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Original Research

# Sport for development and peace: Surveying actors in the field

**Meredith A. Whitley[1], Kelly Farrell[1], Eli A. Wolff[2], Sarah J. Hillyer[3]**

[1] Adelphi University, USA
[2] Brown University, USA
[3] University of Tennessee, USA

*Corresponding author email:* mwhitley@adelphi.edu

## ABSTRACT

Human resources are critical to the success of SDP as a field, and yet little is known about the experience and expertise of the growing number of SDP actors (e.g., practitioners, scholars, students). The purpose of this paper is to present the results of a questionnaire designed to enhance our understanding of the SDP field through the eyes (and experiences) of SDP actors. The current state of the field is assessed, from the definition of SDP to information about the field that is actively sought (e.g., measurement and evaluation, program design and curriculum, funding) to concerns about limited support, ineffective and inequitable practices, and unclear impact. By understanding actors' experiences in and expectations of the SDP field, we are able to identify a set of strengths and weaknesses that must be addressed in order to facilitate the field's growth and development. The paper concludes with a set of recommendations about ways the field can be improved, including enhanced access to resources and research, more quality collaborations and partnerships, and meaningful, rigorous research and evaluation.

## BACKGROUND

The sport for development and peace (SDP) field has experienced rapid growth since the late 1990s (Coalter, 2010), with an increasing number of initiatives, events, organizations, and networks (e.g., Beyond Sport Awards, streetfootballworld, Up2Us Sports, Laureus Sport for Good Foundation). At this time, over 950 organizations are listed on the International Platform on Sport and Development

(compared with 176 organizations in July 2006; Levermore, 2008), with an estimated 10 new organizations created each month using sport to reach specific outcomes (Hayhurst & Frisby, 2010). Growing political and institutional support has resulted in expanded opportunities for funding and the production of scholarship (e.g., Journal of Sport for Development, UK Economic and Social Research Council, Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation, U.S. Department of State Sports Diplomacy Division; Schulenkorf, Sherry, & Rowe, 2016), along with an increasing number of employment opportunities within SDP and related fields (Whitley, McGarry, Martinek, Mercier, & Quinlan, 2017). For example, since 2013, one SDP website has posted over 500 jobs in the field in the United States, and a global SDP website has posted 347 jobs around the world (sportanddev.org, 2017; Up2UsSports, 2017).

Despite this growth, previous critiques cite the loose, unorganized, and isolated nature of the SDP field (Kidd, 2008; Massey, Whitley, Blom, & Gerstein, 2015). Recent attempts in the academic literature have been made to address these concerns, seeking to synthesize the knowledge within the SDP field, including: (a) an integrative review of sport for development literature by Schulenkorf et al. (2016); (b) an integrative review of sport-based youth development literature by Jones, Edwards, Bocarro, Bunds, and Smith (2017); (c) a systematic review of life skill development through sports programs serving socially vulnerable youth by Hermens, Super, Verkooijen, and Koelen (2017); (d) a systematic map of the evidence on sport for development's efficacy in Africa by Langer (2015); (e) a qualitative meta-study of positive youth development through sport by Holt

et al. (2017); (f) a systematic map of the current state of sport for development research by Cronin (2011); (g) a literature review of positive youth development through sport by Coakley (2011); and (h) a scoping review of SDP interventions targeting Aboriginal youth in Canada by Gardam, Giles, and Hayhurst (2017). Additionally, Whitley and colleagues (Whitley et al., 2018; Whitley, Massey, Camiré, Boutet, & Borbee, 2019) have critically appraised both quantitative and qualitative evidence in academic and grey literature in the SDP field in six global cities (Cape Town, Hong Kong, London, Mumbai, Nairobi, and New Orleans) and throughout the United States. All of these efforts have provided a relatively comprehensive understanding of the current state of SDP as described in the literature, including but not limited to: (a) program design and implementation (e.g., resources/inputs, geographical contexts, sport activities, outputs, level of development, leadership, contextual assets), (b) research and program evaluation (e.g., research foci, theoretical frameworks, methodologies, methods, key research findings), and (c) publication trends (e.g., authorship, journals). However, minimal attention has been given to the experience and expertise of the growing number of SDP actors (e.g., practitioners, scholars, students). The few publications that have featured SDP actors have focused on their motivations for engaging in the field (e.g., volunteers, scholars, practitioners; Welty Peachey, Cohen, & Musser, 2016; Welty Peachey, Lyras, Cohen, Bruening, & Cunningham, 2014; Welty Peachey, Musser, Shin, & Cohen, 2018), partnership experiences within the field (Hayhurst, Wilson, & Frisby, 2011), perceptions of impact on the participants, community, and/or society (Schulenkorf, Sugden, & Burdsey, 2014; Spaaij, Magee, & Jeanes, 2013; Whitley, Hayden, & Gould, 2016), and impact on the actors themselves (e.g., volunteers, celebrity athletes; Darnell, 2010, 2012; Welty Peachey, Bruening, Lyras, Cohen, & Cunningham, 2015; Wilson, Van Luijk, & Boit, 2015). As yet, there has not been a systematic assessment of SDP actors' experiences in and perceptions of the SDP field. This is concerning, given that human resources are critical for success in the SDP field (Svensson & Hambrick, 2016).

The purpose of this paper is to present the results of a questionnaire designed to enhance our understanding of the SDP field through the eyes (and experiences) of SDP actors. The intention is to use responses to assess the current state of the SDP field, as well as outline recommendations for ways in which the field can be improved. In order for the SDP field to continue growing and developing, we must ensure that actors currently engaged in SDP have the knowledge, support, and resources required to be (and feel) efficacious. Understanding their experiences in and expectations of the SDP field will help us identify strengths and weaknesses that must be addressed, along with accruing a set of recommendations from those who are actively engaged in SDP.

## METHODS

### Participants

The criteria for inclusion in this study were being active in SDP and being at least 18 years of age. The demographic variables for the 140 participants in this study are outlined in Table 1. The majority of participants identified as working within SDP organizations, either at the organizational (31.42%) or programming level (20.71%), along with "other practitioners" in the SDP field (e.g., consultants, sport psychologists). The academics (15.71%) included professors, lecturers, and university department directors. Of the 140 total participants, 120 have engaged in higher education, with 62 participants (44.28%) earning degrees in a related field (e.g., sport psychology, sport management, physical education, kinesiology, peace studies, sport-based youth development, education). Alternatively, 58 participants (41.42%) have degrees in an unrelated field (e.g., political science, general psychology, international relations, law, business administration), with the majority of these individuals identifying as practitioners.

### Questionnaire

A multidisciplinary team developed the questionnaire based on their experiences and expertise in the SDP field, along with foundational knowledge of the SDP literature. The questionnaire was then reviewed by six SDP experts with a variety of academic and practical experiences in different geographic locations, with a request for feedback on content validity. Their feedback was incorporated into the final questionnaire, which was composed of 33 open-ended questions organized within the following domains: (a) demographics (8 questions), (b) SDP field (7 questions), (c) professional development (8 questions), and (d) professional associations (10 questions).

### Procedure

The study procedures were approved by the lead investigator's Institutional Review Board. Participation in the questionnaire was interpreted as informed consent, with participants only able to access the online questionnaire after reading an information page, including the voluntary

*Table 1. Participant characteristics (N = 140)*

| Characteristic | N | % |
|---|---|---|
| Geographic Location | | |
|     Africa | 19 | 13.57 |
|     Asia | 19 | 13.57 |
|     Australia (Oceania) | 8 | 5.71 |
|     Europe | 23 | 16.42 |
|     North America | 68 | 48.57 |
|     South America | 3 | 2.14 |
| Professional Title | | |
|     Organization Leader | 44 | 31.42 |
|     Program Leader | 29 | 20.71 |
|     Academic | 22 | 15.71 |
|     Student | 12 | 8.57 |
|     Other Practitioner | 12 | 8.57 |
|     Researcher/Monitoring and Evaluator | 10 | 7.14 |
|     Funding and/or Outreach Leader | 5 | 3.57 |
|     Intern | 4 | 2.85 |
|     Did not specify | 2 | 1.42 |
| Years Working in SDP field | | |
|     Less than 1 year | 16 | 11.42 |
|     Between 1 and 5 years | 52 | 37.14 |
|     Between 5 and 10 years | 43 | 30.71 |
|     Over 10 years | 29 | 20.71 |
| Educational Background | | |
|     Secondary school or less | 2 | 1.42 |
|     Some university | 3 | 2.14 |
|     University degree | 30 | 21.42 |
|     Some graduate school | 8 | 6.43 |
|     Graduate degree | 79 | 56.42 |
|     Did not specify | 17 | 12.14 |

and anonymous nature of the study. Since an exhaustive list of all SDP actors is nonexistent, recruitment procedures were comprised of various methods to ensure wide distribution. This included, but was not limited to, announcements posted on listservs, newsletters, blogs, and social media. Additionally, the research team accessed their personal and professional network of SDP actors in-person and via email and telephone. Data were collected over seven months to increase the number and variety of respondents, with multiple communication attempts via the previously listed channels.

**Data Analysis**

Within the set of the responses for each question, content analysis was conducted in which two investigators independently identified common themes in the data, grouping the data into lower and higher order themes (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). At each stage (i.e., lower order themes, higher order themes), these two investigators engaged in critical discussions about ways the data should be categorized, ultimately coming to consensus regarding how to progress (Sparkes & Smith, 2009). A tertiary investigator also served as a peer debriefer to increase the analytical rigor. Additionally, the responses within each lower and higher order theme were carefully reviewed to determine whether patterns emerged in the responses based on the demographic variables collected: (a) geographic location, (b) professional title, (c) years working in the SDP field, and/or (d) educational background. In the section below, any patterns that did emerge within the themes discussed in the text are identified.

## RESULTS AND SPECIFIC DISCUSSION

### Defining SDP

The SDP field has been critiqued about a lack of clarity, which begins with the term itself. First, "development" and "peace" are vague, amorphous, complex terms (Sugden, 2010), with matters complicated by contestations about the name of the SDP "movement": "What exactly is SDP? Moreover, one could ask what is Sport-Based Youth Development? How does this differ from SDP? What is simply Sport for Development? And why differentiate between Sport for Development and Sport for Development and Peace?" (Massey & Whitley, 2019, p. 175) All of these terms—and more (e.g., sport-in-development, development through sport, positive youth development through sport)—have been used to describe the SDP "movement," with even greater diversity, complexity, and obfuscation in the definitions of these terms.

When participants were asked to define SDP, most provided complex, nuanced responses that addressed many facets of SDP that were subsequently categorized into themes. These themes are outlined in Table 2, although a subset of comprehensive responses is included here to provide a glimpse into the complexity of how SDP actors define SDP:

*SDP complements existing strategies to reduce inequalities in health, poverty, gender, and disability. Working towards broader development goals, SDP provides fun, accessible and inclusive programming that strengthens communities and empowers individuals and communities. (P50, fundraising consultant)*

*Using the power of sport in combination with other interventions in developing countries to work towards social justice, health, education, human rights, rights and inclusion of people with disabilities, peace, etc., stressing that sport is often an easy way in but needs to be combined with other interventions and planned, conducted, and evaluated together with local organisations, institutions to be successful and sustainable. (P58, coordinator of sport and development)*

*Simply put, SDP is using sport (broadly defined to include any kind of physical activity/play-based activities) to achieve development objectives. Such social objectives can address a lot of different issues such as: improving health (WASH/sexual & reproductive health/etc.), empowering girls, promoting social integration, transforming conflict, improving employability, etc. (P111, intern)*

*Channelling the convening, and educational power of sport/physical activity as a vehicle to increase the salience of lessons in personal and social responsibility that can contribute to healthier, safer, and inclusive social systems for all. (P131, doctoral fellow)*

Overall, the themes that were most prevalent in the data described the outcomes (e.g., life skill development) and impact (e.g., social development, social cohesion, social justice) sought through SDP. Themes such as social development (e.g., community development, country development/societal change) generated more responses from participants in North America, while social cohesion (e.g., human rights, access/inclusion, empowerment) and health promotion saw a higher percentage of participants from other countries. There did not seem to be greater responses from practitioners compared with scholars or students within specific themes, aside from the higher order theme of health promotion, in which all six participants identified as SDP practitioners. Overall, the focus on individual development in the responses is not surprising, as many SDP program outcomes target individual behavior change (Lyras & Welty Peachey, 2011), with recently published reviews of SDP research indicating a significant focus on individual outcomes, from cognitive and social life skills (Hermens et al., 2017) and general life skills (Langer, 2015) to positive youth development outcomes in personal, social, and physical domains (Holt, Deal, & Smyth, 2016). In fact, 49% of the articles in an integrative review of sport-based youth development literature included at least one youth development outcome (e.g., academic, social, confidence, positive identity; Jones et al., 2017). However, many of the participants' definitions included connections between outcomes and more complex, macro-level impact, such as social cohesion (e.g., peacebuilding, social integration), social justice (e.g., human rights, access/inclusion, empowerment), and social development (e.g., community development, societal change). While this certainly matches the language that has been used to describe the SDP "movement" over time, there are critiques that this may simply be aspirational language that is faith-based, inaccurately generalizing micro-level effects (e.g., outcomes) to the macro (e.g., impact; Coalter, 2010; Langer, 2015; Massey et al., 2015). Given these concerns about aspirational language, complex responses, and diverse foci in the various definitions of SDP, it may behoove the field to consider the creation of a clear, comprehensive, nuanced definition that can be consistently used across the field. This would address P134's (doctoral student and course instructor) concerns about having "so many different ways of describing work that seems to be very similar."

*Table 2. SDP definition*

| | Higher order theme | Lower order theme |
|---|---|---|
| Using sport, physical activity, and play for… | Social justice (19) | Access/inclusion (6) |
| | | Human rights (5) |
| | | Empowerment (4) |
| | | Gender equity (2) |
| | | Poverty reduction (2) |
| | Social cohesion (11) | Conflict resolution (3) |
| | | Peacebuilding (3) |
| | | Social integration (3) |
| | | Violence prevention (2) |
| | Personal development (9) | Life skill development (3) |
| | | Life transformation (3) |
| | | Education (2) |
| | | Employment (1) |
| | Social development (9) | Community development (5) |
| | | Country development/ societal change (4) |
| | Health promotion (6) | Health promotion and disease prevention (4) |
| | | Substance use prevention (2) |
| | Youth development (9) | Youth life skill development (5) |
| | | Youth development (4) |
| Using sport, physical activity, and play in/as… | Educational/pedagogical tool (8) | Educational/pedagogical tool (8) |
| | Curriculum and programming (7) | Intentional/integrated programming (4) |
| | | Hands-on learning activities (3) |
| Working group | Working group (1) | UN working group (1) |

*Note.* The number in parentheses stands for the number of raw meaning units within the theme.

In addition to identifying the outcomes and impact sought through SDP, 15 participants also described SDP as a way in which sport, physical activity, and play were used intentionally through curriculum, programming, and educational and pedagogical tools. Similarly, Hamilton (1999) defined youth development in three ways: (a) a natural progression of learning, growing, and changing; (b) a philosophy of understanding youth; and (c) a method for working with youth. Thus, these 15 participants who included this focus on the method of engaging with others through sport connect with Hamilton's third description. Interestingly, six of the seven participants who focused on formal curriculum and programming had achieved a degree in higher education, which suggests this focus on methodology may skew toward those with experiences in higher education. In sum, participants' definitions of SDP were varied and complex, with much to say.

