%, n = 19), Martial Arts (2.0%, n = 16), Action Sports (1.9%, n = 15), Cycling (1.5%, n = 12), and Cricket (1.4%, n = 11). The remaining 8.8% of organisations (n = 69) were identified to use one of 24 others sports (See Table 1). Only 0.3% of organisations in this sample (n = 3) were identified to use indigenous sports to deliver their SDP programming. Chi-square results were significant at the 0.05 level for type of sport used and the geographical location of organisational programming (X^2 = 116.466, df = 64, p < .001). Football was the most common in Latin America (43.0%, n = 37) and Africa (34.1%, n = 108). In addition, organisations operating in Asia (15.1%, n = 13) and North America (19.2%, n = 19) were more likely to rely on 'Other Sports and Physical Activities' in their SDP programming compared to other regions. We now discuss the implications of these findings in more detail.

DISCUSSION

Findings from our systematic review provide an overarching view of SDP practice, and builds on existing knowledge about the use of sport for social change.[11, 15-18, 33, 34] We now discuss the implications of our findings for future research, policy, and practice. Specifically, the following discussion focuses on three key areas: 1) The geographical location where organisations operate and where programmes are delivered; 2) The primary foci of SDP initiatives (e.g., education, disability, peace-building, etc.); and 3) The type of sport(s) and activities used to deliver these programmes.

Location of SDP Organisations and Programmes

The geographical location of SDP practice is important to understand due to the complex geo-political factors associated with the environments in which these organisations operate.[45, 52] The majority of researchers and organisations featured in the SDP literature have been located in the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, or Canada.[15] Nevertheless, this should not be assumed to suggest that these are the locations where most SDP organisations are located.[53] Instead, our findings revealed that SDP practice is overwhelmingly operated in Africa. The number of entities in Africa were found to be roughly the same as these next three regions (Europe, North America, and Asia) combined. Thus, the work by Langer[11] synthesising extant knowledge on how African SDP programmes contribute (if at all) to development outcomes is encouraging.

Our analysis indicated that South Africa, Kenya, and Uganda were overrepresented with 218 of the 382 African SDP programmes. However, it is also imperative to recognise the diverse contexts found across the African continent. This warrants an appreciation of different epistemological and methodological perspectives for generating a deeper understanding of SDP programmes in different contexts.[3, 54, 55] For example, Collison and Marchessault's[56] extensive fieldwork in Rwanda and Liberia shows how a participatory social interaction approach allows for developing a deeper cultural understanding in SDP research. Spaaij, Schulenkorf, Jeanes, and Oxford also offer a valuable framework for future participatory research in SDP based on their shared experiences in the field.[55]

Beyond the African continent, scholars have suggested most programmes are found in Asia and Latin America,[15] but findings from this study suggest more SDP projects are found in Europe and North America. These efforts include inner-city initiatives aimed at reducing unemployment, gang

violence and substance abuse as well as those focused on promoting educational opportunities.[28, 48, 49] Even so, we found almost as many programmes in Asia. Unfortunately, these remain largely underrepresented in the literature with the exception of programmes in Afghanistan,[41] Cambodia,[57] India,[58, 59] and Sri Lanka.[5] Future research is needed on a broader range of organisations within these contexts.

Latin America also remains largely underrepresented in SDP research. In this study, three times as many programmes were found operating in Latin America compared to the Middle East. Notably, SDP entities operating initiatives aimed at peace-building and reconciliation in the Middle East have received considerably more attention from scholars.[15, 35, 47, 60] Among the few exceptions is the work by Ramón Spaaij and colleagues on the Vencer (A Ganar) programme in Brazil.[37] This lack of research on Latin America is concerning, since established SDP models and theories may not be suitable for the Latin American contexts.[61] Therefore, future research is needed to enhance our knowledge regarding SDP in Latin American contexts. In addition, social movements and informal ways of organising are also recognized in definitions of SDP.[40, 62] We believe there may be numerous of these loosely formed groups that were not captured in our review of SDP organisations and therefore encourage researchers to explore these in more detail. At the same time, this also warrants additional dialogue among practitioners, policymakers, and researchers on defining the boundaries of SDP.

The headquarters and programme locations of SDP entities provide another important takeaway from this study. There are concerns among critical researchers about the hegemonic issues associated with organisations from high-income countries engaging in SDP initiatives in low- and middle-income countries.[20, 21, 63] Interestingly, our analysis suggests that the majority of grassroots entities are headquartered in the same region as where they deliver programmes. Power imbalances may still be prevalent in their funding relationships[64, 65] and deserves further scholarly attention. Furthermore, over 120 organisations were found to be headquartered in a different region. Hence, there still remains a considerable need to further examine the complex dynamics of these relationships and whether local stakeholders are empowered over time to take ownership of the organisation.[45, 66] This brings us to discuss the primary foci of SDP initiatives.

