



# JSFD

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Special Issue: Sport for Development and Peace in Latin America and the Caribbean

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<b>Editorial: Sport for development and peace in Latin America and the Caribbean</b>	<b>1</b>
<i>Daniell Parnell, Alexander Cárdenas, Paul Widdop, Pedro-Pablo Cardoso-Castro, Sibylle Lang</i>	
<b>Deporte para el Desarrollo y la Paz en América Latina y el Caribe</b>	<b>1a</b>
Spanish translation	
<b>Esporte para o Desenvolvimento e a Paz na América Latina e no Caribe</b>	<b>1b</b>
Portuguese translation	
<b>Using report analysis as a sport for development and peace research tool: The case of El Salvador Olimpica Municipal's programme</b>	<b>6</b>
<i>Tegwen Gadais, Andrew Webb, Alejandra Garcia Rodriguez</i>	
<b>Sport as an analogy to teach life skills and redefine moral values: A case study of the 'Seedbeds of Peace' sport-for-development programme in Medellin, Colombia</b>	<b>19</b>
<i>Stephen Hills, Alejandro Gómez Velásquez, Matthew Walker</i>	
<b>Levelling the playing field: Human capability approach and lived realities for sport and gender in the West Indies</b>	<b>32</b>
<i>Sarah Zipp, John Nauright</i>	
<b>Immediate outcomes and implementation of a sport for development coach education programme in Belize</b>	<b>45</b>
<i>Paul Wright, Jennifer Jacobs, Steven Howell, James Ressler</i>	
<b>The social, cultural, and historical complexities that shape and constrain (gendered) space in an SDP organisation in Colombia</b>	<b>60</b>
<i>Sarah Oxford</i>	
<b>U.S. sport diplomacy in Latin America and the Caribbean: A programme evaluation</b>	<b>71</b>
<i>Robert Baker, Pamela Baker, Christopher Atwater, Craig Esherick</i>	

## Editorial

**Sport for Development and Peace in Latin America and the Caribbean****Daniel Parnell<sup>1</sup>, Alexander Cárdenas<sup>2,3</sup>, Paul Widdop<sup>4</sup>, Pedro-Pablo Cardoso-Castro<sup>4</sup>, Sibylle Lang<sup>5</sup>**<sup>1</sup> Manchester Metropolitan University, UK<sup>2</sup> Plataforma Deporte para el Desarrollo y la Paz, Colombia<sup>3</sup> Open University of Catalonia, Spain<sup>4</sup> Leeds Beckett University, UK<sup>5</sup> Industrieanlagen-Betriebsgesellschaft.Einsteinstrasse, Germany*Corresponding author email: D.Parnell@mmu.ac.uk***INTRODUCTION**

This Special Issue aims to offer a focus point for the growing literature on ‘Sport for Development and Peace’ (SDP) in Latin America and the Caribbean. It was conceived during field visits to Medellín (Colombia) in 2014 and 2015 by the editors of this Special Issue. These visits involved working with government departments, academics and community groups to examine the role of sport and football for a broad range of social outcomes. Our time in Medellín allowed us to view SDP as a collective community endeavour, and a genuine collaborative approach by local Government and Universities.

**HOPE, INNOVATION AND REGENERATION IN MEDELLÍN**

Medellín is renowned for its cable car system, which promotes the interconnectivity of residents by linking communities in the hillside to the metro and city centre. Football has also been a key part of the history of Medellín. Two of most high-profile names associated with football in Medellín are the Escobars, Pablo the drug cartel kingpin who maintained a close relationship with professional and international footballers in Colombia, and Andrés, the Colombian World Cup 1994 player who was tragically murdered. However, at a community level, football pitches have recently become a novel urban intervention located in the heart of rapidly changing neighbourhoods. They are part of what are called “Life Units”, which are colourful

and clean structures built into the hillside for local communities.

The “Life Units” comprise much more than just the football pitches and underneath these are layers of other facilities. This includes gyms, childcare settings, playgrounds, cinemas, computer labs, classrooms, community shops, dance studios, DJ recording labs, swimming pools, water zones, basketball courts and futsal pitches. Critically, the “Life Unit” is a space designed by the local community using funds made available to them by the local authority (municipality council). This enables the community to own and maintain a space for socialising and engaging in cultural activities and healthy recreational physical activity. The “Life Units” also address broader health needs by providing high quality sanitary facilities and clean water fountains. There are also medical support services that include general practitioners and other health care and social support professionals. Importantly, access to all facilities and services provided at a “Life Unit” is free for all local community members.

In summary, the “Life Units” represent a genuine SDP intervention where sport infrastructure has been prioritised and built as a cornerstone of meeting broader community needs. Our experiences of these facilities stimulated discussion amongst the editorial team about the origins of SDP in Colombia. It also prompted us to reflect on the role of sport in the country’s history of conflict and the ensuing post-conflict phase.

**Keywords:** sport for development; Latin America; Caribbean; editorial

*Photo 1*

## SPORT IN POST-CONFLICT COLOMBIA

In 2012, exploratory talks between the Colombian government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia began in Cuba. The aim was to find a political solution to an internal conflict that had been going for more than 50 years, displaced more than 5 million people and claimed approximately 220,000 lives.<sup>1</sup> In November 2016, a peace deal was finally ratified by congress. However, efforts at building peace were not limited to finding a political solution to the conflict. A dynamic peace movement, largely associated with civil society, mobilized different sectors of the Colombian population to act in favour of peace through a variety of initiatives and programs. As such, cultural and artistic expressions, and notably sport, have been acknowledged as modest yet significant social catalysts for successful transition into a peaceful post-conflict era.<sup>2</sup>

There are several advantages in using sport for post-conflict social development in Colombia. Firstly, sport is very popular across the country. For example, 94% of Colombians registered an interest in football during the 2014 World Cup, which was the highest level from all 19 countries surveyed.<sup>3</sup> This interest is not isolated to football, with evidence that cycling, athletics and weightlifting are attracting more participants as Colombia improves its performance on the world stage. Secondly, sport has been used for more than 20 years in Colombia as a vehicle to address violence in conflict-affected communities. There

are numerous organisations that have already established a legacy for SDP throughout Colombia.<sup>4</sup> Finally, sport has recently been recognized by the national government as a cross-cutting strategy to address key priorities such as health, child protection, education and social inclusion. Specifically, the social role of sport has been identified in key documents: Decennial Plan for Sport (2009-2019);<sup>5</sup> Presidential Report to Congress (2011);<sup>6</sup> Vision for Colombia Second Centennial: 2019;<sup>7</sup> and, Decennial Plan for Football (2014-2024).<sup>8</sup>

However, it is important to recognise the limitations of sport as a driver for social change. Firstly, the potential of sport is limited by the infrastructure available to support it. With the exception of the “Life Units” in Medellín described above, there are limited public sports facilities available across much of Colombia and these are often poorly maintained and the focal points of illegal behaviour. Secondly, the violence and aggression associated with hooliganism at football games creates a negative stigma that deters some people away from sport. Thirdly, sport programs cannot change the root cause of violence or sustainably address the sources of inequality in isolation, but need to be embedded in broader development strategies, which is often not the case.<sup>9</sup> Finally, there is currently a limited understanding of the critical processes and mechanisms that enable sport programs to genuinely impact social development in post-conflict contexts.<sup>10</sup>

As Colombia enters a post-conflict phase we propose



several recommendations to optimise resources invested in SDP initiatives. At the broadest level, the State plays a key role in political reform and developing policy that embeds sport within national development schemes.<sup>11</sup> Although the Colombian government recognises the social role of sport, this is yet to become concrete policy. We suggest policy should be informed by the experiences of NGOs that have been delivering SDP initiatives in Colombia during decades of conflict and that may well provide a link between government and civil society during the post-conflict phase.<sup>12</sup> However, additional input will be needed from new stakeholders with expertise in issues specific to post-conflict settings (e.g. re-integration of ex-combatants, physical / mental rehabilitation, economic growth). Consequently, we suggest engaging other NGOs, foreign governments, international agencies and parts of the private sector with relevant previous experiences. Optimising the impact of the sector also requires national sport federations and the National Olympic Committee to promote “sport-for-all”, rather than just focusing on competitive and high-performance sport. Finally, academic institutions have an emerging role to play in identifying key SDP program processes through rigorous monitoring and evaluation, as well as communicating how all stakeholders may embed these mechanisms and existing theory into the design and delivery of future initiatives.<sup>13</sup> Importantly, academics also have much to learn from the other stakeholders and cross-sectoral integration will provide critical learning opportunities for optimising SDP outcomes in Colombia.<sup>14</sup>

## THE SPECIAL ISSUE

The editors are delighted to have collaborated with the authors of this special issue, who have embraced the opportunity to share empirical and applied research across a range of topics, countries, sports and methods. This provides an exciting and varied insight into SDP in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Gadais, Webb and Rodriguez<sup>15</sup> examine the use of report analysis as an SDP research tool within the case of the El Salvador Olimpica Municipal's programme. The paper describes the value of analysing the contents of an SDP agency report (activity or annual), especially when it is not timely, practical or feasible to directly access programmes on the ground. Building on Greimas' Actantial model<sup>16</sup> and the SDP Snakes and Ladders model,<sup>17</sup> a semiotic analysis method specifically adapted for SDP projects is proposed. It is suggested that such analysis of concepts that theoretically help or hinder SDP projects are brought to the fore and serve as an initial waypoint when analyzing reports. By applying this approach to one specific SDP project report (case study), this paper demonstrates that valuable insights

about management priorities and practices may be obtained when the proposed research tool is applied systematically and rigorously.

Hills, Velásquez and Walker<sup>18</sup> contributed the paper, Sport as an Analogy to Teach Life Skills and Redefine Moral Values: A Case Study of the 'Seedbeds of Peace' Sport-for-Development Programme in Medellin (Colombia). This explores how sport has been used to address the legacy of an illegal and violent culture that stems from when Medellin was plagued with drug trafficking and given the dubious distinction of being the murder capital of the world over 25 years ago. This historical context had eroded values systems and left disadvantaged children vulnerable to criminal activities. To begin addressing this social problem, the Concreto Foundation leveraged Colombia's passion for football in its SDP 'Seedbeds of Peace' programme. A case study design was used to illustrate how the 'Seedbeds of Peace' programme uses football as an analogy to teach life skills and redefine moral values. It adds to the limited theoretical understanding of how sport works in social change and further equips SDP practitioners with a sport mechanism not previously discussed in the literature.

Zipp and Nauright<sup>19</sup> produced the paper, Levelling the Playing Field: Human Capability Approach and Lived Realities for Sport and Gender in the Caribbean. This offers new insight in the area of sport, development and gender. Most previous research in this space has focussed on how girls and women access and experience sport and sport participation for girls is often described as a form of empowerment, including a mechanism to enhance life skills. However, little previous research has included the response of boys to girls in sport. This study explores the experience of both boys and girls to better understand gender role attitudes in SDP in the Eastern Caribbean.

Wright, Jacobs, Howell and Ressler<sup>20</sup> explore the immediate outcomes of an education programme provided to 33 youth SDP coaches and its subsequent implementation in the first year of a project in Belize. While SDP programmes exist across the globe, there is a gap in the literature describing and evaluating programmes that have proven successful in Latin America and the Caribbean. The Belizean Youth Sport Coalition was a two-way coaching exchange project that spanned three years and aimed to promote positive youth development and social change through sport. Multiple data sources indicate the education programme was effective in terms of participants': (1) satisfaction with the training, (2) content knowledge, (3) attitudes and beliefs, and (4) capacity to implement the contents of the education programme. This study contributes to the SDP literature by highlighting the

important relationship between coach education and programme implementation.

Oxford<sup>21</sup> explores the social, cultural, and historical complexities that shape and constrain (gendered) space in an SDP organisation in Colombia. Recent research on the role of 'safe space' within SDP shows that the social inclusion of young women in traditionally male sporting spaces may shift who can comfortably access and shape public spaces<sup>15</sup>. Drawing upon six months of ethnographic research conducted with two Colombian SDP organisations, within two volatile neighbourhoods, safe space is framed as a social construction and a dynamic process. While the SDP organisation's ability to adapt to change and resign control makes it accessible to the local community, the positioning of both the organisation and participants simultaneously permits the continuation of gendered space. This data is analysed through Spaaij and Schulenkorf's<sup>15</sup> multi-dimensional interpretation of safe space. It is concluded that further research about the physical and psycho-social barriers that constrain females from participating in SDP programming is needed.

Baker, Atwater and Esherick<sup>22</sup> explore United States (U.S.) sport diplomacy in Latin America and the Caribbean. The focus of this study is a specific SDP program, entitled Sports Visitors, executed in partnership between George Mason University and the U.S. Department of State. The purpose of this program evaluation was to examine a subset of Latin American and Caribbean groups and to ascertain the short-term impact of a program that focusses on changing participant attitudes. The study took place over a 5 year period and applied a mixed methods approach to the collection of quantitative survey data that was supplemented by qualitative comments provided by participants. The results indicate that a) positive change occurred among participants across all objectives measured, and b) changes were consistently reflected across each type of LAC participant group based upon gender, role, and gender with role.

## FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

Given the unique social, economic and political context of Latin America and the Caribbean, future research is needed to examine SDP initiatives that address some of the ongoing challenges in the development of the region such as violence, crime, lack of education and unemployment. Furthermore, as Latin America is home to some of the most notorious social movements, it is also worth exploring the interplay between grassroots mobilization and sport as a response to specific social concerns. We also recommend

increased evaluative research on SDP programs, as well as strongly advocate for the importance of creating a community of knowledge that fosters collaborative efforts among academic institutions, community-based organizations, donors and the international community. Finally, future research should also look into successful experiences, lessons and best practices on the use of sport as an enabler of social development in Latin America and the Caribbean, which can in turn inform global SDP research and practice.

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## Editorial

**Deporte para el Desarrollo y la Paz en América Latina y el Caribe****Daniel Parnell<sup>1</sup>, Alexander Cárdenas<sup>2,3</sup>, Paul Widdop<sup>4</sup>, Pedro-Pablo Cardoso-Castro<sup>4</sup>, Sibylle Lang<sup>5</sup>**<sup>1</sup> Manchester Metropolitan University, UK<sup>2</sup> Plataforma Deporte para el Desarrollo y la Paz, Colombia<sup>3</sup> Open University of Catalonia, Spain<sup>4</sup> Leeds Beckett University, UK<sup>5</sup> Industrieanlagen-Betriebsgesellschaft.Einsteinstrasse, Germany*Corresponding author email:* D.Parnell@mmu.ac.uk

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**INTRODUCCIÓN**

Esta edición especial tiene como objetivo ofrecer un punto de enfoque para la creciente literatura sobre el "Deporte para el Desarrollo y la Paz" (DDP) en América Latina y el Caribe. Fue concebida durante visitas de campo a Medellín (Colombia) por los editores de esta edición especial en 2014 y 2015. Estas visitas implicaron trabajar con departamentos gubernamentales, académicos y grupos comunitarios para examinar el papel del deporte y del fútbol dentro de una amplia gama de objetivos sociales. Nuestra visita a Medellín nos permitió ver el DDP como un esfuerzo colectivo comunitario y como un enfoque de colaboración genuino por parte del gobierno local y las universidades.

**ESPERANZA, INNOVACIÓN Y REGENERACIÓN EN MEDELLÍN**

Medellín es famoso por su sistema de teleférico, que promueve la interconectividad de los residentes al vincular a las comunidades en las laderas de montaña con el metro y el centro de la ciudad. El fútbol también ha sido una parte clave de la historia de Medellín. Dos de los nombres más prominentes asociados con el fútbol en Medellín son los Escobar: Pablo, el capo de la droga que mantuvo una estrecha relación con futbolistas profesionales e internacionales en Colombia; y Andrés, el jugador de Colombia en la Copa Mundial de 1994 que fue

trágicamente asesinado. Sin embargo, a nivel comunitario, los campos de fútbol se han convertido recientemente en una novedosa intervención urbana ubicada en el corazón de vecindarios que se transforman rápidamente. Son parte de lo que se denomina "Unidades de Vida Articulada – UVA," que son estructuras deportivas multipropósito, coloridas y limpias, construidas en las laderas de montaña para el uso de las comunidades locales.

Las "Unidades de Vida Articulada" abarcan mucho más que campos de fútbol, ya que debajo de estos escenarios se ubican otras instalaciones. Estas incluyen gimnasios, guarderías, parques infantiles, salas de cine, laboratorios de computación, aulas de clase, tiendas comunitarias, salones de danza, laboratorios de grabación para los DJ, piscinas, zonas de agua, canchas de básquetbol y campos de fútbol sala. Las "Unidades de Vida Articulada" son un espacio diseñado por la comunidad con fondos que la autoridad local (consejo municipal) pone a su disposición. Esto permite a la comunidad poseer y mantener un espacio para socializar y para participar en actividades culturales y de actividad física recreativa saludable. Las "Unidades de Vida Articulada" también abordan necesidades de salud más amplias al proporcionar instalaciones sanitarias de alta calidad y fuentes de agua limpia. También hay servicios de asistencia en salud que incluye médicos generales y otros profesionales de atención médica y asistencia social. Es importante destacar que el acceso a todas las instalaciones y servicios provistos en una "Unidad de Vida Articulada"

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*Photo 1*

es gratuito para todos los miembros de la comunidad local. En resumen, las "Unidades de Vida Articulada" representan una verdadera intervención de DDP donde la infraestructura deportiva ha sido priorizada y construida como una piedra angular para satisfacer las necesidades más amplias de la comunidad. Nuestras experiencias en estas instalaciones estimularon la discusión entre el equipo editorial sobre los orígenes del DDP en Colombia. También nos impulsó a reflexionar sobre el papel del deporte en la historia del conflicto del país y su subsiguiente fase de posconflicto.

## **EL DEPORTE Y EL POSCONFLICTO EN COLOMBIA**

En 2012, una serie de conversaciones exploratorias entre el gobierno colombiano y la guerrilla de las FARC comenzó en Cuba. El objetivo era el de encontrar una solución política a un conflicto interno que ya se había extendido por más de 50 años, desplazando a más de 5 millones de víctimas y cobrando la vida de aproximadamente 220,000 personas.<sup>1</sup> En noviembre de 2016 el Congreso ratificó finalmente un acuerdo de paz. Sin embargo, los esfuerzos para construir la paz en el país no se han limitado a encontrar una solución política al conflicto. Un dinámico movimiento por la paz, en gran parte asociado con la sociedad civil, ha movilizado a diferentes sectores de la población colombiana para actuar en favor de la paz a través de una variedad de iniciativas y programas. Dentro de estos esfuerzos, las expresiones culturales y artísticas, y especialmente el deporte, han sido reconocidos como modestos pero significativos catalizadores sociales para una

transición exitosa hacia la era del posconflicto.<sup>2</sup>

Hay múltiples ventajas en el uso del deporte para el desarrollo social dentro del marco del posconflicto en Colombia. En primer lugar, el deporte es una actividad muy popular en todo el país. Por ejemplo, el 94% de los colombianos registró un interés en el fútbol durante la Copa Mundial de 2014, que fue el nivel más alto en una encuesta llevada a cabo entre 19 países.<sup>3</sup> Este interés en el deporte no está restringido al fútbol, ya que disciplinas como el ciclismo, el atletismo y el levantamiento de pesas están atrayendo a más participantes conforme Colombia mejora su desempeño en el escenario mundial. En segundo lugar, el deporte se ha utilizado durante más de 20 años en Colombia como un vehículo para abordar la violencia en comunidades afectadas por el conflicto. Existen numerosas organizaciones que han establecido un legado en el Deporte, el Desarrollo y la Paz en toda Colombia.<sup>4</sup> Finalmente, el gobierno nacional ha reconocido recientemente al deporte como una estrategia transversal útil para abordar prioridades para la población como son la salud, la protección de los niños, la educación y la inclusión social. Específicamente, la función social del deporte se ha identificado en documentos clave: El Plan Decenal del Deporte (2009-2019)<sup>5</sup>; El Informe Presidencial al Congreso (2011)<sup>6</sup>; Visión para Colombia Segundo Centenario: 2019<sup>7</sup>; y El Plan Decenal del Fútbol (2014-2024).<sup>8</sup>

Sin embargo, es importante reconocer las limitaciones del deporte como motor de cambio social. En primer lugar, el potencial del deporte está limitado a la infraestructura



disponible para apoyarlo. Con algunas excepciones, entre las que se cuentan las "Unidades de Vida Articulada" en Medellín, descritas anteriormente, la existencia de instalaciones deportivas públicas es limitada en gran parte de Colombia, y a menudo, estas se encuentran en mal estado y son el punto focal de actividad ilícita. En segundo lugar, la violencia y la agresión asociadas con el vandalismo en los partidos de fútbol crean un estigma negativo que invita a algunas personas a alejarse del deporte. En tercer lugar, los programas deportivos no pueden atacar la raíz de la violencia o abordar de manera sostenible las fuentes de la desigualdad de una forma aislada, sino que estos programas deben integrarse dentro de estrategias de desarrollo más amplias, lo que a menudo no es el caso.<sup>9</sup> Finalmente, actualmente existe una comprensión limitada de los factores críticos, los procesos y los mecanismos que permiten que los programas deportivos tengan un impacto genuino en el desarrollo social en contextos de posconflicto.<sup>10</sup>

A medida que Colombia entra en su etapa de posconflicto, proponemos varias recomendaciones para optimizar los recursos invertidos en las iniciativas de DDP. A nivel más amplio, el Estado desempeña un papel clave en la reforma política y en el desarrollo de marcos normativos que incorporan el deporte en los planes de desarrollo nacional.<sup>11</sup> Si bien el gobierno colombiano reconoce el papel social del deporte, esta conciencia debe aún traducirse en políticas públicas puntuales. Sugerimos que la creación de normativa en este campo debe ser informada por las experiencias de las ONG que han estado implementando iniciativas del DDP durante el conflicto en Colombia, y que pueden proporcionar un vínculo entre el gobierno y la sociedad civil durante la fase de posconflicto.<sup>12</sup> Sin embargo, se necesitará aportes adicionales de nuevos actores con trayectoria en temas asociados al posconflicto (por ejemplo, reintegración de excombatientes, rehabilitación física y mental de víctimas, crecimiento económico, etc.). En consecuencia, sugerimos involucrar a las ONG de otros sectores, gobiernos extranjeros, agencias internacionales y organizaciones del sector privado con experiencia relevante. Optimizar el impacto del sector también requiere que las federaciones deportivas y el Comité Olímpico Nacional promuevan el "deporte para todos," en lugar de centrarse exclusivamente en el deporte competitivo y de alto rendimiento. Finalmente, las instituciones académicas tienen un papel emergente que desempeñar, específicamente, identificando procesos clave de los programas de DDP a través de herramientas de monitoreo y evaluación rigurosos, así como también explorando la forma en que los actores interesados pueden integrar dichos procesos, junto con la teoría existente, al diseño y la implementación de iniciativas futuras.<sup>13</sup> Es importante destacar que los académicos también tienen mucho que aprender de los demás grupos de interés en este sector, a la

vez que la integración intersectorial proporcionará oportunidades de aprendizaje fundamentales para optimizar los resultados del DDP en Colombia.<sup>14</sup>

## LA EDICIÓN ESPECIAL

Los editores están complacidos de haber colaborado con los autores de esta edición especial, quienes han aprovechado la oportunidad para compartir investigaciones empíricas y aplicadas en una variedad de temas, países, deportes y métodos. Esto proporciona una visión emocionante y variada del DDP en América Latina y el Caribe.

Gadais, Webb y Rodríguez<sup>15</sup> examinan el uso del análisis de informes como una herramienta de investigación de DDP en el caso del programa municipal El Salvador Olímpica. El documento describe el valor del análisis del contenido de un informe de una agencia DDP (reporte anual), especialmente cuando no es oportuno, práctico o factible acceder directamente a los programas en el terreno. Sobre la base del modelo actoral de Greimas<sup>16</sup> y el modelo DDP "Snakes and Ladders,"<sup>17</sup> se propone un método de análisis semiótico específicamente adaptado para proyectos de DDP. Se sugiere que el análisis de conceptos que, en teoría, ayuden u obstaculicen los proyectos de DDP se pongan en primer plano y sirvan como punto de referencia inicial al analizar los informes. Al aplicar este enfoque a un informe de proyecto de DDP específico (estudio de caso), este documento demuestra que se puede obtener valiosos conocimientos sobre las prioridades y prácticas de gestión cuando la herramienta de investigación propuesta se aplica de manera sistemática y rigurosa.

Hills, Velásquez y Walker<sup>18</sup> contribuyeron con el documento, El deporte como una analogía para enseñar habilidades para la vida y redefinir los valores morales: un estudio de caso del programa de deporte para el desarrollo "Semillas de Paz" en Medellín (Colombia). Este explora cómo se ha utilizado el deporte para abordar el legado de una cultura ilegal y violenta que surge desde cuando Medellín estuvo plagada de narcotráfico y se le otorgó la dudosa distinción de ser la capital mundial del asesinato hace más de 25 años. Este contexto histórico había erosionado los sistemas de valores y dejado a niños marginados en estado de riesgo ante las actividades delictivas. Para abordar este problema social, la Fundación Concreto aprovechó la pasión de Colombia por el fútbol en su programa DDP "Semillas de Paz." Se utilizó un diseño de estudio de caso para ilustrar cómo el programa "Semillas de Paz" utiliza el fútbol como una analogía para enseñar habilidades para la vida y para redefinir los valores morales. Este estudio se suma a la limitada comprensión teórica de cómo funciona el deporte en el cambio social, y proporciona a los profesionales de DDP, un mecanismo

literatura.

Zipp y Nauright<sup>19</sup> produjeron el documento, Nivelando el campo de juego: Enfoque de la capacidad humana y realidades vividas para el deporte y el género en el Caribe. Este estudio ofrece una nueva visión en el área del deporte, desarrollo y género. La mayoría de las investigaciones anteriores en este espacio se han centrado en cómo las niñas y las mujeres acceden y experimentan el deporte, y la participación deportiva de las niñas a menudo se describe como una forma de empoderamiento, incluido un mecanismo para mejorar las habilidades para la vida. Sin embargo, poca investigación previa ha incluido la respuesta de niños hacia las niñas en el deporte. Este estudio explora la experiencia de niños y niñas para comprender mejor las actitudes de los roles de género en DDP en el Caribe Oriental.

Wright, Jacobs, Howell y Ressler<sup>20</sup> exploran los resultados inmediatos de un programa de educación proporcionado a 33 entrenadores de DDP para jóvenes, y su posterior implementación en el primer año de un proyecto en Belice. Si bien los programas de DDP existen en todo el mundo, hay una brecha en la literatura que describa y evalúe los programas que han tenido éxito en América Latina y el Caribe. La Coalición Deportiva Juvenil de Belice fue un proyecto de intercambio de entrenamiento bidireccional que abarcó tres años y tuvo como objetivo promover el desarrollo positivo de la juventud y el cambio social a través del deporte. Múltiples fuentes de datos indican que el programa educativo fue efectivo en términos de los participantes y su(s): (1) satisfacción con la capacitación, (2) conocimiento del contenido, (3) actitudes y creencias, y (4) capacidad para implementar los contenidos del programa educativo. Este estudio contribuye a la literatura del DDP al resaltar la importante relación entre la educación de entrenadores y la implementación del programa.

Oxford<sup>21</sup> explora las complejidades sociales, culturales e históricas que dan forma y limitan el espacio (de género) en una organización de DDP en Colombia. Investigaciones recientes sobre el papel del "espacio seguro" dentro del DDP muestran que la inclusión social de las mujeres jóvenes en los espacios deportivos tradicionalmente masculinos puede generar cambios en quienes pueden acceder y configurar cómodamente los espacios públicos.<sup>15</sup> Basándose en seis meses de investigación etnográfica llevada a cabo con dos organizaciones colombianas de DDP dentro de dos vecindarios volátiles, el espacio seguro se enmarca como una construcción social y un proceso dinámico. Si bien la capacidad de la organización del DDP para adaptarse al cambio y a la resignación de roles de

control lo hace accesible a la comunidad local, el posicionamiento tanto de la organización como de los participantes permite simultáneamente la continuación del espacio de género. Estos datos se analizan a través de la interpretación multidimensional del espacio seguro de Spaaij y Schlenker.<sup>15</sup> Se concluye que se necesita más investigación sobre las barreras físicas y psicosociales que impiden que las mujeres participen en la programación de DDP.

Baker, Atwater y Esherrick<sup>22</sup> exploran la diplomacia deportiva de Estados Unidos en América Latina y el Caribe. El enfoque de este estudio es un programa específico de DDP, titulado Sports Visitors, ejecutado en colaboración entre la Universidad George Mason y el Departamento de Estado de los Estados Unidos. El propósito de esta evaluación de programa fue examinar un subconjunto de grupos de América Latina y el Caribe, y determinar el impacto a corto plazo de un programa que se centra en cambiar las actitudes de los participantes. El estudio se realizó durante un período de 5 años y aplicó un enfoque de métodos mixtos a la recopilación de datos de encuestas cuantitativas que se complementó con comentarios cualitativos proporcionados por los participantes. Los resultados indican que, a) se produjo un cambio positivo entre los participantes en todos los objetivos medidos, y b) los cambios se reflejaron sistemáticamente en cada tipo de grupo de participantes de ALC en función del género, el rol, y el género con el rol.

## CONSIDERACIONES FUTURAS

Dado el particular contexto social, económico y político de América Latina y el Caribe, se requiere de investigaciones futuras que examinen iniciativas que abordan a través del deporte, algunos de los desafíos actuales críticos para el desarrollo de la región, como son la violencia, el crimen, la falta de acceso a la educación y el desempleo. Además, dado que América Latina es el epicentro de algunos de los movimientos sociales más notorios, también vale la pena explorar la interacción entre la sociedad civil y el deporte como respuesta a retos sociales específicos. También recomendamos incrementar la investigación evaluativa sobre los programas de DDP, así como apoyamos la creación de una comunidad de conocimiento que fomente los esfuerzos de colaboración entre las instituciones académicas, las organizaciones comunitarias, los donantes y la comunidad internacional. Finalmente, la investigación venidera también debe analizar las experiencias exitosas, las lecciones aprendidas y las prácticas ejemplares en el uso del deporte como facilitador del desarrollo social en América Latina y el Caribe, lo que a su vez puede informar la investigación y práctica en el DDP a nivel global.

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## Editorial

**Esporte para o Desenvolvimento e a Paz na América Latina e no Caribe****Daniel Parnell<sup>1</sup>, Alexander Cárdenas<sup>2,3</sup>, Paul Widdop<sup>4</sup>, Pedro-Pablo Cardoso-Castro<sup>4</sup>, Sibylle Lang<sup>5</sup>**<sup>1</sup> Manchester Metropolitan University, UK<sup>2</sup> Plataforma Deporte para el Desarrollo y la Paz, Colombia<sup>3</sup> Open University of Catalonia, Spain<sup>4</sup> Leeds Beckett University, UK<sup>5</sup> Industrieanlagen-Betriebsgesellschaft.Einsteinstrasse, Germany*Corresponding author email:* D.Parnell@mmu.ac.uk

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**INTRODUÇÃO**

Esta edição da Revista de Esporte para o Desenvolvimento tem como objetivo apresentar a crescente literatura sobre "Esporte para o Desenvolvimento e a Paz" (EDP) na América Latina e no Caribe. Ela foi concebida durante pesquisas de campo em Medellín (Colômbia) nos anos de 2014 e 2015 pelos editores desta edição especial. Essas pesquisas envolveram trabalhos com departamentos governamentais, acadêmicos e grupos comunitários com o intuito de examinar o papel do esporte e do futebol e seus diferentes impactos sociais. Nosso período em Medellín nos permitiu ver o EDP como um esforço comunitário coletivo e uma genuína abordagem colaborativa do governo e das universidades locais.

**ESPERANÇA, INOVAÇÃO E REGENERAÇÃO EM MEDELLÍN**

Medellín é conhecida por seu sistema de teleféricos, que viabiliza a interconectividade dos moradores, ligando as comunidades localizadas nas encostas dos morros ao metrô e ao centro da cidade. O futebol também tem sido uma parte fundamental da história de Medellín. Dois dos nomes mais famosos associados ao futebol em Medellín são os dos Escobares, Pablo, o chefe do cartel de drogas, que mantinha uma relação próxima com jogadores profissionais e internacionais de futebol da Colômbia, e Andrés, o jogador colombiano da Copa do Mundo de 1994 que foi

tragicamente assassinado. No entanto, em nível comunitário, os campos de futebol tornaram-se recentemente uma nova intervenção urbana localizada no coração dos bairros em rápida mudança. Eles são parte das chamadas "Unidades de Vida," que são estruturas coloridas e limpas construídas na encosta de um morro para as comunidades locais.

As "Unidades de Vida" compreendem muito mais do que apenas os campos de futebol e, na parte de baixo, existem mais andares com outras instalações. Nelas há, por exemplo, academias, creches, playgrounds, cinemas, laboratórios de informática, salas de aula, lojas comunitárias, estúdios de dança, estúdio de gravação para DJs, piscinas, espaços aquáticos, quadras de basquete e de futebol de salão. De uma forma específica, a "Unidade de Vida" é um espaço concebido pela comunidade local e que utiliza fundos disponibilizados pela autoridade local (conselho municipal). Isso permite que a comunidade possua e mantenha um espaço para socialização e engajamento em atividades culturais e atividades físicas e recreativas saudáveis. As "Unidades de Vida" também atendem às necessidades mais amplas de saúde, fornecendo instalações sanitárias de alta qualidade e fontes de água potável. Há também serviços de apoio médico, que incluem clínicos gerais e outros profissionais da área da saúde, e de apoio social. É importante ressaltar que o acesso a todas as instalações e serviços fornecidos em uma "Unidade de Vida" é gratuito para todos os membros da comunidade



*Photo 1*

local.

Em resumo, as “Unidades de Vida” representam uma genuína intervenção do EDP, onde a infra-estrutura esportiva foi priorizada e construída como uma base para se alcançar outras necessidades mais específicas da comunidade. Nossas experiências nessas instalações estimularam a discussão entre a equipe editorial sobre as origens do EDP na Colômbia. Também nos levou a refletir sobre o papel do esporte na história de conflitos do país e a subsequente fase de pós-conflito.

