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## Book Review

**Beyond sport for development and peace: Transnational perspectives on theory, policy and practice**

Hayhurst, L.M.C., Kay, T., Chawansky, M. (eds). *Beyond Sport for Development and Peace: Transnational Perspectives on Theory, Policy and Practice*. Milton Park, Abingdon: Routledge; 2016, 244pp., £68 (hardback), ISBN 978-1-138-80667-2

**Review by Christina T. Kwauk<sup>1</sup>**

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At the dawn of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), persisting development challenges and social and economic inequalities left unresolved at the end of the era of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs, 2000-2015) are compounding with emerging inequities and injustices created by an ever evolving and sometimes volatile global socioeconomic and political landscape. While the 17 SDGs reflect the growing scope and complexity of the world's development problems<sup>1</sup>, their solutions must also embody and encompass the transnational nature of these challenges, the relations of power underpinning them, and the interplay between local and global politics that can either perpetuate or curtail them. Partnerships among academics, practitioners and policymakers are thus vitally important, not only to the production and dissemination of knowledge around effective interventions but also to ensure continuous and critical feedback on policy and practice.

Stepping directly in this space, Lyndsay Hayhurst, Tess Kay and Megan Chawansky have brought together an edited volume, *Beyond Sport for Development and Peace: Transnational Perspectives on Theory, Policy and Practice*, to usher the field of sport for development and peace (SDP) into a new sustainable development era bent not only on eliminating poverty but also achieving peace, stability, human rights, and inclusive social and economic

development through more participatory and collaborative processes. The volume pushes the field of SDP beyond Global North-dominated debates about the utility of sport as a tool of international development in the Global South—although, the volume does anchor itself in the view that the effectiveness of SDP is debatable (several chapters do critically investigate the impact of SDP programs). Through a collective process of “self-critical reflection” (9) on issues of power, knowledge and agency within the field, the volume shines light on the need to enhance the capacity of SDP policy, practice and actors to respond to the global inequities underpinning the development challenges of the SDG era rather than national-level poverty that has traditionally driven Global North-South SDP practice and relationships. Indeed, the volume's extensive list of 36 contributing authors use a range of theoretical and methodological perspectives to engage diverse issues of South-South collaboration (Chapters 10 and 11), gender (Chapters 5, 6, 9, and 11), child protection (Chapter 4), SDP pedagogy (Chapter 8), and youth reengagement (Chapter 7)—issues that go beyond the traditional focus of SDP literature on individual outcome areas like health promotion or peace building. The volume covers 15 countries including the Southeast and East Asian countries within the Confucian Arc and among indigenous communities typically overlooked by SDP actors in the Global North.

**Keywords:** sport for development and peace; theory; policy; SDG; book review

Paying particular attention to inclusivity, the editors have raised the bar in terms of the co-production of knowledge in the field of SDP. In a rare example of integrating a diversity of viewpoints in a single edited volume, Hayhurst, Kay and Chawansky have paired traditionally academic chapters with practitioner and policymaker reflections, commentary, and/or responses, making reading the volume akin to observing a discussant respond to a panelist's presentation at an academic conference. When read together, these pairings allow the reader the opportunity to see what aspects of the researchers' findings, conclusions and recommendations are contested or aligned with the world of policy and practice. However, as any conference attendee might attest to, the quality of a panel depends as much on the quality of the researcher's presentation as the quality of the discussant's remarks and what s/he found important to respond to.

Some chapter-response pairings function well, drawing out key points of tension or contestation that help to advance further critical dialogue around specific issues, such as Wendy Lahey's critique of Hayhurst, Giles and Wright's recommendation to align SDP programs targeting indigenous women with other large-scale movements aimed at reducing their marginalization (Chapter 6). Lahey argues that such alignment may result in top-down approaches while ignoring and/or overlooking local issues that may be more relevant. In Chapter 8, Ruth Jeanes and Ramón Spaaij discuss the critical role of the educator in SDP programming especially one who facilitates social change through dialogical methods that are on the one hand situated within the local realities of the beneficiaries, while on the other hand directed at challenging the power relations and structures of authority in which they are embedded. Sarah Oxford follows this discussion with a reminder that the likelihood for an educator to practice such power-sharing, the Freirean facilitation approaches is often constrained by the didactic style of colonial education that the educator most likely received him or herself, as well as the cultural context that structures local social hierarchies of power and authority. Finally, the last two chapter-response pairings (Chapters 10 and 11) explore the sometimes uncomfortable ways in which SDP knowledge is generated through both short- and long-term Global North-South SDP research collaborations. For example, Iain Lindsey and his co-authors (Chapter 10) offer their perspectives on the "practical and moral dilemmas" (205) of achieving in practice a truly collaborative and sustainable SDP project where all partners come together on equal footing and contribute equally in the face of

structural inequalities that exist across the partner countries (Australia, Ghana, and Tanzania). Clare Barrell responds with a candid discussion of the challenges of North-South collaborations when such endeavors rest upon "crude assumptions" (211) made by the North about the South and when the South is positioned as recipients rather than founders of and/or partners in SDP.

Weaker pairings like Robbie McRobbie's commentary on Roger Levermore's overview of SDP in "Confucian Asia" (Chapter 3), fail to take up the editors' call to self-critical reflection. For example, Levermore notes the relative paucity of SDP programming in the Southeast/East Asian region, attributing this largely to the region's emphasis on competitive sport and its differing attitudes toward, definitions of, and approaches to development. McRobbie's commentary follows by discussing ways in which the region can possibly overcome its "antipathy towards sport" (70) as well as the physical obstacles like air pollution that may discourage wider participation in sport. However, this pairing misses an important opportunity to critically question the underlying assumption that countries *should* take on and/or develop further a SDP agenda, or that the underlying issue for "Confucian Asia" is a matter of translation rather than perhaps the sociopolitical insignificance and historical irrelevance of SDP in societies where institutions—not projects—are traditionally expected to improve standards of living.\*

Nonetheless, one must acknowledge the back-end challenges that this sort of editorial endeavor must have entailed, while also appreciating the chapter authors' openness to putting their research and work in such positions of vulnerability. In terms of the utility of these chapter-response pairings for readers, academic faculty may find these the most useful especially for starting seminar discussions among advanced students of sport studies, development studies, gender studies (especially Chapters 5 and 6) and research methods (particularly Chapters 10 and 11). Practitioners and policymakers may also find both the individual chapters and the responses enriching for their work and understanding of SDP. And, finally, SDP researchers may benefit the most from the more traditional academic chapters, described below.

For example, Simon Darnell and Robert Huish (Chapter 2) use an international relations framework to analyze the gap between Cuba's aspirations to facilitate South-South technical cooperation and the local realities in Zambia that thwart the "development" that is expected to take place

\*See for instance Brownell, S. (1995). *Training the Body for China*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

shortly thereafter (Chapter 2). Jimoh Shehu (Chapter 1) in addition to Megan Chawansky and Marisa Schlenker's (Chapter 5) contributions provide important theoretical insights to the volume. In particular, Shehu's discussion of how the United Nations Office of Sport for Development and Peace (UNOSDP) engages in a process of "manufacturing consent" (20) and "bad faith" (21) point to the ways in which discourse perpetuates unequal relations of power within the field of SDP. And Chawansky and Schlenker's insights from girls' studies highlight how "future girl" (99) discourse within the Nike's Foundation's Girl Effect functions to valorize a particular kind of "self-making, resilient, and flexible" girl (99) while blaming those who fail to become such ideal citizens. Also, Marianne Meier's theorization on sporting role models in SDP provides important clarification into how such individuals (celebrities, coaches, leaders, etc.) may actually influence the lives of their intended observers (Chapter 9).

Despite the minor shortcomings mentioned above, Hayhurst, Kay and Chawansky's edited volume offers a timely and critical look at the field of SDP. Expanding the field's scope to issues like child protection (Chapter 4) and youth re-engagement (Chapter 7), its geographical reach to regions like Southeast and East Asia (Chapter 3) and indigenous communities in the Global North (Chapter 6), and its understanding of relationships to Global North-South research collaborations (Chapters 10 and 11) alongside Global South-South technical cooperation (Chapter 2), the volume delivers on its promise to push SDP into a new era of sustainable development. As students, researchers, practitioners and policymakers carry forward the critical discussions initiated by each chapter-response pairing, the knowledge that was co-produced through many collaborations will continue to reverberate and evolve around the world. It is not often that a text can embody and incite such movement.

## REFERENCES

1. United Nations, 2015. Accessed on July 16, 2016 from <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>.

## Original Research

**‘They don’t see my disability anymore’ – The outcomes of sport for development programmes in the lives of people in the Pacific****Alexandra Devine<sup>1</sup>, Aleisha Carrol<sup>2</sup>, Sainimili Naivalu<sup>3</sup>, Senmilia Seru<sup>3</sup>, Sally Baker<sup>1</sup>, Belinda Bayak-Bush<sup>2</sup>, Kathryn James<sup>2</sup>, Lousie Larcombe<sup>1</sup>, Tarryn Brown<sup>2</sup>, Manjula Marella<sup>1</sup>**<sup>1</sup> University of Melbourne, Nossal Institute for Global Health, Australia<sup>2</sup> CBM Australia, Australia<sup>3</sup> Fiji Disabled People's Association, Fiji*Corresponding author email: devinea@unimelb.edu.au***ABSTRACT**

In many settings, people with disabilities are marginalised from the socio-economic activities of their communities and are often excluded from development activities, including sport for development programmes. Sport is recognised as having unique attributes, which can contribute to the development process and play a role in promoting the health of individuals and populations. Yet there is little evidence, which demonstrates whether and how sport for development can be disability-inclusive. The aim of this qualitative research was to address this knowledge gap by documenting the enablers and barriers to disability inclusion within sport for development programmes in the Pacific, and to determine the perceived impact of these programmes on the lives of people with disability. Qualitative interviews and one FGD were conducted with implementers, participants with and without disability, and families that have a child with disability participating in sport. Participation in sport was reported to improve self-worth, health and well-being and social inclusion. Key barriers to inclusion included prejudice and discrimination, lack of accessible transport and sports infrastructure, and disability-specific needs such as lack of assistive devices. Inclusion of people with disabilities within sport for development was enabled by peer-to-peer encouragement, leadership of and meaningful engagement with people with disabilities in all aspects of sports programming.

**BACKGROUND**

An estimated 15 per cent of the world's population have a disability. In many settings, people with disabilities are marginalised from the socio-economic activities of their

communities. Many do not have equal access to health, education, employment or development processes when compared to people without disability, and are subsequently more likely to experience poverty. People with disabilities are also thought to be less likely to participate in sport, recreation and leisure activities than people without disability.<sup>1,2,3</sup>

Sport has been recognised by the United Nations as having unique attributes that can contribute to the community development process.<sup>4</sup> Sport is universally popular, can play a role in healthy childhood development and contribute to reducing non-communicable diseases (NCDs), which in turn can reduce the likelihood of preventable longer-term impairment and mortality.<sup>1,5</sup> Whilst having numerous benefits for the physical and mental health of individuals, it can also be an effective platform for communication of health and human rights messaging as recognised by its inclusion in the Sustainable Development Goals.<sup>4,6,7</sup>

Participation in sport is recognised as a fundamental right, but its impact on the lives of people with disabilities may be particularly relevant.<sup>6</sup> People with disabilities taking part in sport report a sense of achievement, improved self-concept and self-esteem, better social skills, as well as increased mobility and independence.<sup>8</sup> Whilst these benefits are similar to people without disabilities, the positive outcomes are thought to be more significant for people with disabilities given their experience of exclusion from other community activities, especially in resource-poor settings.<sup>6</sup> Given people with disabilities are known to have an increased risk of developing NCDs,<sup>1</sup> -in part due to a lack of access to physical activity-sport for development

**Keywords:** disability inclusion; sport for development; Pacific; international development; evaluation



should be seen as an important opportunity to reduce this risk and promote optimum health.

The benefits of sport for development aim to go beyond individual level physical and mental health with programmes seeking to develop people and communities through sport.<sup>9</sup> Promoting inclusive communities should be a part of this. Sport for development programmes which enable people with and without disability to come together in a positive social environment is thought to promote inclusion and empowerment by challenging negative beliefs about the capabilities of people with disabilities.<sup>10</sup>

NCDs are the leading cause of death and disability in the Pacific Region.<sup>11,12</sup> In response, Pacific Island governments with the support of international cooperation have implemented a number of initiatives including sport for development programmes. The few studies examining the effectiveness of sport for development in the Pacific highlight the importance of locally driven programmes that address locally identified development challenges, culturally appropriate and gender sensitive activities,<sup>9,13,14</sup> the use of high profile role models and champions,<sup>15</sup> and collaboration between development partners, sports implementers and local communities.<sup>9</sup>

The sustainability and effectiveness of sport for development programmes in benefiting individuals and supporting community development processes was reported to be challenged when these factors were not appropriately considered, as well as insufficient financial and technical capacity to sustain programmes.<sup>9</sup> Further, to be effective in the Pacific, sport for development programmes need to address context and cultural specific barriers to participation in sport such as gendered family and work responsibilities, environmental barriers, and lack of motivation and support.<sup>13,14</sup> There was, however, limited analysis in these studies about the process and benefits of inclusion for people with disability.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) describes disability as an evolving concept, whereby disability results from the interaction between persons with long-term impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

Barriers can be attitudinal, related to the built environment; or information, communication and technology; or institutional, such as policies that do not promote equal participation.<sup>16</sup> Article 30 of the CRPD requires States

Parties to take all feasible steps to ensure participation and equal access of people with disability to recreation, leisure and sport. Article 32 requires all international development programmes to be inclusive of and accessible to people with disability. Greater evidence of how sport for development can contribute to the attainment of the rights of people with disabilities to promote their inclusion within communities and development programmes is needed.<sup>3,16,17</sup>

In 2013, in recognition of the potential attributes of sport for development and in-line with the CRPD, the Australian Government's Aid programme and the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) developed a joint '*Development-through-sport*' Strategy to guide the implementation on the Australian Sports Outreach Programme (ASOP).<sup>18</sup> The aim was to utilise sport to contribute to social and development outcomes, and was divided into two main programme components: 1) *Country Programmes*, and 2) *Pacific Sports Partnerships* (PSP). The *Country Programmes* worked with partner governments and/or Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) to deliver inclusive sports-based activities with the aim of contributing to locally identified development priorities. These development priorities included improved leadership; health-related behaviours; social cohesion; and inclusion and promotion of the rights of people with disability.

The *PSP* was a sport for development programme conducted through a partnership between the ASC, Australian Government, Australian National Sporting Organisations, and their Pacific counterparts. The aim was to deliver sport-based programmes that provided a platform to contribute to development outcomes. The objectives were to a) increase levels of regular participation of Pacific Islanders, including people with disability, in quality sport activities; b) improve health-related behaviours of Pacific Islanders which impact on non-communicable disease risk factors; and c) improve attitudes towards and increased inclusion of people with disabilities.

The '*Development-through-sport*' Strategy included two strategic outcomes or goals. The first was '*Improved health-related behaviours to reduce the risk of non-communicable disease.*' The second was '*Improved quality of life for people with disabilities.*' A 'theory-of-change' framework was developed for each outcome, the second of which is most relevant to this paper. The 'theory-of change' framework for the second outcome includes two intermediate outcomes: 1) improving the way people with disabilities think and feel about themselves, and 2) reducing barriers to inclusion. These intermediate outcomes are then supported by a number of pathways to guide

implementation, such as involving people with disabilities in the planning, design and implementation of sport activities (see Fig 1).<sup>18</sup>

Whilst all the sport for development activities conducted through ASOP were implemented with a core objective of creating opportunities for *all people*, there was a lack of evidence as to whether and how these programmes supported disability inclusion and contributed to improving the quality of life of people with disabilities. This research aimed to address this knowledge gap by documenting the enablers and barriers to implementing sport for development programmes, which are inclusive of people with disabilities, and to explore the perceived impact of these programmes on the lives of people with disabilities in the Pacific.

## METHODS

The approach of the research was participatory and inclusive with two local Disabled People's Organisation (DPO)\* members trained and supported to be Research Assistants (RAs). The research was implemented in Australia, Suva and surrounding communities in Fiji, Port Moresby (Papua New Guinea (PNG)), and Apia (Samoa). Fieldwork conducted in Australia included interviews with ASOP stakeholders living in and outside of Australia, including one interview with a key informant living in New Zealand who managed ASOP activities across the Pacific. All other fieldwork sites were selected purposively based on consideration of where ASOP activities were implemented, its geographical accessibility, and any available resources. Data collection took place between March and May in 2015. Qualitative data was collected via key informant interviews, in-depth interviews and one focus group discussion (FGD). Wherever possible, the research team aimed to include a representative sample across gender, location, types of impairment and people representing or engaged in a range of sport for development activities.

### Sample

A total of 60 participants were interviewed from the five countries (Table 1). Key informants were identified and purposively sampled in consultation with the ASC and partner DPOs. Subsequent snowballing whereby participants informed researchers of other potential participants also helped to identify additional participants. Key informants included current and former ASC staff and stakeholders (e.g. coaches and sport for development staff, as opposed to participants in sport for development activities) knowledgeable on the development and

implementation of programmes that received funding through ASOP. Purposive sampling was used to recruit participants for the in-depth interviews (participants of sport for development activities), identified through the networks of partner DPOs and implementers of the sports programmes. Fourteen in-depth interviews were conducted with current participants of sport for development programmes (both male and female, with and without disabilities); four people with disabilities who had dropped out of sport; and three with parents of children with disabilities currently participating in sport. The age range of the adult participants was 24-56 years. The age range of the children with disabilities whose parents were interviewed as proxies was 9-12 years.

### Interview structure

All participants were asked to participate in either a key informant interview (KII), in-depth interview (IDI) or a FGD. The content of the interview guides was developed based on sport for development and disability inclusion literature alongside available ASOP documentation. The focus of the KII's included understanding of disability inclusion, experience in implementing sport for development programmes; perceived enablers of and barriers to inclusion; and perceived impact of sport on the lives of people with disabilities. The focus of the IDI and FGD included experiences of participation; motivation for participation; experience of enablers and barriers; and the perceived impact of sport for development programmes on their lives and the lives of other people with disabilities, such as access to education, employment, and community participation. Where required, interview guides were translated into the local language and back translated into English. All guides were piloted locally before being administered to participants.

Most interviews were conducted face-to-face, via telephone or skype and were digitally recorded, transcribed, and translated into English (where required) for qualitative data analysis. One key informant was not available for interview and therefore responded via email. Except in PNG, all interviews with key informants were conducted in English. In PNG, the interviews and FGD were conducted in Pidgin. As mentioned above, key informants were stakeholders considered to have knowledge on the development and implementation of ASOP activities, whereas in-depth interview participants were current or previous participants of sport for development activities. Due to limited time for fieldwork in PNG however, the FGD included both key informants and participants of sport for development

\*DPOs can be global, regional, national or local organisations which comprise of a voting membership of people with disability, and a board, of which a majority percentage (usually 51% or over) is made up of people with disability.