**SDP Information**

As the SDP field has grown and transformed over the last 20 years, there has been growing interest in accessing information, although the *type* of information most sought by SDP actors is not fully known. When study participants were asked what information they sought most in SDP (see Table 3), there was a resounding focus on methods and methodologies (mostly by practitioners), from measurement and evaluation to program design and curriculum. Specifically, participants were interested in enhancing their knowledge and skills related to measurement and evaluation of SDP programs, along with access to effective tools, methods, and frameworks. P58 (coordinator of sport and development) called for "guidelines for monitoring and evaluation," while P102 (education director) asked about the "most effective and honest ways to monitor and evaluate impact." Given concerns about rigor and quality in SDP research and evaluation (Jeanes & Lindsey, 2014; Langer, 2015; Massey & Whitley, 2019; Whitley et al., 2018, 2019), this interest in research and evaluation methods and methodologies is not surprising, even for those with higher education experience, given so few in the SDP field studied research and evaluation methods and methodologies broadly—or in SDP specifically. Additionally, interest in information related to program design and curriculum matches recent calls for more intentional and systematic use (and dissemination) of program theories (e.g., theories of change, logic models; Coalter, 2015; Jones et al., 2017; Lyras & Welty Peachey,

*Table 3. Information sought in SDP field*

| Higher order theme | Lower order theme |
| --- | --- |
| Methods and methodologies (48) | Program design/curriculum (29) |
| | Measurement and evaluation (16) |
| | Trends and innovations (3) |
| Impact (37) | Current research (19) |
| | Outcomes and impact (16) |
| | Sustainability (2) |
| Opportunities for engagement (24) | Collaboration opportunities (7) |
| | Networking (6) |
| | Conferences (5) |
| | Key stakeholders (4) |
| | Methods for engagement (2) |
| Funding (15) | Funding (15) |
| Directions of the field (12) | History/definition of the field (9) |
| | Future of the field (3) |
| Career advancement (6) | Job opportunities (6) |

*Note.* The number in parentheses stands for the number of raw meaning units within the theme.

2011; Whitley et al., 2018). Through program theories, conditions and mechanisms are identified that explain why certain outcomes and impacts are (not) reached (Coalter, 2013; Weiss, 1995), allowing SDP actors to intentionally (and effectively) promote specific outcomes and impacts. Without this knowledge, SDP programs are magical black boxes "whose contents and processes are taken for granted" (Coalter, 2007, p. 90). The participants (largely practitioners) in this study were interested in moving beyond this, seeking to understand process-based and evidence-informed program design and curriculum development (Coalter, 2010). Additionally, there exists a set of reviews that have synthesized the (albeit limited) knowledge within the SDP field, with findings identifying best practices as it relates to program design and implementation that should be accessible to SDP actors (Hermens et al., 2017; Holt et al., 2016; Jones et al., 2017; Schulenkorf et al., 2016). There is a need to make these reviews widely accessible to practitioners, given the implications for the continued growth and development of the SDP field.

Participants were also extremely interested in learning more about impact, from accessing current research in SDP (to comprehend the most impactful practices) to understanding the outcomes and impact in the SDP field. In the words of P66 (associate professor), I want to know "more about the actual programs being implemented and the impact they are having." This is a barrier to the growth and development of the SDP field, with Darnell, Chawansky, Marchesseault, Holmes, and Hayhurst (2018) highlighting the "importance of access to and dissemination of SDP research for both academics and practitioners" (p. 143). This yearning (largely by practitioners) for greater access to current SDP research may reflect the fact that many academic publications are hidden behind paywalls, while program evaluations are rarely made public, thereby directly and indirectly preventing most actors from accessing this information (Gardam et al., 2017). There is also a gap in local knowledge, with a need to better understand impact outside of traditional academic outlets. As Nicholls, Giles, and Sethna (2011) highlight, evidence about sport's impact exists in local and indigenous communities, but this knowledge is rarely accessed or distributed. In P55's (chief program officer) words, it would be helpful to have "up to date research being done within the field," while P114 (regional program manager) stated: "I would like to know about the continuing research in the area." Almost all of the 19 participants interested in accessing current research were practitioners from countries outside of North America, suggesting a practitioner-scholar divide that is particularly salient for non-North American practitioners.

When participants were asked how they currently access information about the field, a number of collaboratives, coalitions, and think tanks were mentioned (e.g., BeyondSport.org, SportandSocialChange.org, streetfootball world, Coaches Across Continents, Peace and Sport), along with individual SDP organizations, the United Nations (although the Office on Sport for Development and Peace is now closed), conferences, listservs, and newsletters. However, the most frequently cited methods were sportanddev.org (mostly by practitioners), academic articles and books (largely by scholars and students), colleagues and partners (predominantly by practitioners and scholars), and (broadly) the internet (largely by practitioners). When participants were asked whether these existing resources adequately provided them with the information they needed, 65.85% indicted "no" or "somewhat," suggesting a need for improvement in this area.

As for recommendations of how this information could be more readily accessed, some of the same methods cited above were mentioned, including the creation of a broad,

informed network and both written (e.g., newsletters, listserv) and verbal (e.g., conferences, space for interaction) communication. Interestingly, only one participant mentioned enhanced access to academic publications, which is surprising, given the overwhelming interest by practitioners in information that is typically shared in academic outlets (e.g., current research, measurement and evaluation). Perhaps there is the feeling that academic publications will remain inaccessible, despite recent efforts made by journals such as the *Journal of Sport for Development* to unlock access to SDP scholarship for all actors in the SDP field. As outlined on the journal's website:

*Open-access publishing means that readers do not need to pay to read articles. Most peer-reviewed Sport for Development research to date has been published by for-profit publishing companies who restrict access to universities and individuals with paid subscriptions. This approach disadvantages researchers in resource-limited settings and distances many implementers from academic research. Because the Journal of Sport for Development aims to serve as an open hub of evidence, information, and commentary, all JSFD issues and articles will be freely available online to the public.*

However, JSFD should not be alone in breaking down these barriers, with a clear need for more open-access journals, more support for authors to be able to pay for their publications to be open-access, and more authors self-archiving their publications following publisher policy. Additionally, academic outlets should not be the only source for academic findings, with Schulenkorf et al. (2016) citing the need for the SDP community to close the practitioner-scholar gap by employing "accessible, innovative, and user-friendly ways of presenting research" (p. 35), from reports and newsletters to articles and blogs. Additionally, Nicholls et al. (2011) called for the identification and dissemination of local knowledge so that the field can learn from all actors actively engaged in SDP, regardless of their geography, profession, or expertise. This can occur informally through networking/connections, interactions/discussions, and other methods, although the creation of an authoritative platform (or perhaps the strengthening of an existing platform; e.g., sportanddev.org) could also help democratize knowledge and access. Many participants expanded on this idea:

*A website or organization devoted to bringing together the practice (what programs are running, where, who and how many are they reaching, are they being evaluated, how) with the research (best practices, evaluations, problems). (P66, associate professor)*

*Yes, maybe a portal or webpage with better design, more interactive where there could be gathered all news, scientific research in the field and links to web pages of organisations from all over the world. (P117, network development intern)*

*If there could be a site (whether it be run by a professional organization or something else) that organized information (e.g., such as research articles within past year—and beyond—on certain topics, applied articles, presentations, organizations, funding opportunities, etc.), that would be amazingly helpful. (P140, assistant professor)*

Ideally, this platform would unlock access to knowledge, resources, research, and training/education opportunities, addressing P89's (student and graduate assistant) suggestion for "a more effective way to get information out about the sector to those working in the sector. Not just researchers." This could also address concerns about transparency in the field, with P33 (director of monitoring and evaluation) recommending more transparency with "sharing materials and curricula…it's difficult to find concrete toolkits. I do believe that these exist, but organisations are reluctant to share them publicly online, so knowledge isn't getting transferred across the sector." Similarly, P91 (sales and marketing manager) suggested all actors should "be open and willing to share your information. I understand that intellectual property is a big deal and you want to be able to maintain control of your product, but we should be working together to achieve greater SDP internationally." While transparency may be sought, Hayhurst and colleagues (2010) found that some SDP nongovernmental organizations perceived cooperation in sharing best practices or collaborating on toolkits as "potentially threatening to their existence," particularly in an environment that fostered "competition for scarce resources" (p. 322). Thus, if there is interest in unlocking access to information across the SDP field, there may need to be a stronger rationale and comprehensive support for approaches that deconstruct silos through awareness, discourse, cooperation, and collaboration, such as systems thinking (Massey et al., 2015), collective impact (Kania & Kramer, 2011), and transnational/global impact (Darnell et al., 2018). For example, systems thinking helps organizations "move beyond linear, isolationist, individualistic planning, implementation, and evaluation" (Massey et al., 2015, p. 33) that often carries the assumption that sustainable change on the macro-level (i.e., impact) will ultimately occur through cumulative program-level outcomes. However, this rarely occurs unless programs intentionally align local efforts to societal action (Ricigliano, 2012). This can occur through systems thinking, which

*Table 4. SDP concerns*

| Higher order theme | Lower order theme |
|---|---|
| Disjointed/disorganized field (28) | Isolation within/outside field (16) |
| | No set standards (4) |
| | Duplicated work (3) |
| | Need for an umbrella network (3) |
| | Limited resource sharing (2) |
| Unclear impact (27) | Lack of research and evidence-informed practice (12) |
| | Inadequate/undervalued evaluation (9) |
| | Overstated/unclear impact (6) |
| Ineffective/inequitable practices (24) | Inadequate/missing training for all in field (8) |
| | Sustainability (7) |
| | Neocolonialism and inequity for grassroots organizations (6) |
| | Lack of curriculum (3) |
| Limited support (23) | Inequitable/nonexistent support (14) |
| | Limited support from big organizations and governments (9) |
| Field obscurity/confusion (21) | Lack of awareness/clarity about field (17) |
| | Ineffective messaging (4) |

*Note.* The number in parentheses stands for the number of raw meaning units within the theme.

encourages organizations to acknowledge the messy, complex, and dynamic social ecological systems in which SDP programs operate (Green, 2006) by seeking to understand, engage, cooperate, and collaborate with individuals (e.g., parents, peers, youth workers, teachers) and bodies (e.g., school, funders, government, corporations; Massey & Whitley, 2019). While this certainly requires a different approach to planning, implementation, and evaluation, along with more comprehensive support for these efforts, there is greater potential for macro-level, sustainable impact.

Overall, the information sought by the participants in this study, along with the ways in which it is (or could be) accessed, serve as a reminder of missed opportunities in the field. The majority of study participants (particularly those identifying as practitioners) were unsatisfied, with a sizeable gap between information and access. These recommendations are a starting point for unlocking access for all actors in the SDP field.

**SDP Concerns**

A number of concerns about the field of SDP were raised by study participants (see Table 4), with these concerns distributed across five themes: (a) field obscurity/confusion, (b) disjointed/disorganized field, (c) limited support, (d) ineffective/inequitable practices, and (e) unclear impact.

First, a number of participants identified general confusion about the SDP field, along with the field's obscurity in other domains (e.g., new field, undefined area, difficult to explain). For example, P91 (sales and marketing manager)

described how "the general public and also government don't take it seriously," matching Kidd's (2008) claim that "SDP operates beyond the radar of most national governments' domestic and foreign policies" (p. 371). Additionally, P85 (assistant professor) cited the confusion around terminology: "SDP is used interchangeably with other terms and I feel like this provides a challenge." These concerns connect with the literature cited earlier about the confusion surrounding the name of the SDP "movement" (Langer, 2015; Sugden, 2010). Additionally, there were concerns related to the disorganization of the field, with specific frustrations with isolation both within and outside the field. This concern has appeared repeatedly in the SDP literature, with critiques of isolation in academia within SDP (e.g., within the disciplines of sport sociology, sport management, pedagogy, and sport psychology) and outside of SDP (e.g., within the fields of international development, peace studies, and youth development). Most study participants who voiced this concern about isolation were practitioners from around the world (e.g., Nigeria, Pakistan, Germany, Sri Lanka, Nicaragua, Ireland, Zambia, Canada, United States, Columbia, United Kingdom), with this quote providing a deeper look into these concerns:

*I think there is need for more joint collaboration among all the sectors involved in the field of SDP. Most organization are working in isolation or have limitations in terms of joining networks [that] either charge fees or only accepts [sic] registered organizations. This limits the great work being done by grassroots organizations or academies who are doing great work in rural communities. (P62, chief executive officer)*

This connects to the call for systems thinking (Massey et al., 2015), collective impact (Kania & Kramer, 2011), and transnational/global impact cited earlier (Darnell et al., 2018). Additionally, P58 (coordinator of sport and development) explained how SDP is "not always acknowledged that much in comparison with other interventions in the development sector," suggesting a need for more effective messaging to other sectors and institutions (Black, 2010), with non-sport programming, with government, education, health, and other social services (Hartmann & Kwauk, 2011), with high performance sport (Hayhurst & Frisby, 2010), and with stakeholders in communities and policy (Massey et al, 2015). This enhances the likelihood of awareness, discourse, cooperation, and collaboration within and beyond SDP.

Other concerns came from participants working in organizations who felt frustrated with the limited amount of support received, ranging from perceived inequity to limited support from big organizations and governments. For example, P111 (intern) explained how "money and resources [are] not going directly to where it is needed; global strategies developed far from the grassroots affecting funding and project objectives globally." This quote also highlights concerns that emerged related to inequitable practices (and attitudes), with another participant describing:

*Imbalances between the global north and the global south...patronising attitude of the global north with respect to global south. ...These can be addressed by looking at local SDP from a variety of locations in the global south, developing capacity building at the local level, shifting the attention from Africa to other regions, training local universities in M&E and sharing important info in other languages different from English. (P116, consultant and researcher)*

This reflects concerns by practitioners and academics about neocolonial approaches to SDP that subjugate or colonize practice and/or knowledge, with SDP programs frequently designed, funded, and/or evaluated in/by the Global North for implementation in the Global South, without meaningful engagement with local stakeholders (Coalter, 2013; Jeanes & Lindsey, 2014; Nicholls et al., 2011).

Along with concerns about inequitable practices are concerns related to ineffective practices, with participants citing inadequate or missing training for all SDP actors (e.g., researchers, coaches, administrators). While the participants spoke of this concern in the field more broadly, it may also reflect their own education and training, with

41.42% of the participants with higher education degrees studying fields unrelated to SDP. This matches findings from Welty Peachey et al. (2016), with most practitioners stumbling into SDP from other vocations, without SDP-specific education or training. This is concerning, given the growing number of employment options in SDP, particularly for leadership positions (e.g., director, manager, coordinator; Whitley et al., 2017). While there are some training routes for those implementing SDP activities (e.g., coaches, teachers, community leaders), there is a significant gap in formal training and education for those interested in leadership positions, along with preparation for those currently in entry- and mid-level positions seeking to advance their careers (Lindsey et al., 2015; Whitley et al., 2017). Welty Peachey and colleagues (2016) connected this gap to a potential explanation for SDP organizational failure, with SDP-specific educational backgrounds and development, managerial, and entrepreneurial skills and experience a key to SDP sustainability. However, caution must be taken to avoid perpetuating the neocolonial and inequitable practices that participants cited, with SDP education and training designed for all SDP actors carefully considered and developed. "Institutions of higher education, NGOs, and other development agencies" must "advance critical and contemporary relevant education that moves beyond neocolonialism and neoliberalism and recognizes the value and acumen of local knowledge along with a willingness to adapt to one's surrounding community" (Welty Peachey et al., 2016, p. 16).