### **ESPORTE NA COLÔMBIA PÓS-CONFLITO**

Em 2012, conversas iniciais entre o governo colombiano e as Forças Armadas Revolucionárias da Colômbia (FARC) começaram em Cuba. O objetivo era encontrar uma solução política para um conflito interno que já durava mais de 50 anos, deslocou mais de 5 milhões de pessoas e retirou cerca de 220.000 vidas.<sup>1</sup> Em novembro de 2016, um acordo de paz foi finalmente ratificado pelo Congresso. No entanto, os esforços para construir a paz não se limitaram a encontrar uma solução política para o conflito. Um movimento dinâmico de paz, amplamente associado à sociedade civil, mobilizou diferentes setores da população colombiana para agir em favor da paz por meio de diversas iniciativas e programas. Inclui-se nestas ações atividades culturais, artísticas e especialmente esportivas, que, apesar de serem reconhecidas como ações modestas, são também vistas como importantes catalisadores sociais para uma transição bem sucedida para uma era pós-conflito mais pacífica.<sup>2</sup>

Há várias vantagens em se usar o esporte para o desenvolvimento social numa era de pós-conflito na Colômbia. Em primeiro lugar, o esporte é uma atividade muito popular em todo o país. Por exemplo, 94% dos colombianos declararam se interessar por futebol durante a Copa do Mundo de 2014, sendo este o nível mais alto dentre os 19 países que participaram de uma pesquisa.<sup>3</sup> É importante destacar que tal interesse não está apenas relacionado ao futebol, já que existem evidências de que o ciclismo, o atletismo e o levantamento de peso estão atraindo cada vez mais participantes estimulados pelo desempenho das equipes colombianas nos campeonatos mundiais. Em segundo lugar, o esporte tem sido usado há mais de 20 anos na Colômbia como veículo para combater a violência em comunidades afetadas por conflitos violentos. Existem numerosas organizações que já estabeleceram um legado para o EDP em toda a Colômbia<sup>4</sup>. Recentemente, o esporte foi reconhecido pelo governo nacional como uma estratégia transversal para abordar as principais prioridades da população, como saúde, proteção da criança e adolescente, educação e inclusão social. Especificamente, o papel social do esporte foi identificado em documentos fundamentais: Plano Decenal para o Esporte (2009-2019)<sup>5</sup>; Relatório Presidencial para o Congresso (2011)<sup>6</sup>; Visão para a Colômbia, Segundo Centenário: 2019<sup>7</sup>; e Plano Decenal para o Futebol (2014-2024).<sup>8</sup>

No entanto, é importante reconhecer as limitações do esporte como um fator de mudança social. Em primeiro lugar, o potencial do esporte é limitado pela infraestrutura disponível para o seu desenvolvimento. Com algumas

exceções, incluindo as “Unidades de Vida” em Medellín descritas acima, existem poucas instalações públicas de esportes disponíveis em grande parte da Colômbia e as existentes são muitas vezes mal conservadas, que acabam se tornando locais de comportamentos ilegais. Em segundo lugar, a violência e a agressão associadas ao vandalismo nos jogos de futebol criam um estigma negativo, que afasta algumas pessoas do esporte. Em terceiro lugar, os programas esportivos isoladamente não podem mudar a causa raiz da violência ou abordar de forma sustentável as fontes de desigualdade, mas precisam estar inseridos em estratégias de desenvolvimento mais amplas, o que nem sempre é o caso.<sup>9</sup> Por fim, há atualmente uma compreensão limitada dos aspectos críticos, processos e mecanismos que permitam que os programas esportivos tenham impacto real sobre o desenvolvimento social em contextos pós-conflito da Colômbia.<sup>10</sup>

Quando a Colômbia entrou em uma fase de pós-conflito, propusemos várias recomendações para otimizar os recursos investidos nas iniciativas de EDP. De uma forma mais geral, o Estado desempenha um papel fundamental na reforma política e no desenvolvimento de políticas que incorpore o esporte nos esquemas de desenvolvimento nacional.<sup>11</sup> Embora o governo colombiano reconheça o papel social do esporte, isso ainda precisa se tornar uma política concreta. Sugerimos que a política seja baseada nas experiências de Organizações Não-Governamentais (ONGs) que ofereceram atividades de EDP na Colômbia durante décadas de conflito e que podem fornecer um elo entre o governo e a sociedade civil durante a fase pós-conflito.<sup>12</sup> No entanto, serão necessárias informações adicionais de novos agentes com conhecimentos em questões específicas dos contextos pós-conflito, como por exemplo, reintegração de ex-combatentes, reabilitação física / mental e crescimento econômico. Desta forma, sugerimos envolver outras ONGs, governos estrangeiros, agências internacionais e partes do setor privado com experiências anteriores relevantes. A otimização do impacto de atividades esportivas na sociedade colombiana também exige que as federações esportivas nacionais e o Comitê Olímpico Nacional promovam atividades de “esporte para todos”, em vez de se concentrarem apenas no esporte competitivo e de alto desempenho. Finalmente, as instituições acadêmicas têm um papel emergente a desempenhar na identificação dos principais processos do programa EDP através de monitoramento e avaliação rigorosos, além de comunicar como todas as partes interessadas podem incorporar esses mecanismos e a teoria existente no desenho e implementação de futuras iniciativas.<sup>13</sup> É importante ressaltar que os acadêmicos também têm muito a aprender com as outras partes interessadas e a integração entre diferentes setores

proporcionará oportunidades de aprendizado crítico e otimizará os resultados do EDP na Colômbia.<sup>14</sup>

## A EDIÇÃO ESPECIAL

Os editores têm o prazer de ter colaborado com os autores desta edição especial, que abraçaram a oportunidade de compartilhar pesquisas empíricas e aplicadas em vários tópicos, países, esportes e métodos. Isso proporcionou uma visão empolgante e variada do EDP na América Latina e no Caribe.

Gadais, Webb e Rodriguez<sup>15</sup> examinaram o uso da análise de relatórios como uma ferramenta de pesquisa do EDP no caso do programa esportivo *El Salvador Olímpica Municipal*. O artigo descreve o valor de analisar o conteúdo de um relatório de uma agência que oferece EDP (atividade ou anual), especialmente quando não se é oportuno, prático ou viável acessar diretamente os programas no local. Com base no modelo Actual de Greimas<sup>16</sup> e no modelo EDP de Snakes and Ladders,<sup>17</sup> é proposto um método de análise semiótica especificamente adaptado para projetos de EDP. Sugere-se que essa análise de conceitos que teoricamente ajudam ou atrapalham os projetos do EDP é trazida à tona e serve como um ponto de partida inicial ao analisar os relatórios. Ao aplicar essa abordagem a um relatório específico de um projeto de EDP (estudo de caso), este documento demonstra que informações valiosas sobre prioridades e práticas de gerenciamento podem ser obtidas, quando a ferramenta de pesquisa proposta é aplicada de forma sistemática e rigorosa.

Hills, Velásquez e Walker<sup>18</sup> contribuíram com o artigo, “O Esporte como uma Analogia para Ensinar Habilidades para a Vida e Redefinir os Valores Morais: Um Estudo de Caso do Programa Esporte para o Desenvolvimento e a Paz “Semente da Paz” em Medellín (Colômbia).” Esse artigo explora como o esporte tem sido usado para lidar com o legado de uma cultura ilegal e violenta que surgiu quando Medellín foi atormentada pelo tráfico de drogas e recebeu a denominação de a capital mundial do assassinato há mais de 25 anos. Este contexto histórico erodiu os sistemas de valores e deixou as crianças economicamente desprivilegiadas mais vulneráveis às atividades criminosas. Para começar a abordar esse problema social, a Fundação Concreto aproveitou a paixão da Colômbia pelo futebol em seu programa EDP “Semente da Paz.” Um estudo de caso foi usado para ilustrar como o programa “Semente de Paz” usa o futebol como uma analogia para ensinar habilidades para a vida e redefinir valores morais. Isso aumenta a compreensão teórica limitada de como o esporte funciona na mudança social e ainda viabiliza os praticantes do EDP com um mecanismo esportivo não discutido

anteriormente na literatura.

Zipp e Nauright<sup>19</sup> produziram o artigo “Nivelando o Campo de Ação: Abordagem da Capacidade Humana e Realidades Vividas no Esporte e nas Questões de Gênero no Caribe.” Este artigo oferece uma nova visão na área de esporte, desenvolvimento e questões de gênero. A maioria das pesquisas anteriores neste campo se concentraram em como as meninas e mulheres têm acesso e experimentam a participação esportiva e, conseqüentemente, a participação esportiva das meninas é frequentemente descrita como uma forma de empoderamento, incluindo um mecanismo que contribui para melhorar as habilidades para a vida. No entanto, poucas pesquisas já realizadas incluem a resposta dos meninos à participação das meninas no esporte. Este estudo explora a experiência de meninos e meninas para entender melhor as atitudes do papel de gênero no EDP no Caribe Oriental.

Wright, Jacobs, Howell e Ressler<sup>20</sup> exploraram os resultados imediatos de um programa educacional proporcionado a 33 jovens treinadores que atuavam em programas de EDP e sua subsequente implementação no primeiro ano de um projeto em Belize. Embora os programas EDP existam em todo o mundo, há uma lacuna na literatura no que diz respeito a uma descrição e avaliação de programas de EDP que tiveram sucesso na América Latina e no Caribe. A “Colisão Beliziana de Esporte para Juventude” foi um projeto de intercâmbio de treinamento em dois sentidos, que durou três anos e teve como objetivo promover o desenvolvimento positivo da juventude e a mudança social por meio do esporte. Múltiplas fontes de dados indicam que o programa de educação foi eficaz em termos de participantes: (1) satisfação com o treinamento, (2) conhecimento de conteúdo, (3) atitudes e crenças e (4) capacidade de implementar os conteúdos do programa educacional. Este estudo contribui para a literatura de EDP, destacando a importante relação entre a formação dos treinadores e a implementação do programa de EDP.

Oxford<sup>21</sup> explora as complexidades sociais, culturais e históricas que moldam e limitam o espaço (as diferenças referentes às participações de acordo com gêneros) em uma organização EDP na Colômbia. Uma pesquisa recente sobre o papel do “espaço seguro” dentro do EDP mostra que a inclusão social de mulheres jovens em espaços esportivos tradicionalmente masculinos pode mudar consideravelmente quem pode ter acesso e circular confortavelmente pelos espaços públicos.<sup>15</sup> Baseando-se em seis meses de pesquisa etnográfica realizada em duas organizações colombianas de EDP, localizadas em dois bairros de vulnerabilidade social, o espaço seguro é enquadrado como uma construção social e um processo

dinâmico. Enquanto a capacidade da organização do programa de EDP de se adaptar à mudança e renunciar ao controle torna esta atividade acessível à comunidade local, o posicionamento da organização e dos participantes simultaneamente permitem a continuação de um espaço acessível a ambos gêneros. Estes dados são analisados através da interpretação multidimensional de espaços seguros de Spaaij e Schlenker.<sup>15</sup> Através deste estudo, conclui-se que pesquisas adicionais sobre as barreiras físicas e psicossociais que limitam as mulheres a participar de programas de EDP são necessárias.

Baker, Atwater e Esherrick<sup>22</sup> exploraram a diplomacia esportiva dos Estados Unidos (EUA) na América Latina e no Caribe. O foco deste estudo é um programa de EDP específico, intitulado “Visitantes do Esporte”, executado em parceria entre a Universidade George Mason e o Departamento de Estado dos EUA. O propósito desta avaliação do programa de EDP era examinar um subconjunto de grupos latino-americanos e caribenhos e verificar o impacto de curto prazo de um programa focado na mudança de atitudes dos participantes. O estudo foi realizado ao longo de um período de 5 anos e aplicou uma abordagem de métodos mistos de coleta de dados de pesquisas quantitativas, complementada por comentários qualitativos fornecidos pelos participantes. Os resultados indicam que: a) uma mudança positiva ocorreu entre os participantes em todos os objetivos medidos, e b) as mudanças foram consistentemente refletidas para cada tipo de grupo participante da América Latina e do Caribe e baseado em diferenças de gênero, papel de acordo com o gênero e quando diferentes gêneros desempenhavam determinados papéis.

## CONSIDERAÇÕES FUTURAS

Dado o contexto social, econômico e político único da América Latina e do Caribe, pesquisas futuras são necessárias para examinar as iniciativas do EDP que abordam alguns dos desafios em curso no desenvolvimento da região, como violência, criminalidade, baixos níveis educacionais e altas taxas de desemprego. Além disso, como a América Latina é o lar de alguns dos mais notórios movimentos sociais, também vale a pena explorar a interação entre a mobilização de base e o esporte como resposta a preocupações sociais específicas. Também recomendamos o aumento da pesquisa avaliativa sobre os programas de EDP, bem como defendemos a importância de se criar uma comunidade de conhecimento que estimule esforços de colaboração entre instituições acadêmicas, organizações baseadas na comunidade, patrocinadores/doadores e a comunidade internacional. Finalmente, pesquisas futuras devem também olhar para



experiências bem-sucedidas, lições e melhores práticas sobre o uso do esporte como um facilitador do desenvolvimento social na América Latina e no Caribe, que por sua vez pode informar a pesquisa e a prática global do EDP.

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## Original Research

# Using report analysis as a sport for development and peace research tool: The case of El Salvador Olimpica Municipal's programme

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## ABSTRACT

This paper proposes a promising tool for analyzing the contents of sport for development and peace (SDP) agency reports (activity or annual). Contributing to ongoing methodological discussions in this field is important since reports afford rich data when access to the ground is not timely, practical, or feasible. Building on Greimas' Actantial model and the SDP Snakes and Ladders model, a semiotic analysis method specifically adapted for sport for development and peace projects is proposed. Such analysis of concepts that theoretically help or hinder sport for development projects are brought to the fore and serve as an initial waypoint when analyzing reports. By applying this approach to one specific sport for development project report (case study), this paper demonstrates that valuable insights about management priorities and practices may be obtained through the systematic and rigorous application of this proposed research tool. Moreover, the importance of content analysis as a precursor to, or in concurrence with, fieldwork is also discussed.

## BACKGROUND

The size and scope of the Sport for Development and Peace (SDP) industry, as well as the number of SDP projects throughout the world is rapidly expanding.<sup>1</sup> Projects within this industry aim to foster social improvement within communities through the development of sport and physical activity programmes.<sup>2</sup> In this context, the new United Nations' (UN) Millennium Development Goals (2015-2030) presents a new opportunity to this industry. It

is effectively time for the UN, Sport for Development (SDP) agencies, as well as academics alike to evaluate the contributions of not only specific SDP projects, but to also reflect on the contribution of sport as a development tool more generally. In fact, certain academics have recently "suggested that sport for development organizations must evaluate or perish".<sup>1</sup> Clearly, evaluations are critical for proponents who advocate using sport as a medium to contribute to individual or community development and peace and updating or establishing new development goals for the next decades (2015-2030). A better understanding of previous successes and failures will provide insights about the realistic potential and limits of future SDP projects, which will aid stakeholders to identify best practices and to better define and plan future development schemes. However, it remains difficult to access certain SDP operations for research purposes, and even more challenging to evaluate projects that have already ended. Accordingly, this paper proposes a systematic procedure for reviewing<sup>3</sup> and analyzing SDP programme documents and reports, such as activity or annual reports.

## Crafting a SDP Content Analysis Tool

Notwithstanding the existing literature supporting the claim that sport is a cost-effective development tool<sup>4</sup> as well as the increase in both managerial and academic interest in this growing industry,<sup>5</sup> Sport for Development (SFD) and SDP research is still thought to be under-theorized.<sup>6</sup> There has been insufficient discussion on how to investigate SDP project reports, as well as more general community development documents produced by the SDP field. Much

**Keywords:** sport for development; sport for peace; El Salvador; content analysis; report analysis

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of the existing published literature in this field has focused on the relationships between sport and the development of communities or individuals.<sup>7-12</sup> With the exception of a handful of studies,<sup>13-15</sup> there has been limited attention paid to the elaboration of research methodologies applied to this field. Hence, adapting one proven method for analyzing narratives to the field of SDP could provide a valuable tool for analyzing specific SDP documents in a way that will concurrently contribute to both the specific SDP as well as the broader community development and research fields. Furthermore, adapting a proven content analysis approach to the reality of SDP operations may contribute to ongoing calls for more and better SDP evaluation made by practitioners<sup>16, 17</sup> and academics alike.<sup>1</sup>

This last argument appears all the more relevant considering several critiques of the claimed benefits of sport in society,<sup>18, 19</sup> and a lack of understanding of the best practices needing to be implemented in order to maximize SDP project impacts.<sup>20</sup> A review of the existing literature reveals rich and diverse theoretical thought regarding concepts that need to be implemented in the design of SDP projects in order to maximize their chances of being successful and sustainable. For instance, Lederach<sup>21</sup> posits that well-designed SDP projects can provide multiple processes of change. Based on peer-reviewed literature, successful SDP projects need to be rooted in dialogue;<sup>4, 22-24</sup> mobilize multiple partnerships;<sup>4, 25</sup> structured around “skilled committed administrators, coaches and volunteers [who] enjoy the confidence of the intended beneficiaries and their communities”<sup>26</sup>; and afford opportunities to build trust.<sup>27</sup>

However, we concede that understanding SDP evaluation could be a challenging undertaking, especially when the project targets amorphous objectives such as peace or development. Consequently, researchers might need to shift the focus away from evaluating overarching theoretical social impacts and concentrate on evaluating the tangible traces left from a project. Project reports provide rich, valuable, and traceable accounts of the performance of a given SDP programme and are therefore a very pertinent source of such tangible data.<sup>28</sup> Similar to Duff’s<sup>29</sup> position with regards to annual reports, and Czarniawska’s<sup>30</sup> review of gender in fiction, SDP project reports are a “most promising source of field material for studying discriminatory practices in organizations...because a prolonged, direct observation of a workplace is often difficult to conduct”.<sup>29</sup> Thus, what is evaluated, by whom, with what tools and to what end may all be captured and synthesized from such reports. Several authors discuss methods, such as semiotics<sup>31-33</sup> and content analysis<sup>34, 35</sup> that

have been shown to be effective for analyzing reports. As an illustration, Gendron and Breton<sup>33</sup> applied Greimas’s actantial model to explore the content of organizations’ reports, whereas Hasbani and Breton<sup>36</sup> used this same approach to analyze discursive strategies used in annual reports.

### Analysing Narratives with The Actantial Model

Greimas’s Actantial model<sup>37</sup> is a robust theoretical model that deconstructs the action, actors and their relations presented in a document or report by a) identifying actors mentioned in the narrative, b) allocating them to one of six Actantial categories (roles) and c) analyzing the structure of actors’ relationships within the story or the quest presented in a written narrative. Inspired by the study of folk-tales, actors’ roles are positioned in relation to the drama of a given story. Specifically, a *hero* is on a quest to obtain an *object of value*. Actors who positively help the hero are known as *adjuvants*, and those who hinder are known as *opponents*. The *quest* is proposed by a *sender* to benefit a *receiver*. Actors’ roles may shift over time throughout the narrative. For example:

From a folk tale: The King (sender) asks a Princess (hero) to obtain a magic lamp (object). During the quest, the princess is helped by a Genie (adjuvant) to defeat the evil Vizir (opponent). The lamp is then used to bring prosperity to the people (receiver).

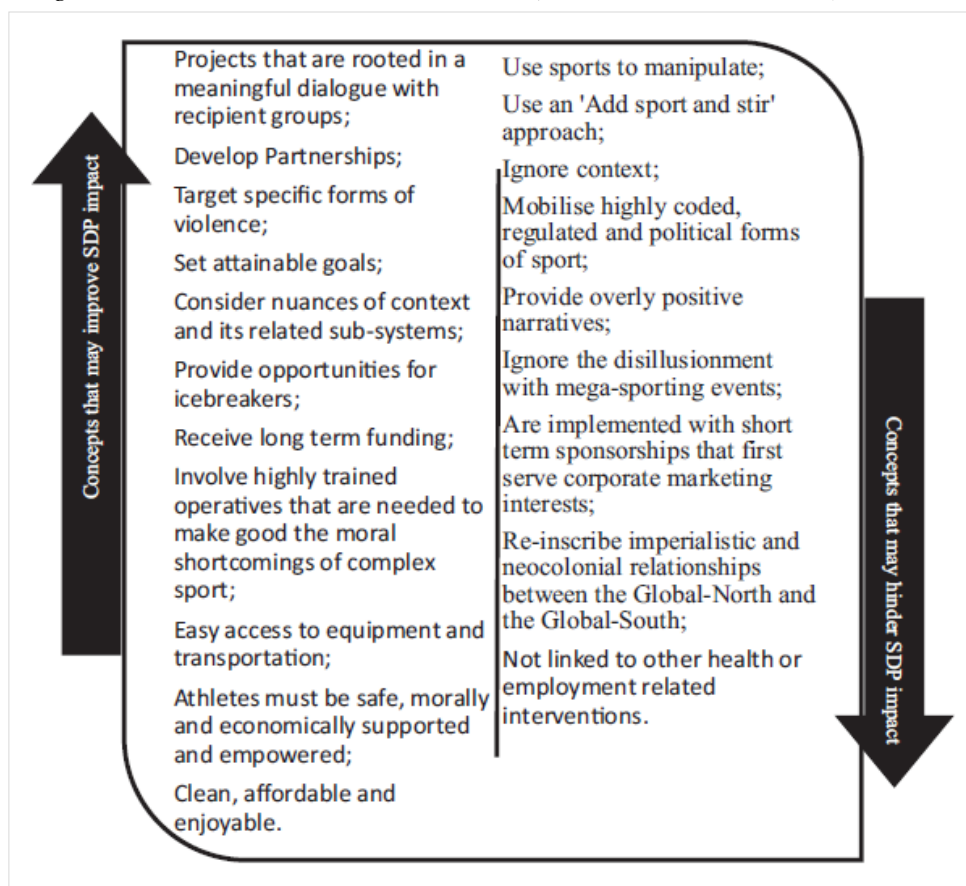
From Hasbani and Breton’s<sup>36</sup> study of pharmaceutical annual reports: Pfizer (hero) is given a legal mandate to operate by Governments (sender) in order to provide health (object) to the people (receiver). The Hero accomplished this quest with the help of patents and R&D (adjuvant) allowing them to develop new products faster than competition (opponents).

Although Greimas’ Actantial model has been utilized in different contexts and industries, applying it to a research field as broad as SDP may require certain adjustments and refinements in order to produce a more manageable network of actors. The SDP Snakes and Ladders review could offer promising perspectives on this issue.<sup>38</sup>

### SDP Snakes and Ladders

Drawn from scientific articles, the *Snakes and Ladders* metaphor serves to conceptualize 14 *Ladders* that the literature claims will help SDP projects as well as 12 *Snakes* that are thought to hinder projects. For instance, focused impact targets, multilevel partnerships, and contextual

Figure 1 – SDP Snakes and Ladder Model (Webb &amp; Richelieu, 2015)



intelligence represent key concepts that theoretically need to be included in the design of the SDP project to ensure its success (Figure 1). Thus, considering Snakes and Ladders should facilitate the initial identification of *adjuvants* and *opponents* and provides opportunities for examining contrasts and coherence between how academics and practitioners conceive adjuvants and opponents.

In this study, we combine the Actantial model and the SDP Snakes and Ladders review as a new tool to investigate SDP reports via content analysis. As a metaphorical test-drive, this tool has been subsequently applied to the case of the *Juventud Olímpica Municipal, Modelo de Club, El Salvador*.

### The Case Study Report: Juventud Olímpica Municipal, Modelo de Club, San Salvador

The project targeted for this study began in 2009, in San Salvador, El Salvador, and was terminated following the election of the Alcaldía Municipal of San Salvador in 2012. A programme report was published in 2013 by the *Alcaldía Municipal of San Salvador* (City hall mayor team) in collaboration with the *Instituto Municipal de Deportes y*

*Recreación* (Sport and Recreation Institute from San Salvador), the *UN Children's Fund* (UNICEF), and the *Programa Conjunto Reducción de Violencia y Construcción de Capital Social for El Salvador* (Programme for the reduction of violence and building social capital in El Salvador). This extensive sport programme was developed to target reduced violence and improved social capital, and was provided in part by the United Nations Development Programme and UNICEF with the intention of achieving certain Millennium Development Goals. This project was retained as the locus of this study because a) it was cited by UNESCO as an example of a sport for peace accomplishment;<sup>39</sup> b) the project has ended; c) the violent and nihilistic subsystem in which this programme operated presents challenges to field work;<sup>13</sup> d) reports were available for content analysis.

### Objectives of The Study

This study has two objectives: 1) to operationalize a method for analyzing SDP project reports; 2) to validate the SDP Snakes and Ladders review by contrasting concepts that academic literature claims either help or hinder projects, with what practitioners include in their narratives.

## METHODS

### Research Design

Considering that this is the first time this adapted content analysis tool has been operationalized, a single case study was retained for this research project.<sup>40</sup> Case studies are highly suitable for exploring complex social, managerial, and procedural phenomena when the situation includes many interesting variables, multiple sources of evidence, and broad theoretical propositions that guide the collection and analysis of data.<sup>40, 41</sup> Yin's three prerequisites that justify using a case study method are present in this project, notably that a) the main research questions are *how* or *why* questions; b) there is little or no control over behavioural events; and c) the focus of study is a contemporary phenomenon. This study remains descriptive and exploratory and as such will focus on describing, in great detail, the data collated from the studied SFD project, in relation with the context in which the project took place, by using the two aforementioned lenses (i.e., Actantial model, Snakes and Ladders) in a complementary way.

### The Targeted Report

This study targets the case of the *Juventud Olímpica Municipal, Modelo de Club de San Salvador* (JOM) project report published in 2013.<sup>42</sup> The authors of this report were the Alcaldía Municipal de San Salvador (AMSS) in collaboration with the Programa Conjunto Reducción de Violencia y Construcción de Capital Social en El Salvador and the UNICEF. The Instituto Municipal de Deportes y recreación (IMDER) was in charge of designing and implementing the project with the support of the United Nations Development Programme, the International Work Organization, the Panamericana Organization of Health, and the United Nations Fund for Population. Collaborators inside and around the JOM project were numerous, including among others: International organizations (e.g., UNICEF, UNDP, USAID, European Union), community and women leaders, El Salvador Olympic Committee, and other public institutions.

The activity report is 84 pages long, and includes the following sections: 1) Context; 2) Basic concepts of the model; 3) Model structure; 4) Methods of attention; 5) Planification and 6) Research sheets and documents, with a thesaurus, references, and five appendices. The main idea of the report is to present the JOM and the basic concepts that structure the project. Also, a small study was conducted during the project using discourse analysis, deep interview and focus groups as collecting methods, but no results were

mentioned. Two categories of pictures are found inside the report: a) focus groups pictures and b) pictures of the initial event to introduce the JOM.

The project was implemented for three years (2009-2012) during the mandate of the past mayor of the city of San Salvador in El Salvador, Latin America. It targeted 36.43% of the San Salvador population. Previously in 2009 and 2011, El Salvador adopted three laws to reinforce the protection of the population, especially girls and women (Ley Marco para la Convivencia Ciudadana y Contravenciones Administrativas; Ley de Igualdad, Equidad y Erradicación de la Discriminación contra las Mujeres; Ley de Protección Integral de la Niñez y Adolescencia (LEPINA)). The main goal of the JOM was to create sport events and tournaments to involve children from each neighborhood of San Salvador with the condition of reintegrating schools and repossessing public places, which were under the control of *maras* armed groups.

This major project involved 130 municipal sport schools and required the collaboration of 26 different sport installations (e.g., stadiums, sport fields, swimming pools) to propose various activities such as soccer, basketball, swimming, baseball, track and field, and martial arts, as well as implementing active recess breaks in schools. Participants were between 6 and 17 years old. Various sport programmes were set up for younger children (6-8 year olds) focusing on basic physical education training, gross motor skills, and introduction to multiple games. For 8-10 year olds, the project added multiple training practices, and 10-12 year olds received activities to perfect motor skills and manage their own health. For 12-14 year-olds, the project focused on participants' basic sport preferences and on acquiring complementary sporting skills, and 14-17 year olds received the first phases of specialization and application in a specific sport.

### Analysis

Following Yin<sup>40</sup> and Gee,<sup>41</sup> this case and content analysis was conducted in four phases. In the first phase, a double blind review and coding was conducted by two authors of this study who spoke Spanish. Their first task was to identify actors and the relations between them in order to establish the Actantial model of the project. The second task was to identify concepts in the report that either helped or hindered the project. To this end, the authors initially looked for traces that could be connected to conceptual Snakes and Ladders. The two authors had to identify exact quotes and page numbers to facilitate comparison of their



results. Subsequently, quotes were collated according to which of the 14 Ladders (L) and 11 Snakes (S) they most represented.

In phase 2, a comparative analysis was conducted to confirm agreement on the Actantial model, and also identification and coding of the S and L quotes.

In the phase 3, quotes that could not be allocated to previously identified Snakes or Ladders were allocated to new categories labelled adjuvants (A), for new concepts that helped the SDP project, or opponents (O) for those that hindered the project.

Finally, phase 4 implied collating coherence and contrast between what practitioners and academics claimed either helped or hindered the project. In short, the process identified traceable<sup>43</sup> concepts that were subsequently categorized as new adjuvants (A), previously identified Ladders (L), previously identified Snakes (S), and new opponents (O), providing the foundation for a so-called “AL-SO approach” to analyzing SDP documents, reports, and narratives. In the end, mix methods (quantitative and qualitative) were used to give us a general picture about content analysis from the report and also provide details about reasons or explanations for those results.

## FINDINGS

Applying the AL-SO approach to one specific Latin-American SDP project report provides evidence of some coherence in how practitioners and academics view Adjuvants/Ladders and Snakes/Opponents concepts. However, many contrasts were also revealed.

### Drawing The JOM Project as a Story (Actantial Model)

In this case, the Alcaldía Municipal de San Salvador, the UNOSDP (sender), asked IMDER administrators (hero) to

develop and implement the JOM project (task) to provide sport for development (object of value) for the youth of San Salvador (receiver) in order to develop future responsible citizens for the country (quest). During their quest, IMDER administrators were helped by UN agencies such as UNICEF, by official laws (LEPINA and Ley de Protección Integral de la Niñez y Adolescencia), and by the Programa Conjunto Reducción de Violencia y construcción de Capital Social en El Salvador (adjuvants). Together, they were facing the *maras* armed groups and the violent context they impose on the Salvadorian population, as well as the political context with elections (opponents) of political parties who did not support this project. Figure 2 represents the Actantial model applied to the JOM project, and gives a reading of the thematic forces of this story.

### Adjuvants and Ladders That Helped The Implementation of The Project (AL)

The AL-SO approach highlighted numerous concepts that helped this sport for development project succeed. The first author who reviewed the data identified 158 references to Adjuvants/Ladders, whereas the second author identified 157. After combining, analyzing, and comparing the results, Figure 3 synthesizes 181 Adjuvants/Ladders that were retained. Subsequently, after validating the identified concepts, the codification was validated for 134 references identified by both authors.

Of the 14 Ladders, both authors conducting the content analysis of the JOM concurred that only 28.5% ( $n=4$ ) of the theoretical Ladders are found in the report. Specifically, *rooted in dialogue* was referenced 66 times; *Partnerships* 5 times; and *Consider nuances of context* 11 times. Interestingly, 15 *New adjuvants*, or concepts that practitioners claimed helped their project, but that were not identified in previous literature, were also observed. These previously unidentified adjuvants will be revisited in the discussion section.

Figure 2. Actantial Model Applied to The JOM Project

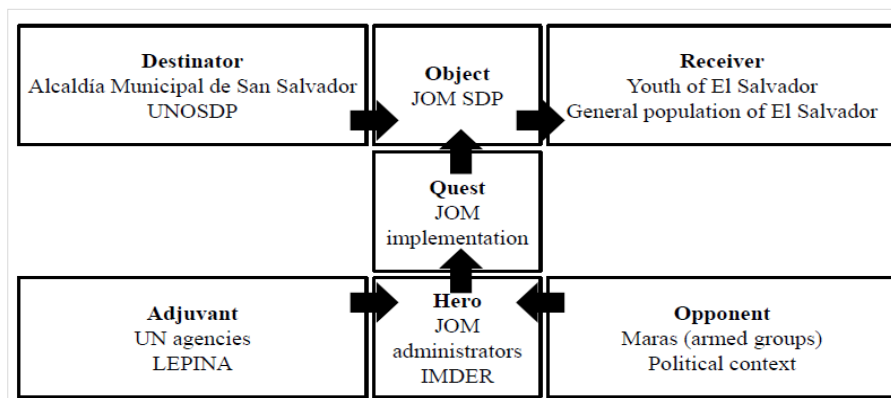
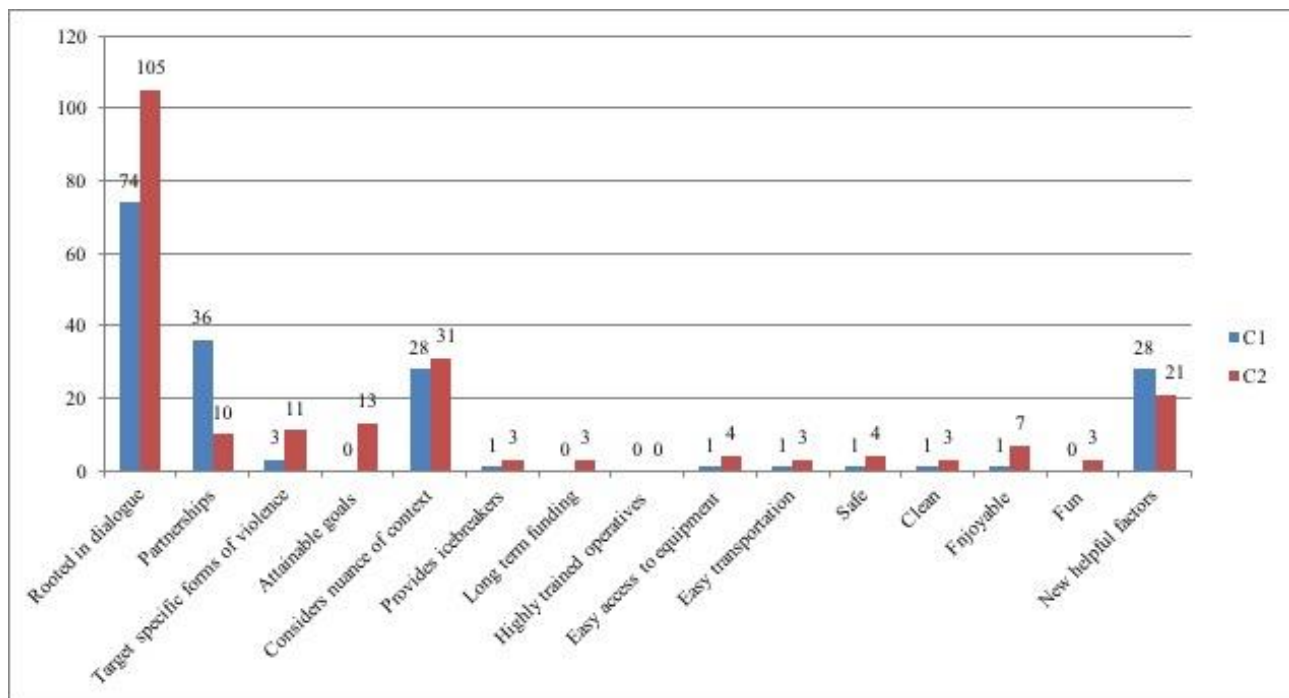




Figure 3. Ladders Found in The JOM Report by The Two Coders



Remarkably, the third most common category identified, *new adjuvants*, has not been previously considered by academic literature and is thus not classified as conceptual Ladders. Yet, because new adjuvants were clearly claimed to help the project, they are concepts and actors that could warrant more academic attention. What is more, the comparatively high number of references to A/L concepts suggests that the JOM report paints a highly positive picture of the project, which is somewhat unexpected since the report was written after the project had ended. Many quotes transmit a general positive message throughout the report. For instance, within the *rooted in dialogue* ladder,<sup>i</sup> authors noted many positive messages supporting the way in which the JOM project took place, such as:

(1) *One of those is to bring back the pride of citizens and the identification of residents with their city; so we made a significant investment to recover historical sites and landmarks of the capital such as the Plaza El Salvador del Mundo, San Jose Plaza, Plaza Barrios, among others. We also focused on making a major investment in remodeling, recovery public areas and parks construction in neighborhoods and districts. (Translated from Spanish)*

Another illustration of the *rooted in dialogue* Ladder refers to the benefits that youth gain from participating in sport. The report claims that:

(2) *By holistically integrating kids, teenagers and youth through sport, and to train them as a good citizen and an*

*excellent athlete, enables them to assume their role and responsibilities in society and to contribute to the productive development of their community, municipality and nation.*

However, no traces were found to indicate that these goals had been achieved.