Table 1 – Demographics of interview participants

	Total number of participants n (%)	Participants with disability n (%)
<b>Country</b>		
Australia	8 (13.3)	0 (0.0)
New Zealand	1 (1.7)	0 (0.0)
Fiji	30 (50.0)	17 (56.7)
Papua New Guinea	19 (31.7)	16 (84.2)
Samoa	2 (3.3)	2 (100)
Total participants	<b>60 (100)</b>	<b>35 (58.3)</b>
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	36 (60.0)	23(63.9)
Female	24(40.0)	13 (54.7)
<b>Organisation</b>		
DPO	21 (35.0)	20 (95.2)
ASC - current	3 (5.0)	0 (0.0)
ASC- former	2 (3.3)	0 (0.0)
International Sports Organisation	4 (6.7)	0 (0.0)
National Sports Organisation	7 (11.7)	1 (14.3)
<b>Government Representatives</b>	3 (5.0)	0 (0.0)
<b>Sport participants</b>		
Current	13 (21.7)	10 (76.9)
Former	4 (6.6)	4 (100.0)
Family members	3 (5.0)	0 (0.0)

activities because this was the most feasible option to collect data from these participants who had travelled to Port Moresby for a related meeting.

### Analysis

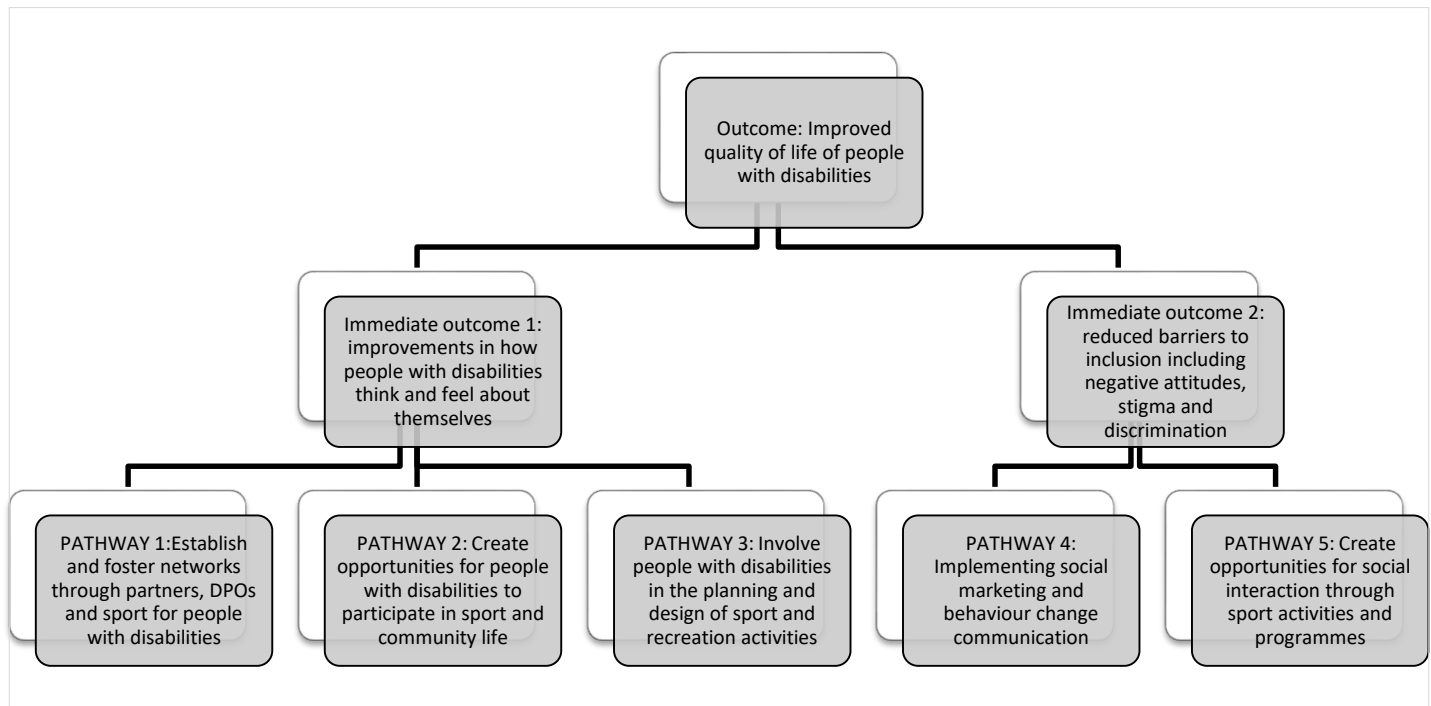
Data were manually coded inductively and deductively to generate themes using thematic content analysis approach. The ‘*Development-through-Sport*’ Strategy’s ‘theory of change framework’ for outcome two was used as the theoretical framework for the analysis (see Fig 1). The two lead members of the research team independently read all transcripts, familiarised and coded the findings while other team members reviewed a representative sample of the transcripts and coded analysis. Findings were initially coded under the relevant intermediate outcomes and pathways outlined in the ‘theory of change’ framework, including examples of enablers and barriers relevant to each pathway. Findings under each pathway were further categorised into relevant subthemes. An analysis workshop was conducted by the Australian-based research team.

Initial findings were then shared with the local RAs and other DPO and ASC staff involved in the research to ensure the analysis gave an accurate reflection of the context, and then the analysis was finalised. For the purpose of this paper, the findings have been presented under three main sections 1) Improvements in the quality of life of people with disability; 2) Barriers to inclusion in sport for development activities; and 3) Enablers of inclusion in sport for development activities.

### Ethics

The Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) at the University of Melbourne in Australia approved the research. In addition, the Ministry of Youth and Sports in Fiji approved the research. The interviewers informed potential participants of the research and invited them to participate. All participants were 18 years or older and provided written or verbal consent. In cases where parents of children with disabilities were interviewed as proxies, consent was obtained from the parents only.

Figure 1 – ‘Development-through-sport’ Theory of Change framework



## RESULTS

### Improvements in the quality of life of people with disabilities

#### *Improved Self-worth and Empowerment*

All except one participant with a disability interviewed and clearly indicated that participation in sport led to a greater sense of self-worth and empowerment to create change in their lives, as highlighted by a male sport for development participant with physical disability in Fiji – “[Sport] expose[s] that disabled people have talent. We can compete ... I've noticed it gives you more confidence to expose yourself. No longer staying at home and being quiet.” Sport was also reported to contribute to social inclusion, improved access to employment and better attitudes towards people with disabilities. Participants reflected on these inherent qualities of sport, particularly highlighting that sport enabled them to challenge negative beliefs about their capabilities by providing opportunities to demonstrate their skills and talents to the broader community.

*It changed my mindset. It changed how I look at myself, because I was achieving a lot. Participating in the Games ... and also overseas. Being involved in the community, being on TV. It's normal hey, because then they don't see my disability anymore. Those are the changes that it has brought into my life. (Male sport participant with physical disability, Fiji)*

The sense of empowerment and inclusion gained through participation in sport was reported to prompt participants to encourage others with disabilities to access sport. Being included alongside people with and without disabilities, and pushing each other to improve also promoted empowerment and inclusion. A male participant from Fiji who is Deaf said, “because I realised that your life could change when you started to interact more with hearing people.” This was triangulated in the findings by other participants who specifically reported feeling encouraged to participate in sport by their peers with disabilities.

The empowerment gained through sport was reported to be a driver for people with disabilities to address barriers to inclusion in other aspects of their lives, and the lives of other people with disabilities. For example, one former athlete who attributed his opportunity to participate in sport as leading to other opportunities in life such as employment, reported a sense of responsibility to address barriers to employment for other people with disabilities.

*I think that for some of us who are former athletes ... they tend to be engaged in other activities in the community such as becoming a businessman and sometimes have jobs such as being a cook or working in an office. As [former athletes] are aware of the problems we tend to face, and through sports, are empowered to work through these problems. It then becomes important for them to drive changes in the community, due to individual experiences of overcoming challenges. (DPO representative, PNG)*

### *Improved health and well-being*

Similarly, the majority of participants with disabilities who interviewed about their experience in sport reported that sport contributed to improved health outcomes and better self-management of health. “The Zumba programme – it actually reduces my level of stress,” commented a female participant with psychosocial disability in Fiji. It also helped people make healthier lifestyle choices.

*Before I did sports, I used to smoke and drink ... go clubbing. When I joined the sports, the para sports, it changed me. Right now I don't drink grog (kava) and I don't smoke, I do full-time training ... Some of us with disability they can't exercise themselves ... they don't reach the age they want to reach – they die early – because they don't do exercise ... I think sports is good for us ... (Male sport participant with physical disability, Fiji)*

Sport provided the prospect of enhanced enjoyment of life. A small number of respondents described the enjoyment of winning as greater for people with disabilities because they have had less opportunity to experience such emotions in their day-to-day life. This was also reflected in the observations of sports organisation staff.

*... I can see that they've built up a lot of self-esteem, a lot more confidence. This is all the mental part of the person. I could see changes in themselves – being able to interact more with people and not be too concerned about what people think about their disabilities. I think they are more focused on what their abilities are rather than what their disabilities are. (National sports organisation representative, Fiji)*

### *Social Inclusion*

The social aspects of sport were ranked as more important than the competitive aspects by more than seventy percent of interviewees with disabilities. For those who participated in sport before acquiring impairment, the reason for participation often changed from the desire for personal achievement to sport's social aspects after the impairment had occurred. People without disabilities also valued the opportunity to spend time with people with disabilities.

*It was the first time for me to participate in sports with persons with disabilities and I really like it, it was a totally new experience for me. (Male sports participant without disability, Fiji)*

There were also examples where organisations included social aspects for people with and without disability into their programmes, adapting activities to include an element of fun and time for socializing.

*... technique disguised as a fun exercise, and they need time to socialise so with a one hour training session there should be at least five minutes or ten minutes for people just to talk to each other' (International sports organisation representative, Australia).*

Where participants had experience of representing their country in national or international events and received media attention, they described the experience of becoming ‘famous’ in their community and associated positive interaction with others. Travelling for sport within their country and internationally supported further social opportunities.

*It's fun, you meet new people and travel around ... you are being exposed to other customs and traditions - you're not closed up, you can open up ... you are more confident with speaking to other people ... apart from your own race and apart from Fijian people. (Male sport participant with physical disability, Fiji)*

Sports programmes in schools were identified by nearly half of the DPO representatives as particularly important for children with disabilities to socialise and develop skills. A DPO representative from Samoa stated, “What we are seeing in those kind of games we play locally ... most of the kids they don't know each other – when they come and play games they finally make friends with other kids.” This sentiment was echoed by all parents interviewed.

*It has especially [impacted] social inclusiveness and access to education. Without sports sometimes, she is always idle, but with sport she is learning process, because more children they tend to learn through sports, and some of them they don't adapt in the classroom. When you get them to play sports that's when they learn to get engaged. (Parent of child with disability participating in sport, Fiji)*

### *Economic Empowerment*

Nearly half of the interviewees with disabilities in Fiji and PNG reported opportunities for employment gained through sport. These roles included sports advocates within DPOs, sport development officers in sports organisations, and as coaches. This not only promoted economic empowerment of people with disabilities but was reported to help

demonstrate their capacity to be gainfully employed, again raising their status in society.

*I have even been told myself ‘‘if you can do that [participate in sport] you can work in an office or go back to your normal job’’ or something ... anything can happen. (Female sports participant, Fiji)*

Opportunities to facilitate workshops and learn coaching skills through ASOP enabled some participants to build their skills in communication, which opened up doors to the workforce. Mainstream programmes that were inclusive were seen as particularly beneficial because they allowed for interaction between people with and without disabilities. A male sport participant with a physical disability in Fiji reported that ‘‘... it is an eye-opener to me because I meet plenty and more friends, especially people with disability and also people, able person, we make friends a lot and we socialise a lot.’’

#### *Community Attitudes Towards Disability*

The vast majority of all research participants highlighted the ability of sport to improve social inclusion of people with disabilities, especially when implementers and DPOs were able to go into communities and raise awareness of the rights of people with disabilities. Raising awareness and understanding among the community enabled, often for the first time, people with disabilities to participate in sport activities conducted as part of these outreach visits. DPOs involved in outreach activities reported using this role to better advocate for inclusion in the broader community. One interviewee highlighted the DPO role in broader advocacy, but also how much more needs to be done.

*There was one guy, who was in a wheelchair, but his home was inaccessible, it had steps and everything, so someone had to carry him down and put him in a wheelchair and then he could go out. On Sundays, he would get up, dress up, and listen to a church service from his window. We told his parents and the church about accessibility, but it costs money. Often issues with accessibility need money to fix, and the family might not be willing to spend money on that, or just can’t afford it. (DPO representative, Fiji)*

Another positive example of the ASOP highlighted were activities where families are actively encouraged to allow children with disabilities to play sports, which then led to improved parental expectations of their child’s capabilities. Families reported being more hopeful about what their children can achieve, which may then encourage families to support their children to participate in other areas of the

community such as cultural events, education and employment.

*We [have] seen some of the parents like to play with the kids during the sports. So from there we know that parents not only to be there to look after the kids but you know that they have their heart to encourage their kids to play and have time with other kids. (DPO representative, Samoa)*

#### **Barriers to Inclusion in Sport for Development**

Participants with disabilities reflected on a number of personal and external factors that impact their participation in sports. People with disabilities highlighted they often lack confidence in their own abilities, particularly when their families lack confidence in them and actively discourage their participation. Many of the interviewees with disabilities cited their families’ lack of support as a major barrier to participation. Two-thirds of these participants also identified environmental barriers to participation such as the lack of accessible information on available programmes; inaccessible facilities and equipment; and difficulty accessing transport to get to training and events.

#### *Prejudice and Discrimination*

Three-quarters of key informants identified prejudice and discrimination as a significant barrier to the inclusion of people with disability in sports programmes. In communities where there were perceived negative attitudes toward disabilities, programme implementers reported difficulty while including people with disabilities in community-level activities, as people with disabilities were hidden within the home or families would not allow them to participate. The vital broader role of DPOs in addressing prejudice and discrimination and raising awareness of rights was again highlighted, particularly during community outreach programmes.

The longer-term impact of community outreach programmes on participation is more difficult to determine. A small number of key informants felt that as community programmes are often one-off visits, they don’t allow for enough community engagement to contribute to sustained attitudinal changes, or to develop sustainable inclusive sport programmes.

A small number of research participants with and without disabilities noted that opportunities to participate in sports are not the same for all people with disabilities. One key informant reported staff often don’t have appropriate understanding of how to interact with people who have



certain disabilities, stating “If they have a physical disability they are more likely to be included, whereas people with a mental disability, there is often that fear of well ‘I don’t know how to talk to you, because you have a mental disability.’” (International sports organisation representative, Australia). This perception was echoed by a small number of participants.

*For my brothers and sisters who are not confident to come out in public, one of the barriers would be attitudes of people, probably the stigma. Because people ... when someone has been admitted to St Giles [psychiatric hospital in Fiji] they tend to act differently to that person ... (Female sport participant with psychosocial disability, Fiji)*

*Those with intellectual disabilities .... Because they are seen by the public differently rather than ... because it’s not your physical body that’s affected. ... you know you are intellectual... and immediately when people see them they will say ok we cannot play with them because you know whatever we plan, it will turn up differently because of them ... (DPO representative, Samoa)*

For women with disabilities, there was a sense of disparity expressed when describing efforts to participate in sport, with one saying that “when I trained I am the only girl for, I think, four months, and for me there is gender imbalance there.” (Female sport participant with vision impairment, Fiji). Some participants with and without disabilities also identified that females with disabilities may face additional discrimination.

*... sometimes it's the women who are being laughed at mostly I've heard of that ... I'm thinking why do they do that to that particular person – why is it a woman who has to be the one who go through a lot of things that make her feel she is not wanted? (Female sport participant with physical disability, Fiji)*

### *Lack of Family Support*

An absence of family support or active discouragement was identified as a common barrier by nearly half of the participants with disabilities who interviewed. Many reported strong cultural and traditional beliefs, particularly in the rural areas, whereby families believe people with disabilities should stay at home. A small number of key informants emphasised the importance of addressing these barriers and encouraging families to enable family members with disability to participate in sport.

*... [they say] ‘no my child did not play that game because you know he has a disability, he can’t play.’ So they come and just say that, you know, take away kids from the event ... we have to provide some awareness programme ... to encourage the parents to bring in their kids ... because most of the parents here in Samoa believe that people with disability [should] just stay home. (DPO representative, Samoa)*

### *Limited Accessibility of Sport for Development Programmes*

Inaccessible sporting facilities and lack of knowledge on how to make reasonable accommodations\* to support inclusion were seen as an ongoing barrier to participation by more than half of all research participants. People with disabilities highlighted that they wanted access to more choices in programmes and that programmes should sustain interest by allowing for increased challenges. This is particularly important when considering the involvement of people with more complex participation requirements. It was expressed that some sports currently only cater to people who are more mobile and use common communications methods with people who have more complex physical or cognitive needs missing out. A few key informants reported that genuine commitment, time and resources are required from organisations to analyse and solve problems surrounding how their sport can be modified to enable people with different abilities and impairments to participate.

For some participants with disabilities who live relatively close to urban areas, significant motivation and financial resources were still required to commit to training. Even where physically accessible buildings do exist, access was reported to be constrained by short opening hours of venues; difficulty getting to the venue; and difficulty mobilising within the venue around equipment.

*We have a gymnasium whereas in the day but it's always full. It's a small gym and a lot of corporate bodies training ... [it's] hard for me. And they only open at about 3 o'clock in the afternoon. So in my case if someone is to open a gym close to where I am they should open in the morning so when abled people go to work. (Male sport participant with vision impairment, Fiji)*

Access to sport was reported to be better in urban cities compared to rural areas. A small number of interview participants from Fiji reported that sporting venues in the country's capital had improved in terms of accessibility, but in communities outside the city, accessibility was an

\* “Reasonable accommodation” means necessary and appropriate modification and adjustments not imposing a disproportionate or undue burden, where needed in a particular case, to ensure to persons with disabilities the enjoyment or exercise on an equal basis with others of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, CRPD Article 2.

ongoing issue. In PNG, half of the participants with disabilities described travelling from rural areas to attend a sport event only to find a lack of modified equipment had been provided by the programme, thereby not allowing everyone to participate. Similarly, limited access to coaches in rural areas was reported to prevent participation.

#### *Lack of Information About Sport*

Two-thirds of participants with disabilities in Fiji cited limited access to information about sport for development activities as a reason people with disabilities are not participating. Factors impacting access included a lack of information in accessible formats. *One participant suggested that the events* “should have more advertising in the media through TV or print ... so people with disabilities can read and know that this is happening ... because [people with disabilities] isolate themselves and don't know what's happening.” (Female sport participant with psychosocial disability, Fiji). Conversely, effective collaboration between sports organisations and DPOs was said to support better access to information on upcoming events. This was reported as essential for people with disability so they have time to prepare and organise assistance to participate if required.

*At the moment this coordination and consultation is lacking ... us DPOs we do not have [opportunity to be consulted during planning].... (DPO representative, PNG)*

#### *Lack of Accessible Public Transport*

All participants with disabilities cited transport as one of the most significant barriers to participation and for some, it was the primary reason for dropping out of sport. Constraints to accessing transport were described in three ways: limited finances to support transport needs; real and perceived discrimination experienced by people with disability attempting to use public transport; and lack of physically accessible transport. Some organisations recognised this barrier and provided transport for ‘come and try’ sport days. Others are starting to make adjustments to the way they deliver sport, stating, “We are trying to alleviate that problem by taking the sport to them rather than asking them to come to us by using outreach programmes.” (Sport organisation representative, Fiji). However, neither of these approaches solves the ongoing issue of inaccessible transport, highlighting the need to support governments to address systemic barriers to inclusion of people with disabilities in society.