Concerns about ineffective practices were not limited to the inadequacy of education and training for SDP actors, with this participant citing other concerns in this theme:

*It's become a bit too general and programs are not always carefully or responsibly designed. A consensus on determining impact needs more work. Now SDP is a bit whatever you want it to be and often not well linked to community needs. It suffers, as does the development sector in general, with a supply side approach. In addition, suppliers don't always appreciate that sport is not a neutral good. It can be highly political and associated with marginalization. (P124, chief innovator)*

This quote, and others in the data, raise awareness about the obscurity (i.e., the magical black box; Coalter, 2007) that exists when it comes to the most effective practices in SDP. There is a need to move beyond this (as discussed above), through both the intentional and systematic use (and dissemination) of program theories (e.g., theories of change, logic models; Coalter, 2015; Jones et al., 2017; Lyras & Welty Peachey, 2011; Whitley et al., 2018) and easy, equitable access to recent SDP reviews that report some of

*Table 5. SDP recommendations*

| Higher order theme | Lower order theme |
| --- | --- |
| Resource/research access (31) | Knowledge-sharing (13) |
| | Funding (7) |
| | Best practices/standards/guidelines/ethics (5) |
| | Capacity building (2) |
| | Conference (2) |
| | Education/training (2) |
| | Collaboration/partnerships (17) |
| Collaboration/networking (23) | Networking (4) |
| | Space for interaction/discussion (2) |
| | Engagement with those outside sector (12) |
| Widespread awareness/engagement (18) | Greater awareness outside sector (4) |
| | Communication (1) |
| | Engagement with players/fans (1) |
| | Meaningful/rigorous research/evaluation (17) |
| Meaningful/rigorous research/evaluation (17) | Empower all engaged in SDP (5) |
| Organized field (14) | Global/regional leadership/alignment (4) |
| | Clear definition (3) |
| | Organization (2) |
| Equitable policy/engagement (11) | Governmental/intergovernmental involvement/policy (4) |
| | Localize/contextualize programming (3) |
| | Connection between grassroots and upper levels (2) |
| | Level Global North-South divide (2) |

*Note.* The number in parentheses stands for the number of raw meaning units within the theme.

these practices. This connects to the final theme that emerged in this section (i.e., unclear impact), with the participants highlighting gaps in research and evidence-informed practice. Most of these participants were currently working in academia or in the area of monitoring and evaluation in the field, with P29 (chief executive strategist) stating, "there isn't enough research for [SDP] to be taken as seriously as other development initiatives." This matches findings in the field, where SDP is considered "out of step with the current drive towards evidence-informed development," with a "need for reliable research and evaluation data to inform the design of policies and programmes" (Langer, 2015, p. 69). Currently, there is a limited evidence base in SDP that is largely reliant on isolated impact evaluations, with questions about rigor, concerns about what constitutes sufficient evidence, and few structured evaluation tools and manuals (Jeanes & Lindsey, 2014; Langer, 2015; Massey & Whitley, 2019; Whitley et al., 2018, 2019). There is a need for more rigorous, systematic research and evaluation efforts and tools that are openly shared with all actors in SDP.

In sum, the findings related to concerns with SDP as a field correlate with the academic literature that cites concerns related to the loose, unorganized, and isolated nature of the SDP field (Massey et al., 2015), with Kidd (2008) referring to the SDP "movement" as "woefully underfunded, completely unregulated, poorly planned and coordinated and largely isolated from mainstream development efforts"

(p. 376).

## SDP Recommendations

When participants were asked what recommendations they have for the SDP field overall (see Table 5), there was a tremendous focus on accessing resources and research, from best practices to funding opportunities. Participants urged those in the field to:

*Continue sharing stories, best practices, and how to effectively tell our stories as a sector. (P29, chief executive strategist)*

*Be more transparent with sharing materials and curricula. (P33, director of monitoring and evaluation)*

*[Open a] learning/sharing space for SDP actors to gather, learn from one another, dedicate time for strategies to improve work. Open said space to those wishing to learn in the field (grad students, entry-level workers). (P64, independent contractor)*

This matches findings outlined earlier, in which participants identified the information they sought most in SDP and recommendations of how this information could be more readily accessed.

Additionally, study participants spoke of developing more

quality collaborations and partnerships, engaging with those both within and outside of the field. Again, matching recommendations for practitioners for close collaboration with development actors in other sectors and institutions (Black, 2010), with non-sport programming, with government, education, health, and other social services (Hartmann & Kwauk, 2011), with high performance sport (Hayhurst & Frisby, 2010), and with stakeholders in communities and policy (Massey et al., 2015). There are similar calls within academia, including Massey and Whitley (2019), pushing SDP scholars to collaborate across academic disciplines and training paradigms, along with collaboration and partnerships between researchers and practitioners, from research and learning partnerships between researchers and nongovernmental organizations (Collison & Marchesseault, 2018) to the co-construction of knowledge between researcher, practitioner, and participant (Darnell et al., 2018). On this topic of collaboration and partnerships, three study participants had this to say:

*Let the stronger organization lend a helping hand to the weaker ones in training, equipment donations, volunteering, etc. (P22, chief operations officer)*

*More ways for researchers and practitioners to work together and funding to develop and sustain those partnerships. (P66, associate professor)*

*We need to be looking more at partnerships with stakeholders/orgs that are looking to achieve the same kinds of outcomes—for example if you are a SDP org working on health education, what other public, private, or nonprofits organizations are out there working on this as well, and how are you using the knowledge they have to make your program better? (P130, director of monitoring and evaluation)*

This need for better collaboration and partnerships within and beyond SDP is grounded in the concerns cited earlier about the isolation of SDP for both academics and practitioners, reinforcing the call for systems thinking (Massey et al., 2015), collective impact (Kania & Kramer, 2011), and transnational/global impact (Darnell et al., 2018). While there are certainly guidelines that should be carefully considered when seeking, creating, and sustaining collaborations and partnerships (Keyte et al., 2018), and concerns have been raised about the potential detriments of collaboration and information sharing (e.g., competition for scarce resources; Hayhurst & Frisby, 2010; Welty Peachey et al., 2014), there is too much to be gained from such strategic efforts to ignore ongoing calls for collaboration and partnerships. The benefits include enhanced structural

capacity within organizations (e.g., processes, practices, accumulated knowledge, support structures; Hall et al., 2003) and contextualized, holistic approaches to research.

Finally, there was a focus on meaningful, rigorous research and evaluation. In the words of one participant:

*Given that SDP & SBYD [sport-based youth development] are relatively new terms, I believe that the next few years need to be extremely rooted in research and proving the model. We need to make sure that these outcomes are actually happening and begin to setup [sic] structures within sports that allow for the outcomes. Sometimes it feels to me that [SDP] moves forward without full proof of concept. I believe that sports matter, but want to make sure that we are giving data-driven answers as to how and where. (P52, program manager)*

This is congruent with the academic dialogue within SDP (discussed earlier), with an identified need for more rigorous, systematic research and evaluation efforts that engage all SDP actors, value all forms of knowledge and expertise, and are accessible and applicable to all SDP actors.

Overall, participants from varied geographic locations identified recommendations for meaningful, rigorous research, collaboration and partnerships, and access to resources and research, suggesting these are salient recommendations for the SDP field.

**SDP Professional Development**

Similar to the ways in which they access information about SDP, study participants described accessing professional development from a variety of conferences, workshops, and events, along with university courses and professional associations, collaboratives, and coalitions (e.g., Up2Us Sports, TPSR Alliance, Association for Applied Sport Psychology). Additionally, participants spoke of informal professional development through conversations with colleagues and field visits to local organizations, in addition to accessing articles in academic journals and online news outlets.

When asked what was missing from current professional development opportunities, many recommendations aligned with the concerns cited above, such as greater accessibility to resources (e.g., research, curriculum funding) and an informed network (e.g., experts in the field), along with training and education that was targeted, with hands-on opportunities for learning and development. However, there

was interest in global expansion of professional development opportunities, along with greater grassroots involvement, as "grassroot organizations are not represented or their projects are not supported" (P62, chief executive officer). This connects with the previously cited concerns of neocolonialism and power imbalances within the field (Coalter, 2013; Jeanes & Lindsey, 2014; Nicholls et al., 2011). Furthermore, participants wished for more consistency, with professional development opportunities "few and far between" (P49, senior director of baseball/softball). A final theme that emerged was interest in ongoing support and follow-up, whether in the form of "resources for follow-up activities back in the organization" (P11, program manager) or "sustained and ongoing mentoring/coaching" (P82, education programming director).

## CONCLUSION

This paper represents another step forward in the growth and development of the SDP field by presenting the results of a questionnaire designed to enhance our understanding of the sector through the eyes and experiences of SDP actors. The findings reveal and confirm many of the same challenges recognized and debated since the inception of SDP as a field of study and practice. There remains an eager desire for an organized field and a united, clear definition of SDP, along with consistent language to describe the work and the intended outcomes. Additionally, SDP actors are interested in accessing a wide range of information about the field, with practitioners especially interested in information related to methods and methodologies (e.g., monitoring and evaluation, program and curriculum design) and meaningful, rigorous research. Finally, there remains interest in improved, accessible training and support for future practitioners, managers, and researchers in SDP, along with enhanced opportunities for meaningful collaboration and partnerships.

The participants in this study represented a subset of a larger population engaged in SDP, and so we acknowledge there is much more to learn from one another—particularly from those who were not meaningfully represented (if at all) in this questionnaire: (a) those implementing SDP activities (e.g., coaches, teachers, community leaders); (b) community stakeholders collaborating with SDP activities (e.g., community leaders, parents); and (c) those engaged in SDP activities (e.g., youth, persons with disabilities). Additionally, while we acknowledge that many of the findings in this paper will be familiar to those deeply engaged in SDP, we hope the field benefits from empirical evidence that supports what so many of us experience on an individual level. We believe there is tremendous potential for this field, but this potential can only be fully realized when *all* of its actors have the knowledge, support, and resources to be (and feel) efficacious.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The final version of the survey is available upon request from the first author.

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Original Research

# Organizational capacity for domestic sport for development

**Ryan Clutterbuck[1], Alison Doherty[1]**

[1] Western University, Canada

*Corresponding author email:* rclutter@uwo.ca

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to explore the organizational capacity for domestic sport for development (SFD). Semistructured interviews were conducted with a representative from 17 domestic SFD organizations operating in Canada (n=17). Within the dimensions of human resources capacity, financial capacity, relationship and network capacity, infrastructure and process capacity, and planning and development capacity, interviewees indicated several unique aspects of organizational capacity for domestic SFD and variation by organizational life cycle. Domestic SFD organizations in this study were focused on improving their local communities using a range of sports (n=10). They represent both urban and rural communities from across Canada and indicated achieving educational outcomes, increasing awareness for mental health services, developing leadership and other life skills, and improving new immigrant and refugee integration through sport plus and plus sport programs. Organizational capacity elements uncovered in this study include passion for helping others and for the sport itself, familiarity with development issues, grant funding success, sustainable funding, sustained partnerships, social capital, facilities, formalization, and strategic planning. Implications for domestic SFD organizations and their stakeholders and recommendations for further research are provided.

## BACKGROUND

Sport for development (SFD) research has evolved over the last 15 years—moving beyond simply mapping the territory (Levermore & Beacom, 2012), to include studies in program design, sustainable development and capacity building, creating and leveraging impacts, and theoretical advancements in the field (Schulenkorf, 2017). In their integrated literature review, Schulenkorf, Sherry, and Rowe (2016) noted the leading outlets for SFD research at the time were *Sport in Society* and the *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, suggesting researchers' (and readers') interests in the social aspects of SFD. However, more often "academics are now analysing the specific management and organisational aspects of SFD projects, including the specific tactics, strategies, and implications of sport related development work" (Schulenkorf, 2017, p. 245). For example, Svensson and Hambrick (2016) identified critical elements of organizational capacity at a small North American SFD organization with operations in East Africa. Svensson, Hancock, and Hums (2017) also uncovered critical elements of organizational capacity for SFD by interviewing leaders from 29 North American-based SFD organizations operating in urban (densely populated) settings. In these two studies, researchers utilized Hall et al.'s (2003) multidimensional framework for nonprofit organizational capacity to identify context-specific elements within broad capacity dimensions that enable SFD organizations to achieve their goals. The framework contends that critical elements of organizational capacity are context specific and fall under the broader dimensions of capacity— including human resources, financial, relationship and network, infrastructure and process, and planning and development capacity. In the current study, we utilize Hall et al.'s (2003) framework to guide our investigation of capacity for domestic SFD in Canada.

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Specifically, building on existing literature in community sport (Doherty, Misener, & Cuskelly, 2014; Misener & Doherty, 2009; Sharpe, 2006), and extending research in the SFD context (Svensson & Hambrick, 2016; Svensson et al., 2017), the purpose of this study was to uncover the critical elements of organizational capacity for domestic SFD within the dimensions of human resources, finances, external relationships and networks, infrastructure and processes, and planning and development.

In this study, we use the term "domestic SFD organization" to refer to community organizations that deliver SFD programs and initiatives that are designed to meet the needs of their communities. Domestic SFD programs are implemented by people from the community and include "sport-plus" initiatives that add social development goals to traditional sport programs, and "plus-sport" initiatives that use sport to attract participants to education-first programs (Coalter, 2010). Domestic SFD organizations in this study include social service agencies, sport clubs, charities, and foundations with at least part of their mandate to achieve community development and social change through sport. Domestic SFD organizations may work independently or be affiliated with a national partner/umbrella organization (MacIntosh, Arellano, & Forneris, 2016; Svensson et al., 2017). However, regardless of any structural variations, they share a mission to improve local communities by addressing local issues. In this context, community development includes promoting education and postsecondary enrollment, increasing awareness for mental health services, developing leadership and other life skills, improving new immigrant and refugee integration, improving police-to-community relations, and making inclusive and accessible sport options available to underserved and at-risk youth. These community-focused SFD outcomes align with Guest's view that SFD programs "simply [provide] the social space for communities to enact their own versions of healthy and positive development" (2009, p. 1347). However, empirical research focusing on the organizational aspects of SFD remains scarce (Schulenkorf, 2017; Svensson et al., 2017). Thus, this study aims to deepen and extend our understanding of these aspects. With greater insight into the critical factors of capacity for domestic SFD, scholars and key stakeholders including government agencies and private donors that provide funding for these groups and their programs, may be better positioned to support these organizations to achieve their domestic SFD goals.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Organizational Capacity

Organizational capacity is the extent to which an organization has certain attributes that have been identified as critical to goal achievement (Horton et al., 2003; Misener & Doherty, 2009). Hall et al. (2003) contend those critical elements (or attributes) may be categorized under the broad dimensions of human resources, financial, and structural capacity, which includes infrastructure/process capacity and planning and development capacity. In this study, we used Hall et al.'s (2003) broad framework, following our colleagues in community sport (Doherty et al., 2014; Misener & Doherty, 2009; Sharpe, 2006), and SFD (Svensson & Hambrick, 2016; Svensson et al., 2017). The framework builds on traditionally isolated indicators of organizational effectiveness (Chelladurai, 1987), and considers a range of factors that contribute to organizational goal attainment. The framework was conceptualized for the nonprofit and voluntary sector and draws from the literature on human, financial, and structural capital as key resources in this broad context. Each of the five capacity dimensions associated with these is purported to influence, to varying degrees, the ability of an organization to achieve its mandate (Hall et al., 2003). The premise of the framework is that dimensions should not be considered in isolation from each other. Further, the broad capacity dimensions are themselves interconnected and may impact one another in a multitude of ways (Hall et al., 2003; Misener & Doherty, 2009; Svensson & Hambrick, 2016; Svensson et al., 2017). Importantly, the specific elements within each dimension are expected to vary by the particular nonprofit context. Doherty et al. (2014) note that

*There is consensus that the elements within each dimension are context specific [and so] what is critical in one context . . . may not be as relevant in other contexts. . . . Therefore, it is important to understand the particular nature of capacity in a given type of organization . . . before efforts can begin to address building that capacity. (p. 125S-126S)*

Research has explored the critical elements of capacity in the community sport and SFD contexts. Beginning with local grassroots sports clubs, Sharpe (2006), Misener and Doherty (2009), and Doherty et al. (2014), uncovered particular elements within the dimensions of Hall et al.'s (2003) framework that represent the key strengths and challenges experienced by these organizations. Collectively, these studies identified the critical elements of sport clubs' capacity for goal achievement: sufficient, continuing, enthusiastic, and skilled volunteers who have a common focus for, and are supported by, the organization; stable

revenues and expenses, alternative sources of funding and fiscal responsibility; effective communication, formalization, and adequate facilities; creative strategic planning and implementation; and effective relationship management characterized by engaged, dependable, and balanced partnerships.