Additionally, the analysis also finds many references regarding the concept of *Consider nuances of context* in the report. San Salvador is sadly known for its very violent context, a contextual situation that is quietly mentioned via the support of working partners such as:

(3) *I want to make a parenthesis to acknowledge the support they have given us through the different United Nations agencies, through the Programa Conjunto Reducción de Violencia y Construcción de Capital Social, in this effort to rebuild the social base in San Salvador.*

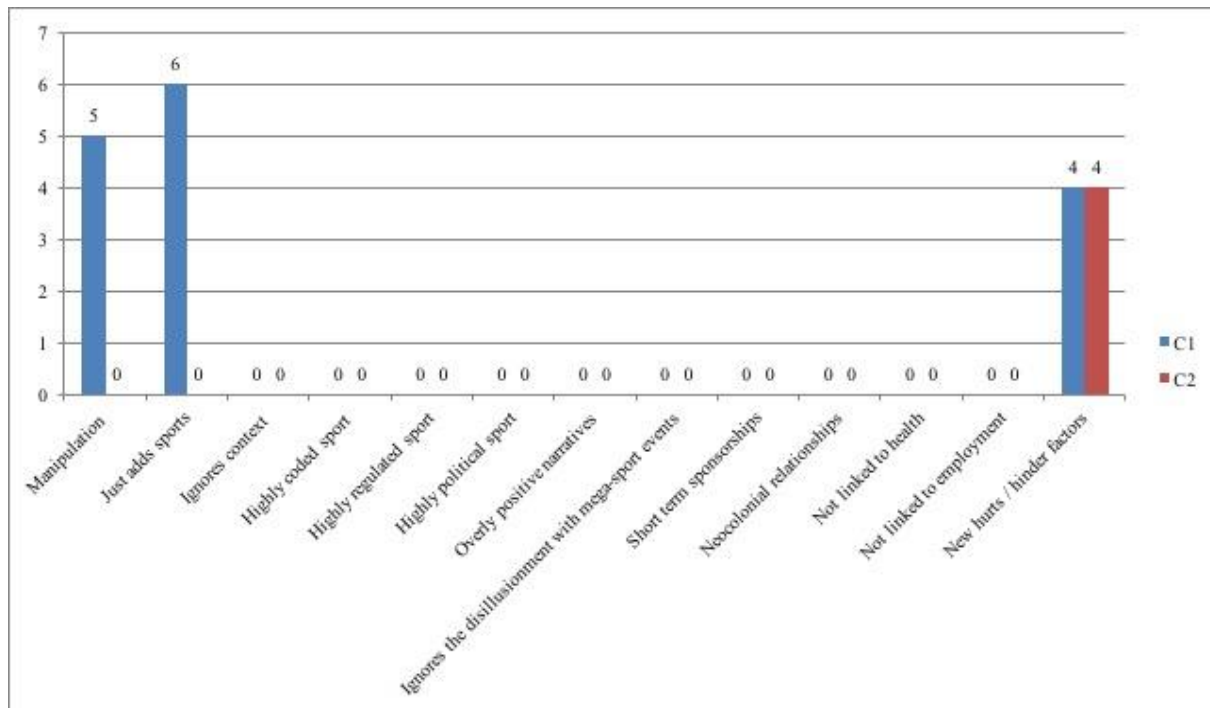
Other contextual situations are mentioned via references to opportunities for safer communities such as:

(4) *In that meaning, rest, recreation, play and recreational activities appropriate for each age can be considered as protective factors, also to be considered as kids and teenagers rights but they are not frequently satisfied because of unsafe conditions inside the public areas.*

Thus, it appears as the main focus of the report is more about the involvement of many partners inside the

<sup>i</sup> Quotes used as illustration of results have been translated in English by the authors.

Figure 4. Snakes Found in The JOM Report by The Two Coders



programme such as the Instituto Municipal de Deporte y Recreación (IMDER), UN programmes like UNICEF and the Programa Conjunto Reducción de Violencia y Construcción de Capital Social. As a case in point, JOM claim that,

(5) *In this context, the Municipality of San Salvador decided to strengthen capacities and reorient the functions of the Municipal Institute of Sport and Recreation (IMDER) in order to respond to this new approach, and also institutionalize the revitalization model implemented inside public areas of the municipality of San Salvador, in the framework of the Programa Conjunto Reducción de Violencia y Construcción de Capital Social in El Salvador.*

A reference to the introduction of a new law to protect girls and women in the country is another example of a concept thought to help the project.

(6) *In 2009 the Ley de Protección Integral de la Niñez y Adolescencia (LEPINA) was created in El Salvador (Law for the integral protection of Children and Adolescents). It aims to ensure the enjoyment of rights and facilitate compliance with the duties of every girl and boy. Those are defined as full subjects of rights, equal in priority.*

These quotes highlight two concepts that appear to play a significant role for JOM but that were not previously identified in published academic literature: political will (quote 5) and legislation (quote 6). Such new adjuvants

complement academic understanding of SFD success factors. This law is based on the children's rights convention of 1989:

(7) *Illustration 1 shows some of the rights of children and youth contained in the Convention that have greater relevance to the reality of El Salvador. The essence of these rights promulgated by the convention is considered as a model for the development and progress for the whole society.*

### Snakes and Opponents That Hinder The Implementation of The Project (SO)

The content analysis review also identified Snakes, or concepts which hindered or limited the project. Author 1 identified 15 references to Snakes, while author 3 identified 4. The combined results considered 15 Snakes in total (see Figure 4). The comparative lack of references to Snakes and opponents raises certain academic questions such as: are concepts that hinder projects considered by managers, but simply not included in their report? Or are concepts that hinder SDP projects even knowable?

The dominant Snake extracted from the JOM report, labelled *Just add sport*,<sup>44</sup> conceptualizes the idea of implementing a sport project on its own or without social, political, or economic policies and practice. Analysis of the report suggests that project managers assumed that sport could be enough to improve the quality of life of youth in

San Salvador and give them energy to develop themselves (identity).<sup>45</sup> As a case in point, JOM's managers explain that the general objective is to:

*(8) Create dynamic public areas through the practice of various sports (football, basketball, swimming, athletics, softball, martial arts, among others) and through recreation, to enhance skills and attitudes, improve the quality of life of children, teenagers, youth and other residents of the municipality of San Salvador, strengthening their personal development integrally and participation with identity.*

Thus, nothing more than practising sport on its own is thought to be sufficient to ensure that the JOM programme's goals will be achieved. Few details about the training youth received from JOM were mentioned, and few possibilities for their future to be involved in SDP administration are cited:

*(9) Strengthening and consolidation of the knowledge acquired by sports monitors in the Diploma in Sports Administration...so that they can be integrated and strengthen the development of specialized schools for different sports.*

Furthermore, one new conceptual opponent was identified in the JOM report regarding the special context of El Salvador:

*(10) Discontent over the lack of educational opportunities, health, economic and security mainly are the everyday concerns of ordinary citizens. The AMSS is a territory within a country that has many gaps and where resources needed to bring comfort to all its inhabitants are scarce.*

*(11) It is in these contexts where sport, rather than being inclusive, excludes those who do not have access to certain spaces because of situations of gang territoriality or other circumstances of insecurity.*

Thus, coders identified a new conceptual opponent through the content analysis in the JOM report. After discussion, it was labelled *violent context*, referring to many references of the violent context of San Salvador Society. This concept will also serve as an underpinning for proposing avenues for future research.

## DISCUSSION

This study had two major goals: 1) to analyze a specific project report with the proven Actantial model and 2) to

validate the SDP Snakes and Ladders model by contrasting concepts that academic literature claims either helps or hinders projects, with what practitioners include in their narratives. We used the Juventud Olímpica Municipal, Modelo de Club de San Salvador report as a case study for crafting a SDP research tool by content analysis. This tool, and the specific case study chosen, showed particularly pertinent in reviews of SDP projects given because 1) documents are a rich source of research data<sup>3</sup> and reports are often promising avenues for collecting empirical evidence (they assemble valuable marketing, accounting as well as managerial information);<sup>29</sup> 2) more insight is currently needed about the reality of the SDP field;<sup>46-48</sup> 3) there is currently a lack of published research that focuses on sport for development projects located in Central America;<sup>49-52</sup> 4) there is a need for a research tool to investigate SDP projects and this could fit with the nuance of SDP context given in El Salvador.<sup>1, 53</sup>

This is one of the first studies in the field of SDP research to analyze a specific project report using Greimas' Actantial model.<sup>37</sup> One advantage of this chosen method is that this content analysis tool facilitates an understanding of the structure of the studied narratives and allows authors to appreciate the meta-context of the SDP project and to better understand the roles and functions of each stakeholder.

Be that as it may, a first discussion point is related to importance of authorship. Undoubtedly, who pens a given report must be considered since the same story, told by different authors, will present the actors in different light. For instance, the final report about the performance of the JOM project would clearly be different if the author had a more positive view of the *maras* gangs cited in the report as an opponent. As noted by Rodgers, gangs can have either oppressive or protective relationships with local communities. The protective role might be particularly prominent in the Central American context.<sup>54</sup>

Thus, what is viewed by JOM as opposition may actually be viewed as protective or defensive actions by a portion of the population. This is not without recalling Latour's argument that for every actor-network that is described, the *anti-groups* should also be considered,<sup>28</sup> and Greimas' view that the actors are defined by the roles that they play in the drama. Future research is needed for describing, in greater detail, the actors involved in SFD dramas as well as the relationships they form throughout the ongoing story. In short, the Actantial model provides the underpinnings for future research efforts.

The second objective of this study was to validate the SDP Snakes and Ladders model by contrasting concepts that academic literature claims either help or hinder projects with what practitioners include in their narratives. This provides a conceptual waypoint for initial review efforts, and facilitates an understanding of the contextual situation in which this specific SDP programme was operationalized. Because gathering first-hand data on the management of SDP organizations may be difficult to accomplish in a timely, efficient, safe, and cost-effective manner, conducting content analysis of detailed reports provides rich and nuanced data about management, marketing, strategies, thought, and organizational behaviour. The AL-SO approach arguably provides a robust, effective, and practical research tool for conducting content analysis of specific SDP reports. For instance, as traces of all previously identified SDP Ladders were found in the report, this suggests that each category previously identified in academic literature was clear for coders.

However, the AL-SO approach revealed important nuances. For instance, based on the number of references to them in the narrative, some concepts appear to help or hinder more than others. Specifically, *rooted in dialogue* and *Consider nuance of context* are, of the 14 concepts that are theoretically thought to help SFD projects, the most commonly referred to by practitioners. However, the third most commonly mentioned category in the report, *New adjuvants*, had not been previously identified in academic literature. This implies that there is a gap between how practitioners and academics currently view what is needed to help a given project, and more research is needed to address this gap. For instance, highlighting the importance given by practitioners to laws and legal documents is an original contribution of this study.

It appears similarly important to consider the usefulness of the AL-SO approach for the evaluation of the effectiveness or impact of a project at the more strategic level, or of the cumulative impact of several projects on social change processes. Indeed, the AL-SO approach appears to be an effective tool for analyzing documents of specific SDP projects, but remains unproven for large scale SDP projects.<sup>55, 56</sup> However, in as much as there are documents and reports to analyze, the adapted version or the Actantial model will likely provide valuable insights.

Notably, the abundance of both theoretical and practical concepts that helped this project succeed largely overshadows references to concepts that hinder it. This may be a reflection of what Coalter describes as incestuous amplification<sup>57</sup> in this field, but may also be a result of the

largely positive tone adopted by the authors of the report. Thus, the curious case of the missing Snakes provides another avenue for future research that suggests that conceptual opponents and Snakes currently lack theoretical clarity and precision, and as such, are empirically unwieldy at this time. As a case in point, frequent conversations were needed between the two authors who coded the text, as many passages did not clearly refer to specific concepts that could hinder the project. Finally, another explanation may reside in the political nature of the report. As this report was written after local elections that led to the closing of the programme, it is plausible that the authors wrote the report with the intention of celebrating the success of the programme over highlighting the challenges, in the hope that funding would be restored. Likewise, it is plausible that certain cultural characteristics of the authors, such as their views about how to interact with funding agencies, may have affected the tone of the document. These explanations remain speculative, as the data collected for this project were limited to the analysis of the programme report. Future research is now better positioned to pursue this case study and meet with key actors involved in the report. Such efforts appear both timely and highly promising research endeavours.

Not only does the AL-SO approach provide valuable insights to orient analysis efforts, it can also serve as a pertinent first step for obtaining awareness of an organization and its context before embarking on more elaborate and costly field research. Such practical research methods appear all the more important considering that recent literature reviews of published SDP articles confirm “that a majority of published research focused on individual case studies and programme evaluations”.<sup>58</sup> Thus, this new mixed method for conducting content analysis of SDP programme reports is proposed as a promising preliminary first step for future case studies that has the potential to provide valuable contributions to this emerging research field.

### Limits

As stated previously, this study aimed to 1) operationalize a method for analyzing SDP project reports; and 2) validate the SDP Snakes and Ladders review by contrasting concepts that academic literature claims either help or hinder projects, with what practitioners include in their narratives. To this end, a proposed methodology that deconstructs the action, actors, and relationships presented in specific project reports was road tested. By a) identifying actors mentioned in the narrative, b) allocating them to one of six Actantial categories (roles), and c) identifying the structure of actors’



relationships within the story or the quest, this research design provides modest contributions to our understanding of the management of SDP accounts. Yet, certain limits of this research must also be conceded.

One major limit to this research materialized from contrasts in the conceptual nature of the *Snakes and Ladders* identified from academic literature. For instance, let us recall that the dominant Ladders, or concepts that would theoretically help a project, were in this specific case, projects that are rooted in dialogue (with  $n = 66$  references), build partnerships, and consider the nuances of context. The potential theoretical issue here is that the aforesaid function of the Actantial model is to allocate roles to actors. Thus, identifying that a project is rooted in dialogue or in partnership does not imply the same interactions and relationships as those built by specific actors engaging in dialogue or entering into partnerships. Granted, organizations are collectives formed of actors who have aligned their interests, yet it is the individual actors who build relationships, and not organizations as such. Hence, one limit to this paper is that this study took the conceptual liberty of assuming that it was an actor, or actors, who became spokespersons for the agency and subsequently engaged in dialogue, or entered a partnership. However, this nuance possibly highlights the need to consider project reports in a new light. Undoubtedly, from a certain point of view, a report may be considered to be a syntagmatic organizational<sup>59</sup> representation of the acts of actors. Thus, what scholars are studying is not the actual actions of the organization, or of its actors, but more precisely the paper, or electronic, versions of actions. Therefore, the limit to this study is that we have focused on the descriptions of the actions provided in the report, and not the actions themselves. Theoretically, then, as the report translates actions in words, it appears safe to submit that studying the actions themselves would provide a much different representation of the actors' interactions, and hence the very nature resulting in the Actantial model. Unfortunately, pursuing this line of enquiry was beyond the scope of this paper, yet this more research is clearly needed to explore this promising avenue.

## CONCLUSION

This paper demonstrates the effectiveness of a new approach for analyzing the contents of SDP project reports. As the first step in a larger study of the Juventud Olímpica Municipal, the Adjuvant/Ladder-Snakes/Opponent approach provides a better understanding of the nature and context of the project. As such, the AL-SO approach to content analysis could make future field work more effective and

efficient. What is more, applied to other SDP project reports, this tool also has the potential for improving our understanding of evaluation reports in a way that may contribute to the revisiting of the millennium development goals for the 2015-2030 timeframe.

Overall, practising a new approach for analyzing the content of SDP reports proved to be a valuable exercise. Indeed, allocating actors to Actantial categories with a specific attention to those who could be labelled as adjuvants, Ladders, Snakes, or opponents provided rich insights into SDP managers' thoughts regarding their project. For instance, as reflected by the overwhelming references to adjuvants and Ladders over opponents and Snakes, the dominant focus of this report is to provide a very positive spin to the project. This report appears so overwhelmingly positive, in fact, that it may easily be interpreted as political manipulation, or even as propaganda in favour of sport. This is somewhat unsurprising considering sport subcultures' deep divisions that can be easily exploited by political manipulation.<sup>60</sup> Yet, this observation simply whets our appetite for more research on the use of SDP as politics by other means.

Beyond the positive light in which the project was penned, the report itself provided little evidence in the way of concrete results. For instance, there was a notable absence of traceable evidence of logic models, management by results, or evidence-based management in the report. Thus, this study is not able to present observations regarding the successes or failures of the project, or even to provide a broad qualification of the performance of the project. What could be described as an ultra-positive discourse in favour of the JOM project is plausibly the result of the local political context or culture, yet the report itself provides little in the way of specific, measurable, attainable, and timed objectives. Indeed, the values presented in the narrative are highly laudable, and the discourse about the importance of SDP for youth is quite elaborate, but the overall report appears to be pro-sports discourse with little substance. This is underscored by the lack of references to opponents, theoretical Snakes, or other negative factors and concepts, such as acknowledging the violent context that currently plagues El Salvador, which makes conducting such a sport project all the more challenging.

Undeniably, implementing any sport for development projects in such a violent context will be challenging. This is why there is an evident need for content analysis tools to facilitate the practical elaboration and implementation of such projects and to simplify the evaluation of the project. Indeed, as it may not be possible to conduct research safely

in some situations, authors could benefit from research tools that facilitate extracting and analyzing a maximum amount of pertinent data from readily accessible sources. As a first step before accessing the field, the AL-SO approach proposed here may clearly contribute to future research efforts.

In conclusion, the aim of this paper was to propose and put a new content analysis tool specifically tailored for sport for development research through a trial run. This combined model provides a valuable method for operationalizing content analysis of SDP reports for practitioners and academics concerned with SDP evaluation as well as subsequent reporting and accounting. Overall, the AL-SO approach has the potential to provide valuable insights into the management of accounts in a SFD context, fascinating insights into SDP storytelling, as well as a new way of exploring the SDP landscape. In short, having successfully navigated this qualifying round, the AL-SO approach now appears ready for more challengers.

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## Original Research

# Sport as an analogy to teach life skills and redefine moral values: A case study of the 'Seedbeds of Peace' sport-for-development programme in Medellin, Colombia

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## ABSTRACT

A history of drug trafficking in Medellin, Colombia, resulted in the city receiving the dubious distinction of being the murder capital of the world in 1991. Over a quarter of a century later, drug trafficking has left a complex legacy of an illegal and violent culture, which has subsequently eroded values systems that leave disadvantaged children vulnerable to criminal activities. To begin addressing this social problem, the Concreto Foundation has leveraged Colombia's passion for football in its sport-for-development (SFD) 'Seedbeds of Peace' programme. A case study design was used to illustrate how the 'Seedbeds of Peace' programme uses football as an analogy to teach life skills and redefine moral values. This case study adds to the limited theoretical understanding of how sport works in social change and further equips SFD practitioners with a sport mechanism not previously discussed in the literature.

## BACKGROUND

In 1991 the city of Medellin, Colombia, had the dubious distinction of being the murder capital of the world with a total of 6,349 murders, which equated to a murder rate of 380 per 100,000 people.<sup>1-2</sup> This was the peak of Medellin's darkest days as the drug trafficking activities of Pablo Escobar and his Medellin Cartel brought violence, terror and corruption to the city. Although a quarter of a century has now passed, the drug traffickers have left a complex legacy of an illegal and violent culture and eroded values systems that leave disadvantaged children vulnerable to

criminal activities, which is happening from an increasingly early age.<sup>3-4</sup> This social problem is being addressed by the Concreto Foundation's 'Seedbeds of Peace' Programme. The purpose of this case study is to understand the sport mechanisms used to strengthen moral values and teach life skills to programme participants.

## SPORT FOR DEVELOPMENT LITERATURE REVIEW

Despite the popularity of sport as a vehicle for social change,<sup>5</sup> there is limited scientific evidence regarding its effectiveness<sup>6-7</sup>, and a limited understanding of how sport can impart social change.<sup>6,8-11</sup> Previously, sport for development (SFD) has been encumbered by "overly romanticised, communitarian generalisations about the 'power' of sport for development"<sup>11</sup> (p. 1386) and dependence "on the supposed inherent properties of sport to achieve desired outcomes".<sup>11</sup> (p. 609) However, sport can also have negative effects.<sup>12</sup> This realisation has at least required conditions to be attached to sport before assuming its positive effect.

## Conditions

According to Sugden<sup>13</sup> football, when well designed, is able to contribute to building bridges between otherwise divided communities. More specifically, Bruening et al.<sup>14</sup> argued that SFD programmes should be intentionally designed in order to achieve social change. In a sport-based service learning intervention, they found that intentional design elements such as continuous programming at the

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same sites each semester, students signing up for weekly shifts and van rides with peers between campus and their community contributed to the development of social capital. However, given that these intentional design elements are broader programme processes rather than the sport component of the intervention, clearly such a finding is not specific to SFD.

Similarly, Lyras and Welty Peachey<sup>6</sup> proposed a sport-for-development theory (SFDT) advocating that sport practices should be based on moral principles, mixed teams, traditional and non-traditional sports, and a variety of sport and physical activities to attract and sustain a more representative population. In addition, the authors noted that sport should be educational and that coaches and instructors should serve as positive role models and agents of change. These suggestions provide an undergirding theoretical framework of how sport can work for social change and be challenged when we substitute the word sport for art. Given the equal applicability of Lyras and Welty Peachey's principles to art, it is suggested that rather than representing a SFD theory, these are simply generic principles for vehicles of change in social interventions whether that vehicle be sport, art, cooking, or embroidery.

As such, the claim of Lyras and Welty Peachey<sup>6</sup> (p. 324) that "SFDT provides the essential features and structure to scientifically explain, describe, and predict how sport can effect social change" is incorrect. They are proposing a set of conditions that sport or any vehicle of change should aspire to, thus not adding to the understanding of how sport can work for social change. Bringing the focus back to sport, Coalter<sup>11</sup> distinguished between necessary and sufficient conditions for social change. According to Coalter,<sup>11</sup> participation in sport is only a necessary but not sufficient condition for social change within the context of SFD programmes. For example, sports may serve as sites for socialisation rather than causes of socialisation outcomes.<sup>15</sup> As such, in order for the possibility of social change to occur, there is a need to consider sufficient conditions beyond the necessary condition of sport.<sup>11</sup> For example, Lyras and Welty Peachey<sup>6</sup> suggested that for social change to occur, sport should be blended with cultural enrichment activities and global citizenship education.

To summarise, the causal relationship of SFD is not as positive and linear as originally assumed because the proposed sport-only conditions are not necessary for social change to occur. Even when positive conditions are attached to sport, it is viewed as a necessary rather than sufficient condition, and whereby change can only occur if

sport is supported by a broader system of social change.<sup>11</sup> However, because much of the conditions proposed can be equally applicable to other vehicles of change, there has been limited progress in understanding how sport itself can work for social change. The research that has best contributed to such understanding is that which has focused on the mechanisms of sport within social interventions.

## Mechanisms

There is a risk that by dismissing the romanticised generalisations about the 'power' of sport with supposed inherent properties to achieve social change,<sup>7,11</sup> the role of sport in development will also be dismissed. To avoid this, there is a need to refocus our thinking about SFD programmes by identifying the mechanisms by which sport, as part of a broader intervention, is contributing to social change. To overcome the "simple one-dimensional notion of the 'power of sport'"<sup>11</sup> (p. 609) and the treatment of sport as "a collective noun that hides more than it reveals",<sup>11</sup> (p. 595) a shift to better understand the mechanisms, processes, experiences, and relationships to achieve the desired social outcomes is warranted.<sup>16</sup>

Any analysis of mechanisms must be facilitated by the development of a programme theory, which is a sequence of presumed causes, actions, processes and effects<sup>17</sup>. According to Coalter<sup>11</sup> such an approach is effective in describing mechanisms. For example, Coalter<sup>18</sup> distinguished between two broad approaches of Sport Plus and Plus Sport. The Sport Plus approach to SFD prioritises traditional sport for development objectives of increased participation, sporting skill development, and sustainable sport organizations, (i.e., development of sport). Secondly, the Sport Plus approach seeks to use sport to address broader social issues (i.e., development through sport), and thus gives limited attention to the mechanisms by which sport can contribute to social change. In contrast, the Plus Sport approach prioritizes developmental outcomes (e.g., behaviour change) and focuses on specific processes and mechanisms specifically designed to achieve social change where sport plays a specific role as part of a broader set of processes. Thus far, only Green<sup>19</sup> has attempted to articulate the mechanisms by which sport can contribute to social change.

## Sport for Social Inclusion

According to Green,<sup>19</sup> sport for social inclusion programmes are designed to provide sporting opportunities to specific populations regarded as underserved, at risk, or disengaged. This approach serves sport by increasing the

number and diversity of sport participants. Participants are also served from a perspective of equity and distributive justice by providing sport opportunities to those who do not have access to homogenous participation opportunities. This categorization relies upon the various myths of sport and, according to Green,<sup>19</sup> such beliefs are so ingrained that it is not necessary to do anything more than provide access to sport because benefits will accrue as a function of participation. An example of a sport for social inclusion programme from Arnaud<sup>20</sup> described a programme that embedded the principles and values of the sports culture to minority populations. However, upon closer inspection of the use of sport in the example, sport was not serving to embed principles and values, instead only serving as a hook to “bring children, adolescents and young adults together” and as a neutral setting “by minimizing differences so to integrate immigrant populations”. (p. 577)

As a further example of sport for social inclusion, Green<sup>19</sup> referred to the case of Belfast United whereby football was used to bring Irish Catholic and Protestant youth together to form a football club. This football club served as a site that required participants to undertake integrated activities so to minimize hostilities between the Catholic and Protestant participants. Green<sup>19</sup> assumed that by “embracing the performance ethos of the competitive sport culture, participants are no longer focused on ethnic differences”. (p. 133-134) However, this assumption that sport is distracting participants from their differences is less realistic than a theory of change whereby sport is a neutral site to bring disparate groups together so that they might understand and accept each other’s differences.

In scrutinising these examples, it can be concluded that the category of sport for social inclusion fails to accurately convey the way in which sport is being used to achieve development. The emphasis on sport to ‘bring together’ participants indicates that sport added value in serving as a hook to engage participants. The assumption that the sport culture (i.e., sport’s inherent positive values) added value to encourage participants to engage in a desired behaviour does not provide a realistic understanding of the role of sport in integration. Furthermore, the assumption that sport alone can enable developmental outcomes hinders the purpose of establishing the role of sport in social change because such a contention makes no effort to understand why sport might work.

### **Sport as a Universal Neutral Language**

An arguably more accurate understanding of the examples used by Green<sup>19</sup> can be found in Pierre De Coubertin’s

vision of sport as a site for peace and cross-national understanding. Sport works because of its social and cultural significance<sup>21</sup> that acts as a hook to bring disparate groups together. However, according to Coubertin, sport works because it is ‘universalisable’ (i.e., a universal language) and provides a cultural contact point<sup>22</sup>. McCormack and Chalip<sup>23</sup> noted that specific socializing experiences that particular sport settings provide result in positive developmental outcomes. This understanding of the role of sport is reflective of Sugden’s<sup>13</sup> description of the Football for Peace S4D programme, which aimed to construct bridges between neighbouring Jewish and Arab villages in Israel. Football was used as a hook to bring the disparate groups together. However, the developmental outcomes could not have been achieved without values-based coaching to promote mutual understanding and engender a peaceful coexistence.<sup>12</sup> Sport worked as a universal neutral language to bring disparate groups together from which other programme processes could be used to promote mutual understanding.

### **Sport as Diversion**

According to Green,<sup>19</sup> the S4D category of Sport as Diversion involves diverting deviant behaviours with socially desirable ones. Green<sup>19</sup> used the example of Midnight Basketball to illustrate this category. This S4D programme in Chicago recognised the social problem of inner city criminal behaviours between 10 p.m. and 2 a.m. As such, the programme was designed to reduce criminal activity via diverting participants from undesirable criminal behaviour to the desirable sport participation behaviour by providing the opportunity to play basketball between 10 p.m. and 2 a.m., when the target group may otherwise be engaged in criminal activity. In this case, basketball provided value because it was identified as an attractive sport to the target group of inner-city, African-American male youths. Thus, basketball served as a hook to attract the target group away from an undesirable behaviour; the choice of sport was dependent on the attractiveness to the intended participants. Indeed, other sports have been used for other target groups such as Midnight Table Tennis in Hungary.

As such, it can be concluded that sport is not serving as a diversion, as Green<sup>19</sup> suggests. The use of sport to attract participants is not a sufficient condition for success because in order to divert the target group away from criminal behaviours, it is also necessary to schedule the ‘hook’ to cover the period of 10pm to 2am. In this sense, it is the scheduling, rather than the sport in itself that is serving as a diversion. Thus, an accurate description of Midnight

Basketball is the use of sport as a hook with effective scheduling as a diversion.

### **Sport as a Replacement or Alternative**

A more meaningful understanding of how sport can be used in development is as a replacement, whereby sport meets the needs that were previously being met by anti-social behaviour. For example, the Walker Research Group<sup>24</sup> described how boxing clubs were used to replace the sense of community that was previously being met by gang involvement and how controlled fighting in the ring was used to replace uncontrolled fighting on the streets. Similarly, sport can also be used as an alternative, whereby sport creates a barrier to engaging in anti-social behaviour. For example, the Walker Research Group<sup>24</sup> described how the health demands of boxing (e.g., a nutritious diet and running) were used to replace excessive drinking and smoking. Of course, vehicles other than sport could be used as a replacement or alternative, but the malleability and multidimensional nature of sport<sup>21</sup> makes it a viable and highly attractive replacement mechanism.

### **Sport as a Hook**

Green<sup>19</sup> proposed sport as a hook and as a further category of S4D programmes, defining its two components as: (1) the use of sport to attract participants, and (2) the provision of other core social services, such as tutoring and counselling. Walker, Hills, and Heere<sup>25</sup> assessed an employment programme supported by an English Premier League football club, whereby participants were engaged by the football brand before employability training was delivered. The authors argued that without the hook of a professional football club, participant recruiting would have been encumbered. The value of sport as a hook can be attributed to its global following and the uniquely strong connections that sport fans have with brands.<sup>26</sup> However, as Green<sup>19</sup> pointed out that while sport can be very attractive to certain target groups, other groups might not share the similar sentiments. For example, those who more strongly identify with music, dance, art, and technology would not be attracted to a sport-based program. Yet, according to Green,<sup>19</sup> it happened to be the context of sport (and sport activities) that dominate the 'social and developmental' landscape. This could be for several reasons: (1) the passion for sport exceeds that of other potential vehicles of social change, (2) sport is a stronger hook since target groups have stronger affinities with their favourite sports/leagues/teams than with their favourite music/bands/artists, or (3) when used as a hook, sport offers something more in the delivery

of a programme, for example, as an analogy.

Although sport as a hook is the prevalent use of sport in development, a criticism of Green's<sup>19</sup> additional requirement of providing other core social services is that it excludes S4D programmes that make use of sport as a hook, but which do not provide other core social services. In returning to the example of Midnight Basketball, a component of this programme was to use sport as a hook, but the additional component was the scheduling to divert from criminal behaviours, rather than core social services.

### **Sport and Life Skills**

The use of sport to develop life skills has been broadly discussed within the sport psychology literature. For example, Danish and Nellen<sup>27</sup> described two sport-related programmes to enhance life skills and sport skills in underserved adolescents. Sport psychology techniques such as goal setting were used to teach life skills. From the description of these programmes, however, other than make use of techniques that are used within a sport setting, as well as many other settings, there is minimal leveraging of sport, other than as a hook. Papacharisis et al.<sup>28</sup> argued that sport participation teaches valuable skills and attitudes that can be applied to daily life. However, this reflects a mythopoeic view of sport.<sup>16</sup> Similarly, Gould and Carson<sup>29</sup> link sport participation with the development of life skills, rather than intentionally designing sport<sup>14</sup> to develop life skills.

### **STUDY PURPOSE**

The preceding discussion underscores the existing limitations to understand how sport can work for social change through life skills education. Although a more modest understanding of the 'power' of sport and the need for it be part of a broader system of social change has been realised, the majority of research has focused on the sport conditions (e.g., intentionally designed) that contribute to social change. However, even when presented as the sport-for-development theory,<sup>6</sup> the proposed conditions are equally important to non-sporting vehicles for change. Rather than looking at conditions, greater understanding will be garnered from a focus on the mechanisms of the sport components of SFD programmes. Thus far, only Green<sup>19</sup> has attempted to articulate such mechanisms. However, there is a lack of clarity in Green's conceptualisations of the role of sport in social change.



Sport for social inclusion refers only to the outcomes desired from using sport, rather than how sport is used. Sport as diversion is a misrepresentation of the role of sport because sport is actually being used as a hook with the programme's scheduling serving as the diversion tool. Finally, sport as a hook does convey a role of sport, but the additional requirement of core social services being attached is, again, part of the broader programme systems, rather than a use of sport. As such, it can be concluded that the different mechanisms of sport in development have not been clearly articulated or fully represented in the academic literature. The study shall start to address this gap in knowledge by specifically analysing the sport mechanisms within the 'Seedbeds of Peace' programme theory. Such focus on a single programme can be justified because "given the diversity of participants, programmes, processes, relationships and desired outcomes it is not possible to develop a definitive or prescriptive programme theory – each programme requires its own programme theory to reflect its context".<sup>11 (p. 607)</sup>

## METHOD

This study engaged in qualitative research, making use of observations and interviews. This approach sought to provide a complex and holistic picture of the 'Seedbeds of Peace' programme in its natural setting<sup>30</sup> and thus attempted "to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them."<sup>31 (p. 3)</sup> The strategy of inquiry adopted in this research was a case study, undertaking empirical inquiry to investigate the research phenomenon in-depth and within its real-life context. 'Seedbeds of Peace' was selected as a critical case<sup>32</sup> and an example of best practice in terms of illustrating a theory of change that made use of sport as an analogy to achieve social change, which had not previously been articulated in the sport-for-development literature.

This study was undertaken by two sport management academics, one from the United Kingdom and one from the United States, and a political science academic from Medellin, Colombia. Given that the participant observations and interviews required data to be interpreted, it is important to acknowledge the backgrounds of the researchers and how these might influence the interpretation of the data. Both sport management academics have five years of prior experience studying SFD interventions in the United Kingdom and United States. As such, it is inevitable that interpretation of 'Seedbeds of Peace' will be influenced by expectations of SFD interventions from contexts outside the developing world. Although this cannot be completely avoided, the presence of a third researcher from the research

setting of Medellin added a perspective that can mitigate the lack of cultural awareness of the British and American researchers. The political science academic has a detailed understanding of the local context, having studied the social problems that 'Seedbeds of Peace' is addressing for four years. Indeed, it was through the contacts of this member of the research team that access to the programme was negotiated. These different perspectives were sought in the research team's formation so to understand 'Seedbeds of Peace' not just as a SFD intervention, but as a social act whose meaning needs to be understood with reference to the local context.

## Data Collection

Over the course of five months from the beginning of May 2016 to the end of September 2016, the research team undertook extensive fieldwork consisting of intervention observations and foundation staff interviews to develop a detailed understanding of the 'Seedbeds of Peace' programme and its use of football as an analogy. According to Patton,<sup>34</sup> case data consists of all the information one has about each case, including interview data and observations. The research team observed in excess of thirty sessions of the 'Seedbeds of Peace' programme, across different neighborhoods and across different age groups, which are detailed later in this article. Two members of the research team (the British and Colombian academics) conducted observations separately, not participating in the sessions or bringing any undue attention to themselves so as to not interrupt the natural setting of the intervention<sup>35</sup> and to help reduce the risk of participants' behaviours being modified due to their awareness of being observed. (i.e., Hawthorne's Effect<sup>36</sup>)

Prior to the sessions, the researcher had a brief conversation with the coach delivering the session so to understand the session goals. Researchers made use of a standardised observation instrument, which Heinrich et al.<sup>37</sup> illustrate, whereby notes were taken under the standardised headings of session goals, participants, activities, sport mechanisms, reflection and hypotheses between goals and mechanisms with the aim of being able to identify the sport mechanisms within the broader programme theory of 'Seedbeds of Peace'. According to Coalter,<sup>16</sup> a programme theory is a sequence of causes and presumed effects underpinning interventions, which articulates the hypotheses about the relationships between social problems, participants, programme mechanisms and processes, intermediate impacts (i.e., the effect on participants), and broader outcomes (i.e., individual behavioral or social changes).

In order to more accurately map out the ‘Seedbeds of Peace’ programme theory, six semi-structured interviews were conducted with the Chief Executive of the Foundation who designed the programme methodology. A semi-structured interview guide was designed so to fill in the gaps in the programme theory covering the topics of social problems, participants, programme mechanisms and processes, intermediate impacts and broader outcomes. Questions such as ‘What steps were taken to move participants from their original state to your desired state?’ were used. Each of the six interviews lasted approximately 30 minutes and were conducted in the private office of the Chief Executive. Interviews were digitally recorded using a dictaphone and professionally transcribed in preparation for analysis.