Many people with disabilities in Fiji have access to free public transportation, yet this doesn't address all the barriers they face to accessing transportation. Three participants with disability reported that despite having a free bus pass, some bus drivers would prevent them from getting on the bus during peak periods, reporting that they had time restrictions and couldn't provide extra time for a person with a disability to climb into the bus. The latter issue arose because buses are not wheelchair accessible and so in some cases people would crawl onto the bus and ask a bystander to fold and lift their chair onto the bus for them. One of these participants went on to discuss that prejudice and discrimination, both real and perceived, prevented people from accessing public transportation even when their impairment physically did not.

#### *Lack of Options and Competitive Pathways*

Moving beyond engagement in social sport activities to more competitive activities can be very challenging for athletes. Whilst many people with disabilities interviewed were motivated to play sports for health and social benefits, there were others who were frustrated by the barriers to more competitive pathways. In PNG, for example, a lack of options was attributed to a lack of people with disabilities holding leadership positions in sports organisations; inadequate engagement of people with disabilities in the design and implementation of sports programmes; and a lack of collaboration between service providers and DPOs, particularly when service providers have ‘control’ over the implementation of sport for development activities. Also highlighted was the need for more recognition of the achievements of athletes with disabilities and better support for these athletes to achieve at a higher level. One DPO representative in PNG reported, “I won three gold medals in the PNG Games, the javelin, shot-put and discus ... I also participated in the Arafura Games ... however from then on I was not supported to progress on to the next level.” (DPO representative, PNG)

#### *Disability-specific Barriers Which Impact on Participation*

People with disabilities often experience disability-specific barriers that impact their participation in sport. Approximately half of the interview participants with disabilities in Fiji reported experiencing disability-specific barriers during their engagement in sport for development programmes. These include communication barriers for people who are deaf or hard of hearing in accessing a programme delivered by people who do not communicate using sign language and without an interpreter. Or lack of



assistive devices, such as a prosthetic limb or appropriate wheelchairs that would support people with mobility impairments to engage in sport. There were examples of organisations trying to overcome this, such as in Suva, whereby some sports officers were learning sign language to enable them to engage with people who are deaf. Yet this hasn't happened in most areas in Fiji or other Pacific countries, highlighting how opportunities can differ for people with the same impairment, depending on the resources available in their environment and the efforts that have been made to include them.

*For years there has been a Deaf Table Tennis club [in Fiji] and this has been integrated completely. There are deaf coaches who coach able-bodied players and yet they don't see the disability at all. But in Vanuatu being deaf is very much more difficult because not many people speak sign language. (International sports organisation representative, Australia)*

In most Pacific countries, access to assistive devices and alternative communication modes is an area that tends to lie outside of the domain of sport, yet it directly influences how and how well people with disabilities are able to participate in sport. A lack of access to quality and fit for purpose assistive devices was another issue raised by a small number of participants with disabilities, particularly those wanting to compete at an international level. Even at the community level, access to affordable replacements for damaged walking aids was identified as placing further burden on the limited finances of people with disabilities that impacted their participation. Similarly, people with disability reported a lack of assistance at training such as 'guide runners' and support getting in and out of the pool. These issues were all described as reasons for dropping out of sport.

#### *Need for Greater Monitoring and Evaluation*

Implementers discussed the requirements of the PSP programme to include reporting on numbers of people with disability who are accessing programmes. ASC were encouraging implementers to use the Washington Group Short Set\* of questions to support this and fill a current gap in the programmes to identify people with disability. Better identification of people with disabilities to support inclusion was also highlighted by DPO representatives.

There were also some good examples of sport organisations seeking to measure attitudinal change toward disability within their monitoring and evaluation systems and

collecting stories of change from participants about the impact of the programmes. Overall however, this research identified a tension between a growing need for better data collection on inclusion and the capacity of local sports implementers to collect and report this data.

Many of the international sport organisation representatives interviewed reported finding it challenging to build the capacity of local implementers to collect basic data on the numbers of people with disabilities participating in programmes, let alone trying to document changes at the community level.

#### **Enablers of Inclusion in Sport for Development Activities**

A number of factors that facilitate inclusion in sport emerged, including peer-to-peer encouragement, support from DPOs and sports organisations, and meaningful participation of people with disabilities in all aspects of sports programmes.

##### *Peer-to-peer Encouragement and Role Modelling*

Encouragement from peers with disabilities also engaged in sport was described as a major facilitator of participation and initial entry point into sport by many of the participants with disabilities interviewed. Such examples serve as evidence of this peer-to-peer pathway being built into some programmes more formally. In Fiji, for example, DPOs helped identify 'Sports Champs' to be role models and help identify and encourage other people with disabilities to participate in sport.

This concept of role models promoting participation in sport was a strong theme emerging throughout the research. Most respondents in Fiji, for example, reported the achievements of the Honourable Assistant Minister Iliesa Delana (a Fijian athlete with disability) at the London Paralympics, who went on to be elected to the Fijian parliament as a turning-point in changing the perceptions people with disabilities had of themselves, as well as challenging how the community perceived people with disabilities.

##### *People with Disability in Leadership*

Beyond participating in sport itself, a number of participants described pathways that enabled them to engage in sport in positions of leadership. Having more people with disabilities in positions of leadership was described as a way to make people with disabilities feel more comfortable about

\*These are a set of six questions developed by The Washington Group on Disability Statistics which measure functioning (vision, hearing, mobility, self-care, executive cognition and communication) to identify people likely to be experiencing disability. The questions are endorsed by the UN Statistical Commission as a universally agreed tool within censuses and surveys, allowing for comparison of data across countries. Although originally designed for population-based surveys, they have been used more widely and adapted for use in some programme level activities. Further information is available at <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/methods/citygroup/washington.htm>

joining programmes. One female sport participant with a vision impairment in Fiji said, “While I was training for my athletics we used to have a coach who was also disabled so he used to understand us.” Some respondents also identified that involvement of DPO representatives in programmes had led to people with disabilities taking on leadership roles within their community in Fiji, such as the Toragi ni koro. (Chief Liaison at the village level)

### *Inclusion of People with Disability in All Aspects of Programmes*

Meaningful participation in sport for people with disabilities goes beyond being a beneficiary of sport activities. It also encompasses inclusion in sport processes, including planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programmes. The inclusion of people with disabilities in the planning of programmes was recognised by many key informants as contributing to better understanding about the capacity of people with disabilities to participate in sports programmes, and the development of more accessible and inclusive programmes.

*So that’s what I call inclusive sport ... you design something that includes everyone’s idea and make sure that everyone is involved from the beginning, the implementation and monitoring and evaluation as well as reporting ... you don’t just ask [people with disability] to join when the programme is half way through. (DPO representative, Samoa)*

A key enabler to supporting inclusion in all aspects of programmes highlighted was providing more opportunities for networks to share good practice and facilitate cross-organisational learning. Sports organisations vary greatly in how they implement disability inclusion. By showcasing examples of good practice, it is hoped all organisations would be encouraged to improve inclusion within their programmes and promote more opportunities for people with disability to engage in all aspects of sports programming.

### *Encouragement and Support through DPOs, Sport Organisations and Family*

DPOs and sports organisations were highlighted as playing an important role in encouraging participation in sport. Individuals within these organisations were reported as being instrumental in identifying people with disabilities in communities and nurturing their skills and talents. People with disabilities were reported to sometimes be “locked at home.” Participants acknowledged that because of this and the long history of exclusion of many people with

disabilities, significant time and effort is often required to encourage individuals with disabilities to participate.

*Like, they still feel shy. There is still that stigma, that barrier that they have. So we sports people, sometimes we have to go that extra mile, we have to break the ice with them in order to get them to open up and be comfortable. (National sport organisation representative, Fiji)*

Individuals with an understanding of and interest in inclusion were recognised for their role in championing inclusion while also encouraging and linking in a number of individuals with disabilities into sport networks. These individuals included coaches, mentors and other sports leaders who identified participants and supported their inclusion through encouraging family support, securing funding, training people with disabilities to be coaches, and encouraging networking between DPOs and mainstream sports organisations.

*I think what has worked well in some countries such as Fiji and Vanuatu is that there has been a champion who has actively sought out how to include people with disability ... in Australia when we talk about those champions it’s often people who have had a family member with a disability. That doesn’t seem to be the common denominator in Vanuatu and Fiji. It’s just that these people have got a really good awareness about disability and an attitude towards inclusion ... (ASC representative, Australia)*

Social marketing campaigns were seen as an important tool for inclusion through their use in highlighting the success of athletes with disabilities and motivating people with disabilities to participate in sport. Organisations are also starting to explore ways they can engage with social marketing to support participation, both in terms of promoting media coverage of people with disability in sport, and utilising technology to promote participation. A representative from an organisation noted, “I think mainly we use media and word-of-mouth. Right now, we’re hoping to use text messages on phones and various other marketing mechanisms we have, such as TV.” (National sports organisation representative, Fiji).

Many participants with disability reported that when family support was available, it was integral to their ongoing participation. Different kinds of family support were described, such as practical support like helping people get to training or helping finance the cost of participation. Families were also central to enhancing the self-belief of their family members with a disability which in turn enabled participation.

*My family embraced it – even when they saw [disability] happening to me they still kept encouraging me ... I didn't want to listen – I was too ashamed to go around. (Male sport participant with physical disability, Fiji)*

### *Opportunities to Participate in Mainstream Sport Programmes*

Providing opportunities for people with and without disabilities to play sport alongside each other is an important approach to inclusion, which was highlighted by nearly half of all research participants. Some organisations implemented this approach, but not all. The findings also suggest that people with disabilities often participate in mainstream sport due to self-motivation, rather than as a result of opportunities provided by sports organisations.

Schools, particularly schools for children with disability and colloquially referred to as special schools were regularly cited by participants with disabilities and key informants as a common entry point for children with disabilities into sport. Sport for development activities implemented in special schools allowed for development of skills in a safe and supported environment, which for some children with disabilities can support transition into mainstream sport activities.

Yet programmes implemented in special schools were also mentioned as actually creating barriers as they keep children with disabilities segregated from playing sport with children without disabilities. The need to develop the capacity of sports organisations to design and implement more programmes outside of disability-specific settings was highlighted by some implementers. There is evidence this is starting to occur, with some sports organisations implementing programmes outside of school hours which are inclusive of children with and without disabilities.

*... what we are seeing in those kind of games we play locally ... most of the kids they don't know each other when they come and play games they finally make friends with other kids. (DPO representative, Samoa)*

## **DISCUSSION**

Findings from this research support evidence in the literature that sport can be a powerful transformative tool, improving the overall status of people with disabilities within society.<sup>6,19</sup> Promoting access to sport for people with disabilities has the capacity to improve the quality of life of people with disabilities, and improving physical and mental health particularly in the context of increased incidence of

NCDs.<sup>11, 13,14</sup> More importantly, in line with previous research, to enable people with disabilities to reduce the emotional effects of disabilities by offering a way to accept their disability ("come out") and to manage the discriminatory effects of disabilities.<sup>20</sup>

By providing a platform for people with and without disabilities to come together, there is an opportunity to challenge commonly held misconceptions about disabilities and for people with disabilities to demonstrate their capacities. It also provides an opportunity for people without disabilities to interact and socialise with people with disabilities. This may help to address negative attitudes towards disabilities, a major barrier to the inclusion in other activities such as education, employment and community participation more broadly.<sup>1,2</sup>

Realising the rights of people with disabilities to participate in sport requires governments and sport for development programmes to clearly articulate disability inclusion in their strategies, contractual agreements, implementation plans, and as part of their monitoring and evaluation. A strong policy environment for health and physical activity is vital,<sup>14</sup> making sure relevant policies are disability-inclusive would strengthen subsequent inclusion within implementation. Increasing participation of people with disabilities in sport will also require collaboration with stakeholders outside the sport sector, for example the corporate sector, transport authorities, health and rehabilitation, and urban planning. Sustainability and effectiveness of sport for development programmes relies on appropriate human, technical and financial resources.<sup>9</sup> Dedication of resources to embed disability inclusion in sport for development activities and these related sectors over time will require ongoing commitment from donors and implementing partners.

Effective and sustainable sport for development programmes require leadership and collaboration.<sup>9</sup> The same is required of disability-inclusive sport for development programmes. The research highlighted a number of important networks and partnerships that support inclusion of people with disability in sport. Central to these are the partnerships between DPOs, national sports organisations, and their international or regional counterparts. People with disabilities are the key stakeholders in sport for inclusive development networks. In recognition of this, programmes should determine appropriate mechanisms and adequate resources to ensure people with disabilities can provide leadership and coordination of these networks, support organisational commitment and capacity for disability inclusion, and meaningfully engage in all aspects of programming.

Strong leadership is required from all stakeholders to provide more opportunities for people with disabilities who are currently less likely to have access to programmes such as women,<sup>13,14</sup> people with psychosocial disabilities, intellectual disabilities, and those with more complex participation requirements. This could be achieved by building on international examples of modified sports, and collaboratively problem-solving with DPOs to enable people with more complex impairments to participate.

Inclusion of people with disabilities in programmes not only benefits individuals, but their families and the broader community.<sup>10</sup> Implementers of programmes and DPOs need to continue to work with families and communities to raise awareness of disabilities, and promote an understanding of the benefits of sport including the potential to promote access to other life domains such as social inclusion, education and employment. Similar to other findings in the literature, this study found that drawing on high profile role models and ‘champions’ is key to promoting awareness and encouraging participation in sport of individuals who are more likely to have experienced exclusion and marginalisation.<sup>15</sup>

People with disabilities want more choice and options as to how they participate in sport – from intermittent social participation, to participating at an elite level, and engaging in sport beyond playing, in roles such as coaching. Similarly, as many people with disabilities living in the Pacific do not live in urban areas where many sports programmes are implemented, organisations need to continue to build their capacity to provide more opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in sport in rural and remote areas. Building on community outreach programmes and collaborations between DPOs, sports organisations and rural communities is one way this could be achieved.

With the growing recognition and utilisation of sport as a tool for development, continual sharing of experiences of how sport for development can be inclusive of people with disabilities could encourage development actors using sport to better include people with disabilities.<sup>7</sup> It is also positive to see a move towards collecting data, for example, through the use of the Washington Group questions, to better understand the rate of participation of people with disabilities in programmes. Yet, to evaluate the longer-term impact of inclusive sports programmes on reducing negative attitudes and promoting inclusion in the broader community, and to address the need to build the evidence base on the effectiveness of sport for development to promote the rights

of population groups more likely to be excluded from development, counting the numbers of people with disability participating in programmes is insufficient.<sup>17,21,22</sup>

The need for improved quality of research on the impacts of sport for development is gaining recognition.<sup>9,21,23</sup> Attributing the specific impact of inclusive sport for development programmes and the sustainability of this impact, requires a deeper understanding of the contextual factors which influence inclusion within sport and broader community domains including development programming. There would be great benefit in conducting baseline studies in communities before implementing programmes and disaggregating data by disability in order to really understand the current experience of people with disabilities as compared to people without disabilities; how this impacts on their access and participation in sport and other areas of community life; and what barriers need to be addressed to improve inclusion, including attitudinal barriers.<sup>24</sup>

This could then be followed up with an evaluation of the programme using the same survey to allow for an analysis of the longer-term impact of the programme for people with disabilities in their communities. Combined with other monitoring and evaluation techniques such as collection of qualitative data through stories of change, this would also enhance global understanding about how sport can be used more broadly as a tool in development.<sup>17</sup> Guaranteeing these processes are embedded in programmes requires funders to ensure that the terms of references for implementers include appropriate resourcing for disability inclusion and its monitoring, evaluation and learning through research.

## LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

The research was conducted in a tight timeframe with limited resources. As such, despite efforts made to ensure people with different types of impairments were included in the sample, it was difficult to ensure adequate representation of all groups. In particular, we were unable to directly interview people with intellectual disabilities. Given more time and resources, it would also have been beneficial to directly interview children with disabilities about their experiences in sport. The decision to use proxies for children with disabilities was made with the knowledge that limited time in-country would make it difficult to develop and use appropriate participatory methods, which would have allowed for children to directly participate in the research. More time in the country would also have allowed us to collect more information from people with disabilities living in rural and remote areas.



Because a purposeful sampling method was used, there may have been a selection bias towards people known to have positively participated in sport. Interviews were conducted with people who have dropped out of sport to try and counteract this effect. Whilst this research collected in-depth qualitative data from a range of participants, both with and without disabilities, collecting data at one point in time doesn't necessarily provide data about changes in participation in the community over time. Nor does it allow an accurate measure of change of attitudes and barriers to participation in the community. The use of baseline surveys and ongoing monitoring and evaluation would help researchers overcome this issue.

## CONCLUSION

Disability inclusion is reaching a critical point whereby organisations are becoming more aware of the importance of inclusion. There have been significant positive changes since the introduction of the CRPD, which are reflected in this research. It is hoped that this trend will continue the explicit inclusion of disability within five of the SDGs. The growing recognition of the effectiveness of sport as a tool for development, including in the SDGs, and the importance of disability-inclusive development provides an excellent opportunity to advocate for the implementation of sport for development programmes which are inclusive of people with disability.<sup>6</sup> Ensuring people with disability are included within sport for development programmes will contribute to the improved quality of life of people with disabilities, and help fulfil the development community's responsibility to ensure people with disabilities are no longer marginalised from the processes and benefits of broader development goals.

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## Original Research

**“Leadership and empowerment through sport”: The intentions, hopes, ambitions and reality of creating a sport-for-development organisation in Cape Town****David Meir<sup>1</sup>**<sup>1</sup> University Centre Blackburn College, School of Health, Science and Technology, UK*Corresponding author email: david.meir@blackburn.ac.uk***ABSTRACT**

Leadership and Empowerment through Sport (LETS) was created in February 2013 to deliver sports leadership programmes in collaboration with governmental departments and community projects in Cape Town, South Africa. This case study research project was undertaken to gain an understanding of the complexities of creating a sport-for-development organisation; to determine the flaws that existed within the process; and to develop possible solutions for their successful resolution. It was also an attempt to connect theoretical perspectives with empirical observations with a clear research aim of informing the way in which the LETS organisation would develop in the future. Qualitative data was collected through interviews and questionnaires with participants and partners on two pilot programmes delivered in Cape Town in 2014. Findings indicate that whilst there were a number of positive elements including the use of a values-based pedagogy, policy links and the desire to work in a collaborative way, there were greater challenges facing the organisation than it was prepared for. The most fundamental issue was the lack of both cultural awareness and community engagement, which highlighted further issues around pedagogy, the relevance for the participants, the methodological approach, and the monitoring and evaluation of the programmes themselves. Looking forward, the research suggests that the adoption of a Participatory Action Research methodology and programme development through the framework of critical pedagogy will increase the opportunity for community ownership and individual empowerment.