Type of SDP Organisation

The boundaries of SDP encompass a broad range of programmes used to address various social issues.[25, 49, 67] These initiatives combine sport activities with various educational elements.[4, 25, 49] The explicit emphasis on educational programming among more than one-third of the sample in this study indicate the need for enhancing our understanding of the relationship between education and SDP. A common discourse in mission statements and organisational descriptions centred around teaching life skills to participants. This suggests that the language used by many SDP entities continues to reflect idealistic beliefs about sport.[20] Practitioners should instead consider a more balanced view of sport since programmes may result in positive and negative outcomes.[25, 68]

At the same time, it is worth noting other examples where SDP actors are focused on delivering more sophisticated educational opportunities. In inner-cities across the United States, Svensson, Hancock, and Hums[48] found SDP leaders often go as far as identifying their entities as educational nonprofits rather than sport entities. But how does this influence the lived realities of participants? To some extent, a recent special issue of Sport, Education, and Society provides a useful foundation for beginning to answer such questions. For example, Spaaij, Oxford, and Jeanes[69] along with Mwaanga and Prince[30] brought attention to the need for critically examining SDP pedagogy, which requires stakeholders to consider important questions such as whether programmes are participant-centred and designed to engage local stakeholders in meaningful dialogue.[25, 70] Researchers can further help by delving deeper into the educational dynamics involved in SDP and potential contextual differences. This would help practitioners in developing locally relevant programmes.

The emergence of livelihoods as the second most common thematic area also carries important implications, since this remains one of the least studied areas of SDP.[15] These organisations included those delivering sport-based employment training programmes or sport-based social services to at-risk populations. The complexities associated with social mobility and sport-based initiatives warrants future research to advance our understanding of the multi-faceted nature of SDP and livelihoods.[71, 72] There are some examples of how football-based programmes for homeless populations have resulted in increased livelihood among *some* former participants.[73] However, much more work is needed to critically examine the complex realities of these types of programmes. Even well-designed SDP initiatives may not necessarily result in positive outcomes.[49] As Spaaij[71] noted, these programmes cannot be examined in isolation from broader institutions. Therefore, researchers and policymakers should consider the role of governments, community leaders, and local businesses in these initiatives, as well as the potential influence of disparate institutional demands on SDP organisations.[74] Additional efforts are

needed to identify strategies for overcoming environmental challenges and avoid further, albeit unintentional, marginalization of participants.[44]

It is also worth noting that an additional category was added for organisations that did not fit in any of the pre-existing thematic areas from JSFD, yet were characterized by a discourse centred around grassroots SDP practice. This new category was entitled 'infrastructure.' A total of 22 organisations were found to primarily work to develop the necessary physical infrastructure needed in terms of facilities and equipment for underserved communities to benefit from SDP initiatives. While not directly associated with grassroots programmes, we include these organisations due to the infrastructure challenges often reported by SDP practitioners.[28, 75] For example, PITCHAfrica develops sport facilities that are used for local programming, but also allow local communities to harness rain water. Developing sufficient infrastructure is essential for both the ability of an organisation to fulfil its desired goals[45] and for achieving sustainable long-term community impact.[76, 77]

Type of Sport

A review of SDP research published between 2000-2014[15] found football to be the most common sport for delivering SDP programmes. This could arguably be due to the sport's global popularity and the lack of specific equipment and facilities needed. Rookwood and Palmer,[78] however, called for the importance of critically analysing the appropriateness of a given sport within local SDP contexts. For example, is football an appropriate tool for promoting peace-building considering the game is associated with invasive aspects that may inadvertently reinforce conflict and violent behaviour? Darnell and colleagues,[53] raised similar questions suggesting that without more careful (and critical) analysis, SDP initiatives may actually reinforce hegemonic values and practices. Thus, a failure to develop a thorough understanding of the historical aspects of a given sport (e.g., the football war), risks further marginalising participants and other unintentional negative outcomes.[4, 23, 44]

We therefore extend the call for researchers to examine opportunities and challenges associated with using different sports and physical activities in SDP efforts.[15] Overreliance on any one sport or type of activity risks promoting a narrow view of sport.[53] This is concerning since sport is defined by the UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Sport for Development[79 (p.2)] to encompass "*all* forms of physical activity that contribute to physical fitness, mental well-being and social interaction, such as play, recreation, organised or competitive sport, and indigenous sports and games." Having a narrow view of sport limits the possible outcomes from SDP initiatives.