### Data Analysis

Notes from the standardised research instrument and semi-structured interview transcriptions were analysed using an inductive coding strategy to extract themes and quotes related to the ‘Seedbeds of Peace’ programme theory. All three researchers individually analysed the transcriptions using a line-by-line open coding procedure to “expose the thoughts, ideas, and meanings contained therein”.<sup>38</sup> (p. 102) A selective coding process was used whereby only data relevant to the sport mechanisms and programme theory were analysed. Segments of relevant and meaningful text were identified with and initial codes were attributed.<sup>39</sup> Axial coding was then used to group these segments of text into larger abstract categories in order to sort, synthesize, organize, and reassemble the data.<sup>40</sup> The three researchers read each other’s memos and discussed their insights, comparing coding and categories before reaching a consensus on the findings and the selection of representative quotes. The lead author wrote up the consensus before the other two researchers reviewed to ensure accuracy. Validity of the qualitative data was ensured through: (1) the use of multiple methods of data collection (observations and interviews), and (2) the use of multiple researchers to reduce researcher bias.<sup>41</sup>

### THE SOCIAL PROBLEM

Colombia lived its darkest days in the 1980s and 1990s when the country’s illegal drug trade was at its peak bringing armed violence, terror and corruption.<sup>2</sup> The city of Medellin was at the forefront of these problems as the home of the Medellin Cartel and its boss Pablo Escobar, who during the peak of their operations were supplying 80% of the cocaine going into the United States<sup>42</sup>. Drug trafficking planted its roots in all sectors of the population and created

a culture and manner of social behavior that became ingrained in society.<sup>43</sup> Young people were among the most affected by the rise of drug trafficking and the lifestyles it proposed because they saw it as an easy opportunity to escape poverty.<sup>44</sup> As a result, society faced a loss of values, principles and a growing de-legitimization of the State.<sup>45</sup> The absence of a real understanding of the options of citizen participation, the mechanisms for the proper resolution of conflicts, and the absenteeism of citizens – generated by fear and mistrust – caused the situation to become more and more critical and also relegated citizens to be silent spectators, victims and/or perpetrators of the armed conflict.<sup>46</sup>

Today, violence in Colombia has mutated and diversified its manifestations.<sup>47,48</sup> Currently, Medellin does not face the same difficulties or the same actions of illegal armed groups.<sup>49-51</sup> However, a complex legacy of drug trafficking remains, which is a lingering culture and lifestyle based on the idea of easy money and disrespect for existing minimum social agreements.<sup>52</sup> This culture and lifestyle based upon material and aesthetic values remains the social norm. Violence continues to have an important social capital and the culture of illegality remains.<sup>3</sup> As such, illegal actors are still successful in recruiting children to their illegal and violent activities.

### ‘SEEDBEDS OF PEACE’ INTERVENTION

The Constructora Concreto Business Group (Grupo Empresarial Constructora Concreto) originated in the city of Medellin. In 1986, in the middle of the city’s darkest days, it created the Concreto Foundation (Fundación Concreto), seeking to channel its social investments and improve the quality of life for Colombians. Since its inception, the foundation has focused its actions on contributing to the transformation of the culture of illegality and developing tools to promote critical, responsible thinking among its participants. The Foundation developed different projects, which have aimed to strengthen social networks, rescue civic values and, above all, seek innovative and peaceful ways to solve problems and create an attractive future for children. Since 1990, the ‘Seedbeds of Peace’ programme has become the principal outcomes of the Concreto Foundation.

When the case study fieldwork was undertaken, the ‘Seedbeds of Peace’ programme was in operation in nine Medellin neighbourhoods. Within these nine neighbourhoods there were a total of N=25 groups in operation, broken up according to age group, looking after a total of 995 children. The Foundation was in contact with

the children for one session of two hours per week, every week for the whole year. At the start of each year, each group chose what they would be doing throughout the year, which became their vehicle for social change. Educational or diversionary vehicles chosen included graffiti, dance, arts and crafts, theatre and cooking. The most popular choice, as would be expected in Colombia, was football. Out of the 25 groups, 6 chose football.

### Target Group

‘Seedbeds of Peace’ operates in a variety of Medellin neighbourhoods and the Concreto Foundation assists them in identifying neighborhoods with the greatest need. Neighborhoods are selected for participation if they meet three conditions that the Foundation has defined. First, neighbourhoods lack social and economic opportunities as informed by Gobernación de Antioquia and Alcaldía de Medellín in their quality of life survey. Second, these neighborhoods have illegal groups that are operating in the barrio, as informed by local police. Finally, the neighborhoods have a high ratio of at least 20% of under 18-year-olds, as informed by local police. To achieve greater impact, the Foundation begins its training process with children aged between 7 and 10 years old with an expectation that children remain with the Foundation for several years, potentially until they leave school at 17, 18 or 19 years old. The typical duration of participants in the programme, however, is five years. As a result, participants engage in a process of growth over several years. There is an even number of boys and girls participating in the programme, the majority of whom are white, with some Afro-Colombian and indigenous participants.

### Programme Theory

The ‘Seedbeds of Peace’ programme takes a preventative approach to the above social problem. The ‘Seedbeds of Peace’ aims to redefine the target groups’ values system so that it is based upon moral values, rather than material and aesthetic values that come with a culture of illegality pursuing ‘easy money’ through criminal activities to escape poverty. The Concreto Foundation defines values as the important and lasting beliefs about what is good or bad, acceptable or unacceptable and desirable or undesirable. They believe that these beliefs have a direct influence upon behaviour and whether the target group go on to engage in pro- or anti-social behaviour. For a long time, ‘Seedbeds of Peace’ focused only on strengthening the moral values of its participants. However, in 2014, a new chief executive identified a need to, in addition to strengthening the moral values of participants, develop the life skills of participants.

The Concreto Foundation’s view of life skills as an important moderating factor between values and behaviour change. Even if the target group has a positive values system, they do not have the life skills to execute behaviours that would typically manifest from a positive value system and they remain vulnerable to negative influences and illegal actors. Life skills mitigate the vulnerability of participants to risks by increasing their individual resilience. As such, in order to elicit pro-social behaviour, the Foundation seeks to provide a safe and positive framework and environment, whereby participants have the opportunity to not just develop or redefine their values systems, but also to equip participants with life skills. This approach helps ensure that programme participants have every opportunity to live their life in a manner which reflects their beliefs about what they believe is right, acceptable, and desirable.

### CASE STUDY FINDINGS

The teaching of life skills alongside the strengthening and redefining of moral values was achieved via three separate components of the ‘Seedbeds of Peace’ programme. The first component of a ‘Life Skills Curriculum’ used football as an analogy to establish life skill principles via a football game or drill before extending and applying it to other contexts. The second component of ‘Moral Dilemmas’ involved the discussion and reflection of moral dilemmas in football matches before extending and applying these to other contexts. The third component of ‘Life Projects’ tested and applied participant learning of life skills and redefining of moral values, so to reinforce development from the other two components.

### Life Skills Curriculum

The ‘Seedbeds of Peace’ programme used football as an analogy to deliver a life skills curriculum. It was observed across many sessions with different groups and different coaches that life skills principles were first established via a football-based game or drill before being extended and applied to other contexts. For example, to teach decision-making, ‘Seedbeds of Peace’ used a game whereby participants undertook shooting drills under two different conditions. The aim of the game was to accurately shoot the football to marked corners of the goal. First, participants, one-by-one, received a pass from the coach and were required to shoot the ball at the targets without being permitted to take a touch or control the ball first. Second, the drill was modified so that participants were required to receive the ball by first taking a touch, so that the ball was controlled. Then, the coach encouraged the students to take

their time and consider their options before executing their shot.

After several rounds of this drill in both the conditions of hitting the ball first time and controlling the ball before striking, the coach called the group together to reflect upon this drill. Reflection involved participants sitting quietly and the coach addressing questions to the group. Those who wanted to answer would raise their hand and the coach would select one to three participants to answer each question. The participants were asked whether they were more effective and accurate when they tried to hit their shot the first time, or after they controlled the ball and took their time before shooting. As expected, participants generally responded that they were more accurate and effective when using control and taking their time. The coach then asked participants to reflect upon why using control and taking their time allowed them to shoot more accurately and effectively. As expected, they generally responded that when shooting the 'first time' they were not given the opportunity to analyse the shooting situation, to look up and see their targets and to make adjustments to themselves so that they were in the correct position to receive the ball and shoot accurately at the targets.

Finally, the coach asked the participants to reflect on being controlled, taking their time and analysing situations before executing an action and whether this principle could be extended and applied to other areas of their lives. As expected, the participants generally responded that being controlled, taking their time and analysing situations would lead to more effective decision-making in a variety of aspects of their life. For example, some participants referred to examples where their friends ask them to participate in something that is wrong, such as drinking alcohol or smoking. By not being controlled and analysing the situation some participants reflected that they were more vulnerable to peer pressure and thus more likely to engage in such behaviours, but if they were controlled, took their time and analysed such 'wrong' behaviours, they would be more likely to make the 'right' decision of not engaging in such acts. Using football as an analogy, the 'Seedbeds of Peace' programme also sought to develop the life skills of prudence, problem-solving, creative thinking, critical thinking, effective communication, interpersonal relationship skills, self-awareness, empathy and emotional regulation. These life skills have been identified by the World Health Organisation as the necessary aptitudes required for effectively developing and facing life. According to the Foundation Chief Executive, participants required these skills because, we were aiming to strengthen their value system, but we realised that the kids did not have

the tools at their disposal in order to behave morally. For example, in order to choose to not participate in crime, our kids need to have other options in life.

### **Moral Dilemma Reflections**

It was also observed across many sessions, groups and coaches that football was further used to discuss and reflect upon moral dilemmas. Some 'Seedbeds of Peace' sessions were dedicated to football matches, utilising the standard rules of the game whereby the group was divided into teams and rotations so that all teams played each other. Experiences during these football matches were used to discuss and reflect upon moral dilemmas. At the end of all the matches, before the end of the session, the coach called the group together to reflect upon moral dilemmas related to a specific value. For example, following one session the coach asked participants to reflect upon honesty. He asked if a player on the defending team had last touched the ball before it went over the goal line; he, as the referee, had not seen this and incorrectly awarded a goal kick instead of a corner kick, so he questioned how should the defender

### **Life Projects**

Finally, the 'Seedbeds of Peace' programme engaged participants in year-long life projects using their chosen vehicle of change, football, as detailed in interviews with the Foundation Chief Executive. Within the context of the programme, a life project is a project that aims to improve the everyday life of their community by overcoming a social problem. At the start of the year, each group was asked to identify a social problem in their community. As described by the Foundation Chief Executive, "one of our groups were concerned about drug dealers in their community and the use of drugs by friends and classmates as young as eleven years old." According to the Chief Executive, the coach and other Foundation staff empowered participants to design and deliver a life project that would help alleviate this social problem using football as a vehicle for change, whereby a group hosted a football event for their community.

Members of the community, including parents, teachers and friends, were invited by the group to attend the event. The event commenced with football-based games and drills that the group designed and delivered in connection with messages they wanted to deliver to combat the social problem of illegal drugs. For example, there was a game that required heading the football, which was used as an analogy to accompany the message, 'use your head, don't take drugs'. Other messages included 'tackle wrong decisions', 'analyse situations to make a good move', 'score



your life goals' and 'give drugs the red card'. These messages were also painted on signs and put up around the football pitches where the event was being held. The group also made bracelets for event attendees with the messages on them, which were given out at the end of the event.

It was the intention of the Foundation Chief Executive that the life projects strengthen the moral values of participants. The Foundation Chief Executive recognised that,

*Whilst skills can be taught via a curriculum, values are internal beliefs that cannot be taught. As such, we simply wanted to provide the children with the opportunity to discuss and reflect upon moral issues and engage in moral acts to benefit others.*

According to the Chief Executive, the life projects provided such an opportunity by encouraging participants to think about problems they faced not just by themselves but also by others in their community. The life projects also provided a platform to discuss moral issues. As observed in several sessions, participants were asked to reflect upon how they could help others and why they should help others. In the process of choosing a social problem, participants were asked to reflect upon the causes of a social problem and the choices of actors within that social problem. They were asked to reflect upon whether the behaviours of actors linked to the social problem were right or wrong, moral or immoral and to reflect upon why this was the case. According to the Foundation Chief Executive, such discussions provided an opportunity for participants to strengthen or redefine their moral values. The Chief Executive reflected that,

*The life projects serve to reinforce strengthened or redefined moral values by putting participants beliefs into actions, so that they could experience the feelings associated with helping others and acting in a moral fashion.*

## DISCUSSION

By focusing on sport mechanisms, as Coalter advocates,<sup>11</sup> rather than conditions<sup>13,6,14</sup>, it has been possible to provide a vivid description of a previously undescribed role of sport in social change, which can be described generally as 'sport as an analogy'. An analogy is a comparison between things that have similar features in order to help explain a principle or idea. The 'Seedbeds of Peace' programme designed football so that comparisons could be made to other contexts so to teach life skill principles and reflect upon moral dilemmas. Specifically, with the life skills curriculum, a football-based game or drill is designed to reflect a principle

or idea associated with a life skill. Through the football-based game or drill, it is intended that participants will gain an understanding of the principle or idea as it relates to football. Following the game or drill, participants are asked to reflect on what they have experienced and to articulate the principle or idea. Once coaches infer that participants have understood the principle or idea within a footballing context, they ask participants to reflect upon other contexts where that principle or idea would be important and useful to them. Through a well-designed game<sup>13</sup> that delivers a clear principle or idea, it is intended that participants will be able to identify how the principle or idea can be applied in other contexts.

Football has the potential to work effectively as an analogy for social change for several reasons. First, as already well established in the SFD literature, sport serves as a hook to engage target groups.<sup>19</sup> Football is the sport that Colombians are most passionate about, so it follows that it should work effectively to hook participants. However, unlike Green's category of sport as a hook, which relies on non-sport processes for development once sport has worked as a hook, football also serves as the analogy, so to achieve development. Sport works well as an analogy because, if well designed, it is fun and meaningful. For example, without the use of football as an analogy, teaching the principle of stopping and thinking in order to problem solve is highly abstract and thus has limited associations that participants can make in order to learn the principle. It is suggested that using sport can take abstract concepts and apply these concepts using the rich content of sport, so that deeper learning occurs.

The finding that sport can be used as an analogy in an attempt to achieve social change speaks to the flexibility of sport, rather than the romanticised notions that sport is blessed with inherent properties that will achieve social change.<sup>7,11</sup> In order for sport to function as an analogy it has to be well designed<sup>13</sup> and intentionally designed.<sup>14</sup> However, the use of sport as an analogy was only identified when analysing sport mechanisms for social change, as Coalter advocates,<sup>16</sup> rather than analysing the conditions that sport needs to meet in order to deliver social change.<sup>6</sup> This mechanism was discussed within a broader programme theory,<sup>17</sup> whereby sport served as a hook<sup>19</sup> but also as an analogy so to take a Plus Sport approach,<sup>18</sup> and functioned as both a necessary and sufficient conditions for social change.<sup>11</sup> Although the effect of sport as an analogy on life skills was not tested, this study shows that the use of analogies creates clear links between sport and life skills; participants are likely to be more effective in developing life skills than if they had simply participated in sport.<sup>28,29</sup>

## Research Implications

This study established a way to use sport in development that had not previously been articulated within the academic literature, which adds to the number of ways that SFD practitioners can leverage sport for social change. Rather than simply using sport as a hook,<sup>19</sup> sport can now be used in a more integrated manner that increases its influence within a broader system of change. Within the 'Seedbeds of Peace' programme, sport was still utilised to engage a target group, but the engaged sport was also designed to teach life skills and redefine moral values. Using sport as an analogy provides a flexible tool whereby sport can be intentionally designed<sup>14</sup> to deliver a potentially unlimited number of messages and principles that, in turn, can contribute to a potentially limitless number of social outcomes. As such, sport's ability to engage no longer just gets participants in the door, but it can be used to engage participants in the components that impart the desired change. For example, Walker et al.,<sup>25</sup> described the use of a Premier League football brand to engage unemployed youths in employability training. The sport brand was used to 'sign up' participants, but after the sign-ups, that generic employability training was used to achieve the employment outcomes. In contrast, 'Seedbeds of Peace' engaged participants with football, but also kept participants engaged in the wider processes designed to develop life skills and redefine moral values.

## Limitations

This study only analysed the mechanisms and processes of 'Seedbeds of Peace', rather than measuring its effect. As such, it is not possible to draw conclusions on the effect of utilizing football as an analogy. Rather, this study only describes the untested mechanism of using sport as an analogy. The practical implications of this study would be greater if 'Seedbeds of Peace' was found to have a significant effect on participants learning life skills and redefining moral values. Such a study could be conducted via a quantitative experimental design where these significant effects were mapped against the mechanism of football as an analogy in order to instil greater confidence in the ability of sport as an analogy to contribute to social change.

## Future Research

This study has highlighted a previously unarticulated sport mechanism for social change, but there are likely many other sport mechanisms still to be defined within the

academic literature. Further case study research of SFD programmes may identify further sport mechanisms to add to the toolkit of S4D practitioners. Also, so to complete the picture of the 'Seedbeds of Peace' programme, future research is needed to understand its effect as well as the processes by which it operates. A longitudinal quasi-experimental study is already underway, measuring the life skills and values of participants. Comparator groups within the 'Seedbeds of Peace' that use alternative vehicles for change (e.g., music) and also control groups not in receipt of any intervention have been established in order to measure the effectiveness of both 'Seedbeds of Peace' and also sport as an analogy in relation to other vehicles of change. If a statistically significant effect of 'Seedbeds of Peace' is found, there can be greater confidence in the use of sport as an analogy. In comparing the use of sport with other vehicles of change, it may be possible to isolate the effect of sport by holding all variables other than the vehicle of social change constant. In mapping mechanisms to differences in effect, greater understanding of how sport works in social change can be achieved, overcoming limitations of the SFDT<sup>6</sup> that proposed conditions equally applicable to other vehicles of change.

## CONCLUSION

The Conconcreto Foundation has leveraged Colombians' passion for football in an attempt to tackle the lingering problem from the illegal and violent culture created by Pablo Escobar and the Medellin Cartel. The 'Seedbeds of Peace' Programme designed football so that comparisons could be made to other contexts; such a design also taught its participants life skill principles and how to reflect upon moral dilemmas by using football as an analogy, which has not previously been discussed in the academic literature. Articulation of this sport mechanism has extended understanding of how sport works for social change beyond sport as a hook,<sup>19</sup> adding to the toolkit of SFD practitioners.

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## Original Research

# Levelling the playing field: Human capability approach and lived realities for sport and gender in the West Indies

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## ABSTRACT

Understanding the role of gender in sport for development and peace (SDP) has sparked new and critical research recently, aligning with the focus on gender equality in the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Researchers tend to explore gender in terms of how girls and women access and experience sport. The academic literature often describes sport participation for girls as a form of empowerment, but fails to critically examine the masculinised, heteronormative framework of sport and rarely includes the voices of girls and boys together.<sup>1</sup> This unique study is the first to apply the human capability approach (HCA) to explicitly investigate gender role attitudes from the perspective of boy and girl participants in SDP. We believe it is vital to include voices of all participants to more critically examine how SDP might both challenge and reinforce restrictive gender norms.

This paper is drawn from a research project for a doctoral thesis in Development Studies and focuses on adolescent participants, youth coaching trainees, programme facilitators and government administrators involved in SDP programmes in Barbados and St. Lucia (n=104).<sup>2</sup> The primary author conducted surveys, focus group discussions, interviews and journaling to gather the data presented here and in the thesis. Using the HCA as a theoretical framework, we argue that these SDP programmes tend to integrate participants into masculinised, heteronormative forms of sport that may unwittingly reinforce restrictive gender norms for both boys and girls. In order to better

support the capability development of all participants, SDP leaders must actively challenge restrictive gender role attitudes of masculinity and femininity.

## INTRODUCTION

### An Illustration

Cricket ovals across the West Indies are often considered hallowed grounds. Upon these pitches, legendary men have bowled, batted and sprinted their way to glory. Cricket champions such as Sir Garfield Sobers are lauded and memorialized with statues and roundabouts named in their honour. Missing amongst these sporting heroes are the names of women cricketers. Women in the West Indies were excluded from regional and international competitions for decades and only recently rose to international success. First brought by the British in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, cricket is an iconic masculine sport and a vivid legacy of colonialism in the region, rooted in a history of exclusivity by race, class and gender.<sup>3,4</sup>

Against this historic backdrop, the following story unfolded. Children from the Sport for Life (SFL) programme gathered on the pitch at Kensington Oval, Barbados' premier cricket grounds. SFL is designed to support adolescent children in developing their academic, computer, life and sporting skills. Children from ages 12-17 were spread across the pitch on this day. In one area, about ten children arranged themselves in a circle around a coach. The coach, a male volunteer, conducted a drill by batting each player a ball so that

**Keywords:** sport for development; sport for social change; gender; human capability; Caribbean; West Indies; sustainable development goals

he or she could catch it and toss it back. Only two out of the participants in this drill were girls. The goal of the drill was to catch it ten times consecutively as a team. However, each time the group had built momentum, catching it several times in a row, someone dropped it. Most often, the person who dropped it was a girl. The boys began to grumble and complain, without overtly blaming the girls for the errors. Eventually, both girls abandoned the drill and drifted off to the margins of the pitch. There, they began turning cartwheels, danced and laughed.

What can this story tell us about sport, development and gender in the West Indies and beyond? It illustrates the imbedded inequalities when a game such as cricket is passed down from father to son for generations, but daughters are rarely invited to play.<sup>3,4</sup> Can SDP work effectively to challenge restrictive gender role attitudes within such a rigidly gendered context? Many SDP scholars are now asking this question.<sup>1,5-8</sup> This problem was present throughout the study and is reflective of a growing concern in SDP research that “integrating girls and women into patriarchal sport structures can diminish the impact of sport benefits or even reinforce gender norms by requiring female participants to adapt to programmes designed for males.”<sup>9</sup> (p.1921) In this illustration, the girls adapted by leaving the structured sport and creating their own space to play.

## Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to better understand how gender role attitudes are experienced, challenged and reinforced within the context of SDP in Barbados and St. Lucia. Using the HCA and applying a gender lens across our study, we critically examine SDP from the perspective of both boy and girl participants, peer mentors/coaches and programme leaders. In doing so, this study contributes original research to the growing body of critical literature on gender in SDP by applying an HCA model for the first time in this field. SDP is a version of development in which sport and related physical activities are used to help support specific development objectives, such as the UN SDGs. SDP programmes can be found across the globe and focus on engaging with participants on issues of health, sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR), economic development, academic support, social inclusion, employability skills and more.<sup>10,11</sup> While much of the existing research on SPD highlights the positive development benefits gleaned from participation in sport programmes, critical scholars describe such SDP literature as overstating these positive effects and are now calling for more in-depth and critical research to challenge such

claims.<sup>1, 10-13</sup> According to Coalter and Taylor, sport for development programmes that reduce social and economic ills are often “vague and lack theoretical and policy coherence . . . and [are] overly romanticized.”<sup>11</sup> (p.1374)

## Examining Gender

### *Conceptualising Gender in SDP*

In this study, we have built upon the work of feminist theorists from the fields of philosophy, gender studies, development studies, sport studies and SDP. Recently, a wave of SDP research has called for a more critical approach to examining gender, claiming that the field is rooted in a binary-based, heteronormative framework that overlooks ways in which sport reinforces restrictive gender norms and roles.<sup>1, 5-9, 14-17</sup>

This debate unfolded in the field of development studies over the past decades, as many feminist theorists (e.g., Ester Boserup) argued that development efforts focused on integrating girls and women into existing male-dominated structures. Such an integrative (gender *in* development, GID) approach has been largely abandoned by development scholars and replaced with a more complex gender *and* development (GAD) approach. A GAD perspective recognizes that without fundamental and transformative change to existing hegemonic systems and structures, true progress toward gender equality is limited.<sup>18-20</sup> This study draws from research in SDP and development studies and answers the call to examine gender role attitudes in SDP with a more critical eye.

We conceptualise gender as a social construct, developed through social practice and governed by a power dynamic that privileges men and subjugates women.<sup>21</sup> Gender is fluid, relational and non-binary.<sup>1</sup> It is not determined by biological sex nor does it function as a fixed reality, but rather a social process experienced, performed and interpreted.<sup>8,22,23</sup> We posit that the utilitarian notions of gender as fixed and binary are harmful in SDP, marginalising girls, women and those who are non-gender-conforming while also constructing a restrictive ideal masculinity.<sup>24</sup> This paradigm prevents boys and men from working together with girls and women to promote gender equality for all. Further, we examine the heteronormative culture of sport, which positions heterosexuality, traditional gender roles and sexual division of labour as the normal or natural way of being.<sup>23-26</sup>

This study questions how sexual divisions of labour in sport were and are generated and how they are practiced today in the context of SDP in the West Indies. In the cases studied here, we explore a West Indies masculinity based on heteronormative, machismo expectations of boys and men in sport and the domestic sphere. Sport in the West Indies has a long tradition of representing an iconic masculinity expressed as strength and aggression with rigid gender divisions.<sup>27</sup> For example, the “Windies,” (West Indies unified men’s cricket team) has historically represented a challenge to the colonial past with speed bowlers and strong batsman cheered on as they faced the English and other Commonwealth foes. Yet the Windies women’s team did not compete in the cricket World Cup until 1988, 15 years after the first women’s cup was held.<sup>28</sup>

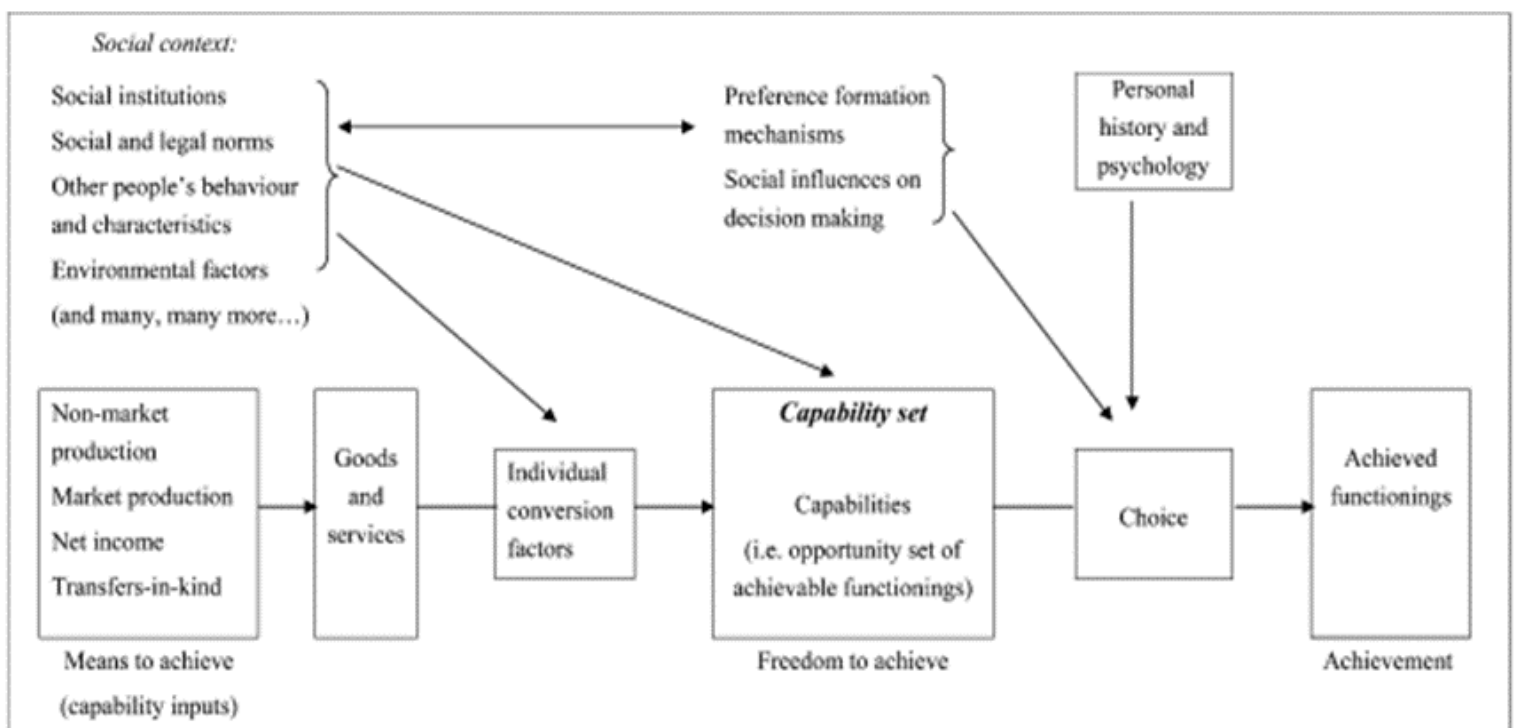
### Applying the Human Capability Framework

The HCA was drawn from amongst Amartya Sen’s pivotal work<sup>29</sup> and built upon by Martha Nussbaum<sup>30</sup> and Ingrid Robeyns.<sup>31</sup> In particular, the HCA explicitly focuses on capabilities, or possibilities, rather than functionings, or outcomes. A person’s capabilities, or “real opportunities to do and be what they have reason to value,” are the core of this approach.<sup>31</sup> (p. 1) In 2017, SDP scholars Darnell and Dao<sup>32</sup> and Svennson and Levine<sup>33</sup> examined various SDP programmes and contexts through the HCA framework. In

2016, SDP scholars gathered for a research symposium. Amongst the outcomes was a call for research built out of development studies, using theoretical concepts such as the HCA.<sup>32</sup> However, to date, no SDP research using the HCA has explicitly focused on gender.

This study, rooted in development studies theory, is a timely contribution to the research trends in SDP. The HCA, as a theoretical framework, provides a useful platform to critically examine the experience of SDP participants without relying on outcomes based monitoring and evaluation techniques; such techniques tend to mask or de-emphasise limitations, risks and challenges of traditional SDP programming.<sup>32</sup> To better define how the HCA is applied to our study, we have built upon the work of Ingrid Robeyns, a development studies, philosophy and ethics scholar. Robeyns’ dynamic model of the HCA (see figure 1) helps to define how *capability inputs* are converted to *capability sets* and *achieved functionings*, the main elements of the HCA framework.<sup>31</sup> (p.98) In this specific study, we examined “positive gender role attitudes” as the capability set and “taking and accepting non-stereotypical gender roles” as the “achieved functioning.” Across this model, we applied a gender lens, questioning how larger social norms and institutions support challenge or mitigate the capability developments of positive gender role attitudes.

Figure 1 – Robeyns’ HCA model <sup>31</sup> (p.98)





A key concept of the HCA is preference formation or adapted preferences. Sen contends that preferences are formulated by formal and informal social and cultural influences as underlying factors that govern behaviour in unforeseen ways.<sup>29</sup> In this study, we apply the HCA to explicitly examine how gender roles and norms influence capability development and preference formation. We unpack how specific elements of each programme and its setting influence the capability development of positive gender role attitudes.

The HCA is uniquely situated to examine the process of converting resources into opportunities within the context of complicated social influences and personal preference informed by macro-environmental factors. Therefore, another advantage of this approach is that it looks at specific aspects of social contexts such as social institutions, social and legal norms, etc.<sup>31</sup> With its emphasis on macro- and micro-environmental conversion factors, the HCA framework is ideal for examining the formal and informal norms of neo-liberal societies. We follow a definition of neo-liberalism from SDP scholar Mary McDonald who argues that SDP is often misguided by the belief that with the right kind of intervention and support, girls and women will overcome everything from poverty to gender inequality to poor health if they are able to develop their economic abilities and cultural competencies. She defines neo-liberalism as follows:

*Used here neoliberalism refers not just to economic principles which privilege free markets and privatization while eroding state expenditures related to social services for the poor and marginalized communities. Rather, neoliberalism also signifies a shifting regime of thought and action, which produces subjectivities dedicated to promoting self-reliance, personal transformation, individualism, and economic efficiency as ways to solve broader social ills.* <sup>6(p.911)</sup>

As an explicit challenge to neo-liberalism, the HCA framework supports the kind of holistic research called upon to by SDP scholars such as McDonald, criticising the neo-liberal influences that often deny or overlook the systematic and structural inequalities that disadvantage and subjugate groups of people.<sup>6</sup> Such influences include inequalities within the education system and curricula that commodifies education, often at the expense of health and physical education classes.<sup>34</sup> Historically, international SDP has been a Global North to Global South movement with athletes, NGOs and sport organisations from Europe and North America developing sport-based interventions in impoverished countries and communities (most often in

sub-Saharan Africa). These relationships reflect deeply troubling colonial histories and may reinforce long-standing dependencies whilst overlooking important socio-cultural norms, such as gender roles.<sup>6,12,13</sup>

### The West Indies Context

Studies in the field of SDP often omit the complex social and economic environment in the postcolonial West Indies. Beyond programme monitoring and evaluation projects, few studies on SDP in the West Indies exist. As one long-time practitioner of SDP claimed, the Caribbean region is the “forgotten child” of the sport for development field.<sup>35</sup> (p.44) Still, as in the larger field, SDP in the West Indies has grown dramatically over the past 20 years. Early efforts to use sport as a development tool began in the late 1990s. The Commonwealth Heads of Government sought to include sport in larger development initiatives to combat poverty and promote youth development. Such directives were discussed over several years at the Council for Human and Social Development in Sport and were eventually integrated into youth and health policies by the regional government, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). While individual countries took their own paths, region-wide support from CARICOM, the Commonwealth Games and the Australian Sports Outreach Programme (ASOP) provided funding and guidance to the Caribbean Sport for Development Agency (CSDA). They work in partnership on local, regional and international programmes using sport-based interventions toward development goals.<sup>36</sup>

Such initiatives were deeply rooted in traditional Commonwealth sports such as cricket and football. These two sports are the centrepieces of West Indies’ sport culture today. Cricket, a quintessentially British sport, is king in the English-speaking Caribbean with football as prince. British colonial rule extended until 1967 in St. Lucia and until 1966 in Barbados. Historically, cricket in the Commonwealth represents the male, white and colonial elite. Since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, cricket clubs for wealthy whites were the epitome of exclusivity. C.L.R. James’ seminal work on cricket in 1963, *Beyond a Boundary*, describes how the sport served as a platform for challenging colonial rule.<sup>37,38</sup>

In confronting a white, elitist and colonial legacy, the sport of cricket seemingly reinforced traditional, restrictive and machismo gender norms in the West Indies. Cricket grounds, historically and today, tend to serve as platforms for the performance of traditional gender roles. Men play the sport, while women surround them in supportive roles, such as preparing meals, cheering or scorekeeping.<sup>39</sup> West Indian feminist scholars, such as Professor Eudine Barriteau

from the University of the West Indies<sup>ii</sup>, consider gender roles in the West Indies as rigidly defined and imposed, built upon male hegemonic ideals, heteronormative values and patriarchal social norms.<sup>34</sup> Cricket, in particular, vividly represents gendered divisions and identities within larger social contexts.<sup>9,40</sup> We contend that integrating girls into such sport frameworks without explicitly challenging restrictive gender norms falls short of the transformational GAD approach to development.

Today, West Indies sport is still mired in many of the same concerns about race, ethnicity and gender. Neo-liberal influences have created a tension between sport and education with an expanded black middle-class that prioritises education at the expense of supporting sport initiatives.<sup>4</sup> Other scholars conclude that sport, across the West Indies, has somewhat less cultural and economic significance than in larger, North American and European countries.<sup>41</sup> Additionally, the decline of cricket success in international competition during the 1990s and 2000s has somewhat dampened enthusiasm for the sport.<sup>4,40</sup> Although the very recent success of the men's and women's Twenty20 teams may again reinvigorate cricket as a sport of national and regional identity.

## METHODOLOGY

### Study Overview, Data Collection and Analyses

This paper examines gender role attitudes discussed in focus group discussions (FGDs), interviews and journal activities from amongst five (5) of the SDP programmes included in the larger doctoral study. A total of 104 participants are included in this analysis; 84 joined the 15 FGD sessions and 22 were interviewed. The programmes were selected because they were primarily focused on

development efforts such as education, health and employability skills; yet they also used sport as a mechanism by which to engage participants. They can be classified as “sport-plus” according to Levermore and Beacom’s descriptions rather than “plus sport” programmes, which focus on sport over development aims.<sup>10</sup> The fieldwork design and instruments were drawn from Coalter and Taylor’s 2010 SDP.<sup>11</sup>

The programmes in Barbados were A Ganar and Sport for Life (SFL). In St. Lucia, the programmes were the National Skills Development Centre (NSDC), the Court Diversion Programme (CDP) and the Junior Visionaries (JV). Four of the five programmes worked exclusively with adolescents aged 11-17, while the other (NSDC) was a sport coaches training programme for unemployed youth between 16-25 years old. The programmes varied in many ways, including their attendance requirements and gender makeup, but were all intended to serve “at risk” adolescents and youth in their communities. 61 of these participants identified as boys or men whilst 23 identified as girls or women, reflecting gender imbalances common in West Indies SDP.<sup>9</sup> Nearly all participants identified themselves as “black” or “Afro.” We have tried to further describe and explain the context of participants’ statements in the findings and conclusions sections.

Furthermore, the 22 adult participants interviewed in this study provide a different view. They were programme leaders (coaches, directors, etc.) and educators/government officials working in sport development (at national youth sports organisations). Through these participants, we can understand multiple perspectives of how sport, development and gender intersect. Additionally, 22 adult programme leaders, coaches, educators and youth sports administrators were interviewed (12 female, 10 male).