**Keywords:** sport; pedagogy; development; community**BACKGROUND**

Sport-for-Development is a contested social construct; it is a phenomenon created by society, an idea constructed through social practice that finds its expression in diverse social contexts.<sup>1</sup> It operates within two overlapping discursive frameworks: Sport as a universal and integrative social practice alongside the notion of the deliverance of aid from the ‘1st World’ to the ‘third world’ within an international development context.<sup>2</sup> Sport-for-Development is seen by some as a ‘top down’ and principally ‘Global North’ process influenced by the internationalism of development.<sup>3</sup> Critics further argue that there is an aspect of evangelical neo-colonialism in the way it is developed and delivered, aligning itself with historical calls proclaiming the principles of equality, justice and the eradication of poverty.<sup>4</sup> A further concern is that some traditional aspects within sport contribute towards social exclusion leading to the promotion of inequitable attitudes<sup>5</sup> through the implementation of rules, structure and tradition; sport can just as easily prove far more dysfunctional than functional to social order.<sup>6</sup>

On the other hand, Sport-for-Development projects are believed to have the potential to deliver a wide range of positive outcomes due to the way in which it can be developed in an apolitical, neutral and integrative way<sup>7</sup>; yet Sport-for-Development can never be apolitical. Any attempt to deliver projects separately from the socio-political landscape will only succeed in reducing the validity, relevance and potential successes of specific projects. Organisations looking to further their own aims

and objectives are mediated by wider social issues such as local culture, policy and an array of different power relations.<sup>8</sup> It is essential, therefore, for any organisation to increase their cultural understanding through community engagement and understand in depth, the communities that they intend to work alongside.

Within the Cape Provinces of South Africa, barriers that restrict the potential for success within the formal labour market reinforce high levels of poverty. The limitations, vulnerability and exploitation within social and economic structures ensure that many people are 'simultaneously thoroughly dependent on the City's informal economy and deeply marginalised within it.'<sup>9</sup> An increasingly excluded and destitute racial underclass within post-apartheid South Africa remains 'non-contact' for a substantial majority of the population.<sup>10</sup> Limited access to resources has in the past fostered a culture of interdependency; however, extreme poverty is eroding networks of community cooperation and undermining a fragile social fabric.<sup>11</sup> In South Africa, the national unemployment rate currently stands at 50% for people under the age of 24 and the country has one of the largest gaps between rich and poor of any country in the world; many people are trapped in a poverty cycle where they lack skills, employment, and hope.<sup>12</sup>

A further causative factor in this is the education system. The illiteracy rate is at 18%, less than 50% of people pass their matric certification and 80% of schools are classed as currently 'failing'. All this is counter to the fact that South Africa has one of the highest levels of investment in education in the world with 7% of GDP and 20% of total state expenditure being spent on education.<sup>13</sup> Conventional approaches to learning are struggling to make a significant contribution to benefiting or advancing the position of marginalised communities or meeting their needs. In South Africa, education reinforces the social and economic marginalisation of the poor with few prospects for movement or further development.<sup>14</sup> A lack of opportunity within education makes it extremely difficult for young people to find opportunities that enable them to develop appropriate skills and confidence and to make a life for themselves within this challenging environment. The education system is one of inequality based around segregation through ethnicity, wealth and resources. This continues to reinforce feelings of superiority/inferiority and breeds contempt, fear and a sense of injustice. It creates groups of people who remain locked into spaces of poverty.<sup>15</sup>

An education system should enrich the lives of learners with sport being a particularly useful area because it can

provide hope and freedom and also play a role in the engagement of individuals who are marginalised from traditional aspects of society.<sup>16</sup> There are a number of barriers that prevent young people from being able to access and therefore participate within sport. These barriers include a lack of resources and a debilitating lack of support from a variety of presumed sources including schools, community members and government at all levels. It is within this context that the original idea was developed for the creation of a sustainable Sport-for-Development organisation. Leadership and Empowerment through Sport (LETS) was registered in Cape Town as a Non-Profit Company in February 2013. The objectives of the programme are:

1. To work in partnership to develop current and future community leaders through sports leadership and entrepreneurial programmes.
2. To create and deliver programmes that contributes towards participant's holistic development.
3. To incorporate international best practices and research to develop programmes that meet specific individual and community requirements.

LETS was initially set up with only a limited understanding of the different types of Sport-for-Development programmes that were being implemented in both Cape Town and across the Global South. In the initial stages of development it was clear that research was required to inform the ethos of the organisation, to gain a greater level of understanding of Sport-for-Development and to reflect on how this would impact on its implementation. The aim was to develop the organisation within Cape Town, working with different government departments and community organisations to create and deliver sports leadership programmes. The intention was to educate potential sports leaders and existing coaches in a way that develops their knowledge and skills alongside developing their understanding of how to contribute towards individual and community development through sport.

The initial pedagogical development of LETS was influenced by the values based approach of Football 4 Peace International (F4P), a sport-for-development programme that has been conducting cross-community projects in Northern Ireland and the Middle East for many years [41-44]. In their Manual for Community Football they discuss the value of both social learning theory and structural development theory in the promotion of specific values through sport. Structural Development Theory

identifies the fact that young people are influenced in their behaviour in response to the behaviours of others and because of the environment that they are in. Social learning theory “advocates that social skills, attitudes and values can be learned by observing behaviours of others and adopting and demonstrating those behaviours.”<sup>17</sup> It is the role of the coach, leader and teacher that is so important in promoting specific values to the young people. A further key element of the F4P curriculum is the use of ‘Teachable Moments’. These are specific incidents of behaviour which occur within a session that can be used to translate the four principles of the programme which are concepts and abstractions into practical examples.<sup>17</sup> It is these moments that enable the coach to put across the specific values that he or she is looking to promote.

Aspects of this pedagogical approach were incorporated within the design of the initial curriculum to increase the likelihood that programme participants would be able to apply what they have learned within their community and to use their skills to address the wider social issues that exist within them. In building on the initial adoption of a value-based pedagogy, the programme incorporated the aims of the new South African Coaching Framework and the National Sport and Recreation plan. Through initial discussions with partner organisations in Cape Town, there was awareness that sports administrators were incorporating a value-based pedagogy as a way to improve sports coaching and young people’s social development. Their intention, within specific contexts, was to create a learning climate where psychomotor performance is replaced as the criterion for success by a range of value-based behaviour.<sup>18</sup> The South African Coaching Framework’s vision is to create an effective, inclusive, cohesive and ethical coaching system that promotes transformation and excellence in an active and winning nation. The Framework aims to provide skilled and qualified coaches to support the development of South Africans at all levels in sport.<sup>19</sup> LETS developed its curriculum to ensure it was in a position to contribute to the framework through putting inclusion at the heart of everything that it does, upping the skill of its coaches, and developing their understanding of a new pedagogical approach. LETS also designed the content of their curriculum to meet strategic objectives within the National Sport & Recreation Plan (NSRP). The general aims of the NSRP are to increase sports participation, address the imbalances that are still perceptible within South Africa and help to develop a strong participation base within the community.<sup>20</sup> Through delivery of programmes in a variety of different settings and with a variety of different organisations, LETS was capable of contributing towards a series of strategic objectives within the plan. Specifically,

LETS was able to contribute to Strategic Objective 1: To improve the health and wellbeing of the nation by providing mass participation opportunities through active recreation.

The original sports leadership curriculum of LETS was split into the following two areas:

1. Coach education programme for existing sports coaches
2. Community programme for young leaders

The coach education programme was designed for coaches already working within schools, community clubs and community projects. The curriculum focused on the development of a value-based approach to sports leadership and was developed in partnership with a local government department in Cape Town (Government Department 2 (GD2)) and the initial pilot programme was run with 20 curriculum advisors and developers in February 2014. The initial community programmes were designed for young people who were new to the concept of sports leadership. Its intended outcome was for the participants to use leadership skills in developing activities within their own community. The curriculum again focused on developing the participants’ understanding of a values-based pedagogical approach but in less depth than the coach education programme. The content was developed in partnership with a local government department in Cape Town (Government Department 1 (GD1)) and was delivered as a pilot programme in July 2014 with 25 young leaders.

## METHOD

### Study Design

This overall aim of the research is to develop an understanding from a participant perspective as to the strengths and weaknesses of a new Sport-for-Development organisation. A case study methodology was implemented to enable new learning about behaviour and its meaning within a real world context.<sup>21</sup> The case study methodology is holistic because it focused on the development of an organisation and also incorporated embedded subcases that focused on the views and experiences of the participants. LETS as an organisation is essentially a bounded entity, which cannot be removed from its contextual conditions and in depth consideration must be given to the nature of the case including historical, physical, institutional and political contextual factors.<sup>22</sup> The case develops through a relationship between the researcher and the participants, inviting and engaging the reader to participate within the interaction.<sup>23</sup> It is an interpretive enquiry with the intention

to go beyond the research of isolated issues and enable an in-depth study of contextual and complex issues.

The research has been informed using a constructivist epistemology with the belief that people effectively construct meaning through the reality that surrounds them. An understanding of their lived experiences within their communities as well as their understanding of the programme was explored with the intention to apply their constructed reality to the future development of the organisation. Both researchers and participants bring their own personal experiences and opinions to the table and these are in turn derived from the history and culture of the communities in which they are from. Whilst the need to reduce bias and ensure validity within the representation of the data is essential, it is difficult to separate ourselves from what we know; our subjectivity is an integral part of our understanding of ourselves, of others and of the world around us.<sup>24</sup>

### Data Collection

The primary data was collected at the following two pilot programmes in 2014: The Coach Education Pilot Programme in February 2014 and the Young Leaders Pilot Programme in July 2014.

Data was collected through questionnaires, focus group interviews with participants, support workers and coordinators as well as individual interviews with managers from the (GD1) and (GD2) in Cape Town.

Drawing upon interpretive paradigms and engaging with human agency in semi-structured interviews allowed for a certain degree of flexibility and the pursuit of unexpected lines of enquiry. Government departments selected participants in each of the programmes and their involvement in the research was voluntary. The coach education programme consisted of twenty curriculum coordinators who worked directly for (GD2). They were employed within schools across the Cape Province to design and develop the sports curriculums within schools. The majority came from an elite sport background in a variety of sports including netball, table tennis, volleyball, football and rugby union. The participants in the Young Leader's Pilot Programme were selected from various communities throughout Cape Town and the surrounding suburbs such as Mitchell's Plain and Khayelitsha. These communities are affected with gang violence, drug & substance abuse, unemployment, teenage pregnancies and school dropouts. These participants were part of a wider project being delivered by (GD1) to develop young leaders. Their views were sought on the organisation, the programmes, the potential value of this type of approach within Cape Town and their thoughts on how the organisation could ensure its success and relevance in the future.

### Data Analysis

Due to the qualitative nature of the research, a thematic approach was employed in the analysis of the data. The analysis of the primary data came from an exploratory approach whereby the data was read and re-read to look for key words, trends, themes or ideas that have informed the overall discussion. Within the analysis, the focus has been

*Table 1 – Research Participant Data*

Data Collection	Questionnaires (Qualitative)	Focus Group Interviews x 3 (Participants)	Focus Group Interview (Support workers / Co-ordinators)	Individual Interviews (Managers)
<b>Coach Education Pilot Programme - February 2014 (GD2)**</b>	20	9	3	1
<b>Young Leaders Pilot Programme - July 2014 (GD1)*</b>	25	9	6	2
<b>Total</b>	45	18	9	3

\*GD1- Government Department 1

\*\*GD2-Government Department 2

on the richness of the summary data and the interpretation of that data. Themes were defined through emerging patterns from within all corresponding data. They were identified through bringing together comments, which would be meaningless when viewed alone. The aim was to piece together these fragments to form a comprehensive picture of a collective experience.<sup>25</sup> Whilst using a thematic approach to data analysis has been criticised for a lack of reliability, it is still the most valid approach in terms of capturing the complexity of meaning. Interest in participants' perceptions, feelings, knowledge and behaviour have been explored as a proxy for experience.<sup>26</sup> The thematic analysis highlighted three broad themes from the raw data:

- a) Cultural Awareness and Community Engagement
- b) Curriculum Design
- c) Monitoring and Evaluation

These three key themes will be presented within the results and explored further within the discussion.

## FINDINGS

### Cultural Awareness and Community Engagement

Developing a programme in the 'global South' when being based in the 'global North' offers up a unique set of challenges. A participant in the Pilot Coach Education Programme clearly identified a lack of cultural awareness as an issue for the project.

*The issues that LETS will face in trying to reach its aims is in the way in which it attempts to understand the culture in which it works and the backgrounds of the participants. It needs to research local issues and develop local based programmes.*

This is especially true as the original idea, curriculum and structure was initially developed in the UK with only a limited understanding of the social, economic and political issues within Cape Town. This reinforced the limitations of the initial didactic approach of the programme. It was a top down process rather than one of a 'bottom up' community driven and inspired agenda. There was a clear lack of understanding as to the wider socio-political factors that would impact the development and delivery of a specific programme. As one participant from the Pilot Coach Education Programme stated, "It is important for the programme to develop in a more 'home based' way to show

a deeper understanding of the cultural and territorial differences within the Cape".

Alongside cultural understanding there was a lack of understanding as to specific social structures and aspects of territorial differences across the Cape. Another participant from the Leadership Pilot Programme stated, "LETS can go to the different communities, include them and learn more about the community because most of the communities are different."

This goes beyond ethnic and cultural differences, which includes issues such as social class, crime, gangs, social mobility and the political factors that influence daily life. It is a continuous process in terms of ensuring the relevance of the programme and through dialogue, increasing its cultural and structural awareness.

There are strengths in terms of the structure of the organisation and the partnerships that have been developed but there is still a great deal to learn in understanding the needs of the communities in which the programmes were delivered. The district manager from (GD1) highlighted that there is a need to tackle social issues through implementing development programmes from a local perspective, stating that "We need to speak to the community".

The engagement of participants from an early stage in the development of the project will enable them to have a direct influence on its future direction. If the agenda is driven by those outside those communities then it has to be questioned whether their understanding and concern for the people of those communities is sufficient and whether their concerns will be taken into account. A participant in the Pilot Coach Education Programme noted that it is important to have engagement with a wide variety of community organisations to provide the opportunity for dialogue, discussion and community ownership, noting:

*By establishing links with local role players such as schools, places of worship, civic organisations, local government and community leaders etc. By being linked with the community, the community will be more forthcoming and open up to the programme.*

There are the partnerships that are already in place with the government departments and negotiations that have taken place with other organisations based in both the community and within education with regard to the development of future partnerships. Through this engagement the opportunity for ownership and empowerment in the future will only increase.



## Curriculum Design

In the initial stages of development, there was limited analysis as to the pedagogical strategies that would best fit the organisation and the community in which it would work. From the data that has been collected, it was clear that the value-based aspect of the curriculum resonated with the participants. As a participant in the Pilot Coach Education Programme noted, “It is important to develop a platform where communities identify the values they think are lacking and need to be addressed.” The curriculum advisors on the pilot programme identified and discussed a series of social issues within the Cape Provinces. These included lack of self-esteem, discipline, empathy, ambition and respect. The participants were clear that the communities in which they lived and schools in which they worked were suffering from major social problems. When discussing the potential of the programme and the problems that it could address, participants made reference to ingrained issues within their communities. One participant in the Pilot Coach Education Programme noted, “I feel the moral fibre in our communities (country) has been worn away and not enough is in place to restore it”.

There was a clear agreement with the participants that a value-based approach has the potential to contribute towards challenging those social issues. Many issues were highlighted with regard to the importance of developing specific values within young people and how it relates to their life within their communities. A participant in the Leadership Pilot Programme stated, “Most of the activities on the programme tell a story about many of our lives. And many of us see a way to get past it with the values that we get out of the game.” A support worker participating in the Leadership Pilot Programme stated, “The young people play the game and realise it is similar to life. Value-based games pin point the mistakes we make in reality and finds a solution to them.” It is a new concept in sports leadership and coaching for the participants who are either new to leadership or who are entrenched in a traditional coaching philosophy that focuses on psychomotor development. The approach puts the activities into context, providing opportunities for participants to gain experience in delivery and to underpin the practical elements of the curriculum with accessible, clear and appropriate theory.

Whilst there is an agreement that a value-based pedagogy has the capability to provide solutions to wider social issues through sport, it is important that the organisation continuously looks to evolve and improve. More holistic and more critical approaches to pedagogy will be explored

to ensure that participants are provided with the opportunity to understand their own reality. A specific pedagogical philosophy is required that will empower the participants and challenge the wider socio-political situation that reinforces a framework of inequity. An example of this was the desire of GD1 to incorporate an entrepreneurial element to the programme, stating:

*What is important for us is that you look to incorporate an entrepreneurial aspect to the programme. We want the young people to have those skills as we feel they are lacking within the communities.*

Alongside this sentiment, the City of Cape Town Recreation Study in 2011 highlighted that residents desired more informal recreation opportunities for all ages at a community level, rather than formal sport. They want recreation activities to be used to build their communities, to address social problems and to connect them with other communities through friendly competitions.<sup>27</sup> A manager from GD1 reinforced this point, saying:

*I do think the recreation focus could increase. Sport programmes are often dependent on equipment and facilities but the starting point for recreation can be the space and resources at their disposal. There should be less of an emphasis on formal sport moving more towards a programme where rules can be made up to suit attaining social outcomes.*

A key challenge for LETS as it moves forward is how it works with their partners to support the participants in a collective way, ensuring that the structure of the organisation provides the opportunity for further development. There are, however, potential tensions between the agenda of the government departments and the interests of the community. For the organisation to develop in the way that it wants, the interests of the community in which it serves must come first. The partnerships with the government departments have been highly beneficial, yet it is important to be aware of how their future agenda may be in conflict with both the needs of the community and the future direction and development of LETS.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

One support worker in the Leadership Pilot Programme stated, “It is important to ensure that those learners who begin the programme complete it and use their skills positively in their community.”



The strategic partners within Cape Town provide the key support, opportunities and resources to participants upon completion of the programme, which is something that would be very difficult for an organisation such as LETS to do alone. Strategic partners also help with LETS' intended goal to support staff from (GD2) and participants in the post-programme phase. This approach ensures that there is sustainable contact between programme participants and staff based upon the respect for cultural contexts in which they live. There is an understanding through shared lived experiences and of the realities that they will face in the implementation of their ideas. The success of the project will be based on the impact that the trained leaders have following the completion of the course, especially around the amount of events they run, teams they set up and the coaching sessions they deliver. It will also be measured in the future impact for the individuals themselves and where it takes them.

The generic process for the monitoring and evaluation of both programmes was as follows:

Stage 1 – Partner organisations identify and recruit participants.

Stage 2 – LETS delivers the pre-agreed programme.

Stage 3 – Participants are supported post-programme to deliver sessions within their own communities and schools by the partner organisations.

Stage 4 – Participants and the partner organisations collect data (e.g. number of sessions, participant numbers, age, gender, ethnicity, etc.)

Stage 5 – LETS undertakes an analysis of the data collected.

It is the collection of the data at stage four and the subsequent analysis of that data in stage five that ascertains the relative successes and failures of the programme. This approach has been supported by the partner organisations prior to the programme delivery. However, through the data collected after completion of the pilot programmes, it was clear that there were fundamental issues in their ability to undertake the required monitoring and evaluation post programme. As a manager from GD1 put it, "The key issue that we had was that there was a change to the regional boundaries in the city, we no longer had people in place within the organisation to monitor the young people." Another manager from GD1 stated, "If I am being honest we did not know how to collect the data that you wanted. We do not have the resources in place to be able to monitor

participants, we were not prepared." There are clear structural, economical and communication issues that have impacted the development of a rigorous process of monitoring and evaluation. Without an effective system in place, the future of both partnerships and ultimately the organisation itself are at risk.