Researchers and practitioners share a responsibility to re-examine the types of sports and physical activities used in SDP. This requires an open-minded perspective embracing the notion that there may be other sports and activities better suited for achieving sustainable development outcomes than the ones currently used. Some sports other than football are found in the literature including rugby-based SDP efforts in Eastern Africa,[45] cycling in Rwanda,[56] volleyball in Cambodia,[57] or mixed-martial arts in Brazil and Uganda.[43, 44] These still represent only a few of the different types of sports and physical activities encompassed within the definition of sport.[53, 79] Our findings suggest a sizeable group of organisations are indeed using multiple sports, play, and physical activities to deliver their programmes. Sterchele's [80] work examining the value of play compared to more traditional organised sports for achieving desired SDP outcomes should inspire others to further examine different types of structured and unstructured sports and physical activities. Unfortunately, only three SDP organisations in our sample explicitly indicated the use of indigenous sports and games. Future research needs to explore whether indigenous sports are more commonly found in informal social movements within SDP. Additional focus should be on examining the role these activities can play in overcoming the hegemonic ideals and patriarchal associations often found in more traditional, organized sports.

Further implications emerge from the statistical analyses of the coded data. The significance of geographical location in regards to the presence of a formal mission statement may not be surprising in terms of North American organisations. However, it is worth noting that organisations located in the Middle East, Asia, and Africa were more likely to have a mission statement than those based in Europe. Even so, many organisations were found to lack a mission statement. This is important to note given the prevalent funding challenges in SDP [28] since funding agencies often require this type of information from prospective funding recipients. Our findings also highlight noticeable differences in the types of sport(s) and physical activities used to deliver SDP programmes across different thematic areas. This raises questions about whether some sports and activities are better suited to achieve certain SDP outcomes than others, or if there are prominent funders or stakeholders within a given area of SDP who influenced the type of activities used. For example, how come disability-focused SDP entities are the most likely to employ multiple sports and physical activities? Answering such questions require researchers to

examine specific thematic areas in more detail by using different research methods.[54, 56]

Similarly, our findings indicate noticeable differences in the reliance on football across different types of initiatives. Future research ought to examine whether these trends are indicative of funding priorities and entrepreneurial growth (e.g., Homeless World Cup and Street Soccer) or whether these findings represent other factors. Based on the significant differences found for the type of sport used and the location of SDP organisations, scholars should also examine global trends and regional and differences in how programmes are delivered. This would allow us to move toward an international-level analysis of SDP [15] and could help "link the study of SDP to global trends and policies in international development". [53]

LIMITATIONS

The contributions of this study should be understood in light of several limitations. Although a two-person independent coding procedure was used to code the data, we recognise the subjective nature of categorising SDP entities based on thematic areas. Even though a high level of inter-rater reliability was achieved, there remains some ambiguity in this process since an organisation may align with more than one SDP category.[15] Thus, findings are bound by the researchers' interpretations. Even so, findings from this study provide one of the first systematic overviews of SDP practice to complement recent reviews of SDP research.[15, 17, 18, 33, 34] The discussion of findings in this manuscript is also limited to scholarly work published in English. We further acknowledge that academic research represent only one type of knowledge within SDP and encourage others to consider alternative perspectives[53] including practitioner reports and other forms of knowledge.

The sample in this study was also limited to organisations that belonged to a SDP network, registered on the International Platform for Sport and Development, or previously submitted a nomination for the Beyond Sport Awards. These databases provided insight into many SDP entities. From a critical perspective, however, it would be naïve to suggest that any online directory encapsulates all SDP practice.[23] As such, we recognise the blurring of SDP boundaries make it difficult to identify and account for grassroots SDP efforts on a global scale. It is also important to note that government-led SDP initiatives were also excluded in this study. However, this systematic review provides a foundation of SDP practice, which others are encouraged to build upon for advancing our understanding of the SDP landscape.

CONCLUSION

Findings from this study provide an overview of the current landscape of SDP practice. Although over 3,000 organisational entries were reviewed, only 955 were identified to take part in SDP practice at the grassroots level. Our analysis of the geographical location of organisations, type of SDP area undertaken, and type of sport or physical activities used in these efforts point to considerable discrepancies between research and practice. These findings indicate critical avenues for future research. In addition, football was overwhelmingly found as the most popular structured sport to deliver programmes, although significant differences were found across different thematic areas of SDP practice. Even so, the current state of SDP practice is characterized by a narrow definition of sport. Therefore, researchers, policymakers, and practitioners alike are encouraged to critically examine the benefits and potential dangers associated with a given sport or activity. This, in turn, would allow for a more balanced and realistic understanding of sport, and how sport—broadly defined—can contribute to development and peace-building efforts.

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