Following the work of Doherty and colleagues (2014; Misener & Doherty, 2009), Svensson and Hambrick (2016) and Svensson et al. (2017) explored the nature of capacity for SFD. Unlike membership-based community sport organizations (CSOs), SFD organizations (generally) do not have paying members. As a result, they "face considerable challenges in fund development, volunteer recruitment, and staffing" (Svensson et al., 2017, p. 4). Svensson and Hambrick (2016) uncovered critical elements within a North American-based SFD organization that operates its programs in a developing country. Their interviews were conducted with North American staff, and thus the focus is limited to the host organization, rather than the domestic SFD delivery unit. Critical elements uncovered in Svensson and Hambrick's (2016) study include: paid staff and sufficient engaged, knowledgeable volunteers with shared values; sufficient and sustainable funding from a variety of sources, including fundraising; formalized organizational structure; critical, self-reflective, strategic planning and sustained implementation; and mutually respectful, collaborative partnerships. Svensson et al. (2017) focused on the capacity of North American-based organizations that are members in a national coalition of SFD institutions operating within large metropolitan areas in the United States. They found that the critical elements of capacity of those SFD organizations were: paid staff and engaged personnel; sufficient revenues, particularly large-scale funding, and budget management; formalization, access to facilities, technology, and an informal, flexible organizational culture; strategic planning and implementation; and balanced, aligned relationships with a variety of external partners.

There are many parallels and some unique features of organizational capacity in the community sport and SFD contexts, supporting the notion that a "one size" capacity framework does not fit all. Moreover, "the manner in which organizations implement SDP programmes can positively or negatively impact learning outcomes" (Svensson et al., 2017, p. 10), so uncovering the specific capacity elements that contribute to successful SFD programs may be especially important in this context. Thus, prompted by the rich and growing body of research examining organizational capacity for SFD, the current study contributes to the literature by broadening its investigation

to consider a range of domestic SFD organizations that offer programs in diverse settings. Further, this study examines plus-sport and sport-plus programs that are being implemented using a variety of sports (n=10) that represent the breadth of domestic SFD initiatives. This study extends knowledge and understanding of the critical capacity elements in this context, providing a stronger platform to support and build capacity for domestic SFD.

**Related Capacity for Sport for Development Literature**

With the growing focus on management considerations for SFD, a number of studies have examined factors that influence program delivery and organizational sustainability that resonate with the capacity dimensions in the Hall et al. (2003) framework. Research and conceptual reflections corroborate the importance of certain dimensions and elements in the capacity of SFD organizations across a variety of contexts. An indicative, although not exhaustive, review of that literature is presented here.

As is the case with the consideration of capacity in community sport organizations (Doherty et al., 2014), the greatest attention has been given to human resources and partnerships in SFD organizations. Corresponding with human resources capacity, SFD researchers have considered and identified sufficient volunteers and paid staff (Casey, Payne, & Eime, 2012; Spaaij, 2013), important characteristics (e.g., leadership style, motives, skills) of staff and volunteers (Spaaij, 2013; Wells & Welty Peachey, 2016; Welty Peachey, Musser, & Shin, 2017), and shared values (MacIntosh & Spence, 2012) as critical to achieve SFD outcomes in a variety of contexts. With respect to external relationships capacity, the focus has been on mutual or shared understanding by both parties regarding goals and values associated with SFD (Spaaij, 2013), effective communication between partners (Giulianotti, 2011; Hayhurst & Frisby, 2010), and engaged partnerships characterized by collaboration (MacIntosh et al., 2016; Meir, 2017; Schulenkorf, 2012; Skinner, Zakus, & Cowell, 2008; Thomson, Darcy, & Pearce, 2010). Relatively less consideration has been given to financial, infrastructure, or planning capacity. Related work has considered long-term financial sustainability (Casey et al., 2012; Giulianotti, 2011; Thomson et al., 2010), alternative funding sources (Spaaij, 2013), formalization (Casey et al., 2012), access to facilities (Welty Peachey, Borland, Lobpries, & Cohen, 2015), monitoring and evaluation (Sanders, 2016), and strategic planning (Giulianotti, 2011; Skinner et al., 2008) as critical to SFD goal achievement.

Together, these and other studies (Rosso & McGrath, 2017;

Schulenkorf & Edwards, 2012; Sherry, Schulenkorf, & Chalip, 2015; Svensson, Andersson, & Faulk, 2018; Svensson & Seifried, 2017; Welty Peachey & Burton, 2017) indicate a movement in SFD scholarship toward "a focus on management [that] shifts the emphasis from merely investigating specific programme contexts or impacts to factors involved in strategically designing, managing, and leveraging SFD initiatives" (Schulenkorf, 2017, p. 245). As part of this new management movement in SFD scholarship, and with a focus on better understanding and ultimately strengthening these organizations, this study addresses the research question: Within the dimensions of human resources, finances, external relationships and networks, infrastructure and process, and planning and development, what are the critical elements of capacity for domestic SFD goal achievement?

## METHODS

### Participants

A total of 17 organizations representing a diversity of organizational structures, locations, and mandates that reflect domestic SFD agreed to participate in this study. Organizations were from across Canada, with a majority operating in or close to major cities (Toronto, Ottawa, and Vancouver). Participating organizations ranged from small kitchen-table structures to fully developed social service providers with multimillion dollar annual budgets and networks of resources and mandates beyond SFD. Yet they nonetheless share a mandate to offer programs that focus on the development of individuals and their communities through participation in sporting activities. The development focus of the respective sport programs include: promoting education and pathways to postsecondary education; mentoring programs designed to steer at-risk youth away from violence and gang affiliation; suicide and mental health awareness; new immigrant and refugee integration; and facilitating positive police-to-community relationships. The sample also represents a wide variety of sports (n=10) through which these objectives are delivered. Further, and following Coalter (2010), we classified the organizations as offering plus-sport programs (n=7) based on their delivery of development/training/education-first initiatives where sport is used to attract young people, and sport-plus initiatives (n=10) where sport-first programs were adapted to achieve SFD goals. Interviews were conducted with an individual in each organization involved in a key role with respect to the coordination and/or delivery of the SFD program. The interviewee and the organization/program (both pseudonyms), the individual's role in the organization, the sport activity, and the SFD approach taken are indicated

in Table 1.

### Data Collection and Analysis

A semistructured interview methodology following Patton (2015), was utilized to explore the critical elements of capacity within the focal context. The sample was generated based on a search of publicly available information on the Internet that identified organizations that were implementing a domestic SFD program. Without compromising the anonymity of the sample, a Google search for "sport for development + Canada" reveals similarly focused organizations, government agencies that support domestic SFD, and private donors/philanthropists working in domestic SFD as well. Key representatives (e.g., executive directors, program coordinators) from 33 organizations were contacted via email with a letter of information and an invitation to participate in a research study. A follow-up phone call was placed one week later to determine the interest and willingness of the representative to contribute to the study. Ultimately, 17 representatives from 17 domestic SFD organizations participated.

Following an interview guide based on Doherty et al.'s (2014) capacity research in community sport, participants were asked to identify particular strengths and challenges in the delivery of SFD programming within their organization, with respect to each of Hall et al.'s (2003) five capacity dimensions. The strengths and challenges indicated by participants—the greatest assets and greatest deficits to achieving their domestic SFD goals—represent the critical capacity elements for the organizations (Doherty et al., 2014). For example, participants were asked "what are the critical planning and development strengths of your organization? And what are the critical challenges?" The semistructured, conversational nature of the interviews also probed for examples and allowed for follow-up questions and points of clarification that resulted in a "thick description" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 328) of capacity in these organizations. The interviews lasted between 45 and 75 minutes and were conducted by phone (n=16) and in-person (n=1) by the study's first author. The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim, removing all organization names and personal identifiers to protect the anonymity of the organizations and the interviewees. Once the transcripts were complete, and for the purpose of member-checking that also helps to establish the trustworthiness of the data (Patton, 2015), transcripts were sent to participants to review their own statements for clarity and to ensure the transcripts matched their true perspectives and experiences.

*Table 1. Description of sample*

| Interviewee & Organization/Program Pseudonyms | Interviewee Role | Sport Activity | Program Description | Program Life Cycle[1] |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cindy Hoop Mentors | Project coordinator | Basketball | Combining traditional mentoring programs with sport (plus sport) | Newer |
| Donna Jean Basketball Buddies | Director of programs and special events | Basketball & soccer | Building social capital through inclusive sport activities (plus sport) | Older |
| Brian Strong Runners | Program manager | Distance running | Raising awareness for mental health services through sport (sport plus) | Older |
| John Football Playwrights | Executive director | Soccer | Combining soccer training with educational/writing objectives (sport plus) | Newer |
| Susie Downhill Life Skills | Program coordinator | Snowboarding | Combining life skills training with recreational sport (sport plus) | Newer |
| Alison Sporting Chance | Executive director | Basketball | Offering sport programs to facilitate positive police-community/youth interaction (plus sport) | Older |
| Kaitlyn Safe Hoops | Executive director | Basketball & cricket | Offering sport programs through a traditional social service agency (plus sport) | Newer |
| Barb Empowering Fitness | Program coordinator | Fitness & dance | Building social capital through inclusive fitness programs (sport plus) | Newer |
| Lori Junior Knockouts | Executive director & founder | Noncontact boxing | Teaching life skills, and leadership through sport (sport plus) | Newer |
| Larry Basketball Bookworms | Director | Basketball | Combining traditional sport programs with educational and leadership training (sport plus) | Older |
| Ashley Leading Communities | Child & youth engagement worker | Basketball | Offering inclusive sport at a neighborhood community center (plus sport) | Newer |
| Colleen City Tennis | Executive director | Tennis | Offering inclusive sport programs to underserved youth (sport plus) | Older |
| Eddy All-Rounder Citizens | Director of programs | Soccer & cricket | Combining mentoring programs with sport activities to at-risk youth (plus sport) | Newer |
| Trevor Slap Shot Success | Youth program coordinator | Hockey | Combining new immigrant services with sport programs (plus sport) | Newer |
| Chris Community Champs | Executive director | Basketball | Offering sport programs with traditional social services in marginalized communities (sport plus) | Newer |
| Paul Slam Dunk Education | Director & founder | Basketball | Traditional competitive sport programming with educational goals for participants (sport plus) | Older |
| Marilyn Squash for Social Change | Executive director | Squash | Inclusive sport activities with educational goals for at-risk youth (sport plus) | Newer |

[1] Newer (less than 10 years), Older (10 years or longer)

A priori coding of the transcripts followed the five dimensions of Hall et al.'s (2003) framework, categorizing first by identified strengths and challenges within each dimension. Emergent coding for subthemes within each dimension, accounting for strengths and challenges as representative of critical factors, was then undertaken. The emergent coding scheme developed over time, with new subtheme codes agreed to and applied with each transcript until the coauthors agreed the codes were accurate and were represented and applied uniformly across each of the 17 transcripts. For example, with respect to human resources capacity strengths, the emergent codes included 3.1.1 passion, 3.1.1.1 passion for helping others, and 3.1.1.2 passion for the sport. Ultimately, codes 3.1.1, 3.1.1.1, and 3.1.1.2, were merged to capture the theme/critical human resources capacity element "passion." Further, and to

ensure the trustworthiness of the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton; 2015), the coauthors reviewed each transcript independently and then reviewed each other's coding in a series of back-and-forth exchanges and meetings until the interpretation and application of each a priori and emergent code was agreed upon. Although the sample represents a range of organizations offering different sports and sport-plus/plus-sport programs, the purpose of this study was to identify patterns of common themes and subthemes across these domestic SFD organizations. Nonetheless, it was of interest to consider whether there was any variation by life cycle of the SFD program or initiative in the respective organizations. Critical elements of capacity may vary depending on how long the organization has offered its SFD programming, either as the primary reason for its existence or as part of a larger social and/or sport mandate

*Table 2. Summary of findings*

| Capacity Dimension | Critical Elements |
|---|---|
| Human Resources | Passion |
| | Familiarity with development issues |
| | Valued skills and competencies |
| | Active and engaged volunteers |
| | Sufficient staff |
| | Administrative help from volunteers |
| | Training and support |
| | Shared vision |
| Finances | Fundraising success |
| | Grant funding success |
| | Fiscal responsibility |
| | Sustainable funding |
| Relationships and Networks | Engaged partners |
| | Sustained partnerships |
| | Social capital |
| | Time to manage partnerships |
| Infrastructure | Information technology |
| | Effective communication |
| | Facilities |
| | Formalization |
| Planning and Development | Strategic planning |
| | Collaborative planning |
| | Awareness of risks and opportunities |

(Svensson et al., 2018). As indicated in Table 1, the organizations were categorized by whether their programming was "newer" (less than 10 years) or "older" (10 years or more). A total of 11 organizations offered newer SFD programs at the time of the study (range 1-7 years, average 3 years), while six organizations offered older, more established programs (range 10-25 years, average 16 years).

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

Multiple critical elements were identified within each of the five dimensions of organizational capacity (see Table 2). The findings are presented here, along with a sample of quotations that are indicative and representative of these elements in the domestic SFD context. These quotations include examples of both strengths and challenges that illustrate the importance of the particular elements. The findings coincide with existing research on capacity in CSOs (Doherty et al., 2014; Misener & Doherty, 2009; Sharpe, 2006) and SFD organizations (Svensson & Hambrick, 2016; Svensson et al., 2017), and provide new insights to critical elements in the domestic SFD context. As such, this study extends organizational capacity theorizing by advancing a refined framework of critical

elements specific to domestic SFD, while providing a platform for the further examination and management of organizational capacity in this context. The critical elements are presented and discussed in relation to existing knowledge while highlighting new and unique findings.

**Human Resources Capacity**

Critical elements of human resources capacity that impact the ability of organizations to achieve their domestic SFD mandates were indicated as: (a) passion for helping others and for the sport itself, (b) familiarity with development issues, (c) valued skills and competencies, (d) active and engaged volunteers, (e) sufficient staff, (f) administrative help from volunteers, (g) training and support from the organization, and (h) shared vision. Of those critical elements, several are consistent with what has been uncovered in research on SFD capacity.

Consistent with previous research (Doherty et al., 2014; Svensson et al., 2017), passion—particularly for helping others but also for the sport itself—was identified as an essential trait for both paid staff and volunteers. Colleen from City Tennis described her volunteers, suggesting, "they're coming to the table with this whole sense of

wanting to be part of something bigger than themselves, and wanting to give back, and wanting to make a difference in the lives of children." Susie from Downhill Life Skills also shared, "we do have volunteers each night that volunteer their time . . . and those people are awesome! They just have such a passion for the sport and for giving back to the sport!"