## DISCUSSION

### Culture, Community and Methodology

During the process of developing the organisation, opportunities were limited for the participants to have ownership of the content of the programmes. Dialogue existed between LETS and its partner organisations but not between LETS and the participants; it was a case of top-down implementation. There is a need, therefore, to seek a methodological approach to research that provides the participants with a voice and ensures that the programme is culturally, socially, economically and politically relevant. Reinforcing a hegemonic framework through traditional research approaches raises the question of whose interests are being served through dominant ideas, in which contexts and with what effects.<sup>28</sup> The adoption of decolonising methodologies will investigate and attempt to understand the complexities of negotiating dominance and consent, and locate the possibilities of emancipation and social change.<sup>28</sup> One such decolonising methodological approach is Participatory Action Research (PAR), which is a democratic, equitable, liberating and life enhancing form of qualitative research.<sup>29</sup> The engagement and involvement of the participants at each stage of development creates the opportunity for collaboration between participant and researcher, ensuring authentic local voices are not missed or dismissed in the evaluation process.<sup>30</sup> The interaction between researcher and participant is imperative if social change and empowerment are to occur.<sup>31</sup> Participation enables people, through a philosophy of action, to determine their own development and to participate meaningfully in the process of finding their own solutions. In order for LETS to maintain relevance, achieve its objectives, meet the needs of stakeholders and deliver innovative and appropriate programmes, the adoption of a PAR is an essential future development.

### Pedagogy and Curriculum Design

The initial didactic approach of LETS was highly technocratic and underpinned by a positivistic, utilitarian philosophy and hierarchical structure that favoured an externally imposed agenda within pedagogical content.<sup>32</sup> There was an increased awareness that as the organisation

developed, this type of approach would not work in reality as it had been developed in a way that would impose a pre-set agenda. A values based pedagogical approach worked well for LETS in this instance yet the imposition of a curriculum for the perceived benefit of a specific community with only a limited understanding of its validity and worth within a specific context ensures that the process is inevitably flawed. The original position of LETS was one where it provided an opportunity for participants to actively participate in wider social, economic and political spheres rather than providing an opportunity to durably transform those spheres.<sup>33</sup> In developing a relevant programme, dialogue and collaboration are imperative within the pedagogical design. A point raised in the primary data collection is the need for the curriculum to move towards a more recreational model and away from the more sports-orientated elements. This relates to a report by the Human Science and Research Council, which identified the need for increased participation through: “A shift in emphasis to sport that requires minimum financial outlay and infrastructure” and “A focus on the activity, rather than the facility or lack thereof, to increase possibilities for participation.”<sup>34</sup>

Alongside this is the assumption that youth from different social and cultural backgrounds participate in sport or recreation for the same reasons as those in Western societies.<sup>35</sup> Within the Young Leaders Pilot Programme, it was obvious that their love of music and dance was a highly influential part of their lives and through developing a larger focus on recreational activities, there is the opportunity to return to more traditional methods of learning that have served communities well for many centuries.<sup>36</sup> Rather than the content being imposed, it can be created collaboratively to ensure a higher level of relevance for those for whom it is intended. Dialogue and collaboration enables participants to look at the world from a critical perspective, raising an understanding of how they can shape their own reality.<sup>37</sup> A greater understanding of how to develop LETS within a framework of critical pedagogy is required if the actual empowerment of participants is to be achieved.

Critical pedagogy has central concerns to bring about social change through education, to open up possibilities and alternatives, to reveal the complexities of social life, and to resist the imposition of simplistic explanations and quick fix solutions. Emancipation, empowerment and critique are the three dimensions of critical pedagogy that are embedded and constitutive to the practice of sport.<sup>38</sup> Human emancipation involves the ability to change and to adapt to new challenges and new sets of circumstances. Critical pedagogy seeks to achieve human emancipation through

empowerment but only when it is realised in the practical daily activities of individuals. The final dimension of cultural critique has the aim of assisting people to see beyond the obvious and to enable them to enhance self-knowledge, act in informed ways and to see beyond surface appearances.<sup>38</sup> Freire’s conceptual and ethical framework both challenges the status quo and articulates a language of policy. The intention of the framework is to synthesise politics and education to develop greater humanisation and to challenge and provide alternatives to the current state of domination and oppression that exists within specific communities.<sup>36</sup>

An example of both dialogue and the resulting changes in the pedagogical approach is in the recent change to incorporate an entrepreneurial aspect into the curriculum. Through placing sports leadership and entrepreneurialism together within a context that the participants can relate to and apply, a mutual process is developed. This links into the key characteristics of dialogical action which are cooperation, unity, organisation and cultural synthesis.<sup>37</sup> Cultivating an entrepreneurial understanding can create the opportunity for participants to develop their own initiatives or events post-programme. It is their choice as to how they utilise those skills to develop sport, recreation and their own financial gain. Through the promotion of entrepreneurial skills, the participants are gaining knowledge that will enable them to participate and contribute to their own community and to potentially better their own lives, thus awakening their critical consciousness.<sup>37</sup> Yet in order for this to be of value, an understanding of the complexities of the promotion of entrepreneurialism within communities in and around Cape Town needs to be understood. Entrepreneurialism is highly evident within these communities, but it is the absence of developed social organisations and the lack of support available, rather than the absence of entrepreneurial energy at the personal level that create barriers to individual progress.<sup>40</sup> Entrepreneurialism is limited through the individualised nature of it. In the Global North, entrepreneurialism is a collective endeavour; within the Global South, the lack of a collective approach within communities has become a bigger obstacle to economic development rather than the deficient entrepreneurial spirit of individuals.<sup>40</sup> The provision of collective support and guidance is therefore imperative if the participants are to be able to develop their ideas in practice.

### Partnership Working, Monitoring and Evaluation

The key failing of the organisation and its partners to date is in the implementation and delivery of an appropriate

monitoring and evaluation strategy. It may be possible to argue that 'on the balance of probabilities' the programmes have made some contribution<sup>30</sup> but the process that was created has not worked as intended. Currently there is no specific way of highlighting the successes of the initial pilot programmes beyond the initial participation figures and qualitative data presented here. This is due to the difficulty of communicating with partner organisations on the other side of the world, the pressure that they are under with regard to other programmes, the resources at their disposal, a lack of initial planning for the collection of post programme data and a lack of support in developing their understanding of how to collect this data. There has been a clear response from one of our partners that they do not know how to collect the data that was required and that they did not have a reporting structure in place. Without the collaboration, support and communication from its partner organisations, the organisation is put in a vulnerable position because it is extremely difficult to develop in these conditions in an informed way.

It is important to learn from these mistakes, which point to requiring a specific and appropriate model of monitoring and evaluation to enable the partnerships to work effectively in the future. A clear collaborative structure will ensure appropriate monitoring and evaluation of the participants as they plan and deliver within their communities with an agreement in place that what is being requested is achievable. Once an appropriate model is in place, it must avoid becoming no more than a box ticking exercise that simplifies the holistic nature of the project and reduces the capacity for critical reflection. Any claims of success have to be tempered with the realistic understanding that Sport-for-Development projects are not capable as stand-alone entities to fully resolve issues that have eluded many other development organisations and governments in the past.<sup>7</sup>

### Study Limitations

It is important to recognise a number of methodological limitations within this study. First, the data was collected during two pilot programmes delivered by one organisation, and therefore cannot generalise the finding beyond them. Second, the data was collected and analysed by the author of the paper. A criticism of bias could be placed upon the study for this reason. The research was however an interpretive enquiry and acknowledges that our subjectivity is an integral part of our understanding of ourselves, of others and of the world around us. It is within this context that the data analysis took place. Alongside this limitation is the overall aim of the study, which was to highlight the flaws that existed within the organisation and to find

solutions to resolve them. There was no rationale for bias in the analysis of the primary data. Third, the fundamental limitation is in the lack of post-pilot programme data collected. If this had been undertaken by the partner organisations, there would have been a clearer understanding of the successes and failures of the programme. This was an exploratory research project and any future research on LETS has to ensure that it undertakes data collection throughout the lifespan of the programmes in order to achieve a specific understanding of the process and its outcomes.

### CONCLUSION

This research project sought to gain an understanding of the complexities of creating a Sport-for-Development organisation and to find potential solutions to the flaws that existed within the process. The findings from this study suggest that future developments are undertaken in collaboration with individuals and communities in which the programmes will be delivered, ensuring both a level of ownership for the participants and a level of cultural understanding for the organisation. This is fundamental if any claims of increased empowerment and emancipation are to be made. Methodologically, the adoption of Participatory Action Research will provide further opportunity for engagement and ownership over the development of the organisation. Many issues are involved in such a process, not just operational issues such as funding, partnership building, monitoring and evaluation and curriculum development but also the more affective issues such as cultural understanding, social issues within the communities and how best to engage collaboratively with individuals from within those communities to drive the future of the project.

A key question that has emerged through this research is whether or not LETS can develop participants' understanding of their own reality or whether it functions as a reinforcement of the current dominant socio-political order, perpetuating the structures and routines within which oppression is practiced.<sup>34</sup> In response to this the organisation itself must be flexible by embracing adaptability and change, and be capable of developing bespoke programmes to meet individual need. This opens up the need for the curriculum to relate to the specific nature of critical pedagogy. By removing the didactic and top-down approach, a true understanding of reality can be developed for the participants. It must however be greater than this; the dialogue and action that comes through this collaboration must enable the participants to be provided with the opportunity to transform that reality. This is why

developments such as the promotion of entrepreneurial skills, developing a recreational programme and ensuring that appropriate post-programme support, monitoring and evaluation are in place are so important. Through genuine collaboration between communities, who understand their own circumstances better than anyone else, and an informed and experienced organisation like LETS, there will be a greater opportunity to meet the needs and expectations of programme participants and their communities.

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## Review

## Sport for development for Aboriginal youth in Canada: A scoping review

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### ABSTRACT

Sport for development (SFD) programmes for Aboriginal youth in communities across Canada are increasingly gaining support from both the private sector and the public sector. Despite the recent proliferation of these programmes, there has not yet been an examination of the overall body of literature that focuses on SFD programmes in Aboriginal communities within Canada. The purpose of this scoping review is thus to identify themes within the available body of literature on SFD in Aboriginal communities. We used the six-stage Arksey and O'Malley methodological framework to guide our research and identified three themes through the literature review: (1) there is value in cross-cultural mentorship between SFD mentors/staff and programme participants, but having Aboriginal staff/mentors is advantageous; (2) community engagement is essential to the success of an SFD programme in Aboriginal communities; and (3) SFD plays only a subsidiary role in contributing to Aboriginal communities' broader social and economical goals. Our results highlight the challenges and successes associated with SFD programme development and implementation, and also identify the numerous research gaps and opportunities for SFD scholars.

### INTRODUCTION

The Indian Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) was established in 2008 as part of reconciliation efforts related to the operation of Indian residential schools from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to

1996.<sup>1</sup> Over this time period, an estimated 150,000 Aboriginal (i.e., First Nations, Inuit, and Metis) children passed through these schools.<sup>1</sup> The Eurocentric assimilation and suppression of Aboriginal children's traditions, beliefs, and ties to their family and communities through Indian residential schools has been described as "cultural genocide".<sup>1</sup> (p 1). To advance the reconciliation process between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples, the Commission produced 94 Calls to Action. Five of those calls focused on broad aspects of sport development, sport history and education, sport policy, and sport inclusiveness. For the purposes of this research, we are particularly interested in Calls to Action 89 and 90, which among others call for policies that "promote physical activity as a fundamental element of health and well-being";<sup>2</sup> (p 10) and, "In collaboration with provincial and territorial governments, stable funding for, and access to, community sports programs that reflect the diverse cultures and traditional sporting activities of Aboriginal peoples."<sup>2</sup> (p 10) The current Canadian government led by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has promised to take action on each of the 94 Calls to Action.<sup>3</sup> As such, Aboriginal peoples' involvement in sport should be at the forefront of Canadian sport policy decisions in the near future. In particular, sport used as a tool for personal and community development will likely be prioritized due to its prominence in Canadian policy<sup>4</sup> and its increasing presence in Aboriginal communities across Canada.<sup>5</sup>

Sport for development initiatives, which have typically focused on low and middle-income communities in the global South, are becoming increasingly focused on

**Keywords:** sport for development; Aboriginal peoples; self-determination; Canada



disadvantaged communities located in countries typically viewed as middle-high income.<sup>5</sup> Canada is no exception. Right to Play, a prominent international SFD non-government organization, and Nike are both involved in SFD initiatives in Aboriginal communities in Canada,<sup>5</sup> as are numerous mining, oil and gas companies.<sup>6</sup> The target of these initiatives, Aboriginal children, represent one of the fastest growing demographics in Canada; approximately 28% of the 1.4 million Aboriginal peoples living in Canada are 14 and under.<sup>1</sup> Sport for development as a formal concept is relatively new in Canada; however, sport has long been used as a tool for assimilation and “development” delivered by Euro-Canadians to Aboriginal peoples.<sup>5, 7</sup> While the benefits of using sport in accomplishing development goals are often heralded as innately positive,<sup>8</sup> there is a paradoxical dearth of research that supports these claims,<sup>9</sup> particularly surrounding the outcomes of SFD initiatives targeted at Aboriginal youth in Canada.<sup>10</sup> Prior to the formal conceptualization of SFD in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, residential schools promoted sport and recreation under similar guises used by modern SFD organizations.<sup>5</sup> Due to the historical connection between “sport” and “recreation” with Aboriginal youth, and due to the varying and inconsistent terminology used within the literature and SFD organizations, we conceptualize SFD as including “recreation-based” programmes. Thus, SFD initiatives identified in this review include organizations formally conceptualized as SFD such as Right to Play, but also organizations that may use sport or recreation as part of broader youth developmental programmes. For example, Alberta’s Future Leaders Program was not established as a SFD organization, but nonetheless uses “sport, recreation, the arts and leadership development”<sup>10</sup> (p 160) to address its youth development goals. As such, Alberta’s Future Leaders Program and similar organizations are included in this study as examples of SFD programming.

Canadian sport policies continue to “encourage the promotion of sport as a tool of individual and social development in Canada”<sup>4</sup> a view reflected by the *Aboriginal Sport for Life* resource, whose authors have argued that sport can “save lives and...build healthier Aboriginal people, who contribute to healthier communities”.<sup>11</sup> (p 2) Taken together, it appears that SFD will play an integral part in future decisions regarding Aboriginal peoples’ involvement in sport. The need to better understand the existing literature on SFD is thus essential so that government policies and Aboriginal peoples’ own initiatives can be built upon the best possible information. Nevertheless, despite the recent proliferation of SFD programmes for Aboriginal youth, to our knowledge there has not yet been an examination of the overall body of

literature that focuses on SFD programmes in Aboriginal communities within Canada. As such, it may be difficult for staff of current and future programmes to build upon past successes or learn from past challenges. Thus, the purpose of this scoping review is to identify dominant themes within the available body of literature on SFD in Aboriginal communities. We used the six-stage Arksey and O’Malley<sup>12</sup> methodological framework to guide our research, and through our review of the literature, identified three themes: (1) there is value in cross-cultural mentorship in SFD between mentors/staff and programme participants, but having Aboriginal staff/mentors is advantageous; (2) community engagement is essential to the success of an SFD programme in Aboriginal communities; and (3) SFD can only play a subsidiary role in contributing to Aboriginal communities’ broader social and economic goals. Our results highlight the challenges and successes associated with SFD programme development and implementation and also identify the numerous research gaps and opportunities for SFD scholars.

## METHODOLOGY

The purpose of a scoping review is to identify, summarize and disseminate the scope of literature available surrounding a broad area of research.<sup>12</sup> In particular, a scoping review is performed to “map the literature on a particular topic or research area and provide an opportunity to identify key concepts; gaps in the research; and types and sources of evidence to inform practice, policymaking, and research”.<sup>13</sup> (p 8) While there are a number of reasons for undertaking a scoping review, in this study we are guided by the research question, “what academic literature is available concerning SFD programmes for Aboriginal people in Canada?” We employ Daudt and colleagues’<sup>13</sup> six-stage methodological framework, which builds on work previously completed by Arksey and O’Malley<sup>12</sup> and Levac, Colquhoun, and O’Brien.<sup>14</sup> The first stage of a scoping review is to identify the research question. While Arksey and O’Malley<sup>12</sup> originally recommended a broad research question for the purposes of identifying as much literature as possible, Levac and colleagues<sup>14</sup> challenged this approach, arguing that a more clearly articulated research question would strengthen the search strategy and better guide article identification. Stage two, identifying relevant studies, requires an in-depth search of databases and journals for published studies<sup>2</sup> related to the area of research. Daudt and colleagues<sup>13</sup> noted that this stage must balance the need for comprehensiveness in one’s search with finite resources of time. Once stage two is complete, the researcher is likely very familiar with the number and types of literature available. With this knowledge, the

researcher must develop exclusion criteria in stage three to refine and narrow his or her likely large number of references. Stage four, charting the data, is an iterative process<sup>14</sup> that requires the researcher to clearly extract data in a standardized format from the literature identified in stage three. With the data presented, the researcher can then move to stage five, collating, summarizing and reporting the results to “present an overview of all material reviewed”.<sup>12 (p 27)</sup> The results are then organized into themes using thematic analysis.<sup>13</sup> Arksey and O'Malley<sup>12</sup> identified stage six, involving stakeholders in the research process, as a recommended but optional stage to the scoping review process; stage six is not included in this study.

While scoping reviews can be useful in many situations, they are nevertheless open to criticism. For example, a perceived weakness of scoping reviews is that they fail to evaluate the strength of each article's results, which may lead to a misunderstanding of the actual availability of the robust sources in a field of study.<sup>15</sup> However, in a field that is relatively unexplored, or where there is a dearth of research available, a scoping review can be an essential first step in the research process that can guide future research decisions such as whether or not a systematic review should be conducted.<sup>13</sup> Indeed, by identifying the number and types of sources available and unavailable surrounding an area of research, scoping reviews can “inform practice, policymaking, and research”.<sup>13 (p 8)</sup> As noted above, Aboriginal SFD will be at the forefront of Canadian sport policymaking in the near future. Considering that SFD in Aboriginal communities is a relatively unexplored topic, we believe that a scoping review is an appropriate undertaking to guide academics and policymakers in future research and policymaking decisions.