*Table 1 – Programme Participants in FGDs, Surveys and Journals*

Programme	Male	Female	Total
A Ganar (Barbados)	9	11	20
Sport for Life (Barbados)	18	8	26
Court Diversion (St. Lucia)	8	3	11
NSDC (St. Lucia)	11	1	12
Junior Visionaries (St. Lucia)	15	0	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>84</b>

ii Professor Barribeau provided research guidance on gender in the West Indies for this study

Table 2 – Adult Interview Participants

Affiliation	Male	Female	Total
Sport for Life (Barbados)	0	4	4
A Ganar (Barbados)	0	3	3
National Sports Council (Barbados)*	2	1	3
Barbados Vocational Training Board (Barbados)	0	1	1
National Skills Development Centre (St. Lucia)	2	1	3
Upton Gardens Girls Centre (St. Lucia)	0	1	1
Physical Education and School Sport (St. Lucia)	3	1	4
Sacred Sport Foundation (St. Lucia)*	2	0	2
Government Official (St. Lucia)	1	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>22</b>
*some participants were interviewed multiple times			

Interviews and FGDs were recorded, transcribed and analysed using Atlas.ti qualitative research software. Journal entries were analysed directly and coded into themes on spreadsheets. Data was organised into various themes. First order themes over the larger doctoral study included support systems, self-efficacy and social affiliation, gender role attitudes, physical activity, and body image/lived body experience. In this article, we will focus on the theme of gender role attitudes, which was coded into secondary themes of challenging traditional gender roles and reinforcing traditional gender roles.

### Ethics and Limitations

Research with children calls for specific attention to ethical issues in methodology. Researchers working with children must be aware of imposing adult perspectives on children's experiences, building rapport, validity and reliability of responses, clarity of language, research context and setting.<sup>42</sup> Many steps were taken to address these concerns. Informed consent was obtained through all programme directors, school principals and teachers whilst the children themselves provided informed assent. In conjunction with programme leaders, children were reminded that their participation was voluntary and there were no consequences for non-participation. All identities were kept confidential and names used in this article are pseudonyms. This study was designed to be participant-centred with varied and enjoyable activities. A mixed methods approach included verbal, written and abstract (drawing) data collection techniques, which allowed for students with varied communication skills to participate.

Conducting age and culturally appropriate research with children posed a limitation to this study. We were not

permitted to discuss certain sensitive topics, such as sex and dating, with the participants. Lack of female participants was another limitation, although the limited number of girls and women were able to attest to challenges of gender roles in male-dominated programmes and structures. The researcher position may also be considered a limitation, since the primary researcher is a white, adult female from the United States. It is likely that participants provided socially desirable responses and/or evaded certain topics.<sup>43,44</sup> In particular, boys may have felt obligated to express supportive views of girls in sport to a woman researcher. Although there was no explicit discussion on racial diversity amongst the participants, the unspoken racial dynamic between researcher and participants is a concern when interpreting the data collected. We addressed these limitations by participating in activities, building rapport and encouraging open discussion. We contend that the robust data demonstrates that the participants felt comfortable sharing their experiences and beliefs. Finally, we recognise that our research perspective is influenced by the Global North to Global South dynamic common in SDP.<sup>45</sup> In response, we have grounded our work on input from West Indies scholars.

## FINDINGS

### Challenging Gender Roles

*“Girls can play any sport; girls are skilled in sport”*

Boys and girls' focus groups at all programmes agreed that girls should have the opportunity to play sport. With a few exceptions (discussed in the next section), they agreed that girls should be able to play any sport that boys can play.

Across FGDs, interviews, journals and surveys, participants confirmed that everyone should have equal access to sports. In a focus group of four adolescent girls (12-14 years old) in SFL, gender roles in sport were discussed. First, the girls made it clear that they felt it was acceptable and even good for girls to have the opportunity to play any sport they choose. “I think every sport is for girls to play too,” said “Cora.” However, they agreed that many people in Barbados felt differently and the social norm was for boys to play cricket, but not girls. Although SFL was focused on the sport of cricket and was held in the nation’s premier cricket stadium, only one of the girls was very interested in cricket. Cora stated, “I don’t like cricket, but that’s just because I don’t like it,” not because it was a boys’ sport. They all agreed that the primary draw to this programme was not sport at all, and definitely not cricket. These participants were attracted to SFL primarily to access the on-site computer lab. Across all of the programmes girls were less interested in sport, considered it less of a draw to the SDP programmes, or mentioned sport less frequently in their journals than their boy counterparts.

A focus group of boys at SFL agreed (n=5, 12-14 years old), noting that girls should have access to sports just the same as boys. “A girl can play a ‘man’s sport,’ it’s all the same,” one boy stated. Although they still assigned a gender role to some sports (e.g., cricket is a “man’s sport”), they rejected the notion that any sport was off limits for girls. During one SFL session, the women’s national team from England was training at the same cricket grounds in preparation for a match against the Windies. The women bowlers drew the attention of two FGDs with boys and both groups claimed that women could and should play cricket. They also agreed that these women were highly skilled and that they would like to watch them play a match. In a different SFL group, one boy stated, “Whatever the boys are playing the girls can play. If a boy play a girls’ sport then he would get a bad name, but a girl wouldn’t really get a bad name.” In this statement, the social pressures that restrict boys’ access to all sports is clear (discussed below).

Other mixed gender groups had similar attitudes. At the co-ed JV programme in St. Lucia, a boys’ focus group (n=5, 12-14 years old) felt that girls should be able to play football and that some girls were good players while some were not good, just the same as boys. When asked if they liked playing football with the two girls in their programme, they replied positively. One boy noted that “we can teach them new things and they can teach us new things.” He reiterated this concept again later in the discussion. These groups generally felt that sport should be equally accessible

to girls and boys. A different focus group at JV later disagreed, as discussed below. Another all-boy group at A Ganar felt the same. Namely, they said that girls could play any sport and some could be good at it. One boy noted that they saw girls playing basketball on TV and that this kind of sport activity for girls was acceptable. At CDP, participants did not explicitly comment on gender roles in sport. These programmes, like the SFL groups, have contradictory statements regarding gender roles for boys in sport that will be discussed below.

“Jackie” was the only female football coach in the study. She explained how she earned “respect” from her male teammates and community over years of football competition. “They used to call me Beckham (after famous English footballer, David Beckham), but now they say I’m better than Beckham. Like him, he’s real creative. That’s how I play. I’m a creator . . . I give them the ball . . . if they can’t do it, then I’ll do it,” she said. Her story shows that she, and her male teammates, took and accepted the non-typical role of a woman as an elite level footballer.

Situating this data in our theoretical context and in Robeyns’ model (see Figure 1), several aspects become clear. First, we see that although gendered social norms in sport influence the capability set, the participants have overwhelmingly rejected those influences and developed positive gender role attitudes about participation of girls and women in sport across all methods (the capability set). Secondly, we see evidence of gendered choice formation, reflecting Sen’s adapted preferences concept. The girls were less interested in sport, particularly the masculinised sport of cricket. We contend that their preferences represent social influences on decision making, which is why they might develop the capability set of positive gender role attitudes, but not demonstrate the achieved functioning (taking and accepting non-stereotypical gender roles; e.g., playing cricket). By contrast, the boys commonly played cricket (and other sports) in their daily lives and overwhelmingly considered sport the primary draw to the SDP programmes. Further demonstrating the power of social norms on adapted preferences, the boy from SFL thought boys would get “a bad name” for playing a “girl’s sport.” This statement, and other comments delineating sports by gender, reflect the hegemonic and heteronormative frame of sport in the West Indies. The boys’ concern about appearing feminine for playing netball limits their capability to develop less restricted attitudes about gender roles.



*“Girls playing tough against boys”*

Another theme that came through strongly as a challenge to traditional gender role attitudes was girls “playing tough” against boys. Girls and women displaying physical strength and aggression on the pitch against boys is a challenge to machismo gender roles. Many coaches and programme leaders described girls as being “tough” or “aggressive.” Several statements in focus group discussions from both boys and girls, alongside their journal entries describe girls playing sport against boys with aggression and physicality, not shying away from contact. Such statements were coded as “girls playing tough against boys” and grouped under the first order theme of challenging gender roles.

Coach Jackie explained how she spent her childhood and adolescence proving herself to be just as skilled and strong as the boys she played football against. She felt they were trying to intimidate her by being especially tough and trying to “break” her legs. But she endured and believed that she earned their respect, eventually. For Jackie, playing tough was especially important because she felt it was the only way she could fit in and be respected amongst the boys. Some of the adolescent girls in SFL had similar stories, reflecting on how important it was to play aggressively and not shy away from contact. A coach at JV described the only girl that consistently attended as “aggressive,” noting that she was a skilled footballer who seemed to embrace challenging the boys. Boys at SFL, JV and A Ganar all described girls as playing tough or aggressive against boys. However, many of them felt this toughness was actually a display of poor skill.

Overall, there are conflicting aspects within this sub-theme. It seems that playing “tough” is empowering to the girls, demonstrating a rejection of gender roles and achieving the function of taking/accepting non-typical roles. However, the act of challenging these norms seems to reinforce restrictive gender role attitudes amongst some of the boys. Transformational social change is unlikely or limited because of the integrative approach (GID) of these programmes.

**Reinforcing Gender Roles***“Boys are better at sport than girls”*

Across all programmes, many boys felt that girls were either too aggressive, complained or yelled too much or were too “soft” in their style of play. The common thread among these concerns is that boys did not like playing sport with girls, a view underlined by the belief that the way girls

played was inferior. During a focus group of four adult men (18-24 years old) who had just completed the NSDC training certification in St. Lucia and were then serving as football coaches in their communities, the discussion turned to how boys and girls interact during football play. The coaches talked about how the few girls that attend play very “rough” and that the boys react negatively. The boys tended to adjust their play to the girls’ aggressiveness. One coach noted that the boys treated their girl teammates like “sisters.” Another coach stated:

*[The boys] do their training with the guys, but when they play, I have them to play with the girls. The guys cry a lot. The guys cry a lot. Coach, coach! Some girls will just look, like if they cannot get the ball they will just slide tackle you. That’s, the girls are aggressive. They are really aggressive. ... It’s not like [the boys] don’t know how to handle it. Because they play aggressive as well. They just bear in mind that it’s a girl. So sometimes, some of them get angry. And they say, ‘So they playing, don’t worry, don’t worry, I’ll play like that too ya know.’*

In this description, some conflicting elements emerge. First, the girls seem to demonstrate a challenge to gender norms by playing aggressively, such as instigating physical contact (slide tackling). In response, the boys “cry,” however the meaning of crying here was explained as complaining, rather than shedding tears. The boys also respond to the masculinised style of play from the girls by also playing aggressively. However, the coach implies that they hold back or temper their play with their “sisters” because they do not want to hurt the girls. This response then reinforces the traditional gender roles of stronger males and weaker, more fragile females.

The boys at JV in St. Lucia had some similar discussions. While they only had one girl, “Iris,” who consistently attended their football programme, they all played together without any outward tensions or disputes. But when a focus group of all boys was asked whether or not they would like more girls to join JV and play, they issued their complaints about girls playing football. “Less... it depends. They can be bossy and tell us what to do. ‘Pass the ball, pass the ball.’ If you have the ball and they want it even before you have the ball they are saying ‘pass it, pass it,’ and they are calling you.... if you don’t... oh, it’s a problem!... But if she has the ball, she won’t pass it.” The other boys in this group agreed to this description.

Another focus group of adolescent boys at SFL was asked if they liked playing cricket with girls (n=5). They responded with; “No. They’re too soft. And I like a man to do his

work and hit the ball hard.” This boy claimed he was afraid to hit the ball hard when the girls were playing. Although he was serious in his response, the group laughed a bit and joked that he maybe he wasn’t able to hit the ball any harder and that he was using the presence of girls as his excuse.

At JV, several boys stated that the girls did not pass or score as well as them. Some argued that the girls were “slower,” but others contended that it depends on which girl. They mostly agreed that girls played “softer.” But one boy countered that some girls were more “aggressive” than the boys. “Because they don’t know how to play it right,” he continued. They collectively agreed that they would prefer for the girls to play separately from the boys and that they would rather have a male coach than a female coach. When asked if they felt it was ok for girls to play football or if they thought girls should play different sports, they responded that girls should play different sports, particularly netball and volleyball.

These stories reflect the rigid gender role divisions present in sport in the West Indies and the boys’ experiences in sport seem to undermine their development of positive gender role attitudes. The girls’ play is incorrect or less skilled in their eyes. The integrative approach leaves girls marginalised, whether they adopt masculine attributes (playing “tough,” being “bossy”) or play in a more feminine way (“too soft”). The boys do not accept their non-traditional gender role, therefore the functioning is not achieved within the HCA model. Again, we argue that the positioning of girls into masculinised sport contexts is an integrative GID approach rather than the transformative GAD approach.

#### *Lack of Female Players, Coaches*

The overall lack of female participants and leaders in the SDP programmes also reinforces gender role norms. The common perception that boys are better at sports than girls is often reinforced by a lack of female role models in sport.<sup>15</sup> This notion is caught in a feedback loop – girls have less access to sport and are therefore less present as players, which, in turn, leads to fewer females evolving from players to coaches and serving as role models for future generations. This problem was talked about at length by coaching trainees, coaches, facilitators and other administrators in Barbados and St. Lucia. One coach explained that only three to five girls participate regularly in his group of 65 children. One story, from “Randall” at NSDC illustrates the problem:

*Recently, I was training a set of little boys and out of the blue this little girl, skinny as ever, coming on to the field.*

*And she was telling me, sometimes I raise my pants to my waist and when I raise my pants to my waist, they call me Coach Billygoat. So, she’s coming to me and telling me, ‘Coach Billygoat, I want to play.’ So I said, ‘where are your shoes?’ And she says, ‘I don’t have any shoes.’ ‘And you want to play? You think you can handle these guys?’ (he asked her). I asked for them to come look at their shoes and they’ve got these long studs (cleats), but she said, ‘I want to play. I want to play.’ So I had to readjust the drills I was doing to accommodate her playing.*

In order to incorporate her into the play, he had her serve as the referee. He went on to explain that she called many fouls and the boys were growing frustrated. But Randall used it as a learning point, teaching the boys that it was their role as players to adjust to how a referee calls a game. The fundamental point of this story is that there are so few girls playing, and often with fewer resources, that it may become difficult to incorporate them into normal play.

The same challenge was echoed by many of the programme leaders, coaches, youth sport administrators and educators interviewed. “Melly,” a youth sports leader in Barbados, described her efforts to create more opportunities for girls in sport as “pushing molasses up a hill.” Melly was frustrated with the lack of effort to support sport for girls and women in Barbados. She felt that structural differences in how sport is offered to males and females is likely to be both a reflection of the cultural attitudes regarding sport and gender. A male coach for the JV, CDP and NSDC programmes in St. Lucia noted that he felt a primary school he worked with actively encouraged boys to join JV, but “steered girls towards other programmes,” such as art and music.

The challenge to *transform* the playing field is made clear by this particular problem. The framework for SDP continues to be masculinised in large part because it is male-dominated. Such a GID framework discourages girls and women from joining, a reflection of their adapted preferences rooted in gender role divisions.

#### *“Boys do not play netball or gendered sport”*

By far, the most rigid gender restriction discussed across all programmes was a restriction for boys. Boys do not, or should not, play netball. Netball is a non-contact sport similar to basketball that is common in the British Commonwealth and is traditionally reserved for females.<sup>46</sup> Several coaches and sport administrators explained that opportunities for boys to play competitive netball do not exist. Adolescent boys in this study felt that playing

netball would jeopardize a boy's masculinity and call his sexuality into question. The systematic exclusion of boys from netball represents the hegemonic, heteronormative framework of sport in the West Indies that remains unchallenged by the SDP movement.

As many adolescent participants described it - basketball is for boys and netball is for girls. This restriction against boys playing netball was widely held, although some girls defended the right of boys to play. When girls from SFL (n=3, 12-14 years old) were asked if netball was ok for everyone to play, they replied, "No, no, no not for boys. Boys can't play netball. It's only for girls." When probed for the rationale behind this restriction, they struggled to articulate why netball was unacceptable for males. Here, and in other groups, they just laughed and said it was a "girls' sport."

In the same SFL programme, a focus group of five adolescent boys (12-14 years old) responded to the question, "Why can't a boy or man play netball?" One boy said, "It's a girls' sport. You can't get no man that can flip (hands) jump and catch the ball and wear a skirt to play. A man can't jump and catch the ball and do that thing (he motions a flipping of his hand, leaving his fingers dangling)." The group agreed with laughter. In another SFL focus group, this one containing three adolescent boys, they referred to boys and men who play netball as "bullas." "Bulla" is a slang term in Barbados that most closely translates to "fag," a slur for homosexual male. These boys noted that a male playing netball would get a "bad reputation" and be considered a "bulla." At the same time, a girl playing a contact sport like rugby would not be mocked in the same way. In a separate all-boy discussion group, one participant called boys who play netball "she-males."

A discussion group in A Ganar agreed that boys do not play netball (n=8, ages 12-16 years) boys (n=5) and girls (n=3). The boys agreed that they had never heard of a boy playing netball. They explained that boys play basketball, while girls play netball. When asked why, one boy said that boys will "feel funny" playing netball and girls "feel weird" playing basketball. "It's (netball) a girls' sport. You have to wear a skirt. They would say he's gay," remarked one boy. The boys in particular, insisted that the movements in netball were not acceptable for boys to do. "The sport itself looks girly, because you're jumping about," another boy stated. When asked to demonstrate these "girly" movements, this group of boys refused to do so. I asked them to describe a boy playing netball, they responded with, "gay," "fishy," "funny boy," "not in his right mind," and "gay" again. The girls in this group contended the boys'

restrictions, noting that everyone should get to play a sport they like and claiming that netball is not that different from basketball.

The intense and sometimes homophobic reaction to netball exposes the heteronormative frame by which sport is experienced and perceived. The sport of netball is integrated into this frame, making it an unlikely platform for transforming or challenging these restrictive gender role attitudes. Within Robeyns' model, the capability set is undermined by these social influences and the boys' preferences to avoid playing netball is rooted in a heteronormative masculinity. Boys and most girls are unwilling to accept or take on a gender role that violates this rigid social norm.

*"Girls playing sport are too masculine"*

Another code present under the theme of reinforcing gender roles was the notion that girls playing sport are too masculine. Both boy and girl participants indicated this concern. At the mixed gender A Ganar focus group, one girl described girls playing football as "mannish" and "tomboy." A boy responded by saying that if she were good at playing, then it would be fine for her to play. Boys in several FGDs at SFL felt similarly. They said a girl who played football well would seem more like a boy, but if she was "really good," then that would be "ok." This notion aligns with Jackie's experience as an elite footballer. Another boy noted that girls who play contact sports are often girls that "strut," implying they behave in an overly masculine way. They also noted that girls should not play sports like rugby because they are "too rough."

All coaches and administrators agreed that it was beneficial for girls to play sport. However, some believed that when females started playing at higher levels, they were considered increasingly masculine. A male administrator from the Barbados Sports Council explained that girls get stigmatised as manly or even homosexual as they compete at higher levels. As she gets better, others will have "the perception that she is like a boy." He added that "some of these girls are dressing in football in a "manly" style. Some of the girls may not be that way. Some may." Being "that way" was a reference to these girls potentially being homosexual. Another coach described a high level female footballer, who was coaching youth programmes, as too "manly." He explained how she had recently adopted a more "feminine" style to her hair, dress and how she "carried" herself (citing a less "aggressive" communication style). He was pleased with her changes and felt she could be a better role model for girls this way.

Each of these accounts, from youth participants and coaches, describes how girls and women in sport are trapped within a heteronormative, masculinised framework for SDP. These restrictive social influences mediate both the development of positive gender role attitudes and the choices girls and women make. With a lack of women role models in sport, the crux of the problem described here is how to develop the talent of girls and women in sport within the confines of this integrative, GID model?

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

We conclude that the SDP programmes in this study generally take an integrative approach (GID) rather than a transformative one (GAD). That is, they incorporate girls into existing masculinised, heteronormative, neo-liberal sport models with the hopes that this will inherently challenge restrictive gender norms and attitudes. This integrative approach undermines the development of positive gender role attitudes, as reflected in Robeyn's model.<sup>31</sup> Gendered role restrictions in sport negatively influence preference formation, guiding boys toward socially appropriate masculine roles (e.g., basketball over netball) and girls towards the same (e.g., away from cricket). The integrative approach tends to reinforce the belief that girls are inferior to boys in the sporting context, as it dismisses the profound influence of cultural norms and accessibility to sport that may limit the opportunity for girls to develop skills to stay on par with their boy counterparts. Our conclusions align with researchers such as Bruce Kidd, who argues the following:

*...rather than being an 'innocent' pastime, modern sports reinforce the sexual division of labour, thereby perpetuating the great inequality between the sexes and contributing to the exploitation and repression of both males and females.*<sup>47(p. 210).</sup>

The story of the girls at SFL struggling to keep up with the cricket drills, but happily and skillfully engaging in gymnastics on the side lines, reflects our analysis. The vision of the girls, unable or unwilling to fit in to the form of sport offered at SFL (cricket) and exiting the lesson to make their own space to explore sport, movement and their kinetic bodies, is a small rejection of the established hegemonic structure. It was emblematic of the larger problem of trying to challenge gender norms in an inherently gendered system. The boys' whole-hearted rejection of netball, and the girls' agreement on the issue, clearly illustrates this problem as well. Although the sport programmes fell short of wholly rejecting many gender role attitudes in sport, they did succeed in other ways. They explicitly expanded the

opportunities for girls to function outside of typical gender roles by giving them the opportunity to play cricket and football, which is an empowering experience for the girls.

For the most part, both the boys and girls seem to have adapted their life choice preferences to take roles that conform to social expectations, even though they are generally willing to accept non-traditional roles in theory. One explanation, which demands further research, is the lack of role models available to demonstrate non-typical roles. Lack of female role models is a common problem in SDP, yet critical research on this topic is lacking.<sup>15</sup> We found that efforts to create more women coaches flounder under the existing social and structural constraints. Women sporting role models may also be held to heteronormative ideals, with pressure to balance their leadership in sport with a "feminine" appearance and approach. The discord lies in the fact that the sport systems are led by and designed for men functioning in traditional gender roles. Within these systems, true and effective transformation of gender norms is difficult.

Challenging gender norms in SDP must not rely solely on expanding femininity in a way that includes sport. Just as importantly, SDP organisers must consider how they can challenge hyper-masculinity in sport. For example, we found that hope lies in the experience of the NSDC coaching trainees. As these young men discussed their experiences coaching, they emphasised how important it was for them to encourage girls and boys to respect each other as teammates and learn from each other. Engaging with and supporting men to coach as allies to promote positive gender role attitudes can help transform the hegemonic framework of sport for development. We found the HCA model a useful tool in better understanding the intersection of sport, gender and development and call for more research using the HCA model to critically examine gender roles, masculinities and role modelling.

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## Original Research

## Immediate outcomes and implementation of a sport for development coach education programme in Belize

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### ABSTRACT

While sport for development programmes can be found across the globe, there is a gap in the literature describing and evaluating programmes that have been proven successful in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). The Belizean Youth Sport Coalition was a two-way coaching exchange project that spanned three years. The goal of this project was to promote positive youth development and social change through sport in the small Central American nation of Belize. The purpose of the current study, which is part of a larger ongoing evaluation, was to assess the immediate outcomes of the education programme provided to 33 youth sport coaches in the first year of the project as well as their subsequent implementation. Multiple data sources indicate the education programme was effective in terms of participants': (1) satisfaction with the training, (2) content knowledge, (3) attitudes and beliefs, and (4) capacity to implement the contents of the education programme. This study contributes to the sport for development literature by highlighting the important relationship between coach education and programme implementation. Moreover, it contributes to the literature on programmes that have been proven feasible and culturally relevant in the LAC region.

### INTRODUCTION

The number of organisations sponsoring Sport for Development and Peace (SDP) programmes around the world has increased steadily in recent decades.<sup>1-3</sup> These programmes vary in their approach and focus. Some are

designed to promote cultural exchange and understanding,<sup>4,5</sup> while others are meant to foster social change by addressing issues such as violence and drug trafficking.<sup>6,7</sup> While such programmes are sponsored on all continents, academic literature describing and evaluating programmes in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) remains sparse.<sup>8</sup> While the treatment of SDP programmes in the LAC region has increased slightly in recent years, this literature remains insufficient given the need and the amount of programming delivered. To this end, the current study describes and evaluates a coach education programme that was part of a larger SDP project recently conducted in Belize.

Formerly British Honduras, Belize gained its independence as a democratic nation in 1981 although it remains connected to the United Kingdom as a member of the Commonwealth. This small nation shares many struggles with its neighbours throughout Central America including high incidences of drug trafficking, interpersonal violence, and gang activity.<sup>9</sup> However, Belizean culture is also strongly linked to the Caribbean because it is situated on the coast, which includes many small islands, and is framed by a substantial portion of the Meso-American reef. It is the only Central American nation where English is the official language, although Creole and Spanish are commonly spoken. For these reasons, Belize is a particularly interesting cultural context to examine SDP initiatives that may inform others in the LAC region.

**Keywords:** coach education; teaching personal and social responsibility; sport for development; programme implementation; Belize

## Belizean Youth Sport Coalition

The Belizean Youth Sport Coalition (BYSC) project was funded by the U.S. Department of State's Sports United programme<sup>10</sup> from 2013 to 2016. The goal of the BYSC was to promote positive youth development and social change through youth sport. Due to the small size of Belize, limited infrastructure for youth sport, and lack of capacity in many youth serving organisations, a key strategy in the BYSC was to bring together coaches and administrators from various organisations to form a coalition with a shared mission.<sup>11, 12</sup> The hope was that these organisations could support one another, share expertise, and develop a critical mass sufficient to influence the culture of youth sport programming in Belize.

The BYSC project was guided by the following goals: (1) to increase member organisations' effectiveness in promoting youth development and social change through sport, (2) to increase coaches' knowledge, confidence, and skill in using empowerment-based coaching strategies, and (3) to create the capacity within the BYSC to sustain and expand activity after the initial funding period. This training programme was designed to yield outcomes related to participant satisfaction, learning and behaviour as well as institutional changes. The major components of the BYSC project included administrator training to foster organisational change, coach education to influence practice, ongoing consultation to support top-down and bottom-up change, coalition expansion, and the development of sustainable local capacity.

In conversation with the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy at Belmopan, we recruited a Belizean woman who worked in a youth-focused government department to serve as our In-Country Coordinator (ICC). The ICC's role was to facilitate logistics and assist, as a cultural insider, with networking, gaining access, and building trust as we approached Belizean organisations about joining the coalition. We initially recruited five organisations to establish the coalition including city government, national government, and non-profit entities that operated youth sport programmes as part of their mission. Once engaged in the project, directors from these five organisations provided further input on the development of the project. One of these directors, in fact, volunteered to take on the role of a cultural advisor for the project. This individual, also a Belizean woman, was uniquely suited to this role as she had been involved in Belizean sport her entire life, including leadership roles. She also lived in the U.S. where she earned a doctoral degree in sport management. Therefore, she was uniquely suited to advise on cultural and contextual

differences. Her involvement and buy-in also helped to establish credibility and trust for the American team among Belizean participants.

By the end of the three-year grant, 28 organisations joined the BYSC and sent staff and/or administrators to trainings. Members came from offices and departments in the national government (e.g., Department of Youth Services in Belize's Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports), city government (e.g., Belize City Council, Youth and Sport Office), higher education (e.g., University of Belize, Athletics), and the non-for-profit sector (e.g., YMCA of Belize). Regarding social issues, representatives from most organisations wanted to address inter-personal violence. For example, they reported wanting to help youth develop the self-control and decision making skills to help them avoid and/or resolve conflict peacefully. Using sport programming as a vehicle to teach such life skills was seen as a feasible way to achieve this by BYSC members.

In total, 129 individuals visited the U.S. for training: 12 administrators; 108 coaches, teachers, and youth workers received coach education; and nine individuals were trained and certified as BYSC coach trainers to serve as local leaders. A more comprehensive description of the project can be seen in Wright and colleagues'<sup>12</sup> book chapter. An empirical article describing the transformational learning experiences of highly engaged Belizean partners has also recently been published.<sup>11</sup> While these publications and forthcoming studies report on different aspects of the project, the current study specifically examines the education programme delivered to Belizean coaches in the first year and their capacity to implement what they learned.

## Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility

The Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility (TPSR)<sup>13</sup> instructional model was a central feature of the coach education programme. TPSR is an empowerment-based approach that was developed in practice for more than 40 years. The model uses sport as a vehicle for teaching values and life skills that can be applied in other settings. The primary goals of the model include taking on more personal (e.g., motivation, persistence, goal setting) and social (e.g., respect for others, peaceful conflict resolution, and leadership) responsibility in the programme setting and then applying these responsible values and behaviours elsewhere, such as in the school, neighbourhood or home.

Numerous studies indicate that well-implemented TPSR programmes create positive learning environments and foster responsibility in the programme setting. These



outcomes have been reported in qualitative evaluations of after-school<sup>14, 15</sup> and physical education programmes.<sup>16-18</sup> Spanish researchers conducting quantitative studies have reported improvements in a range of psychosocial variables for TPSR participants as compared to control groups of their peers in quasi-experimental studies. Key variables on these significant improvements were seen among TPSR participants including self-efficacy for self-regulation,<sup>19</sup> self-regulated learning,<sup>20</sup> and sportsmanship.<sup>21</sup> Correlational studies with youth participants have shown personal and social responsibility to be positively and significantly correlated with enjoyment<sup>22</sup> and intrinsic motivation.<sup>23</sup>

Although further research is required to better understand and assess the process by which participants transfer learning from TPSR programmes to other areas of life, studies indicate transfer does occur and can lead to improved behaviour and performance in the school setting. In fact, three published program evaluations conducted in large U.S. cities indicate, based on self-reporting, teacher observation, and indicators of school performance (e.g., attendance, disciplinary referrals, homework completion) that many students involved in TPSR after-school programs applied the values and behaviours promoted in the programme to improve their performance in the classroom.<sup>24-26</sup>

TPSR was originally developed in practice with underserved youth in urban areas of the U.S. However, it has been successfully implemented in many other countries including Spain,<sup>19, 20</sup> New Zealand,<sup>27, 28</sup> Canada,<sup>29</sup> Turkey,<sup>30</sup> Finland,<sup>31</sup> and South Korea.<sup>16</sup> A recent study on the transformational learning experienced by some Belizean leaders in the BYSC project indicated TPSR was perceived as a relevant and acceptable approach to promoting youth development through sport in the Belizean context.<sup>11</sup> In fact, the TPSR model provides a dual benefit within the context of SDP. Firstly, the coaching strategies that comprise the model can be clearly articulated and shared with local coaches who can apply them in their own coaching.<sup>32-34</sup> Secondly, the empowerment-based philosophy of TPSR, when applied with the coaches/trainees themselves, can be used to promote transformational learning through reflection on social justice issues and power imbalances.<sup>35</sup> Such an approach is strongly recommended in SDP initiatives.<sup>36</sup> In short, TPSR can be both an important feature in the content and the method of coach education in an SDP initiative.<sup>11,12</sup>

### Coach Education and Learning Transfer

It is well documented across fields and cultures that most

professional development programmes do not result in meaningful change.<sup>37,38</sup> The extent to which a “trainee” transfers the learning into practice is influenced by individual factors related to their ability and motivation as well as environmental factors such as manager/supervisor support alongside workplace norms regarding innovation.<sup>37,39</sup> Likewise, in professional development programmes related to personal and social skills, research has shown the strength of implementation is often related to the quality of the training and ongoing support.<sup>40-42</sup> Similar assertions have been made by scholars in the SDP literature<sup>43,44</sup> as well as the field of sport and physical education pedagogy.<sup>17,20,33,45</sup>

Comprehensive evaluations of SDP initiatives must address coach education programmes. We need to know, for example, whether coach education is delivered well and also if the participants understood the material, were motivated to apply it, and developed the necessary skills.<sup>41</sup> After achieving immediate training outcomes, it is then necessary to assess implementation in the context of practice to determine the extent to which the training influenced coaching behaviours and supported programme implementation.<sup>19,37,40</sup> Only after a systematic and rigorous assessment of coach training and implementation can we draw inferences about a programme’s effects on youth and communities.<sup>38,40,42</sup>

Despite the importance of coach education in influencing programme implementation and subsequent youth outcomes, this aspect of SDP initiatives is often neglected.<sup>11,46</sup> Without seriously evaluating coach education and implementation as well as the relationship between the two, scholars and programme developers are ill-equipped to interpret results related to participant outcomes.<sup>17</sup> As the corpus of SDP literature grows, there is a need for more explicit evaluation of coach education and implementation to enhance our ability to interpret findings and generate theory. Based on the preceding rationale, the purpose of the current study was to assess the immediate outcomes of the education programme provided to youth sport coaches in the first year of the BYSC project as well as their subsequent implementation.

### METHODS

This study was part of a comprehensive evaluation of the BYSC that employed mixed methods to evaluate various aspects of the project.<sup>47</sup> It was reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board for research ethics at our university. Our evaluation approach aligned with the notion of utilitarian pragmatism<sup>48</sup> as it assessed the education

programme relative to its stated goals as evidenced by concrete and practical outcomes. Our approach was also influenced by realistic inquiry<sup>49, 50</sup> because it was designed to meet the needs of a particular programme in a contextualised manner with the data that were available and/or feasible to attain. With this approach we tried not only to determine if the programme was “working”, but for whom and under what circumstances.

Multiple methods were used to assess the coaches' satisfaction with the training as well as its impact on their knowledge, attitudes and beliefs. Data were collected before, during, and after the training programme. At a four-month follow up, data were gathered to assess how well the education programme had prepared coaches to implement the strategies and best practices it promoted. The evaluation plan and procedures were shared with the ICC and cultural advisor prior to the training so they could comment on instruments and data collection procedures to ensure there was no unintended bias related to personal characteristics such as gender, political affiliation, or local issues unknown to the American team.

### Participants and Setting

Participants included 33 Belizean coaches (23 male, 10 female) from organisations that joined the BYSC in the first year. Their average age was 30.52 years old (SD 6.10). Most participants worked in or near Belize City, which is the country's largest city and is located on the coast. However, some participants travelled from more rural regions farther inland (e.g., bordering Guatemala). All participants spoke English but were of African, Creole, and/or Mayan descent. Participants attended a four-day BYSC coach education programme delivered in March 2014 at a continuing education centre in Belize City. The centre provided a large conference room sufficient for lecture, discussion and demonstration activities. Outdoor space, including a basketball court and open field, were available for demonstration lessons and practical sport activities. These lessons and activities included basketball, soccer, martial arts, physical fitness, and team building. Of these, basketball and soccer were the most commonly played sports in BYSC organisations. However, we believe there was sufficient variety in our examples to demonstrate the concepts and strategies from the training could be applied with any physical activity.

Data collection related to implementation at the four-month follow-up occurred in Belize City in July 2014 when many summer camps were operating throughout the city. Due to the high temperatures, most camp activities took place

outdoors in parks, courtyards, playing fields, and a hotel swimming pool. Across multiple site visits and meetings, the first author was able to follow up with 11 of the coaches trained in March, one-third of entire group. Eight of these participants were observed coaching or directing youth programmes.

### Overview of Coach Education Programme

Following the recommendations of SDP scholars,<sup>36</sup> we endeavoured to shape the coach education programme with local input. In setting aims for the BYSC at the grant proposal stage, we integrated input from the Public Affairs Section at the U.S. Embassy as well as conversations with several Belizeans involved in youth sport programming. At this stage, all parties agreed that it was important to make the training relevant to issues of inter-personal violence. The focus of the project, including the coach education programme, was further refined with input from the first five Belizean delegates who came to the U.S. on an exchange visit in January 2014. For example, these delegates explained that there was virtually no professional development or certification available for youth sport coaches in Belize. Therefore, they encouraged us to integrate fundamental material including how to create a positive motivational climate, coaching for skill development, injury prevention, and effective planning. Even during the four-day training programme, minor adjustments to the planned topics and schedule were made based on participant input. For example, during daily debriefing sessions, participants gave feedback on which topics or modes of practice they thought would be more effective or useful for the following day, such as replacing trainer-led presentations with participant-led action planning at the end of the week.