Familiarity with development issues facing local communities is another critical trait for domestic SFD organizations' human resources. Specifically, familiarity with the local culture, the unique needs of the programs' participants, the organization's development objectives, and experience working in (or being from) the targeted community was uncovered here as valuable for volunteers and staff. Paul from Slam Dunk Education stated, "one of our biggest strengths is a lot of volunteers are alumni . . . they've come up through the [SFD] program and they've benefited from the program, so they know what these kids go through." Kaitlyn (Safe Hoops) described the "best thing" about her staff is that

*We recruited from the community or similar communities as our youth. The workers, the volunteers, the leaders have an experience [that is] similar in terms of their growing up to the youth that they're working with, and that seems to be pretty important for them to develop that relationship.*

Whereas skills and experience pertaining to the sport or the club itself are valued in CSOs (Doherty et al., 2014; Wicker & Breuer, 2011), domestic SFD programs appear to rely on an understanding of the specific needs of the participants and communities they serve. Svensson et al. (2017) similarly identified the importance of recruiting former participants as volunteers because "they easily related to the program participants" (p. 15). However, neither Svensson et al. (2017) nor this study's authors interviewed SFD alumni staff or volunteers. Future research may explore how SFD alumni improve communication, build trust, and impact domestic SFD organizations and their participants. Further, this finding may have implications for recruiting, as research suggests SFD volunteers may be interested in "exposing oneself to new cultures and becoming better world citizens" (Welty Peachey et al., 2017, p. 4), influenced by their love of sport (Welty Peachey, Cohen, Borland, & Lyras, 2013). While these characteristics are laudable, the current study's findings suggest it is just as, or more important, that domestic SFD volunteers and staff have knowledge and experiences from the communities they serve. However, familiarity with SFD issues was identified as a critical element for relatively fewer older domestic SFD programs. This may be because more established programs have evolved to a stronger and clearer

sense of their unique needs and thus are less dependent on volunteers and staff having had direct experience in that context.

Valued skills and competencies was another element identified as critical, particularly at the board level. Across much of the SFD literature (Casey et al., 2012; Spaaij, 2013; Svensson & Hambrick, 2016; Svensson et al., 2017) and the nonprofit sector at large (Brown, Andersson, & Jo, 2016; Hall et al., 2003; Wicker & Breuer, 2014), the importance of paid staff and volunteers' knowledge and skills are consistent themes. In the current study, these included relevant education and professional experience, and expertise in marketing and social media, financial management, and fundraising. John (Football Playwrights) described the professional experience of his board members as critical to his organization's success, noting,

*We do have a well-established board of directors and they have a lot of expertise in their areas of work. So, for example, we have a principal, [and] somebody from the education department, . . . and we have a couple CFOs on our board as well.*

Notably, knowledge related to communications and particularly social media was identified as important in the current study. Eddy (All-Rounder Citizens), who had staff with communications experience handling his organizations website, Facebook, and Twitter, explained, "we're getting more exposure and the professionalism is coming through a little better than before, because now we have people that have the experience and the knowledge and the ability to deliver [our] message."

Consistent with other research (Doherty et al., 2014; Svensson & Hambrick, 2016; Svensson et al., 2017), active and engaged volunteers were described as hardworking people who turn passion into action and are critical to domestic SFD delivery. They go above and beyond to positively impact participants' experiences, and they are "the most experienced, hard working group of people you'll ever meet" (Donna Jean, Basketball Buddies). At Sporting Chance—a police-to-youth initiative—"it's all officer driven, right. So, they're our volunteers . . . we advise them of the opportunity, but they're the ones who actually decide whether to do it, and most of the officers do it off-duty . . . [they're] exceptional volunteers!" (Alison). Active and engaged volunteers appeared to be critical to more established programs. While the reason for this was not explored in the current study, it may be that longer running programs are feeling the effects of volunteer fatigue (Lockhart, 2007) and are thus particularly dependent on volunteers who are meaningfully involved.

Sufficient staff was identified by interviewees as critical to administer their operations, deliver programming, and grow their organizations. Many described challenges resulting from having insufficient staff—a critical finding in other capacity for SFD research as well (Svensson & Hambrick, 2016; Svensson et al., 2017). For example, Cindy (Hoop Mentors) shared,

*I mean, one of the challenges is I'm the only person working on this. I'm the only coordinator working on this program. So, in terms of actual capacity, I'm running four different sport programs and I'm trying to plan these events and I'm trying to apply to grants. So, looking to the future it's really dependent on [whether] I have time to continue applying to grants.*

Eddy described his organization's challenge with insufficient staff, noting the growing wait list for their programs. At All-Rounder Citizens, "we have a lot of kids that are waiting . . . almost 400 kids. . . . I'm down to one social worker as well, so, those are the challenges we have" (Eddy).

Perhaps relatedly, administrative help from volunteers was uncovered as a critical capacity element in this study. Interviewees described volunteers helping to write and review grant applications, assisting with registration and communication to participants and volunteers, and handling other administrative tasks. Larry (Basketball Bookworms) described the important role volunteer parents have assisting with administrative tasks at his organization:

*One of the parents has taken on all the registration and database so we can become so much more organized. We have another parent who [has] just taken on the role of tournament facilitator . . . and he's taken care of all of that—again, on a volunteer basis.*

Interestingly, although both volunteers and staff are indicated in the current study and in previous research (Casey et al., 2012; Spaaij, 2013; Svensson & Hambrick, 2016; Svensson et al., 2017), there is a discernable focus in the current study on sufficient staff, who are viewed as carrying out the fundamental work of maintaining the organization and its programs and also managing the volunteers. Volunteers, in turn, are relied on to offer administrative support to the staff; thus, reinforcing the value of volunteers although largely in the context of assisting staff. Whereas Svensson et al. (2017) highlighted the importance of SFD organizations "finding roles and tailoring responsibilities to the needs and skill sets of individual staff members or volunteers" (p. 14), the current

study highlights domestic SFD organizations' reliance on volunteers taking on administrative roles in particular. Thus, the current findings suggest a human resources model that focuses on the critical work of paid staff and volunteers supporting that. Nonetheless, some variation was observed. Relatively fewer organizations with older SFD programs identified sufficient staff as a concern, yet relatively more of these organizations noted their reliance on administrative help from volunteers. With more established programs, these organizations may have settled in to operating with the number of staff they have and thus acknowledge the importance of volunteers pitching in. Consistently, relatively fewer organizations with newer SFD programs indicated relying on volunteers for administrative help. As they are generally in the early stages of building their programs these organizations may be less likely to delegate administrative tasks to volunteers.

Volunteer and staff training and support from the organization was also identified by interviewees as critical to the success of their programs. At Leading Communities, "all of our staff have been trained in the fundamental movement skills . . . so when we have the youth here, we're providing quality recreation experiences" (Ashley). At All-Rounder Citizens,

*We talk about child behaviour management . . . and we also talk about multiculturalism . . . and [we have] a really thorough child abuse [prevention] training segment. We do a learning challenges [and] learning disabilities piece, as well as a mental health piece. So [volunteers are] getting a good variety of information and lots of written material to prepare them for what they may encounter. (Eddy)*

Training and support has not previously been identified in the domestic SFD literature and the focus here is ensuring personnel are familiar with both the sport activity and relevant development approaches and strategies. Training was described as formal or informal and comprising mentoring from leaders within the organization and guidance from the national or provincial sport organization.

Finally, and consistent with other research (MacIntosh & Spence, 2012; Misener & Doherty, 2009; Svensson & Hambrick, 2016; Svensson et al., 2017), shared vision among staff and volunteers was identified as a critical element, although it was indicated by the challenge of lacking a shared vision. At Slam Dunk Education for example, volunteer coaches were removed from the organization who were unwilling to embrace the education-first mission of their programs. Paul shared, "we've had to get rid of coaches before that didn't really get this—that you

and the tutors are working together." At Hoop Mentors, Cindy indicated,

*This is a social services agency that's trying to deliver a sport and recreation program . . . like I'm coming at this from a phys-ed background, and everyone is coming at it from a social work or an education background . . . [and] people with a social work background are really wanting to emphasize the mentorship component. Well, I'm coming at it from a sport background and I really want to emphasize the sport component. So, I think that's an organizational challenge.*

The current study helps to refine understanding of the critical elements of human resources capacity in domestic SFD organizations by reinforcing the importance of several factors that have also been identified in previous literature, while uncovering new and more nuanced elements (familiarity with development issues; particular skills and competencies that are valued; the importance of active and engaged volunteers, volunteers providing administrative assistance, and sufficient staff in programs at different stages of their life cycle; and personnel training for both sport and development).

**Financial Capacity**

Four critical elements of financial capacity for domestic SFD organizations were indicated by interviewees. The elements uncovered are: (a) fundraising success, (b) grant funding success, (c) fiscal responsibility, and (d) sustainable funding. In Svensson et al. (2017), and Svensson and Hambrick's (2016) research, similar elements were identified as revenue generation, fundraising, financial management, and the creation of a sustainable funding model. Although no new elements were uncovered in the current study, new insights into additional nuances of these elements were indicated.

Fundraising success was identified by all interviewees as a critical element, impacting the ability to achieve their organization's mandate. Fundraising refers to external voluntary contributions of financial resources, including private individual donations (e.g., annual giving, special events, major gifts) and in-kind donations from partners (e.g., free or reduced costs for facilities, sports equipment, etc.). Because domestic SFD programs are sustained almost entirely through external funding sources as opposed to membership fees, their ability to fundraise successfully is critical (Brown et al., 2016; Svensson et al., 2017). Colleen, for example, described her major fundraising event as an annual gala that "raises anywhere from one quarter to a third

of our annual budget." As well, in-kind support and equipment donations were identified as critical to many SFD organizations. Susie, for example, indicated her organization's partnership with a major snowboard company was vital, noting, "we are associated with [Snowboard Company], [and] they support the program through in-kind [donations]—they supply all of the equipment."

Grant funding success was also identified as critical for domestic SFD organizations and distinct from fundraising success. Grant funding is typically awarded for specific projects and issued by grant makers to various causes, including SFD. Indeed, many of the programs examined in this study would not exist without the significant funding provided by foundations, corporate awards, and government grants. At Strong Runners, for example, securing grant funding allowed the organization's SFD vision to become reality for thousands of at-risk youth:

*[At Strong Runners], the first couple of years, the pilot project was financed by the [Grant Foundation]. We received over two years, just shy of $150,000.00, [and] during that time we reached thousands and thousands of youth . . . maybe as many as 1,000 youth running in the [Strong Runners Program]. (Brian)*

However, successful grant funding can come with organizational challenges, particularly when funding is earmarked for specific initiatives only and does not necessarily align with the organization's particular needs. For example, Kaitlyn noted limitations she experienced with grant funding, suggesting "none of those funders pay for paying the rent, paying utilities, that kind of thing." There may be a risk of "mission drift" (Hall et al., 2003, p. 23) in SFD organizations if programs are designed merely to meet particular grant criteria. The reported need for what has been described as "better money" (Hall et al., 2003, p. 21)— that allows flexibility and autonomy in its use—in nonprofit, voluntary organizations in general appears to be particularly relevant in the SFD context. While grant funding is considered essential—a "potential game changer" (Svensson et al., 2017, p. 24)—additional capacity challenges were uncovered in the current study, including with the application process and reporting to granting organizations. For example,

*in terms of government grants . . . [there's] this funding stream that said new charities are welcome to apply—which is true—we are welcome to apply. But then they require you to have an engagement review. Well, an engagement review is $3,000.00. So, for an organization that doesn't have any*

*paid staff—we don't have any money to pay ourselves—to come up with $3,000.00 to apply to maybe get some money—I don't think that's really a fair system. (Lori, Junior Knockouts)*

Thus, financial capacity is not just about securing grant funding, but the ability to apply for and manage this particular form of revenue. Hall et al. (2003) noted such challenges for the nonprofit sector in general, and the current study highlights their particular relevance in the domestic SFD context.

Fiscal responsibility, or financial management (Svensson et al., 2017), described as careful budgeting and management of existing funds, was also identified as critical to domestic SFD organizations in this study—for the organization and its reputation. Donna Jean indicated, "when you donate [to us], you know your money is going to go a lot further than your expectations . . . we're not wasting." Paul put it this way: "we've been really cheap—which is good. Any sort of big purchase we all debate [it]. Everybody on the board gets to sit down and say 'do we really need this?'" This likely reflects both the nonprofit status of organizations delivering domestic SFD and the expectation to be frugal. Given SFD organizations cannot rely on earned income from membership or participation fees to cover the costs of programming (Svensson et al., 2017), they instead have a primary focus on generating and managing funds responsibly to ensure their survival. Notably, relatively fewer organizations with newer domestic SFD programming identified fiscal responsibility as a critical factor, which may be a function of their relatively less complex budgeting (so far) or a focus on simply generating funds as they grow. However, that perspective may be problematic as organizations with older, sustained programs may be the ones that focused effectively on fiscal responsibility from the start. Indeed, Svensson et al. (2018) found that financial capacity was more likely to be problematic for sport for development and peace (SFDP) organizations at the start-up and growth stages.

Sustainable funding was also identified as a further critical element for domestic SFD. While a sustainable funding model has been noted previously (Doherty et al., 2014; Misener & Doherty, 2009; Svensson & Hambrick, 2016), interviewees in the current study focused specifically on sustained financial capacity for the long-term viability of their SFD initiatives and programming. Trevor (Slap Shot Success) described his ongoing challenge to acquire sustainable funding:

*So, with the funding we have now, I think we have a two or three-year plan. But we're hoping that be exceeding [at] this program we can gather more funding and write more proposals and attract more potential donors, because [now] we can display what we're doing. It's not an idea anymore. It's actually tangible, and [donors] can see what's happening. We just need to keep this going . . . [but] will we get the funding to do it?*

Chris, from Community Champs, also described his organization's financial challenges to maintain existing programs, noting, "we're coming to the end of two years of funding where we've been hugely successful . . . but right now we're really struggling to find a way to get the additional funds to support that on an ongoing basis." He added,

*The work we do with young people, being in sport or physical activity—it's about relationship building. And it takes time to build trust with the young person and break down the barriers and the walls they put up. And there's this idea of 12- to 18-month programs that start and stop and the funding only comes for this amount of time . . . [and that] isn't what's most beneficial.*

Sustainable funding was seen as critical to maintaining and continuing to build trust that is seen to be fundamental to domestic SFD programs.

The further insights to financial capacity uncovered in this study—namely, capacity challenges associated with grant funding, the importance of fiscal responsibility according to program life cycle, and sustainable funding for continuing program trust—advance our understanding of this dimension of the organizational capacity framework specific to domestic SFD.

**External Relationships and Network Capacity**

Four critical elements emerged within the external relationship and network capacity dimension. Interviewees identified: (a) engaged partners, (b) sustained partnerships, (c) social capital, and (d) time to manage partnerships as the critical elements impacting their ability to achieve social change in their communities.

Engaged partners are likeminded individuals and organizations that actively seek out opportunities to grow domestic SFD programs based on shared values and common goals with the focal organization. They help to acquire financial resources, provide assistance with planning and development, and offer valuable expertise. Engaged

partners have been identified as a critical element in previous SFD research (MacIntosh et al., 2016; Meir, 2017; Schulenkorf, 2012; Skinner et al., 2008; Spaaij, 2013; Svensson & Hambrick, 2016; Svensson et al., 2017; Thomson et al., 2010), and just as passionate and engaged staff and volunteers are important to the success of SFD organizations, interviewees described engaged partners as critical to the long-term success and viability of their programs. At Safe Hoops, for example, Kaitlyn described a knowledge-sharing initiative intended to prevent duplication-of-services and identify new opportunities for at-risk youth: "We meet monthly and we talk about what we're all doing and talk about issues in the community and work on creating strategies to respond to problems." At Football Playwrights, John described their partnership with the provincial sport organization:

*We're in partnership with our provincial soccer association as well. [We] asked them to come and help us do soccer coaching workshops . . . [and] it helps us to train our coaches so they are competent when they lead soccer practices.*

At Squash for Social Change, Marilyn described their partnership with a private tutoring company: "We work with [them and] they help us getting our students assessed when they come in in grade six—knowing exactly what reading and writing and math levels they're at." Critical in these attentive, interactive, and collaborative partnerships is shared values and mission alignment (Svensson et al., 2017).