## Analysis

Following Arksey and O'Malley's<sup>12</sup> framework, we stated our research question as, “What academic literature is available concerning SFD programmes for Aboriginal people in Canada?” Our initial search made use of three research databases: Scopus, SportDiscus, and Sociological Abstracts. Using the search terms (Sport OR Recreation)

AND (Aboriginal OR Indigenous OR Inuit OR Metis OR First Nations) AND Canada AND Development for each of the databases, and limiting results to solely academic journals and books, we yielded sixty-one results. Aware that sources related specifically to SFD were likely missing, we expanded our search to the Search+ Function, which scans most available online databases. To ensure our results were specific to SFD, we used the terms [(Sport for development OR Sport for development and peace) AND (Aboriginal OR Indigenous OR Inuit OR Metis OR First Nations) AND Canada], which yielded a further twenty-one results. While Arksey and O'Malley<sup>12</sup> recommended that researchers physically search through academic journals for related articles, the availability of online journals since Arksey and O'Malley's publication has reduced the importance of such a step. However, due to the likelihood that some pertinent sources may be unavailable through online databases, we physically searched through five relevant edited books and found a further thirty-one references. In total, we identified ninety-two references. Next, we applied our exclusion criteria to refine the number of references. Exclusion criteria included articles and books whose main focus was on Aboriginal sport history or imagery, the environment or tourism, and articles where medical issues (e.g., musculoskeletal injuries) were the main focus. Importantly, articles focusing on sport development, rather than sport *for* development, were also excluded. While some SFD-like tendencies may exist in sport development programmes, sport development primarily refers to “increasing and possibly sustaining participation in sport”.<sup>16 (p 87)</sup> With the exclusion criteria developed, we read each abstract and deleted duplicates. Thirty-four articles and book chapters remained for stage four, charting the data. We thoroughly read all thirty-four articles and book chapters and, after again applying the exclusion criteria (based on the entire article or chapter, not just the abstract, as was done in the previous stage), we excluded a further twenty-one, leaving 13 articles and book chapters for analysis. As an exception, an additional article<sup>17</sup> that was published following our literature searches was included due to its relevance to the field, increasing the total of identified studies to 14.

*Table 1 – Articles and Book Chapters Identified Through the Scoping Review*

Authors	Objective/Aim	Methods/Theory	Geographical region	Programme description	Key Points
<b>Bean &amp; Forneris, 2016</b>	Formative evaluation of a SFD programme.	Utilization-focused approach; semi-structured interviews and document analysis	Nunavik, northern Quebec, Canada	The Nunavik Youth Hockey Development Program (NYHDP); hockey-for-development programme focused on crime prevention and positive development	A number of programme successes and challenges were identified; strong organizational structure and local involvement benefitted the programme's implementation and sustainability.

Table 1 – Continued

Authors	Objective/Aim	Methods/Theory	Geographical region	Programme description	Key Points
<b>Carpenter, Rothney, Mousseau, Halas, &amp; Forsyth, 2008.</b>	Develop a youth mentorship programme that supports and empowers typically disadvantaged youths.	Qualitative; community-based, participatory action research study; Circle of Courage Model	Winnipeg, Canada	“A mentoring program that incorporated physical activity, leadership training, Aboriginal youth engagement, and perceived community needs” (p. 55).	Incorporating Aboriginal values in the development and implementation of the programme is important. The programme enabled youths to attain new skills.
<b>Carpenter &amp; Halas, 2011.</b>	Overview of previously-implemented programme.	4 R’s methodology	Winnipeg, Canada	Rec and Read; community-based approach to youth mentoring and social development.	Four R’s (Respect, Relevance, Reciprocity, Responsibility) guide the programme’s development and implementation.
<b>Coleby &amp; Giles, 2013.</b>	Discourse analysis of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal media coverage of Right to Play’s Promoting Life Skills in Aboriginal youth (PLAY).	Critical discourse analysis and postcolonial theory	Northern Ontario, Canada	PLAY; “uses sport and recreation to attempt to improve the health and well being of northern Ontario’s First Nations youth” (para. 3).	Non-Aboriginal media produce colonial discourses, while Aboriginal media produce strength-based discourses.
<b>Galipeau &amp; Giles, 2014.</b>	“Understand how power, discourse, and discipline shape AFL and its cross-cultural mentoring practices” (p. 157).	Exploratory case study methodology; semi-structured interviews, focus groups, participant observation, and archival research. Foucauldian discourse analysis.	Aboriginal communities in Alberta, Canada	Alberta’s Future Leaders (AFL) Programme; Aboriginal youth mentor programme that uses sport, recreation, and arts for development.	The programme risks promoting Eurocentric values due to its “colour blind” approach to programming.
<b>Gartner-Manzon &amp; Giles, 2016.</b>	“Explore if/how working for Alberta’s Future Leaders Program (AFL) in Alberta, Canada, had a lasting impact on former employees” (p. 159).	Exploratory case study, thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews	Aboriginal communities in Alberta, Canada	AFL Programme (as above)	Mentors believe they accrued more benefits from the programme than the Aboriginal youth mentees; Domestic SFD programmes may yield similar outcomes as international programmes.
<b>Hayhurst &amp; Giles, 2013.</b>	Examine the policies that created a need for SFD programmes in Aboriginal communities; how are SFD programmes addressing the need.	Postcolonial international relations feminist approach	Aboriginal communities in Canada	N/A	There is an increasing presence of international non-state (corporations and NGO’s) actors in Canadian SFD programmes.
<b>Hayhurst, Giles, Radforth, &amp; the VAFCS, 2015.</b>	Understand the experiences of urban Aboriginal women “participating in a sports, gender and development (SGD) programme” (p. 952) in Vancouver.	Postcolonial, participatory action-oriented, decolonizing girlhood approach Semi-structured interviews and photovoice, followed by thematic analysis	Vancouver, Canada	Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre Society (VAFCS); A recreation programme that provides competitive sport opportunities as well as social and cultural activities for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community members.	The girls found that attempts to improve their health and recreation often came at a cost of culture and tradition; however, the girls used the programme in ways that resisted negative stereotypes.
<b>Hayhurst, Giles, &amp; Wright, 2016a.</b>	“We examine how SDP programs target urban Indigenous young women and girls reproduce the hegemony of neoliberalism” (p.549).	Transnational postcolonial feminist participatory action research; Semi-structured interviews, sharing circle, photovoice	Vancouver, Canada and Perth, Australia	VAFCS (as above)	Neoliberal attributes were promoted with the assumption that it would help the girls’ future success.

Table 1 – Continued

Authors	Objective/Aim	Methods/Theory	Geographical region	Programme description	Key Points
<b>Hayhurst, Giles, &amp; Wright, 2016b.</b>	Analyze Aboriginal girls' experience in SDP programmes; analyze the impact of private sector involvement in SDP programming.	Postcolonial feminist intersectional approach informed by a girlhood studies perspective; semi-structured interviews	Vancouver, Canada and Perth, Australia	VAFCS (as above)	Neoliberal skills are reproduced in SDP initiatives, but these skills may have positive aspects for the girls
<b>Macintosh, Arellano, &amp; Forneris, 2016.</b>	Examine a SFD programme that uses a high cost sport in an at-risk community.	Resource dependency theory; Case study, semi-structured interviews	Northern Ontario, Canada	Promoting Life-Skills in Aboriginal Youth; Hockey-for-development programme in northern Ontario.	Sport participation was central to the community, while promoting life-skills was the emphasis of the SFD organization. Limited financial resources threaten the stability of the programme. Further communication between the community and organization could have better fostered shared values and goals.
<b>Reading, Ritchie, Victor, &amp; Wilson, 2005.</b>	"Identify factors that contribute to improved health and well being of Aboriginal children and youth aged six to thirteen years through sport and recreational programmes" (p. 62).	Qualitative and quantitative; community-based health research	West coast of British Columbia, Canada	Community-based health promotion through sport and recreation.	The programme promoted youth health in previously neglected areas; Parental involvement plays a large role in youth SFD.
<b>Rose &amp; Giles, 2007.</b>	Examine if SFD programmes can enable Aboriginal youths to "become more connected to themselves, their communities, and their cultures" (p. 427).	Review of programme summaries and documents	Aboriginal communities in Alberta, Canada	AFL Programme (as above)	AFL meets best practice guidelines in terms of short- and long-term youth programming. Hiring non-Aboriginal mentors has some benefits, but more benefits could be accrued from hiring local and Aboriginal mentors.
<b>Rovito &amp; Giles, 2013.</b>	"Determine if and how OLI's staff and Board members perceive the programme to be influenced by Eurocentric ideas of programming and the impact this may in turn have on achieving Aboriginal self-determination" (p 183).	Semi-structured interviews, field notes, archival research and postcolonial theory	Northern Ontario, Canada	Outside Looking In; Give First Nations youths "opportunities to self-express through hip-hop, choreography, videography, journal writing and painting" (p. 187).	OLI contributes to Aboriginal self-determination; however, the programme should depart from Eurocentric values and incorporate Aboriginal values.

## RESULTS

As shown in Table 1, the 14 identified articles and book chapters focus on a relatively limited number of organizations in few geographical areas of Canada. Three focus on Alberta's Future Leaders (AFL) programme, which "uses sports, recreation, arts and leadership activities to provide First Nations and Métis youth with active, positive opportunities".<sup>18</sup> Alberta's Future Leaders has been operating in Aboriginal communities across Alberta since 1996.<sup>18</sup> The Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre Society's (VAFCS) recreation programme is the subject of three of the included studies,<sup>19-21</sup> and it provides competitive sport opportunities as well as social and cultural activities for urban Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community

members. An Aboriginal youth mentorship programme delivering "an after-school physical activity, nutrition, and education program for children"<sup>22</sup> (p. 51) in Winnipeg, Manitoba is the focus of two articles, while Right to Play, an internationally recognized SFD organization, is the subject of two studies. Right to Play partners with Aboriginal communities in northern Ontario through its Promoting Life-Skills in Aboriginal Youth (PLAY) programme, which is designed "to enhance education outcomes, improve peer-to-peer relationships, increase employability and improve physical and mental health amongst Aboriginal children and youth".<sup>23</sup> Reading, Ritchie, Victor, and Wilson<sup>24</sup> focused on a community-based, health-promotion-through-sport programme employed in two rural communities in British Columbia. Bean and Forneris<sup>17</sup> examined the NYHDP



operating in Nunavik, Quebec. The NYHDP has been in operation since 2006 and offers free hockey-for-development programming to youth aged 5-17 living in villages across Nunavik. The last programme examined, Outside Looking In (OLI), partners with schools in northern Ontario (though it has since expanded across Canada) to provide Aboriginal youth with the opportunity to engage in an arts and recreation development programme as part of a high school credit. While this is certainly a limited number of studies, there are nevertheless benefits that can be accrued from a few programmes receiving heightened focus. For example, since AFL has been the subject of three studies, data have been obtained from documents from the late 1990s to semi-structured interviews nearly two decades later; this allows for rich and diverse conclusions to be drawn that otherwise would not have been possible.

The iterative process of identifying and summarizing pertinent data from the 14 articles and book chapters enabled us to identify three themes: (1) there is value in cross-cultural mentorship, but having Aboriginal mentors/staff is advantageous; (2) community engagement is essential to the success of an SFD programme in Aboriginal communities; and (3) SFD plays only a subsidiary role in contributing to broader social and economical goals. We generated codes and identified themes using Braun and Clarke's<sup>25</sup> six phases of thematic analysis. Both the rigorous methodological framework employed in this scoping review and our eventual heightened familiarization with the included articles and book chapters facilitated our thematic analysis. We identified the first theme, "there is value in cross-cultural mentorship, but having Aboriginal mentors/staff is advantageous," through the codes "diversity," "power relations," and "youth mentorship." The second theme, "the importance of community engagement in the development and implementation of SFD programmes in Aboriginal communities" coalesced from the codes "community engagement," "communication and dialogue," and "incorporating Aboriginal values." Lastly, the codes "neoliberal skills," "Eurocentric values," and "self-determination," formed our final theme, "SFD plays only a subsidiary role in contributing to broader social and economical goals."

### Cross-Cultural Mentorship

The first theme identified in the literature we reviewed is the tendency for Aboriginal SFD programmes to employ cross-cultural mentorship between programme mentors/staff and the targeted mentees. Five of the 14 articles discussed

cross-cultural mentorship, of which two<sup>22, 26</sup> were focused on the Rec and Read programme in Winnipeg, and three<sup>11, 27-28</sup> were focused on AFL. The two programmes, however, had opposing approaches to the cultural experiences of youth mentorship. Rec and Read selected Aboriginal youth as the mentors/staff while the child participants (mentees) were from diverse cultural backgrounds<sup>22</sup>; conversely, AFL employed mostly non-Aboriginal mentors/staff to mentor Aboriginal youth in Aboriginal communities.<sup>27</sup>

The contrasting approaches to mentorship through Rec and Read and AFL garnered similarly contrasting evaluations from the researchers. Carpenter and colleagues valued Rec and Read for its "opportunity to feature these young [Aboriginal] people as positive role models for the younger multicultural cohort of students".<sup>22</sup> (p 56) Indeed, the authors, who were also involved in the development and implementation of the programme, stated that one of the programme's goals was to provide urban Aboriginal youth affirmation through cross-cultural physical activity experiences.<sup>22</sup> Conversely, when non-Aboriginal mentors mentor Aboriginal youth, which was frequently the case with AFL, the colonial "power relations at work make it difficult for AFL to achieve its objectives," such as creating positive Aboriginal youth leaders through sport.<sup>27</sup> (p 162) Rose and Giles<sup>28</sup> (p 443) argued that the practice of SFD organizations employing southern, non-Aboriginal youth mentors to mentor Aboriginal youths in rural communities "might be seen as suggesting that there are no candidates from the community that are up to the leadership standard".<sup>28</sup> (p 443) Through interviews with past AFL mentors/staff, Gartner-Manzon and Giles<sup>11</sup> determined that, similar to international SFD programmes<sup>29</sup>, the non-Aboriginal youth workers believed they accrued more benefit from their involvement with the programme than the intended beneficiaries: the Aboriginal youth mentees. While Rose and Giles<sup>28</sup> (p 443) noted there are some important benefits to bringing non-Aboriginal mentors to Aboriginal communities to share their expertise, they argued that AFL "would only be strengthened if it hired more youth workers who already live in the [Aboriginal] communities".<sup>28</sup> (p 443) Interestingly, in the community of Moose Cree, Ontario, Right to Play employs local community members to mentor the youths engaged in the PLAY programme.<sup>30</sup> Similar practices can be found in the NYHDP, where local youths and adults are able to become certified as hockey trainers for the programme's younger participants;<sup>17</sup> both the PLAY and NYHDP programmes counter the discourse promoted through AFL's hiring practices that there is a lack of available local Aboriginal mentors.<sup>28</sup>



## Community Engagement in Programme Development and Implementation

The importance of community engagement in the development and implementation of SFD programmes in Aboriginal communities is the second theme that emerged. Of the seven SFD programmes that are examined in 13 of the 14 studies, each is lauded for its extensive collaboration with Aboriginal partners, criticized for its dearth of collaboration, or identified as having collaboration with Aboriginal partners that could be improved. The Rec and Read programme was both developed and implemented with urban Aboriginal youth to ensure the programme would reflect the needs of the community.<sup>22</sup> The NYHDP has focused on involving Inuit stakeholders “by providing opportunities for local individuals to be involved at the organizational level, specifically related to programme delivery”.<sup>17 (p 12)</sup> Similarly, the rural British Columbia health promotion through sport programmes examined by Reading and colleagues<sup>24 (p 62)</sup> were, from the outset, intended to give communities a “a sense of ownership over the programme design and implementation”.<sup>24 (p 62)</sup> While these programmes thus benefitted from extensive community engagement, other programmes, such as RTP and Outside Looking In (OLI), had some collaboration but were identified as having the potential to accrue further benefit from increasing dialogue and participation with the programmes’ community partners. For example, OLI benefits from community feedback and suggestions, yet the authors suggested OLI could further its community engagement and enable “Aboriginal peoples, but particularly youths, to create and be involved in implementing such programmes”.<sup>31 (p 197)</sup> Right to Play’s “involvement was important in bringing motivation, ice-hockey equipment, and other resources”<sup>30 (p 55)</sup> to the minor ice-hockey programme; however, the authors noted that the true catalysts for change were community leaders and mentors. To strengthen the programme’s impact, Macintosh and colleagues<sup>30</sup> suggested that mutual goals needed to be identified through clearer communication between the community and Right to Play. In an analysis of Right to Play’s representation in Canadian media, Coleby and Giles<sup>32</sup> argued that Aboriginal communities’ role and agency in the PLAY initiatives were routinely ignored and subjugated in non-Aboriginal media.

The final two programmes, AFL and the VAFCS’ recreation programmes were identified as having many strengths, but they were also criticized for the lack of community participation in their development and implementation. In writing about VAFCS’ recreation programme but also to

broader SFD programmes in general, Hayhurst and colleagues<sup>20 (p 564)</sup> argued that,

*If the young women in the program are to celebrate their Indigenous identities and work from that basis for social change, there needs to be fundamental shifts to program structure and content that would foreground Indigenous peoples and their knowledge in the development and implementation of [SFD] programs.*

In continuing with the need for SFD organizations to further and meaningfully engage with Aboriginal communities, Rose and Giles<sup>28 (p 447)</sup> argued, “greater attention needs to be given to incorporating Aboriginal values, particularly pertaining to leadership, into youth and community development initiatives”. One suggestion put forward by the authors was for AFL to collaborate with community elders in the programme’s development and implementation.

Hayhurst and Giles<sup>1</sup> analysis of Aboriginal SFD programmes in Canada recognized that the increasing trend of transnational, non-state actors “delivering” SFD programmes without community engagement fails to recognize the self-determination of Aboriginal peoples in Canada. Indeed, the role of SFD in furthering Aboriginal self-determination is routinely discussed in the literature and is thus our final theme.

## Sport, Development, and Self-Determination

Coalter<sup>9 (p 307)</sup> argued that while the “mythopoeic qualities of ‘sport’ might provide a symbolically unifying concept, sport-for-development will inevitably remain a subsidiary actor”<sup>9 (p 307)</sup> in areas of social and economic development. Similar scepticism of SFD’s purported abilities to effect broad social changes was apparent in the literature identified in this scoping review. In two of the programmes that were studied (OLI and VAFCS), SFD was recognized as having a potential role in furthering the self-determination of Aboriginal peoples, yet that role was described as being difficult to achieve in the face of broader structural inequalities and colonialism that continue to hinder the full realization of Aboriginal self-determination. Indeed, Rovito and Giles contended that, “while programmes like OLI can make a contribution towards self-determination, they alone are not enough”.<sup>31 (p 199)</sup> In their research with the VAFCS, Hayhurst and colleagues acknowledged that SFD programmes “have the potential to be used in ways that can promote Indigenous peoples’ self-determined goals and values”.<sup>20 (p 550)</sup> The authors also noted that the participants

valued the neoliberal skills (as the authors labelled them) they acquired through the VAFCS programme. These skills included Eurocentric leadership, which were deemed “necessary” for survival in competitive capitalism, and thus for upholding their autonomy and independence for surviving in the current economic moment. Promoting these traits, however, “can be seen on the other hand as reinforcing the colonial, patriarchal project by failing to address broader and intersecting issues”.<sup>21 (p 124)</sup> It appears then, that while SFD is often lauded by organizations for its ability to promote self-determination, the literature fails to support such a discourse. A poorly developed and implemented programme that values Eurocentrism over Aboriginal values and leadership risks reaffirming colonialism.<sup>27</sup>

Beyond colonialism, and in part due to colonialism, the authors describing two programmes (AFL and RTP) used caution when identifying the role of sport in broader development goals. Rose and Giles<sup>28</sup> highlighted the important work AFL does in the communities in which its staff delivers programming, but cautioned that the programme “alone will not solve the underlying problems of social injustice. Issues of racism, suicide, poverty and violence lie within the social structure of society, and must be dealt with in and through areas in addition to sports and recreation”.<sup>28 (p 447)</sup> Interestingly, without mentioning self-determination specifically, Bean and Forneris<sup>17</sup> noted that the NYHDP’s strong organizational structure gave Nunavik communities leverage to accrue funding for physical resources (e.g., arena renovations) from government and private sector partners.