The training team for the March 2014 coach education included four male professors specialised in physical education and sport pedagogy, the TPSR model, sport-based youth development, and athletic training. The training team also included two consultants (one male, one female) with expertise in the TPSR model, sport psychology, community sport programmes, and sport for development. All members of the training team had extensive practical experience working with youth in their respective fields as well as university and/or professional development teaching experience. The team met prior to the course and debriefed daily throughout to coordinate their efforts, avoid gaps and redundancy across their sessions, and ensure that the curriculum was relevant and responsive to their audience.

The educational programme lasted approximately eight

hours per day. The daily routine involved registration and light breakfast followed by the first morning session, break, second morning session, lunch, first afternoon session, and finally a second afternoon session. Two educational sessions were always run concurrently so the participants could be divided into smaller groups to maximise interaction. In line with the aims of the project, several sessions were devoted to the principles of youth development and specific coaching strategies from the TPSR model. Related to social change, sessions were devoted to action planning, using sport to reclaim public space, and community organizing. Some topic areas were integrated into the curriculum based on input from the first BYSC delegates who visited the U.S. in January 2014.

Some earlier sessions relied more on lectures to introduce terms and concepts related to sport-based youth development and the TPSR model. However, these sessions maximised participant-driven discussion after the initial presentation. Other sessions were more practical in nature, such as a trainer leading a model lesson in order to demonstrate how to integrate leadership roles into a basketball practice. These practical sessions engaged participants actively and culminated in debriefing sessions that provided them with opportunities to ask questions, share insights, and make connections to their own work. By the last two days of the training, sessions became more participant-centred. For example, on the third day, several participants were invited to lead practical sessions to demonstrate their ability to implement specific coaching strategies. On the fourth day, based on participant input, some of the practical sessions were reduced in order to devote more time to action planning. This involved small group discussions and sharing among participants about their hopes for the BYSC initiative, personal goals they wanted to set for applying these concepts, and obstacles they anticipated encountering. One of the final sessions involved a process of peer election among the participants to identify leaders from within the group who would be charged with helping to organise and facilitate communication among participants after the training week.<sup>11</sup>

## Data Collection

### *Training Feedback Surveys*

Participants completed customised feedback surveys after the second day of training and again at the end of the course. The mid-training version consisted of seven forced-choice items and three open response items. The forced choice items were rated from 1=very dissatisfied to 5=very

satisfied and had to do with quality of the training (e.g., quality of training materials and balance of lecture vs. active learning). The open response items asked participants to identify strengths and weaknesses in the training including examples of content they found most applicable to their work. The final version of the survey also contained a section on training quality and another forced choice section in which participants rated the extent to which they felt the training helped them understand key topics. The 19 items in that section were rated from 1=very ineffective to 5=very effective. The final feedback survey ended with three open response items relating to the most and least useful aspects of the training and content that participants were willing to commit to applying in their work. These customised surveys were created jointly by the American training team, the ICC and the cultural advisor. Customised surveys of this type are recognised as an important data source in formative programme evaluations.<sup>47</sup> To maximize face validity and content validity, the American team vetted items and crossed them with the training curriculum to ensure that all key learning objectives were represented. To ensure that the required reading level, wording and cultural framing did not present obstacles or biases given the intended audience, the ICC and cultural advisor gave constructive feedback. The finalized surveys were approved by the aforementioned parties and have proven useful in terms of program development and research activities.<sup>11, 12</sup>

### *Self-Efficacy for Teaching Personal and Social Skills*

This validated survey was administered pre- and post-training. Prior to the first session on the first day and after the last formal session of the course, participants completed a self-efficacy survey that asked them to report their feelings of confidence for teaching personal and social skills through sport (e.g., cooperation). This eight-item scale is rated from 1=not confident at all through 10=extremely confident. This scale was drawn from the Exemplary Physical Education Curriculum (EPEC) Self-Efficacy survey.<sup>51</sup> This survey's reliability has been demonstrated by showing satisfactory levels of internal consistency and convergent and content validity.

### *Interviews*

In July 2014, the first author returned to Belize to conduct a four-month follow up. The ICC helped to identify BYSC trainees who were implementing summer programmes at that time. Based on access and availability, 11 (8 male, 3 female) participants working in eight different programmes were recruited for interviews. This subsample constituted one-third of the original trainee group. These interviews

were semi-structured and conversational in tone, typically lasting 30 minutes. Main topics addressed included recollections of the March 2014 training experience, description of the current sport programme being delivered, examples of integrating training content into coaching, barriers and facilitators to implementation, as well as recommendations to improve the training programme and ongoing support. Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim.

### *TPSR Implementation Checklist*

This checklist<sup>15</sup> has proven useful in documenting which elements of TPSR implementation are seen in practice. In the current study, it was applied in assessing demonstration lessons delivered by the training team and/or participant volunteers in March 2014. The checklist was also used on site visits in July 2014. The checklist is comprised of four sections relating to the core TPSR goals and lesson format as well as common teaching strategies and student behaviours. The teaching strategies include modelling respect, setting expectations, providing opportunities for success, fostering social interaction, assigning management tasks, promoting leadership, giving choices and voices, involving students in assessment, and addressing the transfer of life skills. Key student behaviours include participating, engaging, showing respect, encouraging others, cooperating, helping others, leading, expressing voice, and asking for help. Some of these strategies and behaviours are more common than others so together they represent a range of indicators to describe and assess the extent to which a lesson aligns with the TPSR model.<sup>19, 34</sup>

### *Field Journals*

The first, third and fourth authors were part of the training team that delivered the coach education programme in March 2014. All three recorded their observations and reflections during the training week. Feedback elicited during informal conversations were also frequently documented in these journals. Generally, entries were made in the evening or morning hours (i.e., before or after training sessions). Entries were made directly into electronic files called field journals. The first author used the same approach when conducting site visits during the summer.

### *Artefacts and Documents*

Artefacts and documents were retained throughout the study. Planning documents, correspondence, the original project proposal, as well as handouts and PowerPoint

presentations are materials generated prior to the delivery of the coach education programme. Registration and attendance records, video footage and photo documentation are materials that documented the delivery of the training programme. We also retained correspondence with the ICC, reports to the funding agency, and media coverage were generated between March and July. During July, additional video footage and photo documentation was gathered.

### *Data Analysis and Trustworthiness*

Regarding quantitative data, analysis began with standard procedures for the initial cleaning and screening of survey data.<sup>52</sup> Through this process, it was found that the data were appropriate for inferential statistics. Study constructs scores were created by averaging the items related to the subscale. Descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) were then calculated to assess both the general effectiveness of the training and how well the training helped the participants understand the topics covered during the training (Table 1). Next, descriptive statistics were calculated and a paired-samples *t*-test was conducted to examine changes in participants' self-efficacy from pre- to post-training (Table 2). Cohen's *d* is presented as a measure of effective size for the *t*-test conducted. A Cohen's *d* value between .15 and .40 is associated with a small effect, between .40 and .75 with a medium effect, and above .75 with a large effect.<sup>53</sup>

Qualitative data were analysed with a combination of deductive and inductive analytic strategies.<sup>54</sup> The value of this approach has been promoted in sport-related research<sup>55</sup> and has proven useful in previous TPSR programme evaluations.<sup>11,15,26</sup> Specifically, data were organised using *a priori* codes that attributed units of meaning to key concepts of interest such as satisfaction, learning, attitudes and beliefs, transfer of learning, relevance, application, and the various aspects of the TPSR model. Once data were coded and organised, inductive analysis was undertaken to identify emergent themes and patterns within these broader categories. Higher order themes and subthemes were determined through consensus with all authors. Illustrative quotes were selected to integrate into the narrative based on how well they characterised the meaning of the various subthemes.

Trustworthiness in this evaluation was enhanced using several well established techniques.<sup>47, 56</sup> Chief among these were the triangulation of multiple data sources and methods. Member check procedures consisted of debriefing interviews with several leaders in the BYSC to share and discuss the initial interpretations of the research team.



Table 1. Descriptive statistics for post-training survey of satisfaction and understanding

Items	Mean	SD
<b><i>Training Effectiveness</i></b>		
Effectiveness of the presenter(s) overall	4.917	0.276
Organisation of the training overall	4.833	0.373
Quality of training materials	4.542	0.498
Amount of material covered	4.333	0.553
Relevance of the material to your organisation	4.625	0.564
Balance of lecture and discussion/active learning	4.667	0.553
The training experience overall	4.833	0.373
<b><i>How Participants Understood the Material Presented</i></b>		
Principles and best practice of youth development	4.565	0.496
Specific strategies to promote youth development through sport	4.792	0.406
Teaching for skill development	4.583	0.571
Motivation in youth sport	4.833	0.373
Strategies to effectively motivate athletes	4.333	0.471
Framing competition positively	4.583	0.493
Effective planning for instruction	4.750	0.433
Integrating instruction in sport skill with instruction in personal-social skills	4.652	0.476
Strategies for fostering responsibility in sport settings	4.542	0.576
Teaching for character	4.375	0.633
Fostering fun and enjoyment	4.958	0.200
Creating an inclusive environment	4.667	0.471
Purposeful warm-ups to prevent lower extremity injuries	4.696	0.460
Awareness of prevention and treatment of common sport injuries	4.435	0.924
Awareness of concussions, including prevention and response	4.609	0.642
Thinking outside of the box in designing sport/play programmes	4.667	0.471
Importance of being intentional in sport/play programmes	4.500	0.500
Using sport/play to reclaim public space	4.625	0.484
Using sport/play as a community organizing tool	4.708	0.455

Extensive peer debriefing occurred among the members of the evaluation team throughout the process. Credibility is also enhanced due to our detailed knowledge and direct experience with the project over an extended period of time.

Regarding reflexivity, we were sensitive to imbalances in power. Because members of the American training team were both delivering the program and also conducting the evaluation, they made efforts to create a climate of partnership and minimise this power differential. Specifically, the local voice was prioritised through encouraging honest feedback during structured feedback sessions within the training program as well as through member checking during data collection and analysis. Efforts were also made to establish meaningful relationships with participants in order to foster a sense of mutual respect and openness. The ICC, cultural advisor and other BYSC directors were helpful in assuring participants that their voices were valued and should be heard. Despite these proactive attempts, some participants

may have been uncomfortable sharing negative or critical perspectives due to the inherent power differential. Awareness of this potential tension informed our approach to gathering, analysing, and reporting data. The cultural advisor, in particular, was helpful as a critical friend as we discussed our findings and interpretations.

## RESULTS

Results are organised as they relate to the following outcome areas: satisfaction, knowledge, attitudes and beliefs, and implementation. In each subsection, the relevant quantitative results are presented first followed by qualitative results.

### Satisfaction

The upper portion of Table 1 displays the descriptive statistics from the training feedback survey, which assessed the general effectiveness of the training. All items assessing

the participants' overall satisfaction with the training were found to be above 4.3 (out of 5), with overall effectiveness of the presenters scoring the highest at 4.92 (out of 5). The positive quantitative ratings were highly consistent with trainer observations and feedback provided throughout the course. Open comments on the feedback surveys coincided with quantitative ratings. Participants were particularly positive about the quality of the training, the relevance of the material, as well as the social and active nature of the sessions. Regarding the quality of the training, one male participant stated, "The sessions are very informative. Instructors are well prepared and have a great knowledge of what they're presenting". A female participant shared, "I am able to be in the session and understand all the material being introduced to me. I get to participate openly and I feel comfortable with the pace that instructors are moving at". Another male wrote, "I like that the facilitators are clear in what they're saying and that they use great examples that reflects on their teachings". Although asked to identify weaknesses and make recommendations to improve the training, few individuals raised concerns. Some participants suggested more materials could have been provided and that more time would have been beneficial, but no strong patterns emerged.

Many participants made comments about the relevance of the content to their context. For example, one male participant said, "All aspects of the training are useful in the work I do from my office and especially on the field". Apparently referring to debriefing sessions that focused on participants' real life examples, a female listed one strength as, "When we had open discussions about our different experiences when it comes to the camps". Another female participant provided a concrete example of how the content would be relevant to a new role she was about to undertake. She stated, "Key points are the drills and warm-up section that I can use in my ball game with my kids as I venture into the coaching of basketball for my first experience with basketball".

In their feedback, many participants expressed satisfaction with the social and active nature of the learning. For example, a female participant wrote, "I liked the group work which allowed each and every one to be interactive and think of ways to make a sport be fun". One of her male counterparts observed, "Thus far, I like the group interactions and the information given to me because I'm building my knowledge am gaining a lot of skills that I can implement in youth development".

Some participants appreciated working as peers with people from different organisations and with people from different

areas of their own organisation. One gentleman stated that he appreciated, "Being able to connect with the people you work with of all different levels and how to interact respectfully".

## Knowledge

The lower portion of Table 1 displays the descriptive statistics from the training feedback survey, which assessed how well the training helped the participants understand the topics covered during the training. These items were all found to be above 4.4 (out of 5) with fostering fun and enjoyment scoring the highest at 4.96 (out of 5). These self-reported learning gains were supported by checks for understanding captured on video and reflected in field journals. Eighteen of the 19 topics addressed in Table 1 were mentioned in open comments on feedback surveys. The only topic not mentioned directly was concussion awareness, although general references to sport injury response and prevention were made. The topics mentioned most often were youth development, coaching strategies, and the transfer of life skills.

In their feedback, many participants demonstrated understanding of the material by applying the language and concepts in their responses. For example, one male wrote about the importance of, "Responsibility to model respectful behaviour, e.g., how you treat the kids you work with will reflect how they treat each other". A female participant explained how she would use certain activities to develop a more positive social climate in her programme, stating:

*I've learn to prepare my team to have trust and confidence in each other no matter what the situation is. The skills to create activities for you to learn each other's difference so that they can accept this difference and live in a more peaceful and minded environment for everyone.*

Demonstrating his understanding of concepts and how to frame them, one male shared, "I will apply the SMART [specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, time-bound] strategies to help youths make good goals. I will use motivation both extrinsic and intrinsic to help them to complete their goals". Finally, the transfer of life skills appeared to be a new way to frame an idea that resonated deeply with many of the coaches, which was mentioned frequently. Many coaches also used specific examples to demonstrate their understanding. A female stated, "For me (transferring) applying what you do and learn in sports you can apply those skills in your everyday life (life skill, self-control, and motivation)".

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for pre-post self-efficacy items and results of paired-samples t-tests

Factor and Items	Pre	Post	$\Delta$	t	d
<b>Self-Efficacy*</b>	<b>8.01</b>	<b>9.22</b>	<b>1.21</b>	<b>6.191</b>	<b>1.46</b>
Constructive competition	7.28	9.44	2.16		
Self-control	7.33	8.67	1.34		
Best effort	8.00	9.11	1.11		
Cooperation	8.28	9.39	1.11		
Following directions	8.17	9.28	1.11		
Compassion	8.06	9.17	1.11		
Responsibility	8.17	9.17	1.00		
Respect	8.83	9.56	0.73		

\* $p < .001$ ;  $n = 18$ 

### Attitudes and Beliefs

Table 2 displays the mean variables for all items and the self-efficacy for teaching personal and social skills construct administered at pre- and post-training, as well as change in ( $\Delta$ ) scores. The participants who completed both the pre- and post-training survey ( $n = 18$ ), on average, perceived their self-efficacy levels for the construct and all items to be above 8.6 (out of 10) upon completion of the training programme, with many of the items above 9.1 (out of 10). All items and the self-efficacy construct showed increases from pre- to post-survey administration. Results of the paired-samples t-test are included in Table 2 along with the related Cohen's d value. The increase across the self-efficacy construct from pre- to post-survey administration was found to be significant ( $p < .001$ ,  $t = 6.191$ ,  $d = 1.46$ ). Moreover, the two items that saw the largest increase after the orientation training related to constructive competition ( $\Delta = 2.16$ ) and best effort ( $\Delta = 1.34$ ); while the two factors that saw the smallest increase related to respect ( $\Delta = 0.73$ ) and responsibility ( $\Delta = 1.00$ ).

Consistent with increased feelings of self-efficacy, open responses in feedback surveys indicated varied impacts on participants' beliefs and attitudes. Many demonstrated critical reflection as well as motivation and commitment to the BYSC project. One female participant mentioned increased confidence directly and how that helped her feel empowered as a change agent. She wrote, "One of the most valuable thing that I learnt in this training thus far is building self-confidence within myself. Am sure I can go back within my community to execute what I learned for the past days". She and many of her counterparts were reflective in their responses. One male indicated the training influenced the way he would view his athletes and his role as a coach, writing:

*The most useful aspect of the training were the tools and knowledge given to me to actually connect with the kids we work with on a personal level and understand their personal situations. This will further help me know them better as a person and not just as an athlete who can help me win games.*

Regarding the belief that a coalition of youth sport organisations and coaches could make a difference, one male participant wrote:

*In Belize, our youth of today and the future needs those strategies to help us as a nation to become better in sports, social life and even on a daily basis. These strategies will help our youth/children to be better learners, respect others people as an individual as well as a culture, which will end up in positive result for us as a small country.*

### Implementation

During the July 2014 follow-up visit, the first author visited multiple summer camps and conducted interviews with BYSC administrators and coaches. At that point, 20 of the coaches trained in March had the opportunity to apply the content of the training in youth programmes, which included sport-specific camps (e.g., volleyball, basketball, and soccer), swimming lessons, recreational summer camps, a city-wide basketball tournament, an outdoor education camp, and visits to primary school physical education programmes across the country. In total, after four months, trained BYSC coaches had worked directly with 1,184 youth participants. Within their organisations, the BYSC trained coaches had been able to mentor at least 25 new coaches and eight youth leaders. Of course, these outputs do not reflect the extent to which material from the training was actually applied. In an interim report on the project submitted after the July 2014 visit, the first author opined:

*My impression is that almost all of the coaches we trained value and support the principles of youth development...Based on my observations and interviews, the most commonly used teaching strategies in BYSC programmes are modelling respect, creating a positive and inclusive environment, planning activities that allow all participants to feel successful, and discussing character or life skills. I saw some brilliant examples of fostering social interaction among students, involving youth leaders in management and instruction tasks, but those were isolated examples and need to be developed more across programmes.*

In the following paragraphs, three examples are provided that establish links between the coach education programme and changes in practice.

#### *Example One*

Two of the coaches that were interviewed and observed were Gabriele and Dale, who both worked for a government-operated sport organisation. In this capacity, they supported sport programmes and to a lesser extent physical education in primary schools during the academic year. Regarding the primary schools, Gabriele reported, “Well, we did most of the primary schools in the district, in the entire [Belize City]; roughly about 10 primary schools”. She and Dale reported that they tried to use strategies from the trainings in these lessons, but struggled because they typically did not know the students and had only one opportunity to teach them. The intent of these visits was to model best practices for classroom teachers charged with teaching physical education. However, as Dale explained, “Most of the time, the teacher leaves and I just be the teacher of the class”. Both reported they were able to implement more of the training content in their summer camps. According to Dale, “We had been working with primary school programmes, but now that the summer programmes have started, we now have the opportunity to work with some of the skills we did in the workshop”. Regarding their coaching in the summer camps, Dale reported, “I know we work on the respect aspect. You know, like, ‘your friend wants to learn too and it’s not just about you’. We try to make sure we get everybody involved”. The first author observed a soccer lesson taught by these two coaches that was consistent with their reports. In fact, during the observed lesson, they integrated an intentional activity to promote communication among the players. While this activity was well-implemented and highlighted new structures the coaches were using to foster life skills, there was little discussion or debriefing with the

players about these life skills. In an interview after the lesson, when this point was raised, Dale reflected:

*In the camp, when we were doing the specific things to achieve the particular goal of the respect, the leadership, team building, we weren’t doin’ the talkin’ part enough. I gotta be honest, that part we wasn’t stressing a lot, but that’s really what we should be stressing that part because that’s really the important part.*

#### *Example Two*

Another example of the training content being applied was seen in the context of a non-for-profit organisation. This organisation had a strong set of core values and commitment to youth development. Interviews with the programme director and coaches as well as observations made it clear that empowering strategies such as youth leadership were part of the culture of the organisation. In fact, two separate programmes operated by this organisation were observed and in both cases, teenagers who had previously participated in the programme were now serving as assistant coaches. Although such strategies pre-dated the March 2014 training, coaches reported the training had validated their approach and helped them become more intentional and explicit in integrating their core values into activities. One coach, Manny, explained:

*Basically, the way the actual training was, was basically hand in hand with what we do. The way we incorporate the actual values into the actual programme is something we were lacking. [The training] gave us the main idea of how we could actual do everything smooth, including the physical and the mental...Sometimes we were doing the physical only, and then the mental afterward, but now I’m at the point where I teach both the physical and mental.*

As a senior coach in the programme, Manny explained that he had been stressing this new approach with his peers and the youth coaches. He reported, “telling others they are not just going to teach the sport this year but the core values too”, then added, “It was my main idea for this training for this year...not to only teach the sport but to teach and learn the values of the actual programme”.

#### *Example Three*

In another government-sponsored programme focused on youth services, a model lesson was observed that integrated life skills education with basketball practice. Through observation and interviewing, it was clear that the coach,



Elijah, was directly applying strategies from the March 2014 training. In a single lesson, Elijah demonstrated all nine of the teaching strategies on the TPSR checklist. As quoted in a previous publication,<sup>11 (p.538)</sup> Elijah explained:

*In the previous year, our life skills [instruction] was very poor because we used it in the classroom setting and their attention span is very short. So we started using the TPSR model last year and our life skills turnout was tremendous.*

This success was not just a matter of changes in pedagogy, it also required organisational support to rearrange the schedule of the programme and alter the curriculum. As summarised in a field journal:

*This year, [Elijah's programme] are experimenting with teaching life skill lessons through the sport activity (i.e., purposeful drills and activities to highlight conflict resolution and communication skills). All parties involved agree the youth find this approach much more engaging and observe that attendance and retention seem to be improved over previous years.*

The examples provided above demonstrate the linkages between training and implementation. These are selected examples of stronger implementation shared for that purpose. It must be noted that other programmes were observed that showed little or no evidence of implementation. Virtually all coaches had positive recollections of the training, but only some had made systematic efforts to apply the material. Some coaches would speak enthusiastically about how much they had changed their approach, but upon direct observation only the most fundamental coaching strategies covered could be seen (e.g., modelling respectful behaviour, including all students, creating a positive climate). It was noted in a field journal in July 2014 how organisational factors were influencing the degree of implementation:

*I saw a wide range in terms of the quality of implementation of our training strategies and principles. At the organisational level, I have the impression that some have taken little action to make changes whereas others have taken concrete steps in a relatively short period of time.*

Consistent with this last point, some coaches received support to make changes related to scheduling, venue, curriculum, and coaching style. Other coaches met resistance to change in various forms. It is beyond the scope of this study to fully analyse organisational barriers and facilitators, but they did appear to influence implementation.

## DISCUSSION

A common goal in coach education is that the training content will be understood, embraced, and implemented by the coaches. However, this basic assumption is often overlooked in personal and social development programmes of all kinds.<sup>42,57,58</sup> The current evaluation underscores the key role that training effectiveness plays in motivating and preparing coaches to implement an SFD programme. Specifically, findings presented here indicate the BYSC coach education programme was well-received by participants, increased their understanding of the content and motivated them to apply it. While many external factors influenced implementation, data indicated that much of the learning was retained and applied by a subsample of participants at a four-month follow up.

Participants appeared highly satisfied with the education programme. Both quantitative and qualitative data indicated they felt it was well-organised and effectively delivered. In keeping with recommendations by scholars in the SDP field<sup>1, 3, 36</sup> we made efforts to shape this educational programme with local input and connections to the local context (e.g., focusing on issues like interpersonal violence and tailoring the programme to participants who had little-to-no previous coach training). Data indicate this approach enhanced the relevance and personal meaning for participants.<sup>42</sup> They also expressed positive feelings about the social and interactive nature of the training, which are often noted as best practices in the training literature.<sup>59,60</sup>

We agree with Spivak<sup>61</sup> that SDP programmes must provide more than technical and didactic instruction to foster meaningful change. Data presented here and in a previous study indicate that our approach did foster critical reflection and transformational learning.<sup>11</sup> At the same time, some degree of technical and didactic education was required in this case. As there is no system of training or credentialing youth sport coaches in Belize, this educational programme represented an opportunity to introduce fundamental knowledge on a range of topics to participants. Many of these related to the unique aims of the project (e.g., youth development) and others were identified as important foundational knowledge needed by Belizean coaches (e.g., injury prevention). Findings indicate participants understood the information and were able to see meaningful connections to their practice. Concrete learning experiences of this type are necessary if real changes are to be made in the realm of practice.<sup>17, 37, 41</sup>

To make the leap from professional development to changes in practice, participants must see relevance, be motivated to

apply the material, and possess the ability to do so.<sup>37, 42</sup> Feelings of self-efficacy are known to be a strong predictor of an individual's ability to execute a skill in practice.<sup>62</sup> Although the current study was based on a modest sample and lacked a control group, significant increases in self-efficacy for teaching personal and social skills were identified with a strong effect size. This indicator, combined with qualitative feedback, indicates the BYSC coach education programme was effective in increasing participants' attitudes and beliefs in ways that would support effective implementation.<sup>37, 41</sup>

Of course, the ultimate test of a training programme's effectiveness is the participants' demonstrated ability to implement its content in practice. As reported here, the reach of the BYSC programme at follow up was substantial. Not all 33 participants had the opportunity to implement youth programmes immediately, but those who did worked with 1,184 youth by July 2014. Based on direct contact with one-third of the original participants, data indicated most coaches had positive feelings about the training programme and reported that it influenced their practice. However, a deeper level of scrutiny revealed that the extent to which coaches changed their practice as a result of the training varied. While examining organisational barriers and facilitators in-depth was beyond the scope of the current study, it is clear from the examples provided that these are as important as individual factors influencing implementation.<sup>37, 39</sup>

Future research should examine organisational barriers and facilitators in more detail to develop recommendations that might facilitate implementation. Still, the findings indicate the programme helped individual coaches develop the capacity and ability to implement essential concepts and strategies. While the SDP literature is replete with programme descriptions and reports of outputs, this study makes a contribution as one of the few that provides an in-depth analysis of the immediate outcomes from a coach education programme and is able to connect them to changes in practice at follow up.<sup>17, 57</sup>

The current study also contributes to the literature by providing an example of an SDP programme that proved effective in the LAC region. Although Belize is the only English-speaking nation in Central America and has a distinct culture, it shares many features with other Central American countries as well as its Caribbean neighbours. Some features of the BYSC may inform future SDP programming in the region. We found that adopting an approach that involves local expertise and promotes critical reflection<sup>3, 36</sup> seems to have fostered transformational

learning as well as necessary technical and didactic learning.<sup>59</sup> Regarding the content of the training and our approach working with the participants, the TPSR model appears to have been an effective pedagogy. This model has been successfully applied in many cultural contexts<sup>16, 19, 28</sup> and the current study adds empirical support to its relevance in the LAC region.

In terms of the evaluation of SDP programmes, there are many calls in the literature for robust evaluation plans that start with training.<sup>42, 45, 57</sup> The current study used multiple data sources to assess a range of immediate outcomes as well as implementation.<sup>41, 47</sup> Best practices for assessing professional development and implementation of the TPSR model were employed in this study and appeared to have contributed to the rigor and coherence of the programme.<sup>17, 32, 33</sup> We recommend that future SDP initiatives that involve coach education integrate strong evaluation plans into their programme. We propose that aligning evaluation measures with the training can enhance programme effectiveness.<sup>47</sup> Finally, having an expert from the local community such as our cultural advisor to consult on the evaluation design, procedures and interpretations was extremely valuable in terms of respecting local culture, increasing credibility as well as minimizing bias and power differentials.

SDP programmes are practical in nature and idiosyncratic by design. For these reasons, we found a realist inquiry framework to be quite useful, such as focusing on questions that were most relevant to the project and feasible given the access and data we had.<sup>50</sup> We were not concerned as much with hypothesis testing as answering practical questions such as, "Is this particular programme working?" and "If so, for which participants and under which conditions?". Nonetheless, there were several limitations in the current design. First, the ability to verify findings was limited by the fact that most data were based in participant perceptions and on self-reporting. Second, even though inferential statistics were used to assess changes in self-efficacy, our ability to attribute the changes to the training programme is limited because there was no control group. Third, despite efforts to involve participants as partners, there was an inherent imbalance of power between them and the Americans who were both delivering and evaluating the programme. Despite efforts to minimise its influence and the fact that the cultural advisor never reported any major problems in this regard, this power dynamic may have impacted participant responses. Fourth, as there is little professional development available to youth sport coaches in Belize, it is possible the strong positive reactions to this programme were influenced by the fact that any such training could be appreciated as a rare and valuable opportunity, regardless of the content.

In closing, the current study describes and reports many positive outcomes stemming from an SDP coach training programme in Belize. Findings indicate the training was sufficient to enable some participants to implement the content in their work with local youth. Future studies should probe more deeply into the organisational factors that influence participants' ability to transfer what they have learned in SDP programmes.<sup>37, 39</sup> The examples of programme implementation provided in the paper illustrate how much influence is exerted by external and contextual factors. This is especially true in programmes such as the BYSC that attempt to foster both top down and bottom up change.<sup>11,12,61</sup> Such programmes must navigate organisational norms, cultural context, and local politics, which will vary by both country and region (e.g., the LAC).

## DEDICATION

This article is dedicated to the memory of our dear friend Mr. Phillip Singh of Belize. Phillip was a local advocate for youth sport and a leader within the Belizean Youth Sport Coalition from its inception. His enthusiasm, love for his country, and belief in the power of sport for development inspired us all.

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## Original Research

# The social, cultural, and historical complexities that shape and constrain (gendered) space in an SDP organisation in Colombia

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## ABSTRACT

Recent research on the role of ‘safe space’ within Sport for Development and Peace (SDP) shows that the social inclusion of young women in traditionally male sporting spaces may shift who can comfortably access and shape public spaces. Framing safe space as a social construction and a dynamic process, and drawing from six months of ethnographic research conducted in two volatile neighbourhoods with a Colombian SDP organisation, this paper will explore the social, cultural and historical complexities that shape and constrain safe space. It will argue that while the SDP organisation’s ability to adapt to change and resign control makes it accessible to the local community, the positioning of both the organisation and participants simultaneously permits the continuation of gendered space. This data is then analysed through Spaaij and Schenkels’ multi-dimensional interpretation of safe space. In conclusion, further research about the physical and psycho-social barriers that constrain females from participating in SDP programming is suggested.

## INTRODUCTION

Since the mid-1990s, Sport for Development and Peace (SDP) organisations have used sport as a method to recruit youth who are labelled as vulnerable or disadvantaged.<sup>1</sup> In addition to and sometimes in conjunction with sport, these programs provide educational curricula catered to the various issues faced by participants. Sport, Gender and Development (SGD) emerged from the SDP movement with Brady & Banu Khan’s report exploring the

relationship between the SDP movement and girls’ participation.<sup>2</sup> During this period, thoughts of improved gender relations related to girls’ inclusion in sport entered the discourse.<sup>3-5</sup> These observations led Saavedra to question the extent female participation in gender-sensitive SDP programs ‘has the power to upend what is seen/presented as ‘normal’ and [to] become a major force to social change beyond sport by challenging gender norms’.<sup>4</sup>

Top-down donors and SDP organisations were quick to note, or assume, progressive gender-related outcomes. For example, Read and Bingham, respectively representing Right to Play and UK Sport, point to anecdotal evidence of SDP contributing to the Millennium Development Goal of ‘promoting gender equality and empowering women’.<sup>5</sup> But researchers have been cautionary. They propose further research that explores how circumstances and specific sports may result in positive gender-related outcomes, acknowledges sport’s historical baggage as a colonial tool, and notes the North/South power dynamics that underpin SDPs placement within the neo-liberal world order.<sup>6,7,8</sup> Other concerns include how the ‘girl’ SDP participant is framed as either ‘empowered’ or a ‘victim’, with arguments that the SDP movement may draw heavily from Third Wave feminist and post-feminist critiques, resulting in a general and limited conceptualisation of gender and thus gender equality.<sup>9</sup>

The current SDP paradigm includes the ‘girling of SDP’, whereby there is an increased presence of female participants, specific SGD agenda’s targeting girls, and

**Keywords:** safe space; gendered space; sport; Colombia; gender and development

more research being conducted on the complexities of gender within sport and SDP as a global industry.<sup>10,11</sup> Providing a critical review of SDP literature, Chawansky exposes how girls within SDP fall into two categories as organisations either ‘allow’ girls to play in a mixed-gender environment, or ‘empower’ girls in a single-sex program.<sup>11</sup> She argues SDP takes a Western ontological perspective and consequently, the SDP movement is missing an opportunity to make concrete social change. Asking for a reimagining of gender relations within mixed-gender SDP programs, she suggests researchers and practitioners look beyond the Western hegemonic framing of gender as binary to consider the structural restrictions and realities of girls’ positions in SDP, particularly when their involvement is positioned within boys’ social privilege and a masculine-oriented SDP structure. Adding to this, Hayhurst et al. found female participants challenge gender norms in a self-defence SGD program in Uganda, but at the cost of experiencing emotional abuse.<sup>12</sup> As such, the cost attached to participants’ ‘increased self-esteem, confidence and self-defence skills’ that assisted them in challenging gender-based stereotypes, to begin with, is questioned.<sup>15</sup> Recently scholars have begun to encourage more creative research approaches, including feminist, intersectional and decolonial that question researchers’ ontological positioning and the broader power relations, which are the impetus for participants to need these programs to begin with.<sup>12, 13, 14</sup>

The term safe space has been adopted and adapted throughout history to the point that academics argue it has lost meaning, is overused, or may undermine critical thinking.<sup>15</sup> The Roestone Collective explain the concept of safety varies by context and time, noting ‘the categories of safe and unsafe are socially produced and context dependent’.<sup>16</sup> The term space is also fluid; ‘It moves and changes, depending on how it is used, what is done with and to it, and how open it is to even further changes’.<sup>17</sup> In this research, space is understood as ‘an imaginary construction reliant on ritualized forms of control’, with control coming in multiple forms such as from parents, gangs, and the government.<sup>21</sup>

Central to this paper is framing safe space as a social construction and a dynamic process, or as Gotham articulates: ‘the idea that spatial boundaries, identities and meanings are negotiated, defined and produced through social interaction, social conflict and struggles between different groups’.<sup>18</sup> For purposes of this paper, the term safe space relations will incorporate several considerations: the notion of non-physical violence in a physical space; a metaphorical space for unabated emotional expression; and, the relational negotiations constantly changing due to

internal and external players and factors (e.g. groups, government legislation, common law). It is the third aspect, here recognised as the volatile nature of the communities studied in this research coupled with the positioning of participants, community members<sup>i</sup> and the organisation that fosters an environment where participants can be ‘safe’ while experiencing risk-taking.<sup>19</sup> Viewing the term as dynamic, constantly evolving, and relational allows us ‘to understand how the people who cultivate safe spaces recognise and negotiate sometimes deeply problematic differences’.<sup>21</sup>

Safe space is well established in educational studies and social work but is still under-researched within SDP. In 2005, Brady presented a significant analysis on the relationship between SDP and safe space, illustrating the realities of challenging the normative acceptance of gendered space in society.<sup>3</sup> Gendered space refers to girls and ‘women’s lesser access to certain spaces, and the association of space with gender stratification’.<sup>20</sup> Drawing on research conducted in Egypt and Kenya concerning young women’s participation in SDP programming, Brady argues it is the characteristics of the local culture that heavily influence how space is occupied and used rather than the physical space itself.<sup>3</sup> An argument also demonstrated through Hayhurst’s research in Uganda.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, Brady notes that a young age girl’s physical mobility is limited due to cultural norms and security, and these restrictions increase with adolescence.<sup>2</sup>

Restrictions to space can be varied. For example, Spaaij and Schulenforf analyse safe space as multi-dimensional, including *physical, sociocultural, psychological/affective, experimental and political*.<sup>22</sup> These dimensions are also explored through the methodology of participatory mapping and personal geographies, where it is argued local voices are heard in the process of gaining knowledge on the physical and psychological relations within local space.<sup>23</sup> Sobotová et al. illustrate the ‘social geographic role of sport and physical activity and how they influence the use and perception of insecure or dangerous places’, concluding with an endorsement for sport as a pathway to improve local security, but noting that access can be problematic.<sup>34</sup>

Safe space is a critical issue for the SDP organisation under investigation because power and control in the neighbourhoods where it operates is continuously being negotiated by various actors such as local citizens, gangs, and the government. The positioning of the SDP organisation, as neither a strict insider nor outsider in the community, allows the organisation to play a unique role as it operates across class lines and in multiple neighbourhood

<sup>i</sup> A vulnerable community in this research is one that has experienced previous or on-going conflict (disaster), and is statistically rated below the world standard in literacy, birth rate, childhood mortality, and women’s rights, typical factors that often lead to cyclical poverty (for more on vulnerability, see, Birkmann J. Measuring vulnerability to promote disaster-resilient societies: Conceptual frameworks and definitions. Measuring vulnerability to natural hazards: Towards disaster resilient societies New Delhi, India: United Nations University Press: 2006.

zones while providing community members with opportunities to do the same. As such, it has become a rare instigator for safe space relations in the community.