Beyond engaged partners, the current study uncovered a new capacity element of sustained partnerships, which have the potential to grow with the domestic SFD organizations, as critical to achieving organizational goals. Such enduring relationships were described as consistent with the organizations' ambitions to create meaningful and lasting programs built on trust with participants. For example, Lori from Junior Knockouts described the importance of finding sustainable partners that share her organization's vision:

*I don't always feel that it's truly sincere. Like, some people do collaborate because that's the only way to get the money, but as soon as it's done they're going to go their separate ways. But we don't really look at it like that. We're trying to build long-term relationships and we want to be a charity that's around. We want to create a legacy!*

Moreover, sustained partnerships may be seen as critical because the time to pursue new partners can be a substantial burden on the limited human and financial resources of the

organization (Gazley & Abner, 2014; Svensson et al., 2017). This may explain, in part, why it was further observed that sustained partnerships were indicated by relatively more organizations with newer programs that are still evolving and establishing themselves in the field. Their particular focus on such partners may reflect a vulnerability with being the (relatively) new kid on the block. This finding extends insight into the challenges of partnership capacity in general across the life stages of SFD organizations (Svensson et al., 2018), highlighting that sustained partnerships are of particular concern with newer ventures.

Social capital is a resource that is generated among individuals and groups as they work together, which may in turn become a valuable asset to those individuals or groups (Andersson, Faulk, & Stewart, 2016; Putnam, 2000; Wicker & Breuer, 2014). While social capital has been noted as a critical aspect of partnership management in community sport (Misener & Doherty, 2009), it was uncovered as a new critical element for domestic SFD as the connections and networks generated by the organizations were seen to have great potential (and realized) value. For example, Eddy shared,

*Our board has been, as I said before, very instrumental in developing new networks of support—providing events that are more attractive to the general public. We had, just the last spin-a-thon, [and] one of the [broadcaster] journalists was on. She came by and signed up and promoted it to her Twitter account. So we're getting exposure.*

At Basketball Buddies, Donna Jean described the snowballing impact of social capital to attract volunteers and funding, suggesting they can occur in tandem:

*Once [volunteers] start to participate in our activities—and if [their workplace] has a community foundation or an engagement foundation, [the workplace will] want to support Basketball Buddies because they know their staff supports it with their time.*

Social capital for domestic SFD was described in the context of networking with potentially new partners (e.g., volunteers, funders), whose interest in SFD was characterized by trust in the organization and its personnel and reciprocity based on common values. This linking social capital (Doherty & Misener, 2008) appears to be manifested in the leveraging of resources within ever-widening networks.

Finally, and consistent with other SFD research (Svensson et al., 2017), time to manage partnerships was indicated as a

challenge (or an asset, if available) and thus a critical element of external relationship capacity. Time is fundamental to fostering and sustaining partnerships as domestic SFD organizations are so dependent on them—for funding, for facilities, and in some cases for staff and volunteers. Notably, Ashley (Leading Communities) indicated that the time required can vary among financial partners:

*[It is] different depending on their reporting guidelines and how involved they are in terms of the actual operation of each program that they fund. [And] it's always been really important for us to have good communication with our funders around targets and timelines.*

The findings reinforce several critical elements of external relationship capacity for domestic SFD, while the identification of social capital and further insight to sustained partnerships as critical for program continuity— and with apparent variation by program life cycle—further enhance the framework. The importance of continuity is repeated in this dimension, with a focus on sustaining relationships (and the resources that come with them) for program continuity that is critical to achieving social change.

**Infrastructure Capacity**

Four critical elements of infrastructure and process capacity were determined to impact the ability of domestic SFD organizations to achieve their goals. Interviewees identified: (a) information technology (IT), (b) effective communication, (c) facilities, and (d) formalization.

Across all organizations, reliance on IT—and particularly a sound database system to manage contacts and to keep volunteers and staff organized—was indicated as a critical asset. In a dynamic environment where coordinating volunteers and staff, managing partnerships, reaching donors, and communicating with participants is the essence of SFD organization operations, managing those activities is dependent on up-to-date IT systems and support (Svensson et al., 2017). Donna Jean described the importance of a strong database to maintain contact, sharing: "We invested in a great database last year to ensure that we don't lose anybody's information and that we can maintain our alumni." Kaitlyn noted the importance of her organization's database to meet their financial goals:

*We've been able to upgrade our fundraising data . . . [and] we got a stronger, more robust financial accounting system now. We've been able to set up remote access for the finance department, so they don't always have to be in here, and now we're looking at doing some things with our IT.*

Effective communication—described as open, two-way, and regular—was also identified as critical to the success of domestic SFD initiatives. For example, Brian shared,

*The biggest advantage we have as an organization is the fact that we have the input of all of our volunteers. They are very, very involved in running the [Strong Runners Program] on a day-to-day basis. We have the input of those 35 to 40 team leaders and another 200 assistant coaches on a regular basis.*

Marilyn (Squash for Social Change) described the importance of effective communication with her volunteers and staff, suggesting, "that's the short and sweet . . . small team—easier to communicate. We're all on email. We have weekly meetings. We do our goal setting twice a year. We know where we're headed." Effective internal and external communication has been noted elsewhere in the SFD (Svensson & Hambrick, 2016; Svensson et al., 2017) and community sport contexts (Doherty et al., 2014; Wicker & Breuer, 2011) and is essential for "informing people and letting them know what is going on" (Doherty et al., 2014, p. 135S) and communicating and reinforcing shared values (Svensson et al., 2017).

Facilities, and specifically space for programming and administration, were identified as a critical capacity element and were often described as a challenge facing organizations. Kaitlyn shared her experience at Safe Hoops:

*At our former youth centre . . . we had a three-bedroom apartment that we used for years . . . and we had another unit in another building where we ran the girls program when there was a need to have private space for them . . . [and] we've lost those sites. So right now, we're operating out of a portable that [Community Housing] has made available to us because those buildings have been demolished.*

Eddy described their "challenges with space . . . we always have to find a space—a field, a gymnasium, whatever . . . those are challenges . . . [and] it just comes down to funding—our hands are tied in some respects. We're limited. We just can't do more." Access to facilities was indicated as perhaps the most critical element for domestic SFD in this study and has also been noted in other SFD

research (Sawrikar & Muir, 2010; Svensson et al., 2017; Welty Peachey et al., 2015) and in the community sport context as well (Doherty et al., 2014; Hanlon, Morris, & Nabbs, 2010; Wicker & Breuer, 2011). Very few of the organizations in the current study own their facilities, and access to venues is necessary to offer, and even coordinate, their SFD programs.

Formalization—effective policies and procedures—was identified as a critical element and thus reinforces previous SFD capacity research (Casey et al., 2012; Svensson & Hambrick, 2016; Svensson et al., 2017). However, there does appear to be some diversity across the organizations in terms of having in place, or working on, policies and procedures to guide their action toward social change. Alison described her organization's policies and procedures as "reasonable and good. We have a great law firm that's on board making sure all our legal issues [are resolved] . . . and we have great process maps!" An interesting observation in this study was that a few organizations studied reportedly benefited from following the structure and manuals of a related (or authorizing umbrella) institution, because doing so allowed the organization to focus more energy on programming. At Football Playwrights,

*In terms of policies and procedures and manuals, because we're piggybacking off the [American program]—and they've been around for 20 years, so, they've given us our poetry and coaching manuals—soccer coaching manuals . . . [and] a book of hundreds of soccer activities that our coaches can use, and it has a lesson plan in there as well.*

Marilyn also described benefiting from following an umbrella organization, suggesting "we're fortunate that our structure is based on an existing structure—a model that's been successful for 20 years, and that's great!" This approach to formalization warrants further examination, regarding the availability, uptake, and effectiveness of adopted and adapted policies and procedures. Further, relatively fewer organizations with more established domestic SFD programs indicated formalization as a critical element. This may be a function of being more evolved and thus less focused on ensuring policies and procedures are in place, a finding that appears to be consistent with other research that has identified infrastructure capacity in general as less of a concern to SFD organizations that are at more advanced life stages (Svensson et al., 2018).

Each of the infrastructure capacity elements has been identified in previous SFD research and so the current study reinforces their inclusion on a framework of domestic SFD capacity. However, new insights around variation in

formalization—according to self-generated or adopted guidelines and structure, and its relatively greater attention by organizations with newer SFD programs—advance our understanding of this particular element in the broader dimension of infrastructure capacity.

**Planning and Development Capacity**

Regarding planning and development capacity, three elements were indicated as critical to domestic SFD organizations. Interviewees identified: (a) strategic planning, (b) collaborative planning, and (c) awareness of risks and opportunities.

Strategic planning was identified as critical, although it not always executed to the desired extent. According to Chris, "I think everything comes from your strategic plan," and "we spent time laying this roadmap out that we're working towards, and that has guided us in how we go after dollars and how we write proposals, and where we're looking to add value." At Junior Knockouts, Lori described the process of starting to plan strategically:

*We're getting to the point now, where our board is getting a little bit more involved with strategic planning—creating goals and trying to get a safety net of revenue for us. I think we're just kind of, honestly, we're just getting to the point after four years, where we're starting to create long-term planning goals.*

The importance and challenges of strategic planning have been noted across other contexts as well (Doherty et al., 2014; Svensson & Hambrick, 2016; Svensson et al., 2017; Wicker & Breuer, 2011). However, the current study further uncovered that strategic planning was indicated as a critical element by relatively more organizations with older, more established SFD programs. It may be that organizations with newer programs have not yet begun to embark on strategic planning or even made a commitment to it, with perhaps a greater focus on day-to-day operations of a relatively newer initiative. This finding contrasts that of Svensson et al. (2018), who found that planning capacity in general was most challenging for start-up SFD organizations. The variation may be a function of the specific consideration of strategic planning as just one element of planning capacity in the current study, allowing this nuanced difference to become apparent. It may also be a function of the focus here on life cycle of the program versus life stage of the organization (Svensson et al., 2018).

Collaborative planning was newly uncovered in this study as a critical element for domestic SFD organizations,

involving organizations' board members, volunteers, partners, and other stakeholders. Paul described how his organization benefited from including a range of stakeholders to plan:

*We basically open the doors to everybody. We've had parents come in, [and] once in a while we have players come in and they've said "this's what I see as a problem— but this's what I think we can do better." We actually try to sit and listen to them and try to enact [their suggestions].*

Another new element uncovered in this study is awareness of risks and opportunities as critical to domestic SFD organizations' planning efforts, particularly considering potential threats to sustainability. John explained his organization was "ambitious in growing our program. And at the same time, we need to take a very cautious approach when we expand. Because when we expand, our goal is to stay in a school for a very long time." Eddy shared,

*We need to look at challenges, and we're going to look at— should we stay in our same focus, doing the mentoring, or should we look at broadening our scope . . . [with] youth employment, providing training and resume support . . . and do we have the resources to do that?*

Kaitlyn expressed similar concerns, because,

*The environment changes very quickly . . . families are moving in—moving out. Housing is being ripped down, [and] your constituent base isn't the same from month to month or year to year . . . [and] there's lots of stuff we would like to do—want to do—or, have in our plan. [But] we can't always resource everything we'd like to do.*

Threats to organizations' (which in some cases seeking to grow) sustainability, were indicated as particular considerations for domestic SFD planning. Uncertainty can be reduced by increasing the amount of information available to organizations (Slack & Parent, 2006), and this seems to be the approach taken (or considered important) in the domestic SFD context through collaborative planning. The salience of risk management in this context contrasts with CSOs that are concerned with creative outside-the-box thinking (Doherty et al., 2014, p. 136S), and may be a reflection of SFD organizations' reliance on external and often new and changing funding partners. In the perhaps particularly dynamic environment of social change programming, organizations may be especially alert to mitigating risks to sustainability, particularly while seeking new opportunities for growth.

## CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to uncover the critical elements of organizational capacity for domestic SFD within the dimensions of human resources, finances, external relationships and networks, infrastructure and processes, and planning and development. Building on previous SFD research, the outcome is a refined framework of capacity (see Table 2) in this context, with insight into new and further nuances of elements that are critical to goal achievement.

### Limitations and Future Research

While this research makes a meaningful contribution in uncovering and further refining the critical capacity elements in domestic SFD organizations, there are limitations to this work. The study is based on responses from single persons from each participating organization. In future, research may include several perspectives, including from stakeholders, partners, and across levels of the organization to gain a richer insight to the nature and impacts of capacity in SFD organizations. Also, variation by program life cycle was considered in this study and some further insights to the relevance of critical elements of capacity in different subcontexts were observed. However, other bases of variation may be examined, such as organization size (according to budget, participants, paid staff (Svensson et al., 2018)), goals in terms of growth versus stability, and life stage (e.g., start-up, growth, mature, decline/turnaround (Svensson et al., 2018)), to further enhance understanding of capacity for domestic SFD. As Svensson et al. (2017) indicate, there may also be an opportunity to use more quantitative measures, including financial forms and other key performance indicators to assess organizational capacity rather than relying on leaders' descriptions of strengths and challenges. Further, future researchers should explore connections between the identified critical capacity elements and SFD organizations' outcomes, including general social change goal achievement and more specific indicators of that such as education retention and postsecondary enrollment, reduced violence, attitudinal change (with respect to gender and mental health issues), new immigrant and refugee integration, and improved relations between police and at-risk youth.

Future research should also consider the role of leadership in SFD capacity. To date, and perhaps surprisingly, no capacity for SFD research has identified leadership as a critical element, perhaps because interviews have been conducted with leaders who may not have realized, or have been reluctant to identify, the importance of this factor.

Leaders ultimately decide many of the key decisions regarding whether and how to build capacity for their organizations, and so it is of interest to further explore their role in organizational capacity for SFD.

**Implications for Practice**

The framework of critical capacity elements may be a useful tool for domestic SFD organizations to assess their capacity strengths and challenges, determining what they are doing well, according to these factors, and identifying aspects that need attention. For example, SFD organizations—and especially those with newer programs—may reflect on whether they have volunteers and staff who are familiar with the development context of their programs and, if not, consider recruiting volunteers from their alumni network or other experienced individuals. SFD organizations may also reflect on the critical skills required to achieve their goals and seek out volunteers (and paid staff) who possess those skills. In particular, fundraising experience and grant writing skills may be especially important given these organizations' reliance on external funding. Engaged and sustained partnerships were identified as critical to goal achievement, and devoting time to manage these relationships is important. Using a sound database to streamline communication to partners and participants appears to be helpful. The capacity for domestic SFD framework may also be useful to funding partners and policy makers. It can inform funding initiatives and (more) strategic initiatives directed toward supporting and building various capacity elements identified as critical by SFD organizations themselves. For example, financial support may be directed toward critical aspects including staffing and training, sustainable (long-term) finances, IT, and facilities. These are just some of the critical factors identified by domestic SFD personnel as fundamental to the ability of their organizations to deliver social change programs through sport. Thus, acknowledging the critical elements of capacity introduced and further verified in the current study as a framework for directing efforts to build capacity, domestic SFD organizations and their key stakeholders can be better positioned to support efforts toward sport for positive social change in their communities.

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Original Research

# Being a part of it: People with intellectual disabilities as volunteers in the Youth Olympic Games

**Roald Undlien[1]**

[1] Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences, Norway

*Corresponding author email:* roald.undlien@inn.no

## ABSTRACT

During the Youth Olympic Winter Games event in Lillehammer, Norway, a group of students with intellectual disabilities worked as volunteers. The teachers of the class functioned in a social entrepreneurial manner, using the event to create social value for this particular group. Qualitative inter*views* were conducted with the group of students (n=12), and observations were made during the event. The students' teachers (n=3) and the head of volunteers (n=1) from the organizing committee were also interviewed for triangulation, thus verifying the interpretation of the data. This study demonstrated that social value was created through the practical tasks the students with intellectual disabilities were given, especially in relation to the Olympic context of the event, and the job itself was more important than those for whom they were doing it or why. Other important sources of social value were for the students to be outside of the classroom and to be cooperating and learning from each other within the group. Last, the students had the opportunity to aid and assist, instead of being aided and assisted, and to give something back to the local community.