## DISCUSSION

With the forthcoming policy decisions that will result from the TRC’s Calls to Action<sup>2</sup> concerning sport, combined with the support of SFD in Aboriginal communities from important documents such as *Aboriginal Sport for Life*,<sup>11</sup> there are numerous opportunities for researchers to inform these discussions; however, it is important that we enhance our understanding of the need for further research in several areas so that we can best contribute to answering the Calls to Action. Based on the results of our scoping review, below, we discuss some of these opportunities as well as further examine the structural inequalities that are often cited as barriers to promoting Aboriginal self-determination in SFD programmes, which we argue must inform in any discussion on SFD with Aboriginal communities.

The Aboriginal population in Canada is diverse. By legal definition, the term Aboriginal is composed of three identifying groups: First Nations, Metis, and Inuit.

Collectively, there are more than 1.4 million Aboriginal peoples living in Canada, or 4.3% of the Canadian population.<sup>33</sup> For First Nations peoples alone, there are over 600 First Nations/Indian bands in Canada who collectively speak over sixty Aboriginal languages.<sup>33</sup> There is also great geographic diversity: First Nations peoples are almost evenly split between residing in urban areas and residing on a reserve, compared to the majority of Inuit who continue to live in their distinct homeland, which covers an expansive area from Labrador to the Northwest Territories.<sup>33</sup> The diverse geographic locations of Aboriginal communities, combined with the continued effects of colonization, racism, and social inequities have an impact on a variety of factors, including health.<sup>36</sup>

The diversity in Aboriginal peoples across Canada poses both challenges and opportunities for prospective SFD programmes and researchers. First, the challenges arise due to the differences in the ways Aboriginal peoples experience sport: indeed, “sport means different things to different Aboriginal people and groups”.<sup>11 (p 2)</sup> For some Aboriginal peoples, a Euro-Canadian sport like hockey can be “passionately embraced”,<sup>34 (p 5)</sup> while for others, traditional games such as the Dene Games can be a site of contention over “tradition” and the politics of gender.<sup>35</sup> Without a nuanced understanding of cultural differences between Aboriginal groups, generalizations can be made from research with a particular population, which could lead to a “one-size-fits-all” approach to SFD in Aboriginal communities that hinders the pursuit of specific community and organizational objectives.<sup>17</sup> Further, research with small Aboriginal populations in remote areas might be seen as being “non-generalizable,” and thus not worthy of funding or publication. The identified research counters this claim. For example, Hayhurst and colleagues<sup>20</sup> utilized a transnational postcolonial feminist participatory action research approach to both meet community members’ self-identified needs and to strengthen knowledge shared between Aboriginal communities participating in SFD programming. Thus, such an approach can be of benefit by helping communities “learn from each other”.<sup>20 (p 563)</sup> Authors employed participatory action research in two other articles/book chapters<sup>19, 22</sup> and it is a methodology that should be considered by prospective SFD scholars.

There is clearly a plethora of opportunities for further research in this area. Research areas that remain to be investigated include the differences in experiences with SFD between Aboriginal people on-reserve and Aboriginal people off-reserve, urban or otherwise. The challenge in adapting SFD programming to meet the needs of diverse Aboriginal cultures that come together in urban

communities across Canada is a particularly relevant and unstudied area of interest. Similarly, there is sparse research that investigates Aboriginal girls' and boys' experiences with SFD, the role of corporate sponsors, and the experiences of the families of Aboriginal youth who are participating in SFD programmes. In addition, future research should focus on examining how Aboriginal peoples understand, define and conceptualize 'sport for development'. It is indeed possible that – by using this term as part of our search criteria – we have missed a number of Aboriginal-driven initiatives that have similar mandates, programming, and elements of SFD but are not conceptualized as such. It is also important to note that while every effort was made to identify relevant existing sources, the relative dearth of available literature ensures that there is not yet a clear picture of what is occurring “on the ground” in SFD programmes in Aboriginal communities in Canada. While the themes identified in this review may represent the SFD programmes described in the literature, they are not necessarily representative of the numerous Aboriginal SFD initiatives operating across Canada.

Another challenge that received much focus in the identified literature relates to the structural inequalities that continue to act as barriers to SFD programming. Notably, authors<sup>5, 20-21, 28, 31</sup> pointed to factors such as racism, neoliberalism and poverty as barriers to the achievement of self-determination and other SFD goals. All of these factors can be argued to fall under the far-reaching umbrella of colonialism, which Reading and Wein noted is responsible for “producing social, political and economic inequalities”.<sup>36</sup> (p. 22) Historically, there have been examples in Canada where sport and recreation have been used as part of colonial projects (e.g., residential schools) that have re-produced these inequalities. While residential schools are no longer in operation, the reproduction of colonialism through sport is still possible, regardless of the altruistic intentions of SFD organizers and funders. It is indeed important that SFD scholars include in their results instances where unintended outcomes of SFD programmes further widen the inequalities they presumed to be closing. Reporting such unintended and undesirable outcomes “is not often appealing, but is needed to move towards a more critical and impactful use of sport in development efforts”.<sup>37</sup> (p. 573). We acknowledge, however, the difficulties in providing analyses of long-term intended vs. unintended outcomes within the financial and logistical confines of academia. Within the literature of this scoping review, Garner-Manzon and Giles<sup>10</sup> identified an unintended outcome relating to the belief by AFL's staff that they accrued more benefit than the programme's participants. While this is an important result, the authors acknowledged that investigating this outcome was beyond

the scope of their research. Sport for development leaders should be cautious of reports produced by industry stakeholders that portray SFD as overwhelmingly positive because an examination of potential negative outcomes could be missing. Thus, long-term research that can follow-up and critically analyze unintended outcomes is needed to further nuance our understanding of SFD outcomes in Aboriginal communities. An ethnographic approach has yet to be used within the Canadian SFD context, but is perhaps suitable for investigating such long-term outcomes.

Some have argued that SFD programmes for Aboriginal communities serve as mere band-aid solutions that fail to address broader social issues.<sup>28, 31</sup> Certainly, it is easier to provide children with access to soccer balls than it is to provide them with access to quality, racism-free education, healthcare, housing and social services. Yet, imagining sport as a place free from colonial intentions and that is universally “good” remains problematic and simplistic, particularly when considering SFD programmes have been identified as potential spaces where colonial relations are re-affirmed.<sup>27</sup> Future SFD scholars, practitioners, and policymakers should resist promoting and justifying SFD as a tool that in and of itself save lives and builds better communities, since this discourse dangerously detracts and distracts from the very real, complex issues affecting many Aboriginal communities in Canada, most of which certainly cannot be addressed through sport alone.

## CONCLUSION

The research question guiding this scoping review was, “what academic literature is available concerning SFD programmes for Aboriginal people in Canada?” A notable exemption from this research question was reports produced by SFD organizations or the communities with which they work. Future research should consider including these reports in their analysis to incorporate multiple perspectives. While we identified important contributions to this (relatively) recently conceptualized field of study, there is a clear need for further research that informs future sport-related policy decisions. Moving forward, it is important that executives of SFD organizations, as well as government and NGO policymakers, use restraint and realism when stating the ultimate socioeconomic goals of their programmes. As much as the efforts of SFD organizations may promote positive change within Aboriginal communities (both on and off reserve), the authors of the identified literature often argued that further collective action is needed to challenge the broader social inequalities affecting many Aboriginal communities across Canada. It may be worthwhile for SFD organizations to attempt to

work in partnership with governments, private donors, Aboriginal youth and other stakeholders to foster an open and honest dialogue to discuss the infrastructural, superstructural and procedural barriers Aboriginal SFD participants face in their day-to-day lives. Sport for development scholars can contribute to this dialogue by advocating for structural changes to the issues such as youth education, which are the purported “targets” of SFD initiatives. By critically examining these structural inequalities and barriers alongside SFD, we will be able to gain a more complete and nuanced understanding of the role SFD may play in Aboriginal peoples’ lives.

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## Original Research

## Yielding healthy community with sport?

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## ABSTRACT

Research has linked an enhanced sense of community to sport programme retention, while literature outside of sport suggest increased sense of community is linked to improved health. Consequently, the purpose of this study was to better understand the association between sport communities and health behaviours and health role modelling outcomes. Athletes and non-athletes were surveyed to better understand the unique contributions sport participation might have on health-related outcomes. Surveys included demographic information, the 21-item Sense of Community in Sport scale, and various health behaviours and outcomes. Surveys were completed by 458 athletes and 323 university social organisation members (i.e., fraternities and sororities) in the United States. The results provided limited support for the positive influence of sense of community on health-related outcomes and indicated that athletes reported higher levels of sense of community ( $M = 75.17$ ,  $SD = 10.158$ ) than university social organisations participants ( $M = 72.17$ ,  $SD = 12.134$ ). When controlling for sense of community, surveyed athletes were more likely to engage in healthier behaviours (i.e., binge drink less, consider themselves role models in terms of exercise, maintain a balanced diet, and use less tobacco). This work highlights the community characteristics found in sport settings that can contribute to positive health outcomes.

## INTRODUCTION

The association between sport participation and positive health outcomes is a complicated one that has been

examined by researchers representing a variety of academic disciplines (e.g., sport management, public health). According to the World Health Organization, health is a multi-faceted concept that encompasses physical, mental, and social well-being.<sup>1</sup> While sport participation has the potential to contribute to overall health,<sup>2-5</sup> in some instances research suggests that sport demotes such salubrious outcomes.<sup>6-8</sup> Despite this empirically supported criticism, sport participation is still commonly considered as a means to improve health. Any health improvement likely occurs because it is well-acknowledged that *physical activity*, which can be achieved through sport participation, is related to positive health outcomes.<sup>9,10</sup> More specifically, at least 150 min of moderately intense physical activity per week is recommended for adults to achieve a health benefit.<sup>10</sup> As trends demonstrate, less physical activity is being achieved daily through occupational (e.g., manual labour), domestic (e.g., household tasks), and transport (e.g., bicycling) means; interestingly, leisure-time physical activity (e.g., sports) has not declined.<sup>2,11</sup>

This suggests the existence of an opportunity for sport to be used for health-related benefits. Berg and colleagues<sup>2(p29)</sup> stressed the importance of participation in sport and physical activity, but noted that “sport is also not a panacea”, and exaggerating the power of sport can actually limit its use for public health policy. This is especially important because sport increasingly has been seen as an effective mechanism for community interventions designed to improve poor health.<sup>12</sup> The exponential growth of sport for development initiatives worldwide and typically in disadvantaged settings and developing countries

**Keywords:** health; community building; sport programming

provides further evidence of this.<sup>13</sup> Sport provides a potential means for delivering positive health outcomes, but how and under what conditions this occurs has not been made clear in the literature. Additional evaluation of the outcomes of sport participation (as distinct from physical activity) and the mechanisms through which these positive health outcomes are achieved is needed.

A promising line of research contends that positive outcomes of sport, including enhanced health and well-being, are achieved as a result of the ensuing sense of community that develops in and around sport settings.<sup>14–16</sup> Previous research has shown that increased sense of community has a positive impact on retention and satisfaction for sport participants,<sup>2,17,18</sup> sport event volunteers,<sup>19</sup> fans,<sup>20,21</sup> youth sport parents,<sup>22</sup> and refer.<sup>23–25</sup> While the sport literature clearly supports the proposition that increased sense of community is positively associated with the sport experience and *implies* a link to overall health, the literature outside of sport provides evidence of a direct link between sense of community and improved health.

While sport has been recognized as one of the few remaining social institutions that builds community,<sup>17,22,26</sup> and the existence of a sense of community can contribute to positive health outcomes, it is unknown whether sport programmes are better suited to this and more effective in achieving these ends than other leisure activities such as music or art.<sup>27</sup> In order to examine the importance of sense of community and its association with sport and positive health outcomes, the following sections review the literature related to: (1) sense of community and health; (2) sense of community and sport; and (3) sport and health.

### Sense of Community and Health

Sense of community has been defined as “community characteristics that lead to members feeling a sense of belonging, attachment, and shared faith and interest in common goals or values.”<sup>28</sup> The importance of individuals experiencing a sense of community in terms of health is well-documented in the community psychology field. Hill<sup>29</sup> asserted that structures fostering a strong psychological sense of community are likely to be similar to those which foster healthy outcomes; thus, promoting a sense of community among individuals could lessen the need for specific interventions to target health improvements. Research in the community psychology realm suggests that increases in one’s sense of community leads to positive health and lifestyle benefits, such as significantly less drug use,<sup>30,31</sup> improved well-being,<sup>32–34</sup> and lower stress.<sup>35</sup> In

addition, the sociological literature points to the connection between a lack of community, or anomie, and many negative health-related consequences,<sup>15,16</sup> including deviant behaviour<sup>36–39</sup> and physical and mental health decrements.<sup>40,41</sup>

Additionally, it is widely accepted that increased sense of community improves health through the promotion of health-enhancing behaviours.<sup>42–44</sup> For example, a strong social network, social capital, and social ties (i.e., fundamental components and the basis in which sense of community is felt) have been associated with lower mortality,<sup>45</sup> increased leisure-time and physical activity,<sup>46</sup> decreased binge drinking,<sup>47,48</sup> improved perception of overall health,<sup>49</sup> and positive health behaviour change.<sup>50</sup> Thus, it is not surprising that, “health promoters are increasingly becoming involved in general ‘community strengthening’ programmes, which seek to create ‘health-enabling communities’, characterized by trust, mutual support and high levels of involvement in local community projects of mutual interest”.<sup>42(p255-256)</sup> In general, many want to assume and credit “sport” for fostering health outcomes, but it may be likely that healthier people seek out sport.<sup>51</sup> In an effort to better understand the unique effects of sport and its potential contribution to health, it is important to study and consider comparative social groups and their structures.

### Sense of Community and Sport

Hill’s assessment of community, described above, served as the basis for Warner and colleagues’ grounded theory work on exploring sense of community in a sport setting.<sup>28,52,53</sup> The result of this work was Warner and Dixon’s Sport and Sense of Community Theory,<sup>16</sup> which theorized that *Administrative Consideration*, *Common Interest*, *Competition*, *Equity in Administrative Decisions*, *Leadership Opportunities*, *Social Spaces*, and *Voluntary Action* are the fundamental factors or community characteristics that are needed for a sense of community to be fostered among athletes. Perhaps not surprisingly, sport and sport programming have been credited with being a context in which community and a sense of community are developed. In fact, Berg and colleagues<sup>2(p29)</sup> pointed out that “hedonic rewards and social interaction (and the ensuing sense of community)” are two primary benefits that sport and physical activity participants seek. The extant sport management literature has assumed that the building of community in sport is a positive process and has implied positive health outcomes are being achieved via the created sense of community.<sup>17,28,52</sup>

## Sport and Health

Berg and colleagues suggested that an acknowledgement of the association between sense of community and sport and sense of community and health would aid in efforts to utilize sport for public health purposes.<sup>2</sup> Eime and colleagues' work further supports this notion, as they found that the social nature of sport has been associated with a range of psychological and social health benefits.<sup>51</sup> However, researchers have also argued that sport can promote unhealthy behaviours. For example, previous research has shown that athletes are more likely to binge drink,<sup>7,54</sup> suffer from eating disorders,<sup>55,56</sup> and report higher levels of anxiety.<sup>57,58</sup> As well, it must be acknowledged that sports and recreation-related injuries are detrimental to one's overall health.<sup>59,60</sup> Thus, a clear gap in the literature exists with regard to whether or not greater sense of community is related to positive health outcomes and if so, whether this association holds true for athletes.

## Present Study

Consequently, the purpose of this study is to further understand the association between the communities formed via a sport programme and health outcomes. In the collegiate realm, several scholars have compared athletes to members of social organisations (i.e., fraternities and sororities, also commonly referred to as Greek organisations). This comparison is often done because both groups are considered high-risk for problem alcohol use and other negative associated outcomes.<sup>61–64</sup> In an effort to identify and determine the unique contributions of sport programming and sport participation on health, university club sport athletes were evaluated and compared to a non-sport social group. Specifically, we included university social organisations (i.e., fraternities and sororities) as the comparator group, given that such organisations are often credited with fostering a sense of community<sup>65,66</sup> and are also thought to promote more risk-taking and unhealthy behaviours. The comparison between athletes in club sport programmes and members of university social organisations allows for empirical investigation of the relative advantages (or disadvantages) of sport involvement in delivering positive health outcomes. The following research questions were developed to explore these associations:

RQ1: Do increased levels of sense of community fostered in social settings lead to positive health outcomes?

RQ2: Is there a difference in the sense of community experienced by club sports athletes in comparison to university social organisations participants?

RQ3: Are there differences in health outcomes experienced

by sport club athletes compared to members of university social organisations?

RQ4: Are there differences in health outcomes between club sport groups and members of university social organisations when controlling for sense of community?

## METHOD

### Participants

The sampling frame for the current study consisted of undergraduate students from a mid-sized university in the southeastern United States who participated in either university-sponsored club sports or social organisations (i.e., fraternities or sororities). All 3,614 students who were involved in either a club sport or social organisation at the university were invited to participate in the study. A total of 781 usable surveys were returned for a response rate of 21.6%. Of the surveys returned, 59% ( $n = 458$ ) were from club sport athletes and 41% ( $n = 323$ ) from members of a university social organisation.

### Procedure

University administrators provided a list of email addresses for club sport and university social organisation members. Participants were sent an email invitation and a link to an online survey about their sport or social organisation experiences. The email described the purpose of the study, contact information, time required to fill out the questionnaire (10 to 20 minutes), and the participant's right to refuse to complete the survey or stop responding at any time. No incentives to complete the survey were offered. Two follow up emails were sent to remind students to complete the survey.

### Instrumentation

The survey consisted of three sections with a total of 31 items. The first section of the study contained a 21-item Sense of Community in Sport Scale (SCS).<sup>18</sup> The SCS consists of 6 Subscales (Administrative Consideration, Common Interest, Equity in Administrative Decisions, Leadership Opportunities, Social Spaces, and Competition), measured on 5-point Likert-type scales. The SCS measure has shown satisfactory reliability and validity in previous research with Cronbach's alpha scores ranging from .76 to .86 and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) scores ranging from .62 to .72 for each sub-dimension.<sup>18</sup> Higher scores indicate a greater sense of community. Table 1 provides an overview of the SCS scale with all sub-dimensions and individual items listed. The second section of the survey

consisted of six items related to participants' overall well-being and healthy lifestyle choices. Two items asked respondents to provide information on the frequency with which they engage in specific health behaviours – one positive (i.e., physical activity) and one negative (i.e., binge drinking). These items specifically asked “How likely are you to engage in moderate intensity physical activity at least 2.5 hours a week?” and “How likely are you to consume five or more alcoholic drinks (males) or four or more drinks (females) in a row within two hours at a social outing?” These items are based on the National Institute of Health recommended physical activity guidelines and definition of binge drinking. Four additional items measured how likely respondents were to believe that others considered them a role model in terms of diet, exercise, stress management, and tobacco use. Social support has been determined to be an important factor in the promotion of positive health behaviours; consequently, the study used role model items as a complement to the behavioural items above. These were all single-item measures examined through 5-point Likert-type scales. Table 1 provides descriptive information for the SCS and Table 2 provides descriptive information on well-being and healthy lifestyle choice outcomes. The final section of the survey contained four demographic questions examining respondents' gender, race, academic status, and grade point average (GPA).