The SDP organisation under investigation allows girls to access sport in a mixed-gender setting, but it does not address female ‘empowerment’ or gender equity. While conducting this research, it was evident through low female participation numbers and gendered staff roles that the organisation and public space was gendered. However, participants, community members and staff were confused as to why female participation numbers were significantly lower than males as the door was metaphorically ‘always open to everyone’ (Field notes, Chévere and Bacano). Drawing from six months of ethnographic research and building on the works of Brady, Sobotová et al., and Spaaij and Schulenkorf, this paper will explore the contextual complexities – social, cultural and historical – that shape and constrain space in an SDP organisation in Colombia.<sup>11</sup> To be clear, what I want to explore here is not the perception of ‘equal access’ to space, but rather how the local hegemonic culture – particularly violence – establishes and normalises gendered space, which in turn reinforces girls lack of participation.

This paper will begin by addressing the research location and methods. Next, the exogenous processes that affect the organisation’s agency, and the intimate relationship between safe space and gendered space will be discussed. Finally, the strengths and weaknesses of the SDP organisation’s delivery will be analysed through Spaaij and Schulenkorf’s dimensions of safe space before suggestions for addressing gendered space and gender equity will be made.

### Location and SDP in Context

Colombia began 2017 as a post-conflict nation that has made great strides towards peace, but its citizens have endured the longest running armed conflict in the Western Hemisphere. Since 1985, more than 5.8 million people or 10% of Colombians have registered with the national government as victims of conflict: an estimated 5.7 million people have been displaced with more than 2.6 million being women and more than one million children under 12 years of age.<sup>24</sup> The conflict was not only physically gruelling but psychologically testing as Colombians were further racially and economically segregated along class lines.<sup>25</sup> Although the Colombian government and the largest rebel group, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), signed a peace agreement in 2016 and the nation celebrated the lowest national homicide rate since 1974,<sup>26</sup>

the legacy of violence remains prevalent in the form of fear and stigmatisation.

Colombia’s history includes excessive inequality, resulting in social discrimination.<sup>38</sup> Elite families own vast quantities of land and the government class system, which is administered through residential property, reinforces segregation, thereby producing a hotbed for social stigmatisation and ‘othering’.<sup>27</sup> A product of colonialism, the dominant people in power are of Spanish descent with light skin.<sup>38, 28</sup> Whereas, the majority of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) identify their ethnicity as indigenous or Afro-Colombian<sup>29</sup> and occupy the two lowest socio-economic classes.<sup>30</sup> These details are noted for purposes of this paper because Colombia’s history of violence (which has reproduced a violent heteronormative masculinity as standard<sup>31</sup>) coupled with an organised class system, shapes social roles and the use of space in Colombia.<sup>38</sup> In other words, class, race, and gender are intersectional and significantly impact the production and reproduction of who can own, access, and shape space. Colombia’s history combined with localised violence affects how the SDP organisation discussed in this research operates.

With the recent exceptions of Cardenas<sup>32</sup> and Sobotová et al.,<sup>34</sup> the SDP movement in Colombia has received little attention in academic research even though the application of sport as a development and peace-building tool in Colombia began in the mid-1990s and is rapidly expanding. In response to the murder of professional soccer player Andrés Escobar, grassroots and multi-sectorial football for peace programs were implemented to combat football’s negative connotation and to use it as a tool for positive social change; a fundamental component of this movement was the inclusion of girls.<sup>33</sup> Although Colombians identify football as a national source of pride, customarily only men are encouraged to play.<sup>34</sup> Although girls are included within SDP, their participation remains ‘allowed’ within a mixed-gender context that prioritises boys.<sup>11</sup>

Six months of ethnographic research was conducted in two field offices of a leading SDP organisation identified by the pseudonym, VIDA.<sup>ii</sup> Operating in multiple locations throughout the nation, VIDA work with children starting at age six and encourage them to continue as trained ‘leaders’ or coaches into early adulthood. Sport is what connects the organisation to the SDP movement, and although it is a fundamental aspect of their methodology, their primary concern is psycho-social support; this includes supporting children in school, creating a safe environment, preventing drug use, and teaching conflict resolution and tolerance

<sup>ii</sup> Due to the volatile nature of the neighbourhoods, pseudonyms will be used to provide anonymity for the organisation and participants.



practices. Because they work in many diverse geographical settings, they do not uphold a single methodology but adjust their practices by location.

Two of VIDA's field offices are in the neighbourhoods of Chévere and Bacano. Citizens live in insecure, overcrowded houses and many work menial, unreported jobs. It is common for residents to have observed extreme violence, lost family members, and have limited social networks. Chronic stress, which leads to high levels of depression, is common.<sup>iii</sup> VIDA staff were empathetic and had developed strong relationships with the local community; as such, they were cognisant to the problems these citizens encounter.<sup>18</sup> Their presence in the community is on an insider/outsider spectrum as this consideration depends on who is asked. Participants and their families considered VIDA staff to be 'family', and most community members appreciated VIDA's efforts (field notes, Chévere and Bacano). But a few community members' responses were slightly colder including a man in Bacano who complained of VIDA's 'outsider methodology' (field notes, Bacano). Through observation, it was apparent that VIDA employees, although not considered wealthy, were from more stable social classes: most had university degrees; they did not live where they worked; they tended to have lighter skin than participants and be able-bodied. In the field offices, jobs were gendered with men occupying coaching roles and women in psycho-social support roles (field notes, Chévere and Bacano). Local volunteers (adults and youth leaders) worked closely with VIDA staff and in the field offices and fostered a horizontal power structure.<sup>18</sup> It should be explicitly noted that many community members were also not raised in the neighbourhoods where they currently reside, and the insider/outsider status as well as power dynamics within these neighbourhoods is complex and ever-changing.<sup>iv</sup>

When asked to explain everyday challenges in Chévere, Lorena, an employee, highlighted the complexity of gender roles, the normalcy of anti-social behaviour, and the different zones organised within the neighbourhood. She stated, 'Boys join together to steal. They are immersed in drugs, but the biggest problem is the gang mentality. Obviously, there are drugs, weapons, but crime in that area is more marked gangsterism...There are girls who are sexually exploited.' And in response to the same question in Bacano, a mother of two female participants, Valery, labelled her neighbourhood 'dangerous' and spoke of regular crime that results in her family spending most of their time indoors.

## METHOD

Experiencing local social pressures, such as those explained by Lorena and Valery, was critical in my attempt to understand participants' lived experiences, but working in these communities required adaptable research methods. An ethnographic approach permitted me the flexibility to explore the cultural phenomena of gender relations in relation to space and sport, and the capability to do this through the voices of local community members, especially the young female participant. By conducting interviews, and participant observation, I could be flexible in my daily routine, but also pay attention to local knowledge and processes.

Interviews were based on the life-history method. This approach encouraged open dialogue and storytelling and allowed me to subtly guide the interview, but gave the participant autonomy to respond at their discretion. Interlocutors were purposively selected based on two primary conditions: their involvement (or lack of involvement) with the SDP organisation, and the role they held in the community. For example, of the sixty (n=60) people interviewed, 48% were directly involved with the organisation (e.g., participant, previous participant, staff member), whereas 26% had indirect relations (e.g., shop keeper, local electrician), and 26% had little to no interaction (e.g., professional player, local social worker, grandparents at senior centre). The aim of this selection was to have a heterogeneous combination of interviewees. I looked for diversity in both age (interlocutors ranged from 18-81) and perceived role in the community, as varied perspectives (theoretically) would provide me with a better understanding of how social relations have changed (or not) over time. This strategy also prevented me from only hearing potential VIDA 'evangelists'.

Most interview participants could walk from their home to the field in less than 15 minutes, resulting in regular interaction (a few days per week) with the organisation. Even though there were more male participants in the program, to gain a broader perspective on the experiences of young women, more female SDP participants were interviewed than male (60%). I wanted interviewees to feel comfortable and for the conversation to focus on their story rather than a specific facet of their identity, so I did not explicitly ask them to identify their gender, race/ethnicity, sexual identity or religious affiliation. However, these markers became evident through dialogue. Overall, 56% of all interlocutors identified as female. Most interlocutors were from mestizo (mixed) decent, but many, especially in Bacano were Afro-Colombian or Indigenous.

<sup>iii</sup> Source withheld for location anonymity.

<sup>iv</sup> Source withheld for location anonymity.

To gain a broader understanding of the SDP movement, women's sport, and macro-social relations, Colombians not associated with the organisation who lived outside the research neighbourhoods were also interviewed. These interlocutors were selected because of their role within women's sport, academia or the SDP industry. Interviews took place within the organisation's offices, on fields, in cafés, or in participants' homes. Interviews were conducted in Spanish, audio-recorded, and transcribed verbatim.

Participant observation included travelling to the field location four days a week to play, coach and assist in the field offices. My level of active participation varied by what the office needed and my interview schedule. On some days, I strictly took notes (looking for gendered words and actions) as I observed interactions in the office, on the field and public transit; whereas on another occasion, I managed the office for a week while the staff attended a conference. During that time, I jotted notes randomly when I had a spare moment.

Participant observation allowed for ripe and constant reflection not only about my social positioning but about the interactions between participants, employees, and community members in various public and private spaces across time. My aim was social immersion, but the task of immersion is not simple as it depends on many factors that make up *habitus*, including the local context, researcher's character, and participant buy-in.<sup>35</sup> I could not pretend to be ignorant of Colombia's colonial past or its dark, sorted relations with the United States (my native country). Moreover, my middle-class neo-liberal academic experience influenced by Western feminism and my white skin colour are elements embedded in my psyche. Although I identify as cis-gendered and heterosexual, due to my 'outsider' status and vocal acceptance of homosexuality, many 'closeted' Colombians (inside and outside of VIDA) directly sought me out to discuss their experiences of being gay in Colombia. And because female athletes are assumed to be lesbians, upon recommendation from Colombians, I feminised myself according to *narco-beauty* standards with pink nails and mascara.

Undoubtedly my 'privileged' status as a white, Western academic impinged on my data. Following the security protocol required by my research institution and VIDA, I lived in wealthier (safer) neighbourhoods distanced from the research sites, could only access the communities during select hours (8am-4pm) four days a week, and had to be accompanied by local leaders while in public. Many leaders felt this protocol stigmatised them and the neighbourhood (Field notes, Bacano). I felt that this distance, literal and

metaphorical, isolated me as a researcher because I lived between social classes. I recognised these limitations in moments where potential interlocutors agreed to speak with me but refused after I had explained I needed their signed consent. And, when youth leaders rattled off the organisation's values that sounded rehearsed and contradicted observations.<sup>36,37</sup>

The leaders' escorts bolstered my research in many ways, however, as with them I momentarily became a legitimised, but superficial 'insider' as I had secure access to many areas of the neighbourhood. Because of regular interaction with leaders, we developed a comfortable rapport whereby we would discuss everyday 'mundane' situations in our lives. These conversations provided me with a greater understanding of life within the neighbourhood. Although my connection with leaders did 'superficially' legitimise my presence in local spaces, my connection to them – although unlikely – may have influenced interlocutors who were indirectly involved with VIDA. Participant observation coupled with regular interaction, allowed me to question and compare what I observed to what I heard in relaxed conversation and interviews, which was often vivid contradictions laced with double standards and implicit sexism.

Initially, all data was systematically analysed and compared based on (theoretically informed) themes, such as safe space, which were identified before collecting fieldwork. In addition, themes were identified inductively through a second analysis using NVivo 11 software, which assisted with thematic analyses and to identify patterns.<sup>38</sup> Full human ethics approval was obtained from my University Human Research Ethics Committee.

## RESULTS

### The Complexity of Safe Space Relations and Gendered Space

VIDA endeavours to cultivate safe space relations by fostering relationships and investing in local infrastructure,<sup>18</sup> but the reality of VIDA's social positioning is a state of continuous troubleshooting. VIDA operates in public spaces, but a lack of urban planning has resulted in minimum communal space for playing. Below I will demonstrate how young women are in a weak social positioning and at-risk of losing their choice to participate.

Recently, Chévere, the oldest of VIDA's programmes with more than 450 participants (40% female), received notice that in three months the government would commandeer the public field for an infrastructural project. Despite VIDA's connections and support in the community, their lack of agency threatened their continuation. An employee spoke about the impact of this change:

*Before we trained on a field where for [a number of] years VIDA made necessary adjustments to make it work. There was a mountain in front and sewage drained onto the field, so we flattened the earth to open ditches around the field...Over time VIDA did an excellent job in that space, so much that we gained recognition in the community because we recovered that space. That space was recovered for the community not only for VIDA. But in [year], the state intervened with a special government project...So we had to close the operation at that point and look for other places to continue. This year, the children with VIDA continue to have a positive reputation, but it's complex. We are starting the programme from zero in [different zones in the neighbourhood]. Today we can say that we have approximately 100 children of 450 that we had last year, we only have 100. (Staff member, Chévere, Julio)*

The original field, discussed by Julio, was located at the base of three adjacent hills. Steep stairs and roads led to houses stacked along the hills. This geographic layout permitted parents (mostly mothers) to observe their children from countless vantage points. In turn, parents could see that their children were secure.

However, the new field location does not have the built-in security structure of the original field. Parents can only observe their children from the sideline. Moreover, it is a twenty-minute walk from the original field up steep terrain. Once VIDA moved facilities, they retained only one-quarter of their participants. The number of female participants reduced from 180 to 20, meaning on average that at the new field, only 20% of participants were female (Field notes, Chévere). Although participant numbers drastically dropped for all children, the percentage of girls dropped by half. The situation quickly became gendered, a problem that appeared to be either unrecognised, trivialised or ignored by staff and community members. Concerned, Julio spoke about this change: 'We are really well structured and we were very strong, but with the series of changes, we are really falling short with the female population' (Staff member, Chévere, Julio). Another employee was less concerned:

*It is not our goal. I cannot tell you 'Oh, we're going to look for the method!' because now it is not on my mind to look*

*for more girls. In my head, I need to stabilise the population there and for children to know how to reach us, boys and girls. The idea after a while is to stabilise them at all points and then if I reflect and ask why are children not coming? But I have no focus on gender. (Staff member, Chévere, Lorena)*

Community members voiced confusion as to why the number of female participants reduced as a repercussion of the change. Female participants took the change in stride as 'normal', while most interlocutors avoided the obvious conversation regarding local power dynamics, a topic I indirectly and tentatively probed. For example, during a post-interview discussion when the tape recorder was off, a young man referred to the issue of gendered space and asked me, 'what do you know about the paramilitaries?' He proceeded to explain his lack of agency, the ever-shifting neighbourhood boundaries, and his opinion that a new field is in a dangerous territory (Field notes, Chévere). Unlike most interlocutors, a female leader cut straight to the point regarding local violence:

*Well, because the football pitch is really far. The girls are more in danger, because there are people, for example, the guerrilla, do you understand me? Sometimes they take the children, normally the children who are nine years old and they enlist them as soldiers. But with the girls its worse because they cannot defend themselves, so they abuse them. For this reason, the mothers are more careful with the girls than with the boys, because they are weaker and the boys, for example, if there is a problem they can run away as opposed to the girls who get scared and stay there. So because the mothers are scared that something bad is going to happen to their girls, they prefer to not allow that they go to the football field, because it is really far from their home. (Participant, Chévere, Lourdes)*

An international volunteer noted the girls who continued to play at the new field were accompanied by their brothers and often a dog (Field notes, Chévere). Lourdes confirmed this, 'Yes, if they come it is with their brothers, or they come with other boys, but never alone.'

In conjunction with gendered space, a social worker connected the young women's drop in participation to gendered roles and expectations, a statement corroborated by observations, but that many community members refuted by arguing that all people are equal, free to do as they choose, and that ultimately girls do not enjoy playing as much as boys (Field notes, Chévere):



*Well, the fact is that it's not handled like you say, above and below [referencing the location of the fields]; but here the girls are more dedicated to studying, [parents] are taking care of them a little more because there are so many risks that exist: deaths, violations and all the things that exist against women – So, the parents now are looking after their children more because of what's happened and more so for girls. So, the boys are a bit freer than the girls to go and play and everything and as you may see there are many dangers, but the parents see that it is more dangerous for the girls. (Social worker, Chévere, Yuli Andre)*

The majority of female participants interviewed discredited gender stereotypes that reproduced the idea that girls do not like sports as much as boys. But when asked why there are fewer girls, a Chévere participant, Cesi, then justified the numbers through this gender-based stereotype: 'There are not many girls that like to play football, while the majority of men like to play football. Because they feel more interested in it. Instead women are more interested in studying English and things like that.'

Cristina, who is a Colombian student volunteer at VIDA in Bacano believed girls' participation is phenomenal but discussed that she does not play sports because she is not interested and could not pinpoint why. From her perspective, there are many girls who want to play, but do not because of stigma; 'it has a big influence because there are always stigmas. For example, if you play football they ask you *why do you want to play a man's sport?* They see this sport as just for men and not for women'. Daniela, a female participant concurred,

*Yes, maybe there is lots of exclusion. The things that a woman does, maybe a man can't do and maybe this is what happened with football. Maybe they don't accept women playing football as much as men playing football, maybe because if you play football you are a man, you are a 'machorra' (butch) so you feel like the men can do more and women can do less. (Participant, Bacano, Daniela)*

Yuliza, a participant in Chévere, argued that things have changed in the last decade, but that it is parents who do not want their daughters to play. When I asked Yuliza how her life differs from girls who do not play, she highlighted girls who participate at VIDA have the freedom to move and enter more spaces. Referencing girls who do not play, she said,

*They do not leave the house. As soon as they finish school every day, they stay in their houses. Their fathers don't allow them to leave the house... When I was playing with my*

*neighbours [before entering VIDA] and the other girls saw me playing, they wanted to play, but their mothers-didn't let them. (Participant, Chévere, Yuliza)*

When discussing gender roles and participation numbers, Lourdes addressed how religion shapes gender roles, which may constrain girls from playing as well:

*For example, there are religious, some Christians, evangelicals. So, supposedly the rules do not allow that the girls to play football. They cannot play football, because the girls are meant to be for their homes. They must learn how to cook and how take care of their husbands and children. (Participant, Chévere, Lourdes)*

Through discussion and observation, it became clear that for girls to participate in sport, physical and psychological security are critical.

But the psychological aspect was more apparent in Bacano, where standards of feminine performativity were more restrictive. Although female and male participants and athletes accessed communal spaces, girls and women did so with hesitation:

*I see [girls] as players, but for people from other communities it is different because it is thought that playing sport is for men... and when that happens, it skews or limits the space for men. Women think [women] should not participate. (Social worker, Bacano, Martha Cecilia)*

Here, female participation looms at 10%, and as previously heard through the voices of Cristina and Daniela, access to space is about psychological regulation.

Although the numbers of female participants in Chévere were reduced with a field change and the numbers in Bacano continue to be dismally low, girls and young women's participation revealed a micro-shift in culture. Through everyday negotiation and interaction, female participants were challenging normative rituals that had previously rendered them invisible and excluded their presence in public spaces. This was supported by Lourdes who argued that despite lower numbers, there has been a shift in community members' collective mentality:

*The way that they have treated us changed when we start to play the championships. Before, the men just saw us as women, which meant we were not really good at sports. Nowadays, there are some husbands who go to watch their wives play soccer. They support the women, for example, they have brought water to the matches. We are now more*



*recognised. Now we are seen in a better light because lots of women have been successful at sports and have been winners...They have a different perception of us. (Participant, Chévere, Lourdes)*

The notion of social change in relation to gendered space was also heard in conversation with male participant Diego, who believed sport is one facet of this change:

*Yes, in the era of my grandparents, they tell me that the woman could not leave her house, if she did it was only to go to school and to go from school to home. But now it's changed. Women have a bit more freedom in where they can visit with friends and partake in recreation, they can enjoy spaces like shopping centres, they chat in the beauty salons and they are finding out that there are many women entrepreneurs and workers. (Participant, Bacano, Diego)*

Although VIDA and a handful of other SDP organisations work in marginalised communities, the presence of these groups has influenced meso- and macro-social relations. For example, in macro-terms, the directors from a few SDP organisations, including VIDA, have worked with the Colombian government on legislation to implement sport across the nation. And addressing meso-social relations, a young Colombian woman who is not in the programme and does not play sport commented on the importance of girls and young women's participation to her and how despite a lack in gender equity in sport, strides have been made across class lines:

*I know that the girls are doing something that socially or historically girls did not do as it was reserved for men, men are implicated, especially with public space, on the courts, in the neighbourhoods...Usually you see a woman in public space and her relationship with space is that it does not belong to her. And people then believe that 'I can do with you practically what I want, or tell you what I want', because the public space is not [hers]. I feel that [girls playing sport] is a re-appropriation of public space, and that is very cool. They are there and they are admired and observed from another point of view. So, it is not what is sought, but it is what happens. That is to say, they are only there doing something, but the spaces were not always there, or it was not organised to happen [for them] or certain things were given. (Sociology student, Bogota, Urcela)*

Urcela highlights the dynamic process of altering gendered space that is influenced by girls' participation in these programs. However, she alludes to a critical aspect that is void to VIDA: the cultivation of young women's agency in

terms of overcoming normative psychological repression and physical participation in public space. In other words, we must question how much control the organisation has in terms of socially including girls? How much control do the young female participants have in terms of their access to participation? Finally, what can the organisation offer young women growing up in volatile spaces if their social inclusion is not an explicit goal?

## DISCUSSION

'Social relations are inevitably and everywhere imbued with power and meaning and symbolism', revealing that 'space is an ever-shifting social geometry of power and signification'.<sup>39</sup> The ethnographic research with VIDA demonstrates truth to Massey's statement. What became clear when analysing safe space relations with VIDA is there is a close relationship between safe space and gendered space. This research draws many parallels with Brady's<sup>3</sup> findings concerning girls' participation in sport and gendered public space, and Spaaij and Schlenker's<sup>33</sup> work on the multiple dimensions of safe space. To explore the contextual complexities – social, cultural and historical – that shape and constrain space in an SDP organisation in Colombia, the findings will be discussed in relation to the five dimensions of safe space: *physical, sociocultural, psychological/affective, experimental, and political*.

The *physical* dimension addresses the importance of physical infrastructure, such as the field. Although Brady<sup>3</sup> argues that the physical space is less restrictive than cultural elements, when applying Spaaij and Schlenker's<sup>33</sup> idea of *physical* dimension to this research, the extent that structure influences behaviour is far-reaching as the lines between physical space and psychological space become blurred. Concomitantly, as noted in Brady's research, cultural elements are critical. In Bacano and Chévere, girls' access is regulated and thus their freedom and autonomy minimised. The security of the field alone does not explicitly determine their social inclusion. Paramount is their psychological comfort combined with their physical mobility and access to that space, in conjunction with other complex factors. Applying Brady's reasoning, when girls are restricted, public space becomes 'defacto' men's space; moreover, boys are encouraged to explore their freedoms, whereas girls are socialised to accept restraint and subordination.<sup>3</sup> The *physical* dimension also considers what games are played, taking into consideration their cultural appropriateness, and the extent by which they are gendered. In Colombia and at VIDA, football is the most popular sport. However, football (and all contact sports in Colombia) is gendered and not welcoming for girls. As

argued by Spaaij and Schulenkorf,<sup>33</sup> the activities offered should be culturally suitable, but not to the extent of exclusion of any group.

The second element, the *sociocultural* dimension, refers to participants feeling socially accepted and comfortable despite individual differences. There are two pertinent elements to this dimension: the stigmatisation of female footballers and the importance of role models. First, female footballers are pejoratively labelled as ‘butch’ or ‘lesbian’, markers that contradict the idealised ‘delicate’ and ‘heterosexual’ Colombian woman. The female leaders at VIDA openly condemned and ignored these derogatory labels, but they are a minority. Interlocutors (inside and outside VIDA) believed girls want to play but are forbidden by their parents for both security and gender-based reasons. Second, but relational, is the aspect of female role models. Although VIDA employs men and women, roles are gendered with women predominantly in care-taking positions and men in coaching positions. The upcoming female leaders are providing the first generation of female role models in sport in these neighbourhoods, which is promising. However, having female staff members dress for and participate in sport, regardless of athletic ability, would encourage girls to overcome psychological barriers learned in socialisation.<sup>40</sup> In discussion, Urcela noted the first obstacle for girls is the psychological hurdle of challenging normative gendered behaviour: ‘The first challenge is to overcome that barrier of “I cannot do it”, because it is not something that “women do” - that mental obstacle’ (Sociology student, Bogota, Urcela). Urcela’s argument was verified at Bacano where female participation was minimal. However, evidence revealed that the psychological aspect was not as threatening in Chévere where interlocutors stated they now see girls’ participation as ‘normal’ and ‘no big deal’, which they noted was different to ten years ago and is a different perspective to outside the VIDA ‘bubble’ (Field notes, Chévere). In other words, a ‘multiplier effect’ and a contribution to the wider community is occurring in Chévere, however slight.

VIDA’s strength is their ability to create what Spaaij and Schulenkorf<sup>33</sup> label the *psychological/affective* dimension, meaning protection from psychological or emotional harm (e.g. trust, purpose, identity). Participation in VIDA provides a unique outlet where girls and boys can take risks and perform in alternative ways that contradict strict gender norms without severe repercussions. Moreover, the communal bond through participation between female participants, as well as female and male participants, allows for a new practise of communication and a reframing of what young women can accomplish (Field notes, Bacano

and Chévere). This is intentionally facilitated through VIDA’s emphasis on psycho-social support through the hiring of social workers and psychologists and their activities. The psychological dimension was also evident in the behaviour (e.g. polite, responsible) of youth participating in the program versus those who did not (Field notes, Bacano and Chévere).

The fourth dimension, *experimental*, refers to secure risk-taking. VIDA works closely with the local community, and there is little separation between the two. The organisation is not exempt from local challenges, and their daily operations include risk-taking. Additionally, opportunities for participants to play on external competitive teams, to travel to conferences and games, and to continue their education, permits participants opportunities to take risks through new experiences (crossing class, race, and gendered lines) and to experience settings with different socio-cultural norms. As noted above, VIDA provides a rare space for boys and girls to interact, and thus a space where this interaction becomes normal and as the boys noted, communication improved (Field notes, Bacano and Chévere).

The final dimension is *political*, which relates to equal representation and power-sharing among the population. It is here that this research adds insight into the complexities of safe space in SDP practice. Due to Colombia’s political history, the class system, and the diversity of citizens, the *political* dimension is rife with complications, with lines between insider and outsider (family, gang, community) on a continuum. In many ways, VIDA has capitalised on its complicated positioning because even though many of its staff live outside the neighbourhood, they make the organisation accessible and comfortable. Albeit VIDA, like community members, are constantly troubleshooting. The organisation’s position and influence on safe space relations raises questions: to what extent does VIDA’s positioning allow them to be a local change maker? To what extent do safe space relations allow young people to gain a sense of control (i.e. agency), particularly the young women in this context? And thus, what role does sport *actually* play in these girls’ lives?

## CONCLUSION

This research revealed that although ‘the door is always open’ for female VIDA participants, the door is not the problem, but rather, the literal and metaphorical path to the door. The use of space, and in particular, how boys and men are socialised to dominate sporting spaces has become an implicit and explicit ritualised form of control in Chévere

and Bacano. This physically preserves space for boys and men, and psychologically restricts girls from participating. In this research, staff and participants alike touted that 'everyone is equal', but did not acknowledge the psycho-social barriers that shape and constrain the reality of 'equality'. Proverbially treating all participants as 'equal' – in other words, institutionally applying a word to the extent that it loses meaning – minimised female participants' gender-based restrictions.

Actions such as participatory mapping,<sup>34</sup> organising meeting places for girls to walk in groups,<sup>3</sup> and assembling girls together regularly (formally or informally) to discuss their opinions and concerns, are short-term ways to potentially improve female participants access to VIDA and contextually similar SDP organisations. Drawing from this research, SDP organisations, policy makers and researchers are encouraged to consider how female participants may not be supported to play sport due to various sociocultural contextual elements that look and feel 'normal'. Further research concerning the normalisation of the physical and psycho-social constraints of gendered spaces on female participation in SDP programming and examples of ways to successfully combat inequality through locally-determined, context appropriate ideas, is needed.

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## Original Research

# U.S. sport diplomacy in Latin America and the Caribbean: A programme evaluation

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## ABSTRACT

The focus of this study is a specific SDP programme, entitled Sports Visitors, executed in partnership between George Mason University and the U.S. Department of State. The purpose of this programme evaluation was to examine a subset of Latin American and Caribbean groups to ascertain the immediate, short-term impact of an intervention programme on the attitudes of participants relative to programme objectives. Nine groups comprised of 150 sport visitors participated in this investigation over a five year period. After the data were cleaned, 143 valid responses remained for analysis. The findings are based upon descriptive and effect size outcomes of quantitative survey data supplemented by qualitative comments provided by participants. The overall total mean for all seven items combined yields a very large effect size of 1.43. The results indicate that a) positive change occurred among LAC participants across all objectives measured, and b) changes were consistently reflected across each type of LAC participant group based upon gender, role, and gender with role.

## INTRODUCTION

Sport is a universal language that can foster individual interface on a local level, as well as a social institution with structural power that allows it to influence broader cultural interaction.<sup>1, 2, 3</sup> The United Nations<sup>4</sup> (para. 2) acknowledged that sport "...can represent an area to experience equality, freedom and a dignified means for empowerment." Further, Nelson Mandela<sup>5</sup> (para. 1) noted that, "Sport has the

power to change the world." He went on to acknowledge sport's "power to inspire," and to "unite people." He further noted that sports "create hope," and "decrease barriers."<sup>5</sup> (para. 1) Right to Play International<sup>6</sup> (p. 3) recognized that, "...the international use of sport, physical activity and play to attain specific development and peace objectives..." is an effective strategy.

Sport Diplomacy, as a component of Sport for Development and Peace (SDP), can enhance peace-building and development efforts; and these diplomatic initiatives have become not only more prevalent over the past decade, but also more closely investigated.<sup>1, 7, 8, 9, 10</sup> Giulianotti<sup>8</sup> identified four categories of SDP policy: a) neo-liberal social policies in the form of commercial corporate social responsibility (CSR); b) developmental interventionist policies of non-governmental agencies (NGO); c) social justice policies associated with social movements; and d) strategic developmentalist policies associated with governments and sport federations. Government involvement in SDP has increased as sports have demonstrated efficacy in developmental and diplomatic agendas.<sup>1, 7, 11, 12</sup>

## Theoretical Framework

### Sport Diplomacy

Sanders<sup>13</sup> (para. 1) observed that sport is "a gigantic and powerful medium for the international spread of information, reputations and relationships that are the essence of public diplomacy." Diplomatic efforts utilizing

**Keywords:** sport diplomacy; sport for development and peace; global sport; international sport; programme evaluation

sport reflect established theoretical underpinnings. Effective diplomatic initiatives should comprise multiple arenas such as sport to address numerous societal levels.<sup>14</sup> Accordingly, Sanders<sup>13</sup> (p. 1) further advised that, “A well-conceived public diplomacy strategy could capitalize on the opportunities that sport presents.”

Change is often a long-term process, particularly in diplomatic endeavors to facilitate intercultural change through local sport programmes.<sup>15</sup> Sports yield obligatory proximity and enables interaction among participants. Therefore, Sport Diplomacy aligns with Allport’s<sup>16</sup> contact hypothesis, which contends that facilitating contact among diverse participants can diminish hostility, negate stereotypes, and inspire more tolerant attitudes. Authentic engagement with dissimilar people or groups promotes fresh knowledge and diminishes apprehension. Mandatory contact must be meaningful in order to foster effective stakeholder exchanges. Sport programmes often emulate the aforementioned contact hypothesis mechanisms wherein cooperative interaction enriches programme efficacy.<sup>16</sup> Through engagement in interdependent sport experiences, diverse individuals with common interests may accept differences and increase mutual understanding, cooperation, and camaraderie. Kuriansky<sup>17</sup> contends that interpersonal engagement in intercultural interventions is critical in achieving diplomatic ends. Sport Diplomacy agendas are myriad, including peace-building, promoting intercultural understanding, and an array of community development; sport is a worthwhile mechanism in fostering intercultural relationships.<sup>1,7</sup>

Beer and Nohria<sup>18</sup> posit a premise for intercultural diplomatic change through Theory E and Theory O. Theory E bases its purpose in the creation of organizational value. It involves centrally planned programmatic change pursued through formal structures and systems that are driven from the top down. Theory O is guided by the development of the organization’s human capacity. Similar to the system’s thinking, the purpose is to implement strategy and learn from experience.<sup>18,19</sup> Theory O depends on a high level of member commitment and the expectation that change is continuous and occurs through a participative process. Theory E, or top-down change, yield more cost-effective and immediate results. Theory O, or bottom-up changes are more costly, yet may yield more sustainable results.

In alignment with Allport,<sup>16</sup> while Beer and Nohria’s<sup>18</sup> top-down Theory E endeavors are common and often supported, bottom-up Theory O practices are likely to humanize stakeholders and shape mutual understanding. Beer and Nohria<sup>18</sup> suggest that combining top-down and

bottom-up change is common. Effective intercultural change often involves both high-level diplomatic initiatives and programmes that engage individual participants.

The utility of sport as a mechanism to heighten mutual understanding makes it valuable in diplomatic programming. Grassroots sport diplomacy programmes based on the concepts of Allport<sup>16</sup> and Beer and Nohria<sup>18</sup> afford local individual interactions, which provide for broad impacts, such as cultural change, that emanate from individuals within the culture.<sup>16,18</sup> The universality of sport allow for the pursuit of both global and local diplomatic goals. While sport offers a mechanism by itself, Sport for Development Theory (SFDT) posits that cultural and educational activities complement sport programming in successfully addressing the objectives of intercultural SDP initiatives.<sup>10,20</sup> Acknowledging the global influence of sport, Sanders<sup>13</sup> (para. 1) noted that “the audience’s level of interest exceeds those of any other subject matter, including political news and the movies.”

Allport’s<sup>16</sup> contact hypothesis and Beer’s and Nohria’s<sup>18</sup> Theory O identify the benefits of direct participant interaction in maximizing the impacts of Sport Diplomacy experiences. While grassroots programming through authentic sport interaction improves intercultural understanding, the

*...effect is greatly enhanced if this contact is sanctioned by institutional supports (i.e., by law, custom, or local atmosphere)... provided it is of a sort that leads to the perception of common interests and common humanity between members of the two groups.*<sup>16</sup> (p. 281)

Institutionally supported intercultural sport programming further promotes information exchanges in the development of qualified personnel with the capacity to effectively function in an internationalized sport environment.<sup>21</sup>

Chufrin and Saunders<sup>22</sup> (p. 158) concluded that, “While governments negotiate around interests and issues, citizens...” are essential in the success of diplomatic efforts. Sport Diplomacy often involves governments’ international agendas being pursued via local activities. Sport-based “glocal” tactics comprise both global and local interests and activities.<sup>23</sup> Glocalization merges the significance of the local in global interests and the global in local interests.<sup>24</sup> The sports industry has actively engaged in “glocal” sport opportunities and practices.<sup>25</sup> Sport Diplomacy endeavors are frequently an element of a global diplomatic agenda that is being implemented through local grassroots programming.