## INTRODUCTION

Sports are employed increasingly as an entrepreneurial mechanism to promote important social issues such as developing a global society (Ratten, 2015). Creating a "better world" by finding solutions for social problems or inequality and, in particular, creating social value, are also the main hallmarks of social entrepreneurs (Dees, 2001; Guo

& Bielefeld, 2014; Helmsing, 2015; Sullivan Mort, Weerawardena, & Carnegie, 2003). Traditionally, social value is viewed as something that benefits people whose needs are not being met by any other means. Social entrepreneurs aim to create social value by stimulating societal change or meeting needs through a process of combining resources innovatively with the intent to explore and exploit opportunities to develop social value (Mair & Marti, 2006). According to Schenker, Gerrevall, Linnér, and Peterson (2014), sports are both suitable and capable of addressing and contributing to solving social problems and are used increasingly in this social entrepreneurial manner.

At the Youth Olympic Winter Games (LYOG) held in Lillehammer in 2016, several actors saw an opportunity to work as social entrepreneurs to create social value for various target groups (Undlien, 2017). According to Hulgård and Lundgaard Andersen (2014), social entrepreneurship is about creating social value by doing something new, with a high level of influence by participants and often with the involvement of elements of civil society such as the volunteer sector. By participating as volunteers in the LYOG, several foundations, organizations, and other actors were able to gain advantage and momentum for their entrepreneurial projects working toward social change and the creation of social value for their respective target groups (Undlien, 2017). Among these groups was a high school class for people with intellectual disabilities (ID).

Internationally, volunteerism has been used to promote the social inclusion of vulnerable groups in mega-sporting events such as the Commonwealth Games and the Olympic

Games (Darcy, Dickson, & Benson, 2014; Nichols & Ralston, 2011). In a Norwegian context, promoting social inclusion through volunteerism is less common. For instance, at the FIS World Cross Country Championships in 2011, 16% of the volunteers were in a catch-all category, such as the unemployed, civil workers, conscripts, and those with disabilities. However, no distinctions were made among various groups within the category. Moreover, Norwegians have often been labeled the world champions of volunteering (Skille, 2012), and sports represents the largest arena for volunteer work in Norway, with a volunteer effort equivalent to 23,000 FTEs (St. Meld. nr. 39 (2006-2007)). Research shows that, within sports, people with disabilities are underrepresented as volunteers (Eimhjellen, 2011). Moreover, this research does not distinguish between people with intellectual disabilities (ID) and those with physical disabilities. Little is known about people with ID and volunteerism in sports (although some research on people with ID and volunteerism in other contexts has been conducted (Patterson & Pegg, 2009; Roker, Player, & Coleman, 1998).

People with ID as volunteers is new and not visible within the Norwegian sports context; thus, they are labeled "nontraditional" volunteers in this study. To discuss the nontraditional, it is necessary to first consider the traditional. According to Folkestad, Christensen, Strømsnes, and Selle (2015), the traditional Norwegian volunteer is a highly educated, married man between the ages of 35 and 49, with children and a high income. At past major Norwegian sporting events (e.g., the world skiing championship in 2011), the majority of volunteers were employed men with a university degree (Skille, 2012).

Participating in volunteer work can be an important arena for promoting integration and social inclusion (Eimhjellen, 2011). In Norway, a political objective is that everyone, independent of functioning, should have equal opportunities to be part of different social and cultural arenas, including the volunteer sector (Söderström & Tøssebro, 2011). Still, it is not traditional to consider issues related to social responsibility and social value in the context of marginalized groups in relation to larger sports events. The official political platform of the Norwegian Olympic and Paralympic Committee and Confederation of Sports (NIF), for the period 2015–2019 does not emphasize or mention social responsibility related to larger events, nor does it consider using events to create social value for marginalized groups through volunteering (Norges Idrettsforbund, 2015).

Enabling people with ID to volunteer at major sporting events allows an opportunity for a new discourse. They can be seen as useful and contributing to society. As volunteers,

they are not necessarily seen as people with an intellectual disability who rely on aid and assistance on a daily basis. Opportunities for people with ID to be a part of new discourses, such as volunteering, can be seen in relation to what Grue (2001) describes as "to make oneself known," a strategy for mastering one's life situation. Within this perspective, people with disabilities are given the opportunity to influence how others see them by choosing the context they want to be part of instead of being placed in a discourse by others ("to get known"). In this way, attention is directed away from the disability and toward the aspects the disabled person wants to display. Furthermore, this allows persons who are disabled to resist being labeled as "disabled." Thus, we can say that volunteering is a potential source of social value for people with ID. Through volunteering, they might "make themselves known" by visually demonstrating their potential, mastering specific tasks, and developing new skills, thereby influencing how they are perceived by others—in other words, becoming a volunteer at an Olympic event and someone who is useful, instead of a boy/girl with an intellectual disability in need of aid to accomplish daily living activities.

The aim of this study is to contribute to the field of volunteerism and social entrepreneurship in order to identify the possibilities of these perspectives in the context of nontraditional groups and their participation as volunteers in sports events. Little is known about how people with ID experience being volunteers at major sporting events and especially how volunteering can contribute to creating social value for this population. It is hoped that this study will contribute to filling this gap.

The following research questions were developed:

• How can social entrepreneurs create social value for people with intellectual disabilities through volunteer work at a major sporting event?

• How do people with ID experience working as volunteers at a major sporting event?

## BACKGROUND

The present study's interviews revealed that the mother of a student with ID came up with the idea for her daughter's class (for students with ID) to volunteer as other students do. She discussed this with the head teacher, who contacted the head of volunteers for the Lillehammer Youth Olympic Games Organising Committee (LYOGOC), and the volunteer project for students with ID was initiated. The program was not adapted for the target group; rather, they enrolled as regular volunteers. The Olympic Games have

had a strong standing in Lillehammer since the games in 1994, and LYOG was seen as a significant opportunity to be part of the same story, resulting in several actors with social entrepreneurial projects wanting to be included in the event (Undlien, 2017). This made participation in the games especially attractive, thereby pushing potential entrepreneurs such as the high school teachers to develop new approaches for taking part.

The Youth Olympic Games (YOG) differs from other Norwegian sporting events in several aspects but particularly for having a wider range of tasks needing to be completed. According to the LYOGOC's head of volunteers, they needed a broad spectrum of volunteers as the event was so diverse; thus, there were many options for identifying appropriate tasks. However, it was clearly expressed on behalf of the group that the tasks they were assigned had to be meaningful (tasks that actually needed to be done) while simple enough that all students could learn and master the necessary skills. Together with the LYOGOC, the class's teacher identified the task of collecting and recycling trash at the largest venue for the event. Trash is generated wherever people gather for several days, but a large-scale event like the YOG is likely to generate a huge amount, and the job of recycling and cleaning up will thereby be more extensive than for smaller-scale events.

**Social Entrepreneurship**

Social entrepreneurship is receiving an increasing amount of attention within the field of sports management (Bjärsholm, 2017). However, according to Weerawardena and Mort (2006), it remains an ill-defined concept. Entrepreneurs are considered people who are able to discover and exploit new possibilities and have the motivation and dedication necessary to pursue them while being willing to take the risks involved (Martin & Osberg, 2007). Broadly, social entrepreneurship can be seen as a process involving innovative use and a combination of resources to pursue opportunities to enact social change and/or address social needs (Mair & Marti, 2006). Furthermore, Dees, Emerson, and Economy (2002) argue that social entrepreneurship is about creating social value and especially finding new and better ways to do so.

It is common to discuss social innovations when talking about new elements that social entrepreneurs bring to the table to create social value. An innovation is often created across three sectors: state, market, and civil society. Social innovations can be seen as new ideas that comply with social needs while creating new forms of social

relationships or cooperation (Hulgård, 2007), while Pol and Ville (2009) take a somewhat wider stance on the subject, defining social innovations as ideas with the potential to improve the quality or quantity of life.

There are several definitions of the concept of social value. Young (2006, p. 56) defines it as something that "benefits people whose urgent and reasonable needs are not being met by any other means." Hence, it is important for social entrepreneurs to create social value by stimulating social change or meeting social needs through a process of combining resources in a new way that aims to explore and exploit opportunities to create social value (Mair & Marti, 2006). According to Martin and Osberg (2007) entrepreneurs are attracted to a suboptimal equilibrium where the entrepreneur sees the opportunity for a new and improved solution, service, or process, while others may perceive it as an inconvenience to be tolerated.

According to Young (2006), value has five crucial features from a social entrepreneurial point of view. First, value is subjective and a matter of real life experiences. Second, social value is negotiated between stakeholders; third, it is open for reappraisal, and fourth, it includes incommensurable elements. Fifth, (social) values are inseparable from social activity. As Dees (2001, p. 4) notes, "It is inherently difficult to measure social value creation." However, social value is created through activities and services that target marginalized groups, which often experience that the market and political systems fail to meet their needs (Young, 2006).

**Sports Entrepreneurship and Social Entrepreneurship**

Previously, the association between innovation, entrepreneurship, and sports has received little attention. However, Ratten (2011b) has made an effort to address this omission. According to Ratten (2011b), in a sports context, social entrepreneurship occurs when sport as a whole field starts to address social change or social problems, and thus social entrepreneurship or other entrepreneurial activities conducted in a sporting context may be referred to as sports entrepreneurship. Defined as "the mindset of people or organisations actively engaged in the pursuit of new opportunities in the sports-context") (Ratten, 2012, p. 66), sports entrepreneurship has a social entrepreneurial nature. Innovation plays a crucial role in social entrepreneurship, as solutions to social problems often involve doing something new (Hulgård & Lundgaard Andersen, 2014). Innovation also lies within the core of an entrepreneurial sports process, as it emphasizes the creation of new ventures or the maintenance of an organization (Ratten, 2012). In addition,

Sullivan Mort et al. (2003) emphasize proactiveness and risk taking as central to social entrepreneurship, and the same characteristics are the hallmarks of sports entrepreneurs (Ratten, 2011a).

## Volunteerism as a Theoretical Concept

The subject of volunteerism in sporting events is one of the most prominent research topics of sports management (Wicker, 2017). This study relies on the works by Hustinx and Lammertyn (2003) and Hustinx (2010), which have attempted to conceptualize volunteerism in a theoretical framework. Hustinx and Lammertyn (2003) separated volunteers into two main categories: reflexive/modern and collective/traditional volunteers.

The reflexive volunteer often volunteers for events with a short time frame and chooses the activity as a means to express his or her identity. The main reason for volunteering is often to extend networks and/or to improve one's work resume to appear more attractive to potential employers. Frequently, the reflexive volunteer has no or little affiliation with the organization or event for which he or she is volunteering (Hustinx & Lammertyn, 2003).

The traditional volunteer has strong roots in the Norwegian context and is a long-term volunteer who often does work on the basis of solidarity and contributing to the local society. Unlike reflexive volunteers, they frequently have strong affiliations with the organizations for which they volunteer. Furthermore, patriotism is an important value for them (Hustinx & Lammertyn, 2003).

Hustinx (2010) has further developed the theoretical framework of volunteerism by introducing another category of volunteers, institutionally individualized volunteers. According to Hustinx (2010), new organizational and institutional models affect volunteerism today, resulting in a type of volunteer she describes as institutionally individualized. Organizations dependent on these types of volunteers are increasingly adapting their activities to be flexible according to volunteers' preferences. This is a kind of volunteerism where the institutional association of the individual, in this case the students' school, becomes important to whether the person volunteers or not and for whom he or she volunteers.

## METHODS

### The Case Study

In order to answer the present study's research questions, a

case study was conducted with a high school class for students with ID (n=12) volunteering at the Youth Olympic Games (YOG). This is considered a single case study of one complex case with several perspectives and is studied to learn about the participation of people with ID as volunteers. Several actors were involved in order to ensure the class's participation as volunteers, to facilitate a positive experience, and to identify tasks for them so they could contribute in a meaningful way. Therefore, the perspectives of the teachers (n=3) as facilitators for the students were included. The head teacher was interviewed prior to the event, while the other teachers were included in interviews following it.

Last, the perspective of the head of volunteers for the event's organizing committee was included to gain a broader picture of the participation of students with ID as volunteers. The selection of the case was information oriented and related to the author`s expectation about the information content that this specific case might provide. The goal of this kind of selection is to maximize the utility of information from a single case (Flyvbjerg, 2006).

Triangulation is about controlling conclusions drawn from one source of data by gathering data from other sources (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2004). By including several sources (the class's teachers and the head of volunteers for LYOGOC), triangulation of the data was ensured in order to validate the answers to the research questions.

According to Flyvbjerg (2006), choosing few cases to study may be fruitful, as atypical cases often reveal more information as they include more actors and more basic mechanisms in the situation being studied. The case for this study was chosen strategically, as the group of students with ID stood out from traditional volunteers. They were special because of the circumstances of their participation (the school played a crucial role in this), in addition to their abilities to explain what they were doing and why. Furthermore, people with disabilities (including people with ID) do not usually volunteer at sporting events and are considered marginalized in the society (Eimhjellen, 2011). They also have unmet social needs and a need for social change (to be fully included in society) and are thus a suitable group to study in a social entrepreneurial context.

The case was conducted through qualitative interviews and participant observations. According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) interviews may provide a fruitful method if the aim is to seek a better understanding of someone's subjective experiences and self-perception in the social world. However, some challenges that will be discussed

below became apparent.

## Qualitative Interviews and People with ID

According to Hammersley and Atkinson (2004), it is only through conversation (e.g., interviews) that we can create generality about the social arena. However, numerous challenges and methodological issues arose when conducting qualitative research with people with ID. They may lack verbal language, forcing the researcher to rely on observation as a research method and paving the way for new challenges. When completing observations, researchers don't necessarily "see everything you notice, you don't notice everything you see, and sometimes you see something else than what you noticed" (Sundet, 2010, p. 123). In addition, the cognitive levels of interviewees with ID may pose difficulties for understanding complex questions or grasping the reach of questions (Ellingsen, 2010).

The initial interviews with the students with ID revealed that it was challenging for most to talk about something that had not yet happened. Furthermore, several students had difficulties expressing themselves orally and, in particular, finding the words to describe their feelings and experiences. Yet it was important to include their voices, as this is a group that is seldom heard within qualitative research (Ellingsen, 2010). Thus, it was decided to interview them again in real time as they were performing their volunteer work, in addition to observing them during the LYOG, to acquire appropriate data.

## Observation

When conducting participatory observation, the researcher interacts with the person(s) to be studied while studying and observing as the person(s) acts in a certain environment (Fangen, 2010). Participant observation is often used to study subjects in the context of their worlds. Although language may be important within participant observation, there is also an option to study situations from the perspectives of individuals with ID who are nonverbal. The aim is to discover and explore the meaning that the subjects make of their world (Biklen & Moseley, 1988). Throughout the study, the interviews and observations were divided into two main subjects, social entrepreneurship and volunteerism.

## Social Entrepreneurship and Volunteerism

Social entrepreneurship occurs when a person or organization recognises a suboptimal situation or problem for a specific social group and combines resources in a new

way to address it (Martin & Osberg, 2007). Thus, it was important to identify who saw the opportunity for the students to volunteer and who worked to make it happen. In other words, who was the social entrepreneur in this case? In addition, it was interesting to see whether the students with ID could picture the event as something that would somehow change their current social world for better or worse. Moreover, this author wished to understand how involved they had been throughout the process and their level of influence.

Regarding volunteerism, the interview questions were mainly related to the students' expectations, especially the eventual outcomes they hoped to achieve by participating in the event (e.g., making new friends or just having a positive experience). Important topics included things they were looking forward to and, to some extent, eventual concerns that some of them had. Other subjects were about the event itself to understand the extent to which they knew for what and whom they were volunteering. This was relevant in order to understand their participation in relation to Hustinx and Lammertyn's (2003) categories.