*Table 1 – Sense of Community in Sport Descriptives*

Factors and Items	M <sup>1</sup>	SD <sup>2</sup>	$\alpha^3$
<b>Administrative Consideration</b>	<b>3.66</b>	<b>.587</b>	<b>.92</b>
Leaders of my athletic department/Greek organization care about their students	3.73	.561	
Leaders of my athletic department/ Greek organization support their students	3.73	.558	
I feel comfortable talking openly with the leaders of my athletic department/ Greek organization	3.60	.726	
The leaders make me feel like a valued student of my athletic department/ Greek organization	3.58	.733	
<b>Common Interest</b>	<b>3.58</b>	<b>.583</b>	<b>.80</b>
I share similar values with other students in my athletic department/ Greek organization	3.62	.629	
I feel like I belong when practicing or competing/participating for my institution	3.67	.645	
Being a student-athlete/ Greek member provides me with friends who share a strong commitment	3.46	.751	
<b>Equity in Administrative Decisions</b>	<b>3.45</b>	<b>.722</b>	<b>.94</b>
Administrators working for my athletic department/ Greek organization make decisions that benefit everyone	3.44	.758	
Administrators working for my athletic department/ Greek organization make decisions that are fair	3.48	.748	
Administrators working for my athletic department/ Greek organization consider everyone's needs when making decisions	3.43	.793	
<b>Social Spaces</b>	<b>3.30</b>	<b>.757</b>	<b>.90</b>
When going to sport-related/Greek-life related activities, there are places where I can interact with other students	3.22	.896	
When going to sport-related/Greek-life related activities, I know I'll have an area where I can interact with other students	3.30	.857	
My athletic department/Greek organization creates a place for me to interact with other students	3.16	.909	
My athletic department/Greek organization provides me a place to interact with other students	3.51	.780	

<sup>1</sup> Mean scores (M) are based on 5-point Likert-type response scale; higher scores indicate greater sense of community

<sup>2</sup> Standard deviation (SD)

<sup>3</sup> Cronbach's  $\alpha$  ( $\alpha$ )

## Data Analysis

Preliminary analyses were conducted on continuous variables to assess normality. All continuous variables used in the examination were found to be normally distributed. Preliminary analyses were also conducted on the SCS to provide reliability-related evidence. Reliability-related evidence was provided for each sub-dimension of the SCS, with Cronbach's alpha scores ranging from .80 to .94 for each sub-dimension of the SCS (See Table 1).

To address RQ1, six multiple regression models were developed to examine the impact of sense of community sub-dimensions on positive health outcomes. The first two regression models contained dependent variables focused on health-related behaviours (physical activity and binge drinking). The final four regression models contained dependent variables focused on role modelling (diet, exercise, stress, and tobacco usage). Independent variables were the same for all regression models and included all six SOC sub-dimensions. For RQ2, an independent samples t-test was developed to examine group differences in sense of community experienced between club sports athletes and social organisation participants. For RQ3 and RQ4, six ANCOVA models were developed to examine group differences in health outcomes between sport club athletes and members of social organisations, controlling for sense of community.



Table 1 – (Continued) Sense of Community in Sport Descriptives

Factors and Items	M <sup>1</sup>	SD <sup>2</sup>	$\alpha$ <sup>3</sup>
<b>Competition</b>	<b>3.42</b>	<b>.782</b>	<b>.88</b>
The competitiveness of my athletic department/social organization helps me bond with other students	3.42	.832	
The level of competition at my athletic department/social organization enhances my enjoyment	3.39	.898	
Being involved in a highly competitive environment is fun	3.48	.844	

<sup>1</sup> Mean scores (M) are based on 5-point Likert-type response scale; higher scores indicate greater sense of community

<sup>2</sup> Standard deviation (SD)

<sup>3</sup> Cronbach's  $\alpha$  ( $\alpha$ )

Table 2 – Health Outcome Variable Descriptives

Outcome	M <sup>1</sup>	SD <sup>2</sup>
<b>Behaviour<sup>3</sup></b>		
Likelihood of consuming five or more alcoholic drinks (male) or four or more drinks (female) in a row within two hours in a social setting	2.79	1.36
Likelihood of engaging in moderate intensity physical activity at least 2.5 times a week	4.23	1.00
<b>Role Modelling<sup>4</sup></b>		
Likelihood that others consider the respondent a healthy lifestyle role model in terms of diet	3.87	1.06
Likelihood that others consider the respondent a healthy lifestyle role model in terms of exercise	3.82	1.10
Likelihood that others consider the respondent a healthy lifestyle role model in terms of stress	3.74	1.03
Likelihood that others consider the respondent a healthy lifestyle role model in terms of tobacco use	3.69	1.53

<sup>1</sup> Mean scores (M) are based on 5-point Likert-type response scale; higher scores indicate greater sense of community

<sup>2</sup> Standard deviation (SD)

<sup>3</sup> Behavior items were measured using a 5-point Likert-type scale, in which a higher value represents a greater likelihood of engaging in the behavior

<sup>4</sup> Role model items were measured using a 5-point Likert-type scale, in which a higher value represents the participant being more likely to be considered a role model

## RESULTS

### Demographics

Of the 781 respondents, 56.4% were female and 74.6% were Caucasian (followed by 7.3% African-American). Respondents were similarly distributed across academic class. Most respondents were freshman (24.5%), followed closely by sophomores (22.9%) and seniors (21.6%). The average GPA for respondents was 3.17 ( $SD = .657$ ) on a 4.0 GPA scale. Results indicated comparable demographic percentiles between study participants and the general population of undergraduate students at the institution with respect to gender (58% female), race (69.3% Caucasian), class (27.0% freshman), and GPA (3.0).

### Sense of Community and Health Outcomes

In the first two regression models focusing on lifestyle habits in relation to sense of community (RQ1), the physical activity model was significant  $F(6,717) = 11.55, p < .001$  (Table 3). However, the sense of community sub-dimensions only explained 8.8% of the variance in physical

activity choices. Common Interest ( $p = .003$ ), Equity in Administrative Decisions ( $p = .007$ ), and Competition ( $p < .001$ ) significantly influenced physical activity. The binge drinking model was not found to be significant.

In the next four regression models focused on role model perceptions related to healthy living, the diet model was significant  $F(6,720) = 7.18, p < .001$ . However, the sense of community sub-dimensions only explained 5.6% of the variance in healthy eating habits. Social Spaces ( $p = .001$ ) and Competition ( $p = .009$ ) significantly influenced diet. The exercise model was significant  $F(6,720) = 5.94, p < .001$ . However, the sense of community sub-dimensions only explained 4.7% of the variance in exercise. Competition ( $p < .001$ ) was the only sub-dimension that significantly influenced exercise. The stress model was significant  $F(6,720) = 7.09, p < .001$ . However, the sense of community sub-dimensions only explained 5.6% of the variance in healthy eating habits. Leadership Opportunities ( $p = .001$ ) was the only sub-dimension that significantly influenced stress. The tobacco use model was not found to be significant.



### Sense of Community and Organisation Affiliation

Participants in club sports showed a higher sense of community ( $M = 75.17$ ,  $SD = 10.158$ ) than participants in social organisations ( $M = 72.17$ ,  $SD = 12.134$ ). The results of the independent samples t-test were significant ( $t(781) = -3.628$ ,  $p < .001$ ) (not pictured).

### Health Outcomes and Organisation Affiliation

The first two ANCOVA models examined differences between groups in lifestyle habits when controlling for overall sense of community (RQ3 and RQ4) (Table 4). There was a significant effect of organisational affiliation on binge drinking after controlling for sense of community,  $F(1,721) = 9.84$ ,  $p = .002$ ,  $\eta^2 = .013$  (Table 4). Respondents affiliated with social organisations were more likely to binge drink ( $M = 2.99$ ,  $SD = 1.32$ ) than respondents affiliated with club sports ( $M = 2.66$ ,  $SD = 1.37$ ). There was also a

significant effect of organisational affiliation on physical activity after controlling for sense of community,  $F(1,721) = 126.93$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .150$ , but in the opposite direction. Respondents affiliated with club sports were more likely to participate in physical activity ( $M = 4.56$ ,  $SD = .756$ ) than respondents affiliated with social organisations ( $M = 3.73$ ,  $SD = 1.13$ ).

In the four ANCOVA models focused on role model perceptions related to healthy living, after controlling for sense of community, there was a significant difference in role model perceptions of diet  $F(1,724) = 144.79$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .185$ , exercise  $F(1,724) = 61.43$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .078$ , and tobacco usage  $F(1,724) = 17.84$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .024$  based on organisational affiliation. Club sports respondents were more likely to consider themselves role models in terms of healthy living compared to social organisation respondents. Group differences related to stress were not found to be significant.

Table 3 - Health Outcome and Sense of Community (SOC) Regression Results

Outcome	SOC Sub-Dimensions	Beta	t	p-value
<b>Physical Activity (Behavioural)</b>	Constant		11.23	<.001
	Administrative Consideration	-.044	-.717	.474
	Common Interest	.185	2.97	.003
	Equity in Administrative Decisions	-.133	-2.70	.007
	Leadership Opportunities	-.038	-.716	.474
	Social Spaces	-.037	-.809	.419
	Competition	.273	5.87	<.001
<b>Binge Drinking (Behavioural)</b>	Constant		7.08	<.001
	Administrative Consideration	.029	.459	.646
	Common Interest	.022	.144	.885
	Equity in Administrative Decisions	-.144	-2.81	.005
	Leadership Opportunities	.010	.189	.850
	Social Spaces	.045	.953	.341
	Competition	.014	.295	.768
<b>Diet (Role Modelling)</b>	Constant		9.85	<.001
	Administrative Consideration	.005	0.83	.934
	Common Interest	.109	1.73	.084
	Equity	.036	.722	.471
	Leadership Opportunities	.029	.541	.589
	Social Spaces	-.120	-2.62	.009
	Competition	.152	3.21	.001
<b>Exercise (Role Modelling)</b>	Constant		9.78	<.001
	Administrative Consideration	-.089	-1.43	.153
	Common Interest	.056	.886	.376
	Equity	.023	.456	.649
	Leadership Opportunities	.056	1.05	.294
	Social Spaces	-.054	-1.16	.246
	Competition	.200	4.20	<.001
<b>Stress (Role Modelling)</b>	Constant		8.59	<.001
	Administrative Consideration	-.090	-1.45	.148
	Common Interest	.059	.932	.352
	Equity	.033	.664	.507
	Leadership Opportunities	.181	3.39	.001
	Social Spaces	.029	.634	.527
	Competition	.050	1.05	.295

Table 3 – (Continued) Health Outcome and Sense of Community (SOC) Regression Results

Outcome	SOC Sub-Dimensions	Beta	t	p-value
<b>Tobacco (Role Modelling)</b>	Constant		8.35	<.001
	Administrative Consideration	-.016	-.258	.797
	Common Interest	-.027	-.420	.675
	Equity	-.007	-.14	.889
	Leadership Opportunities	.080	1.45	.147
	Social Spaces	-.32	-.667	.505
	Competition	.028	.565	.572

Table 4 – Organization Affiliation ANCOVA Results – Health Outcomes

Dependent Variable					Club Sports		Social Organisations	
Health Outcomes		F	p-value	$\eta^2$	M <sup>1</sup>	SD <sup>2</sup>	M	SD
<i>Behavioural</i> <sup>3</sup>	Likelihood of consuming five or more alcoholic drinks (male) or four or more drinks (female) in a row within two hours in a social setting	9.84	.002	.013	2.66	1.37	2.99	1.32
	Likelihood of engaging in moderate intensity physical activity at least 2.5 times a week	126.93	<.001	.150	4.56	.756	3.73	1.13
<i>Role Modelling</i> <sup>4</sup>								
	Likelihood that others consider the respondent a healthy lifestyle role model in terms of diet	144.79	<.001	.185	4.25	.789	3.29	1.14
	Likelihood that others consider the respondent a healthy lifestyle role model in terms of exercise	61.43	<.001	.078	4.09	.959	3.42	1.19
	Likelihood that others consider the respondent a healthy lifestyle role model in terms of stress	.018	.893	<.001	3.77	.995	3.69	1.07
	Likelihood that others consider the respondent a healthy lifestyle role model in terms of tobacco use	17.84	.612	.024	3.88	1.45	3.39	1.60

<sup>1</sup> Mean (M)<sup>2</sup> Standard deviation (SD)<sup>3</sup> Behavior items were measured using a 5-point Likert-type scale, in which a higher value represents a greater likelihood of engaging in the behavior<sup>4</sup> Role model items were measured using a 5-point Likert-type scale, in which a higher value represents the participant being more likely to be considered a role model

## DISCUSSION

The results of the current research provide limited support for the positive influence of a sense of community on health outcomes (RQ1), while providing preliminary evidence of differences in sense of community (RQ2) and health outcomes (RQ3) when sport and non-sport participants are compared. Regarding RQ1, the finding that very little variance in the health outcomes was explained by participants' sense of community is likely a result of both groups reporting high levels of sense of community (RQ4). This finding is not surprising, because decisions related to various health behaviours are complex and influenced by a variety of individual and environmental factors. Still, sense of community did contribute to positive health outcomes for four of the six health behaviours and role modelling variables: frequency of physical activity, and being a role

model for diet, exercise, and stress. Thus, these findings suggest that individuals who reported a stronger sense of community also were more likely to adhere to pro-social health behaviours. This finding is reinforced by the Social Support Model in public health, which stresses the importance of personal support and relationships in maintaining health.<sup>40,50,67</sup> This finding is noteworthy for sport managers concerned with improving health for participants. That is, the results suggest that health can be improved through enhancing the sense of community experienced by sport participants.

The importance and practical implications of the findings regarding the influence of sense of community on health outcomes can be found by examining the specific factors that were significant. Higher levels of Competition, which is defined as the challenge to succeed against internal and

external rivalries, led to individuals being more likely to engage in physical activity 2.5 hours per week and more likely to believe that others considered them role models in terms of diet and exercise. Individuals who believe competition is enjoyable, fun, and helps with group bonding may choose to “compete” on the basis of physical activity and its benefits (e.g., improved athletic performance, physical attractiveness). Further, these individuals may also be motivated to compete or stand out from the crowd by being a role model (i.e., not only do they want to engage in the behaviour, but they want to be seen by their peers as being the best at these behaviours). This finding is not surprising given that competition is so deeply imbedded in Western society and has been found to be a factor that can lead to participant retention.<sup>68,69</sup> Thus, emphasizing competition may be one way sport managers can help improve health behaviours of participants.

Common Interest, which brings together individuals and influences group dynamics, social networking, and friendships, was also a significant predictor of physical activity. Physical activity can have a social component, and in fact, the social nature of physical activity participation may even aid in maintenance of a physical activity programme.<sup>2,70</sup> Thus, individuals who indicate high levels of common interest may seek the social benefits associated with engaging in physical activity with their peers. Finally, the finding that Social Spaces were significant for the diet variable may be explained by the powerful influence of social norms.<sup>71,72</sup> Individuals who have opportunities to interact with peers in a shared common area or facility may feel positive pressure to engage in healthy eating behaviours and model them. Overall, the power of a sport environment to impact health should not be overlooked.<sup>27,73</sup> This work demonstrates the importance of community characteristics typically and perhaps, even organically, found in sport settings that can contribute to positive health outcomes.

Turning to RQ2, both participants in club sport and participants in university social organisations exhibited high levels of sense of community. However, when the sense of community of participants in social organisations and club sport are compared, significant differences were observed. Club sport is largely student organized and run, which could explain club sport participants’ higher reported sense of community. While university social organisations are student-led to an extent, they also have hierarchical structures (absent in club sport) in which the national office of a fraternity or sorority may be deemed geographically and culturally distant. In addition, sense of community could be explained by the centrality of sport to an individual who continues participation through college. By this point, individuals could have spent fifteen or more years

participating in organized sport. For social organisation participants, there is not necessarily a clear common activity that brought members together. Identification as a member of the university social organisation is first available in college, so the length of time an individual is associated with their organisation may explain the observed differences.

Regarding RQ3, our results demonstrated that although members of both university social organisations and club sport had relatively high levels of sense of community, significant differences were observed in the health outcomes between the two groups. Participants in club sport exhibited more desirable health behaviours than university social organisation participants across all variables studied. This finding contradicts previous research that considers both sport participants and participants in university social organisations to be at high-risk for negative health outcomes.<sup>61–64</sup> This also is consistent with the Health through Sport model that demonstrates a relationship between psychological, psychosocial, and social health domains and sport participation,<sup>51,74</sup> and lends support to Eime and colleagues’ suggestion that the social nature of sport can influence the extent to which health benefits are realized.<sup>51</sup> This work supports the potential of community engagement through sport to promote positive health outcomes. Further, the results of this study suggest that rather than promoting risky behaviours,<sup>62,64,75</sup> the organisational structures of sport may, in fact, promote healthy behaviours. This result is consistent with previously untested claims found in the sport management literature.<sup>2,4,5,51</sup> Sport participants typically place a higher priority on health, which affects athletic performance. There are practical implications for universities. University social organisations and campus recreation (which typically includes oversight for club sport) are commonly units of the same department (e.g., Student Life, Student Affairs) and competing for the same resources. If club sports are better able to deliver health benefits to students, campus recreation staff can make compelling arguments for increased financial support from the university. Although this research took place in a university setting in a developed country, any sport-for development initiative that seeks ways to secure funding can also benefit from these findings.<sup>76</sup> Moreover, sense of community likely plays an even bigger role in disadvantaged communities where the majority of sport for development programmes target. Since “one of the biggest challenges for disadvantaged people is to find a community with which to identify and belong”<sup>77(p255)</sup> understanding the positive influence of sense of community on health-related outcomes in other sport for development settings may even be stronger.

While the results of this research suggest the nature of the association between sport participation and health outcomes, there are limitations that need to be acknowledged. Specifically, it is possible that sport club members are better informed about healthy lifestyles than their counterparts in social organisations, which could result in a response bias (i.e., self-report of more desirable health behaviours from sport club participants). Additionally, it is possible that individuals who are more concerned with their health would choose to participate in a sport club rather than in a university social organisation, and this would raise issues of selection bias.

Future research should add sense of community to the many established factors in the extant literature to develop a regression model that accounts for a greater degree of variance in the model. This work represents the first use of the SCS scale for non-athlete populations. Future research should also consider extending the use of this tool to other populations in various other sport for development settings and outside of sport, such as local social and community groups. While the response rates in this study were comparable to those found in sport management research and the demographics of the sample were comparable to the demographics of the student body, results of this study cannot be generalized beyond the participants surveyed. Additionally, expanding the study such that more individuals with lower sense of community are surveyed would shed further light on the issues examined.

## CONCLUSION

Sport organisations have the opportunity to contribute to public health and positive health outcomes. This study empirically tested the associations that have led researchers and practitioners to make claims about the association between sport and health. Specifically, limited support was found for the following associations: (1) sport participation can influence individual's sense of community; (2) sport participation can influence health outcomes; and (3) the development of sense of community can impact the extent to which health outcomes are achieved by sport participants. An additional contribution of this research is the use of a comparison group in a university setting to examine whether sport participation is more effective than university social organisations in developing sense of community and promoting health behaviours. This research provides empirical evidence for sport managers to consider, strengthen and ultimately better position sport such that it positively contributes to health.

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