### *Globalization in Sport*

Globalization compresses the world via increased interconnectedness while simultaneously increasing awareness of the world as a single entity.<sup>24, 26</sup> Globalization is the facilitator of internationalization, wherein sport serves as a strategic stakeholder.<sup>27</sup> While many sport enterprises operate globally, most activities take place in the local environment.<sup>28</sup> In that context, globalization is based on the intersection of global and local influences.<sup>29</sup> Globalization is often framed via economic, political, and sociocultural interests. Advances in communication and transportation technologies encourage globalization in the sport enterprise. Sport crosses economics, education, government, religion, social politics, and technology on a broad scale, but serves as an arena for individual exchange on the local level.<sup>1, 30</sup> This 'glocalized' nature of sport makes it effective as a diplomatic tool.<sup>1, 31, 32</sup>

Sport has fostered globalization through international professional leagues and competitions, including mega events, through international player migration, both professional and amateur, and through not-for-profit endeavors, such as corporate social responsibility (CSR) and Sport Diplomacy.<sup>25</sup> Examples of sport's role in globalization through international professional leagues and federations include Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), Fédération Internationale de Basketball Association (FIBA), and the International Olympic Committee (IOC) is evident. Mega events, such as the Olympics, Paralympics, World Cup, and Pan American Games also facilitate globalization through sport. Globalization is also prominent in the English Premier League (EPL), India Premier League (IPL), Nippon Professional Baseball (NPB), Major League Baseball (MLB), National Basketball Association (NBA), and many other prominent sport leagues that utilize foreign talent.<sup>33</sup> Foreign ownership of clubs and franchises in professional leagues is also commonplace.

Sport enterprises are prominent in international corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities, such as Basketball Without Borders, which aims to support the community beyond sport through community outreach initiatives addressing important social issues, including youth and community development, education, minority empowerment, conflict resolution, and health and wellness. There are numerous not-for-profit endeavors in the sport sector that contribute to globalization, such as Peace and Sport, Peace Players International, and the Fundacion Real Madrid.<sup>1</sup> The United Nations is engaged in global diplomatic efforts using sport through its own U. N. Office

of Sport for Development and Peace.

Sport is an integral part of globalization.<sup>34</sup> On a global scale, sport is connected to social institutions and interests and, on a local level, sport is the setting of personal engagement and exchange.<sup>1, 2, 25, 30</sup> Globalization in sport is based upon the linking of global and local cultural interests.<sup>29</sup> While many sport initiatives, including Sport Diplomacy, have global intentions, most are actually implemented in an internationalized local environment.<sup>28</sup>

Globalization through sport can generate both benefits and concerns.<sup>35</sup> Globalization in sport has been asymmetrical in various parts of the world for a variety of reasons.<sup>34</sup> This variation in sport globalization is likely related to its local implementation and may result in the supplanting of dominant sport norms over diverse local cultures.<sup>28, 35, 36</sup> Globalized sport is often dominated by the Western world and, as a result, has generally become highly Americanized or at minimum Westernized.<sup>34</sup> Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) have been fully engaged in the globalization of sport.

### *Sport in Latin America*

The popularity of sport in LAC is undeniable. Fueled by trends as divergent as populism and imperialism, sport is ingrained in the cultures of the LAC region. Populism has proven to be a driving political and cultural force for over 100 years.<sup>37</sup> At the same time, the dissemination of specific Western sports beyond those native and traditional represents the cultural imperialism embedded in the sporting world.<sup>38</sup> From the turn of the nineteenth century until today, sport reflects a microcosm of local and national development in LAC, playing a role as a political and cultural force.<sup>39</sup>

Baseball is intensely popular in such LAC nations as Venezuela, Honduras, and the Dominican Republic, while cricket is the sport of choice in Guyana and the West Indies. Basketball, governed in accordance with the International Basketball Federation (FIBA), is very popular in many areas of LAC, in no small part due to the international successes, such as Argentina's gold medal in the 2004 Olympic Games. Argentina hosted and became the first World Champion (1950) of the FIBA World Cup, and Brazil has won two World Championships in men's basketball. The Brazilian women's basketball team has also won the World Championship (1994). In addition, basketball is widely played in Venezuela and Uruguay, and is popular in most LAC nations. Volleyball is a popular sport in Brazil, where both male and female teams have

won Olympic gold medals, as well as Peru, Argentina, and Venezuela.

Reflecting its global acceptance, football (Soccer) is the most popular sport in LAC. While emanating from Europe, its transnational nature has seen LAC, particularly Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay, share supremacy with Europe in the sport by winning every Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) World Cup. Brazil has won more FIFA World Cup titles (five) than any other nation. Argentina and Uruguay each have two titles. Four LAC nations have hosted the FIFA World Cup. Uruguay hosted the first FIFA World Cup event (1930), while Brazil (1950, 2014), Chile (1962), and Argentina (1978) have also hosted. Beyond the World Cup, LAC developed the Copa America, a football event regularly held since 1916. Uruguay has won this longest continuously running competition 15 times and Argentina, 14 times.

Importantly, LAC has also produced many great athletes in numerous sports. The migration of talented athletes, such as Pelé and Renaldo in football, Manu Ginobili and Tim Duncan in basketball, and Roberto Clemente and Miguel Cabrera in baseball, has been a mainstay in the internationalization of sport. Talent migration is commonplace and significant element in the evolution of the global sport industry, which is often fueled by commercial interests.<sup>40</sup> The globalization of sport has manifested through many mechanisms, the migration of athletic talent among them. The international expansion of professional sport leagues and related businesses is also prevalent, leading to transnational ownership interests in sports.<sup>25</sup> It should also be noted that SDP entities are most often international, including those funded by commercial enterprises, such as the NBA Cares, Basketball Without Borders, or the Real Madrid Foundation. Not-for-profit SDP enterprises, such as Peace and Sport, Peace Players International, and the Sport Diplomacy Initiative, also facilitate the internationalization of sport, while governmental-based entities such as the United Nations Office of Sport for Development and Peace and the U. S. Department of State's Division of Sports Diplomacy provide international engagement and diplomatic influence.<sup>25</sup>

Murray and Pigman<sup>41</sup> described the governmental use of sport as a mechanism to serve diplomatic ends, which involves intercultural exchanges among non-elite sport participants and/or coaches or sport-related envoys traveling with diplomatic intentionality. Murray and Pigman further identified "international-sport-as-diplomacy," which involves diplomatic interactions between NGOs and non-state actors that facilitate international sport, such as the

International Olympic Committee (IOC) and FIFA.<sup>41</sup> The governance of sport through international federations is, by their definition, a reflection of globalized sporting interests. The IOC and FIFA are unrivaled in global influence in sport, surpassing national boundaries.<sup>34</sup> Through such influential organizations, the expansion of international competitions and mega-events impact global and local interests; although not necessarily yielding local prosperity.<sup>42</sup> Relentless globalization in sport has had extensive impacts throughout the world, including Latin American individuals, communities, and sport endeavors. Sport-based diplomatic efforts supported by governmental or intercultural interests have also impacted LAC localities. Identifying and measuring these impacts is essential to the sustainable success of SDP undertakings, including Sport Diplomacy programmes.<sup>7</sup> A common concern when evaluating such international SDP programmes, because they can be driven by diverse intentions, is assessing whether each is meeting its respective objectives.<sup>7</sup> Regardless of the nature of international sport programming, be it commercially, philanthropically, or government derived, its efficacy should be evaluated based upon its intended objectives.

### *Empowerment Evaluation*

Stakeholders in international sport are seeking quantifiable data to demonstrate the efficacy of programming.<sup>9, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47</sup> As this study focuses on Sport Diplomacy, reliable programme evaluation is required to document the efficacy of such programmes. Skepticism abounds, stemming from exaggerated claims of programme benefits without corresponding evidence.<sup>9, 43, 47-48</sup> Levermore<sup>43</sup> (p. 340) noted, "The lack of convincing large-scale evaluation might contribute to the doubt that some development agencies have shown for the sport-for-development movement ..." It is crucial, therefore, to examine intended programme outcomes and build evidence of the level of programme effectiveness.<sup>7</sup>

Coalter<sup>48</sup> connected the dearth of programme evaluation with an absence of the requisite capital, resources and expertise. Stakeholders call for advances in the number and value of evaluations, with few recognizing the challenges and solutions in the evaluation process, particularly for developing locations and populations.<sup>47</sup> Sport Diplomacy programmes must document outcomes in order to demonstrate their effectiveness of achieving programme goals. This pursuit of efficacy yields improved evaluation measures and processes in order to assess the outcomes of Sport Diplomacy programmes.<sup>49</sup>



This study examines a specific Sport Diplomacy programme evaluation grounded in underlying theories in diplomacy, change, and evaluation. Specifically, this study determines the short-term efficacy of the Sport Diplomacy Initiative relative to its established programme goals. The utilization of goal-driven evaluation procedures also informs future programming and evaluations. Programme evaluation design that acknowledges participant interests in the pursuit of the sponsoring agency's goals can be an Empowerment Evaluation, which transfers evaluation power from the evaluator to programme participants and staff.<sup>50</sup>

Empowerment Evaluation is suitable for Sport Diplomacy programmes promoting development and social justice goals. Participant and staff acquisition of evaluation power encourages programme investment. Empowerment Evaluation serves as the framework for the evaluation process utilized in this study. Empowerment Evaluation concepts necessitate programme staff and participant involvement in the implementation and evaluation of the programme.<sup>7</sup> Programme managers, along with sponsoring agency officials and local in-country representatives, determine the sought-after goals. Participants selected in alignment with these goals engage with staff in implementing the evaluation process.

This study examines the use of Empowerment Evaluation in a Sport Diplomacy programme that yields participant input and shapes a distal follow-on evaluation. Self-determination of post-programme activities is important in the participants' experiences, which is consistent with Empowerment Evaluation concepts. Participant affiliation with, and investment in, the programme goals results from such involvement and seen as a long-term outcome of the programme. The Empowerment Evaluation model fosters stakeholder commitment to programme goals and enhances the sustainability of the programme.<sup>50</sup> While implemented over a five-year period, the current quantitative evaluation is contextually the precursor to longer-term follow-on evaluation procedures. This study examines the initial implementation of the Empowerment Evaluation model in the Sport Diplomacy Initiative, specifically focused on diplomatic and developmental efforts concentrated in the LAC region.

### Programme Description

The current study examines the Sport Diplomacy Initiative (SDI), a programme stemming from a cooperative agreement between the United States Department of State's (USDOS) Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs

(ECA) and the Center for Sport Management (CSM) at George Mason University. This funded programme implements the USDOS Division of Sports Diplomacy's Sports Visitors Program, which it implements to engender cooperation and respect between the foreign visitors and their American counterparts. The SDI is grounded in the principles of the contact hypothesis in support of Theory O's bottom-up approach to effecting change.<sup>16, 18</sup> During the five-year scope of this study, the SDI Sports Visitors Program supported a total of 60 groups comprised of 937 foreign visitors from approximately 50 countries; however, this study focuses on the 9 groups and 150 participants from Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). Each LAC group engaged in a 12 to 14-day visit to the U. S., during which time participating athletes and/or coaches were exposed to educational, cultural, and sport experiences, with content addressing leadership, conflict resolution, psychology, and wellness. Described more fully by specific visiting group's programme, varied activities were implemented in order to facilitate intercultural understanding and tolerance.

The SDI Sports Visitors Program seeks to enable participants to: 1) learn more about U.S. society and culture; 2) improve leadership skills, team building, and respect for diversity; 3) facilitate productive and positive change in their local communities through sports; and 4) build partnerships to support these goals. More specific SDI outcome objectives allow participants to: 1) learn about American culture and its people, the American sport system, diversity and inclusive sport; 2) multiply the impact of the experience upon returning home; 3) value the programme experience as a measure of satisfaction; and 4) maintain contact as programme alumni. The SDI evaluation system has been developed and implemented to measure outcomes aligned with these objectives. These outcome objectives shape the evaluation process, which is based upon Empowerment Evaluation principles.<sup>50</sup> This framework for the SDI programme evaluation with its quantitative pre-programme and post-programme survey is designed to engage staff and participants as the foundation for distal follow-on procedures. The focus of this study, however, examines the more immediate outcomes of programme participants' visit to the United States. Given that programmes yield results based upon the inputs, throughputs, and outputs they generate, programme outcomes result from SDI programming and activities related to the aforementioned programme objectives.<sup>19</sup> While the broader evaluation system of the SDI includes quantitative and qualitative components, which are directed toward assessing both short-term and long-term programme efficacy, this study examines the short-term evaluation of programme outcomes. Each visiting group in this study

consisted of 14 to 24 participants, supported by interpreters provided by the USDOS, and U.S.-based Programme Coordinator, who escorts the group and facilitates their activities for roughly 12 to 14 days per visit. Approximately 16% of the total Sport Diplomacy Initiative participants have been from LAC. This study focuses on these groups.

#### *SDI Groups from LAC*

Each programme designed for the SDI Sports Visitors takes into account the overarching diplomatic goals outlined by the U. S. Department of State. Many of the goals remain the same with all of the groups that visit the United States but each *programme* is not exactly the same because each group of Sports Visitors arrives with a different focus. Examples of a few of the overarching programme goals that are consistent throughout would be to introduce the visitors to the American system of education, provide an opportunity to experience American culture, and develop an understanding of that part of the American sports industry that relates to their interests. The programmes are designed to expose the groups to ordinary Americans who are engaged in the same sport as the visiting participants. For example, LAC football coaches will meet American soccer coaches. LAC track and field athletes will meet American athletes of a similar age in their discipline, along with coaches who can expose them to American training techniques.

Participants in the SDI Sports Visitors programme are athletes, coaches, and/or sports administrators. For example, athletes comprised the two groups from Columbia (baseball and softball), and the groups from Jamaica (basketball) and Peru (girls basketball). A combined group from Ecuador, Panama, and Mexico was comprised of youth baseball participants visiting the Little League World Series. Baseball coaches visited from the countries of Venezuela and the Dominican Republic. The two groups from Brazil included youth basketball, and administrators and coaches of disability sport programmes. Venezuela also had a group of deaf sport educators. The athletes who participate in the programme are generally teenagers; therefore, two adults, who are often coaches, from their home country, usually accompany them.

A typical programme will start with the *programme opening* where the ground rules are established for the group and the programme schedule for the visit is released. This is also an opportunity for the members of each SDI Sports Visitors group to get to know each other, to meet the Program Coordinator, to ask questions, and to familiarize themselves with the interpreters who will be working with

them during their stay in the United States. Early in the programme schedule, there is usually a team building exercise, conducted by team building professionals with the intent of enhancing the working relationship of the visiting group. Many groups who have participated in the Sports Visitors programmes have never worked together and come from different parts of their country. The team building exercise is also an opportunity for coaches, athletes, and sports administrators to observe and participate with team building professionals, and to generate ideas they can take back with them when they return to their home country. The groups from Venezuela, Jamaica, Peru, Columbia, and Brazil all participated in a team building programming.

Another staple of every programme is an introduction to the sports industry in the United States. This introduction is usually conducted by an expert and is tailored to each group of participants. For example, the Jamaican and Peruvian basketball participants learned about youth basketball, high school basketball, college basketball, and the National Basketball Association (NBA) along with how athletes in the U.S. develop in their sport. Additional activities often include a sport psychology presentation tailored to the group and is based on their sport and role (coach, athlete, sports administrator). Programming usually includes a presentation on injury prevention and injury care, focusing on the specific sport, whether it is typical for the sport, alongside treatment and prevention techniques. Nutritional information is also included. Most groups also receive information focused on improving strength and conditioning in their respective sports. Leadership and management skills are also often presented, particularly to coaches and administrator groups.

A significant part of every programme is to facilitate participant engagement with as many Americans as possible over the length of their stay. Each programme usually has a home hospitality component where the Sports Visitors will have dinner at the home of someone involved in the sports industry or associated with the administration of the programme. This is an opportunity to meet an American family, experience a meal in a 'home' rather than at a hotel or public restaurant, and engage in social activity with each other in an informal and relaxed setting. Many of these social opportunities also provide Americans with a chance to learn about the participants, their families, their homeland, and a little about how sports are played, coached, and administered in their home country. For example, after engaging in a softball practice with a local U. S team, the participants from Columbia joined many parents and coaches at an outdoor picnic hosted by the local girls' softball association.

Most of the groups have multiple cultural experiences outside of sport, which often include touring the locality and visiting museums. For example, several of the LAC groups visited the Smithsonian museum and the monuments in the U.S. capitol of Washington, D.C. LAC groups visited varied locations in the U. S. For example, the deaf sport educators from Venezuela visited New York City, touring the United Nations, the Statue of Liberty, and Ellis Island. The delegations from Venezuela and the Dominican Republic visited Phoenix, Arizona experiencing the metropolitan area's culture and attending pre-season training for Major League Baseball (MLB) teams like the San Diego Padres, the Kansas City Royals, the Cincinnati Reds and the San Francisco Giants. They also participated in baseball and softball clinics conducted by coaches from these MLB teams.

Because the American education and competitive sports systems are linked, most groups visit academic institutions and spend time with college and high school students. Participants engage with Americans student-athletes, meet teachers and coaches, tour classrooms, and visit school sports facilities. They interact with peer athletes as they are competing and practicing in their sport. Participants are exposed to American athlete and sport development through these school-based visits. For example, Venezuela and the Dominican Republic participants visited Arizona State University and also Desert Vista High School, while Jamaican participants visited the University of Maryland, Georgetown University and George Mason University. Venezuelan deaf sport coaches and educators visited the Lexington School for the Deaf (New York) and Gallaudet University (Washington, D.C.), a prominent college for deaf students.

Participants also attend athletic events; some are at the youth school, or are college-level, while others are at the professional level. Usually after attending a professional sports event, participants receive a tour of the venue. These professional sport events provide not only the opportunity to learn, but also to engage in a social activity with Americans who share this common interest. For example, the Brazilian participants attended the NBA's Washington Wizards game and toured the Verizon Center basketball arena, while the Columbian group toured the Camden Yards baseball stadium and watched the Baltimore Orioles (MLB) play. Jamaican basketball players participated in a clinic from a former WNBA player, attended the Washington Wizards' practice, and attended the Wizards game with the Atlanta Hawks. In addition to pre-season baseball contests, the Venezuelan and the Dominican Republic delegations attended a National Hockey League

game between the Phoenix Coyotes and the Calgary Flames.

Beyond the spectator experiences, cultural exposure and sport-specific developmental activities, an effort is made to introduce participants to a non-traditional or new sport. For example, the D.C. Breeze, a professional Ultimate Frisbee team, has conducted development clinics for many of the groups. Importantly, every group is exposed to, or participates in, an inclusive sport activity. Participants have observed and participated in wheelchair basketball games, wheelchair tennis, and numerous Special Olympics practices and competitions.

## METHODS

### Research Design

The purpose of this programme evaluation was to examine a subset of groups from Latin America and the Caribbean to ascertain the short-term impact of an intervention on the attitudes of participants relative to the programme objectives. Surveys can be useful for identifying beliefs and attitudes at specific points in time.<sup>51</sup> In this case, a pre-post survey design was used to assess participant perspectives at the start of the SDI programme and subsequently at the end of the experience. Specifically, this type of programme evaluation is considered a modified panel study since the same participants complete the assessment two or more times so changes in attitudes can be monitored over time.<sup>52</sup> Weirsmas and Jurs<sup>52</sup> suggests that the entire population in this type of programme evaluation is assessed rather than using random selection. In addition, while this current summary of the programme evaluation focuses on the immediate, short-term influence of the programme (i.e., two data collection points approximately 12 days apart), a more longitudinal element using follow-on surveys in partnership with the embassies is part of the overall evaluation plan.

### Participants

George Mason University's Center for Sport Management has managed the Sport Diplomacy Initiative (SDI) as one aspect of their mission since 2008. Currently, the SDI includes a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Division of Sports Diplomacy specifically to support the domestic programming experiences of international athletes and coaches in the Sports Visitors programme. During a five-year period of time supporting this partnership, 60 groups were served of which 15% were from Latin America and the Caribbean. It is from these nine groups that the

participants in this programme evaluation were selected via criterion-based sampling of the whole. Each participant during this 60-month period completed two questionnaires with a combination of structured and open-ended prompts. The surveys were given as a pretest during the opening orientation session and as a posttest as the closing session. The nine groups from Latin America and the Caribbean had a total number of 150 participants from nine countries including Brazil, Columbia, Dominican, Ecuador, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Peru, and Venezuela. Of the 150 possible respondents, seven did not complete essential elements required for independent variable groupings on either the pre- or post-programme questionnaires and were excluded from the analysis leaving an  $n$  of 143. Any missing values on the dependent variable items were replaced with an average of the individual respondent's other pretest or posttest values.

### Survey Instrument

The questionnaires each contain three demographic items (e.g., gender, role, and age) and seven Likert-type items asking respondents to report their attitudes and familiarity regarding specific aspects of the programme. The seven objective prompts on each survey are aligned with programme objectives. From the pre-programme measure to the post-programme measure, the semantics of some prompts are altered to address changes from the start of the programme (e.g., *I anticipate the value of the programme will be . . .*) to the end of the programme (e.g., *The value of the programme has been . . .*). The 6-point response scale is balanced between negative and positive options, with no neutral default offered. The higher number in each case is representative of the more positive response. Given the cultural, age, and language differences that are inherent in a programme such as this, the survey was designed to be concise with no response set variations embedded within the scale as each survey is subject to translation by interpreters as needed. The original surveys were piloted with four delegations and fine-tuned based upon the feedback from those 56 participants. In addition, two external evaluations have been conducted to offer expert review of both the collection and analysis methods. Cronbach's alphas indicate the reliability of the pretest to be .61 and the posttest to be .67, respectively ( $n = 520$ ). An open-ended prompt asking for *Comments/Suggestions* is also included on each version of the survey.

It should be noted that many participants come to this programme evaluation process with little exposure to questionnaire-style assessments. Therefore, no identifying information is requested to ensure anonymity and

encourage accurate reporting of their perceptions. The processing of each questionnaire is completed by project personnel not directly involved with group interaction so as to prevent the linking of any individual with his or her survey responses. Each completed survey is visually checked and the pre-programme survey is aligned with a parallel post-programme survey based upon demographic responses and handwriting. The two surveys are then assigned an identification number for tracking purposes during data analysis. Under such circumstances, only independent rather than paired comparisons can be made during data analysis.

### Data Collection Procedures

As has been previously noted, each participant was given two opportunities to complete a questionnaire. The pre-programme survey was provided at the opening session before the initiation of programme experiences and the post-programme survey was provided at the end of the programme during the closing session. As the collection of this data is for ongoing programme evaluation purposes and is not intended for generalization to other programmes, this evaluation process has been given exempt status by IRB. As most participants do not speak English, each group was accompanied by trained interpreters who provided translation of both verbal instructions and written materials. The interpreters were guided by SDI programme staff to inform participants that completion of each survey is voluntary. Each participant was given a paper copy of the survey in English, which was subsequently translated into either Spanish or Portuguese as needed for the nine groups from Latin America and the Caribbean. Not only did the interpreters provide directions and read prompts with response options, they also offered clarifications as needed. Completion of each questionnaire took participants approximately fifteen minutes, depending upon how many questions interpreters needed to address and how many written comments respondents offered.

### Data Analysis

The primary purpose for this programme evaluation was to examine a subset of groups from Latin America and the Caribbean to ascertain the short-term impact of an intervention on the attitudes of participants relative to programme objectives. Given this purpose, pre-programme and post-programme survey responses were used to identify the collective attitudes of these specific groups by examining the range of perspectives provided at specific moments in time.<sup>51</sup> In addition to description elements such as means and standard deviations, Dunst, Hamby, and



Table 1 – Demographic Characteristic of Respondents

Variable	Category	<i>n</i>	%
Gender	Male	65	45.5%
	Female	78	54.5%
Role	Coach	52	36.4%
	Athlete	91	63.6%
Gender and Role	Male Coach	31	21.7%
	Female Coach	21	14.7%
	Male Athlete	34	23.8%
	Female Athlete	57	39.9%

and Trivette<sup>53</sup> suggest ways to calculate effect sizes when measuring pre/post responses for the same group of participants over time. Therefore, the quantitative data were examined at two distinct points in time, the very start of the programme experience and the very end of the programme experience, to ascertain changes that could be indicative of programme effectiveness.

Some qualitative data was collected on the surveys using a single, open-ended comment prompt on each requesting *comments/suggestions*. Participant comments were translated by professional translators and sorted for emergent themes. While the qualitative data adds context, it is not the focus of this analysis. Therefore, information generated from the post-programme qualitative prompt is utilized only to help explain any indications of change yielded from the quantitative analysis. Two demographic items (i.e., gender and role) and all seven Likert-type prompts that were aligned with programme objectives provide the essential data for this analysis.

## RESULTS

Nine groups representing countries in Latin America and the Caribbean participated in the SDI Sports Visitors programme over the course of five years. Of these participants, 143 individuals completed both a pretest and posttest survey consisting of seven items measuring core concepts associated with participation. The goal of this study was to:

1. Measure growth on each item comprising the questionnaire and demonstrate its value through effect size calculations

2. Measure the overall growth of participants using total mean scores for pretest and posttest items and demonstrate their value through effect size calculations

3. Determine whether the overall effect of the programme is received differently by individuals based on gender, role (coach/athlete), and gender/role combined

All individuals who completed both the pretest and posttest further identified their gender and specific role as either a coach or athlete. The demographic data of the final sample used for analysis is outlined in Table 1.

Each item comprising the questionnaire was measured during both the pretest and posttest. These items were based on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from extremely negative to extremely positive. The mean scores for the entire sample of 143 valid participants are included in table 2 along with standard deviations. All items demonstrated gains from pretest to posttest. To determine how large or significant these gains were, effect size calculations were made on a per item basis as well as on the overall total mean scores using Cohen's *d* where the general accepted range of effects are:

1. Small = 0.20
2. Medium = 0.50
3. Large = 0.80

The range of effect size indicates that gains from pretests to posttests were small for items one, six and seven, medium for item two, large for items three, four and five and very large for overall total mean scores. These figures indicate that the programme is having a strong positive impact on

Table 2 – Pretest, Posttest and Effect Sizes for Likert Scale Questions and Overall Scores

Item	Pretest		Posttest		<i>d</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
(1) My opinion of the United States is	5.26	0.76	5.52	0.61	0.38
(2) My opinion of American people is	4.83	0.77	5.31	0.63	0.68
(3) My familiarity with American sport is	4.06	1.16	4.99	0.85	0.85
(4) My familiarity with American culture is	3.43	1.14	4.55	0.82	1.13
(5) My familiarity with including people with disabilities in sport is	3.70	1.46	5.07	0.86	1.14
(6) I anticipate the value of this programme will be/The value of this programme has been	5.66	0.57	5.81	0.43	0.28
(7) I anticipate my willingness to share my experience when I return is/My willingness to share my experience when I return is	5.69	0.48	5.83	0.40	0.32
Overall Scores and Effect Size	32.64	3.63	37.08	2.50	1.43

Range of overall total score is 7-42.

participants as a whole. Participant comments support these findings: “This programme was extremely valuable, well planned and it fulfilled all its objectives. All my expectations were met and I definitely took valuable pointers from the different sessions that will be of great importance.” The idea that change can occur in such a short time was also reflected, “The experience that you have given us has completely changed my life and my way of thinking” and “This programme has changed my perspective on sports and disability and I hope you continue to promote similar programmes.” Some objective-specific elements are affirmed, “My trip here has taught me a great amount about the people, the culture and has made me a better person” and “Participating in this programme was very valuable to me. I was able to reflect about my thoughts and attitudes at work, particularly towards people with disabilities.” Gratitude was a common theme in the comments, “Thank you for everything you did for us! The experience that you have given us has completely changed my life and my way of thinking. I am sure it changed my fellow participants’ life too! Thank you!” Several participants indicated the desire to return and many suggested the need to continue programmes such as this.

It appears that most participants could separate the intent of the objectives from the aspects of the visit they found challenging or in need of improvement. “I know that it is difficult to enjoy the food from different countries but I think that it’s the most difficult thing for kids to get used to. But I think that this is an excellent experience for kids of

this age for their personal and intellectual growth.” Others indicated the desire for more *down time* to rest or reflect; whereas others wanted to have more opportunities to shop.

Because of the very large overall programme effect size, it was important to determine whether gains were more significant for some participants than others. In this study, analyses based on gender, role (coach/athlete), and the combination of the two (gender/role) were used to generate a comparison of overall mean scores for pretests and posttests as well as gains for each independent variable analyzed.

Male participants reported mean gains of 4.42 points and female participants reported mean gains of 4.46 points. Based on the difference in mean gains by gender, an independent samples *t*-test was run. The results of the independent samples *t*-test were not significant when using gender as a factor with overall gains  $t(141) = -0.063$ ,  $p = 0.951$

Individuals who participated in the programme as coaches reported mean gains of 4.31 points and individuals who participated in the programme as athletes reported mean gains of 4.52 points. Based on the difference in mean gains by role, an independent samples *t*-test was run. The results of the independent samples *t*-test were not significant when using role as a factor with overall gains  $t(141) = -0.309$ ,  $p = 0.757$ .

Table 3 – Comparison of Overall Pretest and Posttest Scores by Gender

Gender	N	Pretest		Posttest		Gain
		M	SD	M	SD	
Male	65	32.75	3.83	37.17	2.47	+4.42
Female	78	32.54	3.48	37.00	2.53	+4.46

Table 4 – Comparison of Overall Pretest and Posttest Scores by Role

Role	N	Pretest		Posttest		Gain
		M	SD	M	SD	
Coach	52	33.30	3.61	37.61	2.53	+4.31
Athlete	91	32.25	3.60	36.77	2.44	+4.52

Table 5 – Comparison of Overall Pretest and Posttest Scores by Gender and Role

Gender and Role	N	Pretest		Posttest		Gain
		M	SD	M	SD	
Male Coach	31	33.16	3.72	37.44	2.85	+4.28
Female Coach	21	33.52	3.52	37.86	2.01	+4.34
Male Athlete	34	32.39	3.94	36.93	2.09	+4.54
Female Athlete	57	32.18	3.42	36.69	2.64	+4.51

Four groups who participated in the programme included male coaches, female coaches, male athletes and female athletes. Male coaches reported mean gains of 4.28 points and female coaches reported mean gains of 4.34 points. Male athletes reported mean gains of 4.54 points and female athletes reported mean gains of 4.51 points. Based on the difference in means in the gender/role category, a one-way ANOVA was run. The results of the analysis were not significant when using gender and role as a factor with overall reported mean gains  $F(3, 139) = 0.033, p = 0.992$ . The only quote from LAC participants that explicitly addressed different groups is as follows: “Thank you so much for the opportunity you’ve given us. You’ve helped us to know more about this country and to get better at this sport and to learn more. For both children and adults this experience is unforgettable. How wonderful that there is such an institution that deals with making these kind of events a reality.” As you can see, it affirms the finding that the programme impact is consistent for all.

## DISCUSSION

The purpose of this programme evaluation was to examine a subset of LAC groups in a specific SDP programme that has been a partnership between George Mason University’s SDI and the USDOD Sports Visitor programme to ascertain the immediate, short-term impact of an intervention

programme on the attitudes of participants relative to established programme objectives. The findings are based upon descriptive and effect size outcomes of quantitative survey data supplemented by qualitative comments provided by participants. The results indicate that a) positive change occurred among LAC participants across all objectives measured, and b) changes were consistently reflected across each type of LAC participant group based upon gender, role, and gender with role.

While diplomatic changes are generally slow in evolving, the programme evaluation results indicate that interactive engagement through sport programming has been effectively employed to facilitate positive, short-term change.<sup>13, 15, 17</sup> Affording participants multifaceted experiences through the SDI Sports Visitors Program supports the principles of effective diplomacy recommended by Broome and Hatay<sup>14</sup> and supported by Sport for Development Theory.<sup>10, 20</sup>

In alignment with Allport’s<sup>16</sup> contact hypothesis and Beer’s and Norhia’s<sup>18</sup> Theory O, this programme evaluation supports the contention that direct interaction and bottom-up programming would result in positive change among participants in the SDI Sports Visitors Program. These results are consistent with the results of the programme evaluation of the broader SDI Sports Visitors Program,

revealing that participants from LAC regions, being afforded similar experiences, yield similar results to the larger SDI Sports Visitors Program participant group.

The composition of the participant groups involved in the SDI Sports Visitors Program reflects the citizenship essential in diplomatic success.<sup>22</sup> The non-elite sport participants and coaches embody grassroots use of sport for diplomacy.<sup>41</sup> The sports employed in SDI programming address the specific interests of LAC participants and were essential for programme efficacy by serving as an intercultural influence and connection.<sup>34, 39</sup> The sports of basketball and baseball, in particular, reflect the embedded cultural imperialism in international sport, a side effect of globalization that stimulates cross-cultural similarity.<sup>35, 38</sup> Yet, these sports have been popularized in the LAC region and, therefore, provide an effective vehicle for intercultural exchange.

The U. S. Department of State's support of the Sports Visitors Program explicitly uses sport to foster international engagement and generate diplomatic influence.<sup>41, 54</sup> The programme is organized around broad international diplomatic goals that are addressed at the local level. The 'glocal' foundations of the SDI Sports Visitors Program are evident, as its diplomatic agenda and global intentions are pursued through internationalized local sport activities.<sup>7, 23, 24, 28, 29</sup> Conducted at the interpersonal grassroots level, this programme provided opportunities to increase intercultural understanding, decrease suspicion, reduce stereotypes and humanize cross-cultural counterparts among the participants.

The study measured participants' perceptual changes affiliated with the established SDI Sports Visitors programme objectives through employing an empowerment evaluation model.<sup>50</sup> Through coordinated localized programming tailored to each group's demographics (i.e., participant age, country of origin, preferred sport, role as coach or athlete), the programme facilitated grassroots intercultural interaction grounded on the theoretical underpinnings, such as Allport,<sup>16</sup> Beer and Norhia,<sup>18</sup> and Broome and Natay,<sup>14</sup> upon which the programme was built. Regardless of age, gender, sport, role, or country of origin, programme participants reported growth in individual perceptions directed toward established programme goals. All measured outcomes yielded perceptual growth, including participants' overall opinion of the United States. Participant awareness of American culture, American people, American sport systems, and inclusive sport also strengthened during their visits. The actual value placed on this programme by participants exceeded their anticipated

value of the programme. Additionally, participants' willingness to share their experiences upon returning home increased. This study provided evidence that the SDI Sports Visitors programme was effective in achieving its diplomatic ends through supporting the intercultural awareness of participants from Latin America and the Caribbean.

### Limitations

As with any survey research, limitations exist regarding the accuracy of both input (how well a respondent understands the questions posed and response options offered) and output (the honesty and accuracy of self-reporting). The diversity of the groups can be a limitation as differences in experience, age, roles, and language can complicate the survey process. While steps have been taken to make the surveys accessible to all types of programme participants, the quality of input is still dependent upon the ability and willingness of interpreters translating the documents and responding to participant questions. Because of these input concerns, some typical output controls such as repeating questions different ways and providing reversed response scales have not been used. The reliability scores suggest only moderate consistency since no repetition of questions is used. Therefore, the simplicity of the instrument is a limitation. Another limitation rests in the variability of programming offered to attain consistent objectives. The sponsor maintained a great deal of control over content for most of the LAC groups included in this evaluation. While the results indicate positive outcomes, missed opportunities to apply evidence-based practices to the programme design was limited as was the opportunity to reflect upon experiences relative to follow-on efforts.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

While the surveys have provided useful information, greater infusion of qualitative information should be used to enhance the value of survey and offset the limitations created by this very succinct instrument. Expanding qualitative input to include existing video and photographic data could be used to provide greater insight into the specific elements of the programme that make the greatest impact on participants. For future programmes, the addition of video-based interview prompts, translated in real-time by interpreters, could also lend context to the quantitative programme data. Establishing a consistent method for harnessing unsolicited social media comments/postings could also provide additional information. While the programme staff is aware of some existing data in the social media realm, more information is needed to harvest that data



in a meaningful way.

Programme variability is not problematic as long as essential elements needed to address objectives are consistently infused. A document review of the logistics books that represent programme experiences provided to specific groups should be conducted, preferably by someone external to the SDI team. The goal of this analysis would be to align objectives with activities to make sure essential programme elements are consistently included to address objectives. Outcomes from such a review should drive future planning. Further examination of existing action planning documents would also enhance the potential for connectedness with participants once they return home so that the lasting impact of the programme could be explored.

Finally, this is the first time that the programme has been evaluated based upon regional groupings. In the future, an examination of the larger data set for additional subsets based upon language and/or regional groupings would help to identify areas of greatest impact that could then be targeted for explicit follow-on efforts. The establishment of greater connections with the embassies would also be desirable in order to enhance the likelihood of gathering longitudinal multiplier effect data. After all, the ultimate intent of sport diplomacy programmes is to create meaningful change in local communities. The greatest future research would be to identify the accomplishments of participants from these LAC programmes that they would attribute to their experiences through the programme, in order to add to the research base of SDP as a whole.

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