## Sampling

Although this author had no previous affiliation with the high school class, their main teacher was approached after a tip from an informant in another study (also regarding the LYOG). A meeting was scheduled in which the aim of the study was explained to the main teacher. To follow up, a written notice stating the aim of the study, the methods to be used, and its duration was sent to all parents/guardians of the students, as well as the school administration. This form also served as informed consent to participate in the study, giving all the students the possibility not to participate or to withdraw their participation at any point with no repercussions. Furthermore, for the ethical considerations of the study, it was reported in and approved by the Data Protection Official for Research in Norway prior to data collection. In addition, all names and personal information were anonymized during the transcription of the interviews. Moreover, all names of the interviewees are changed and anonymized in this article.

## Data Collection

The initial data collection was interviews with the group of 12 students, which were divided into smaller groups of three to four students. The 12 students were 16–19 years old with six boys and six girls. Each interview lasted between 10 and 30 minutes.

Observations were conducted during the LYOG, and the

group of 12 students was divided by the teachers into smaller groups of five or six students. The observations were made over the five days the event lasted. The students' working sessions usually lasted from 09:00–15:00, with a 30-minute lunch break, and observations were conducted during these hours with this author fully included as part of the group. Since the author had talked with the students before the event, they were comfortable with the author, who quickly gained the trust of several students. They frequently requested help from the author, for example with mittens, shoes, or even advice about where to pick up trash next, or asked permission to do things. The observations were recorded as handwritten field notes in a notebook.

When observing, situations promoting joy, positive new experiences, and learning were of particular interest, as social value may be conceptualized as positive, subjective everyday experiences (Young, 2006). Some students could not use words to express themselves at all but clearly indicated their emotions using body language (e.g., smiling, hugging, skipping, and jumping as they walked, or wearing a frown, displaying tiredness, being displeased). The observations focused on specific situations and circumstances in which the students displayed joy or displeasure.

Another important aspect of the observations was the social element. As the aim of the study was to identify how the event itself could be used to create social value, it was important that the observations were focused on the event itself. Thus, interactions or situations of interest had to be a direct result of the event rather than just two friends enjoying a conversation, as they would have done in school. Those instances when subjects of conversations concerned something they had experienced together during the event were especially interesting. Thus, the subject of the observations had to be social (interaction), and context specific for the event. Hence, situations that were particularly interesting for this study involved positive or negative experiences resulting from social interaction with each other within the group and with other volunteers, participants, or people involved with the event.

### Analysis

The analysis was theory driven, using the perspective of social entrepreneurship, social value, and volunteerism as concepts. Furthermore, it aligned with what Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) call a "bricolage" approach, in which transcriptions of all the interviews are made and analyzed, and additional observations are used while focusing on the bigger picture. Bricolage is an eclectic approach that

generates meaning by applying theoretical terms ad hoc (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The observations and conversations at this particular event were utilized to discover aspects of the link between volunteerism and social value in general. Selected parts of the interviews and observations, in particular, were studied to find relevant structures and patterns for this study.

Furthermore, the observations were analyzed from a social value perspective, looking specifically at how positive experiences could be seen in a larger picture, for instance, to move toward social change or meet a social need. Examples are skills the students with ID learned throughout the event that might assist them to live independently as adults in the future or other aspects that might promote inclusion in sports settings and society as a whole.

Value was studied in terms of positive experiences (Young, 2006). In the analysis, these experiences and descriptions were recontextualized by looking at how people with ID are positioned in the society and attempting to observe how the experiences of value related to the event could be useful in the students' everyday lives.

The concept of social entrepreneurship was used as a possible interpretation of the described or observed experiences. In other words, the context that the interviewees described was recontextualized by applying the theoretical lens of this study in an attempt to highlight new angles and gain new insights about the theoretical fields of this study (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Themes or outcomes to be included in the findings section were selected through a set of criteria. These had to be positive or negative situations that were context specific (YOG itself) and in which the students interacted within the event, especially in relation to their specific tasks as volunteers.

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### People with Intellectual Disabilities as Volunteers

The volunteers of this study differed from the existing conceptual groups of volunteers, such as the "reflexive" and "traditional" categories of Hustinx and Lammertyn (2003), as some were unable to describe what they were volunteering for or why. From Hustinx's (2010) perspective, there are also similarities to institutionally individualized volunteers, as the school was crucial for this group's participation as volunteers.

The group of students had several elements in common with Hustinx and Lammertyn's (2003) "traditional volunteer," as

the interviews showed that several of them talked about the importance of contributing to the local community. This may be illustrated by the following quotes: "It is good that we have the YOG, so that the youth get more things to do," and "We get to do something for our town." Some students even perceived their own efforts in a bigger picture when several talked about the global importance of recycling trash—not just tidying up the arena, as some of them emphasized, but doing their part to "save the globe," as illustrated by the quote: "We are picking up garbage for the environment." By contrast, some students had difficulties describing the value of their work and were unable to answer questions about why they were doing a particular task and if they saw the value in doing it.

Observations showed that this was a group with a high morale for working, and there was joy in doing physical labor. The main social value was closely connected to the actual tasks, such as picking up trash and recycling. The job itself was more important than who they were doing it for or why. Like the reflexive volunteers, these volunteers did not have a close affiliation with the organization or event for which they were working (Hustinx & Lammertyn, 2003). For some students, the main value was instead being outside the classroom and doing something practical; regarding the most fun about being a volunteer at the YOG, one said, "Not being in school."

The students knew they were there to pick up trash, but it might be that they considered it to be part of school rather than a voluntary act, as the school was the main facilitator and their main source of information. One may argue that the efforts of this group were not done voluntarily at all since they often couldn't explain why they were volunteering or simply claimed "because the teacher told me so." However, there were students in the class who refused to be part of the project, indicating that those who participated actually wanted to do so, even though it was difficult to express why.

Several of the students also had difficulties understanding what they were actually volunteering for. They had talked in school about volunteering in general prior to the event and especially volunteering at the LYOG. Still, they were struggling with the difference between the "regular" Olympics and the Youth Olympics. For instance, all were asked before the event, "What are you looking forward to the most in volunteering at the YOG?" One student answered, "to seeing Marit Bjoergen and Therese Johaug[1] competing."

Although not fully aware of the extent of the event for

which they were volunteering, the students did not expect to get anything in return for their time and effort. As Carl said, "It's not the best job I've had, we don't get any money for this (laughing)." Moreover, as Jens said, "It has been fun to help out." These statements imply that they understood the concept of volunteering and helping out while not expecting or getting something in return for their time and effort, according to Mannino, Snyder, and Omoto (2011).

Observations and interviews showed that even those students with little or no verbal language could recognize the colors and symbols of the event. "Youth Olympic car," said one of the girls (with limited verbal language) when she spotted a car from the organizing committee, wearing the same colors as her uniform. She could recognize the volunteer uniforms, the cars, the flags, and the mascot, knew that all of them were interconnected, and saw herself as part of that bigger picture. She had a sense of belonging to a bigger community, even though it was hard for her to describe what this community actually was.

**Challenges for the Volunteers and Their Environment**

The observations conducted during the LYOG also showed several limitations in the students' volunteer efforts linked to the nature of their disabilities. Some were rather passive in their work efforts, but small facilitations could change the picture drastically. A waste-picker was a tool that made a huge difference for some students, changing their efforts from nonexistent to high intensity.

Another challenge appeared in the electronic registration of the volunteers, a small task for the regular volunteer but time demanding for one person doing the job for 12 others. Every student needed a great deal of assistance registering personal information and retrieving pictures for accreditation. The main teacher, doing all this in addition to her regular tasks as a teacher, still saw what Baron (2006) describes as an entrepreneurial opportunity and, in doing so, activates a set of characteristics often associated with entrepreneurs. Among these are optimism and willingness to take a risk believing that all will turn out favorably for the entrepreneur (Baron, 2006).

Many people with ID rely heavily on close follow-up with one or more assistants, which can be challenging from an organizational perspective. In this case, the teachers followed the students, aiding them as little as possible (to ensure maximum learning) but still being present as a safety net for the students. Thus, the school was crucial for the participation of these students. However, it is becoming increasingly common that third parties, such as institutions,

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[1]Athletes on the senior national team for cross-country skiing and therefore not eligible for participating in the YOG.

mobilize and organize volunteer groups (Haski-Leventhal, Meijs, & Hustinx, 2010). In this case, some students did not function, refusing to do anything unless a specific teacher was present.

Several other challenges for the students with ID appeared during the observations conducted throughout the event. Some tended to be more interested in talking with people and watching the crowds than working. Others needed many repeated instructions to become efficient workers. One student, who became a leader, expressed challenges attached to getting co-students to do what they were supposed to be doing. When asked about the biggest challenge of volunteering, he said, "making people do what they are supposed to." However, a little facilitation in finding the proper tasks (for instance, driving the wheel cart instead of picking up trash) could make the difference between total passiveness and full-speed activity. This implied that the group was dependent on people around them who knew them and what they could and could not do and could find solutions when things were about to turn negative. Last, since it was the teachers who had to facilitate this within their work hours, this is clearly a limitation of this kind of volunteering, as the volunteer efforts of the students could happen only during regular school hours.

According to the teachers, every day that is different, when regular schedules and routines are broken, results in negative experiences for these students. This event, however, was considered positive for all those involved. When writing about the power of the Olympic Games, Chalip (2006) uses the term "liminality." Although Chalip does not clearly define liminality, he describes it as the feeling of being part of something outstanding and a heightened sense of fellowship and community among those present (Chalip, 2006, p. 110). A sense of unity and being part of something bigger than themselves, almost like the experience of liminality, may have influenced the students to do their very best, making everyone pull in the same direction.

From the event organizers' perspective, there were few or no challenges involved with including this kind of nontraditional volunteer in the event. Quoting the head of volunteers, "There were far more challenges in dealing with the regular class of 10B[2], down here at junior high, than with this group." Furthermore, she emphasized that having a group of volunteers with ID demanded a little extra from the leader in charge of clean up and recycling, especially in finding suitable tasks that were also meaningful. However, as soon as the tasks were found, the event organizers had a group that, quoting the head of volunteers, "displayed a

profound amount of joy and enthusiasm, and there were so many people telling positive stories having met this particular group during their working hours."

**The Teachers as Social Entrepreneurs**

Acknowledgement of risk but still being willing to "go for it" because of a highly possible favorable outcome is characteristic of social entrepreneurs (Dees, 2001; Sullivan Mort et al., 2003) as well as sports entrepreneurs (Ratten, 2011a). The teachers for the group acknowledged that there was risk involved in the volunteer project (e.g., students refusing to work or having negative experiences). As one teacher said, "This has exceeded all expectations. There hasn't been any nonsense with anyone!" The quote indicates that there was an expectation or precaution that not every student might function well as a volunteer. In general, people with ID are dependent on a high degree of predictability and rather fixed frames for their everyday lives in order to maintain or achieve a good life quality (Albrecht & Devlieger, 1999). The YOG, by contrast, is an event that deals with several potential X-factors (such as interaction with an unpredictable number of unfamiliar people, different languages and cultures, and sudden practical tasks that need to be solved). On the event organizer's part, there is an expectation that the volunteers will actually do what is expected of them. Still, in an entrepreneurial manner, the teachers focused on how to optimize their efforts with the resources at hand spotting and exploiting possibilities as they appeared (Martin & Osberg, 2007). The observations showed few or no instances where the students expressed negative feelings attached to their tasks.

Within social entrepreneurship literature, the focus has traditionally been on firms or nonprofit organisations (NPOs). In this context, the emphasis has been on how to create social value for a specific group while creating profit or making an economic impact. Others argue that social entrepreneurs can also be individuals independent of organizations or firms (Sullivan Mort et al., 2003), such as the teachers in this study. The high school for this study is a county-driven institution, and thus the state and government have a strong influence on how it works. Governmental enterprises often work entrepreneurially, for example, to improve education for special groups, health care, and other low-cost services for the common good. They do, however, frequently face rigid bureaucracies that can restrain entrepreneurial activities (Lee, 2014). The teachers in this study, although working in a state-run high school, had freedom of action that often NGOs also enjoy (Lee, 2014).

[2]10B is the name of a tenth grade class. At larger junior high schools, there may be up to four parallel classes, usually labeled A through D.

This allowed them to engage in activities outside of school, as long as they could state the importance for the students. However, they had to think in an entrepreneurial manner, and see possibilities for new approaches (Baron, 2006).

Social innovations are highly important for social entrepreneurs, as they represent new ways of addressing a social need or problem that is not currently being met, often through new forms of cooperation (Hulgård & Lundgaard Andersen, 2014). In this study, the teachers engaged in a new activity, volunteerism, by cooperating with an organization that was partly a governmental and partly a private enterprise, the LYOGOC. Thus, the teachers displayed an entrepreneurial mindset in setting out to do something new and seeking new partners for cooperation while acknowledging that it wouldn't necessarily succeed (Martin & Osberg, 2007).

The teachers, and one in particular, did more than was expected of them to make the volunteer project happen. The main teacher said in one of the interviews before the event, "Had I known in advance how much work it would be, I would never have done it. But I think that it will be worth the effort, seeing the joy they get in return." Social entrepreneurship is about working toward social change and addressing social needs (Mair & Marti, 2006). The scope of this project is rather small and doesn't address people with ID as a whole group. However, it might be a first step on a path where people with ID are included in settings in which currently they are not present. This project did not result in a radical change, but those involved were left with highly subjective, valuable experiences and a significant positive learning outcome, according to their teachers. The project was, to some extent, used to display what the teachers felt was social inequality and to create valuable and positive everyday experiences to promote learning for these particular students.

Social entrepreneurship often has an economic dimension in addition to the creation of social value (Hulgård, 2007). The economic impact of this particular project is rather small, however, it is still present. Volunteer work, in its very nature, is about people using their time and effort to aid or assist someone without the expectation of compensation in return (Mannino et al., 2011). For the LYOGOC, volunteers do jobs the organization would otherwise have to pay for. The job that the students did during the event needed to be done, one way or another, and their volunteer effort saved money for the organizers. The students, for their part, learned new skills and improved their work resumes and networks, and demonstrated what they were capable of, thus becoming more attractive to potential employers.

## Social Value through Volunteerism

The term social value is problematized by, among others, Young (2006) in describing this particular kind of value as subjective and almost private. Regarding the class of students with ID, volunteering at larger events can be a source of value by being an arena to promote cooperation and learning to interact with others (for example, in the lunch line or in conversation with the trash recycling leader about what kind of trash goes where). However, the main value might be the work itself and the chance to be someone who assists instead of being assisted.

Furthermore, this experience allows students to choose for themselves what kind of discourse they want to be part of— as a "volunteer at an Olympic event doing an important job" instead of a "student with an intellectual disability with several limitations." Furthermore, the volunteer uniform also contributed to erasing differences among the various volunteers. For instance, those students with Down Syndrome became more like the others, despite their physical characteristics related to their disability. The uniform also contributed to letting students partake of the "volunteer context," which can also be described as "to make oneself known" where the students have opportunities to resist being placed in a certain context, for instance, as "disabled" (Grue, 2001). Moreover, volunteerism might provide an arena where people with ID can experience increased inclusion and an experience of "being normal," thus addressing a social need (the need to belong).

In addition, the LYOG was a valuable arena for exposure, as the volunteers with ID got the opportunity to raise awareness about their potential as a work force. People with ID working as volunteers can also be seen as a social innovation as defined by Pol and Ville (2009). Applied to this case, we can see a new form of cooperation (between the LYOGOC and the local high school), with a potential for increased quality of life for the students concerned, all made possible through this kind of new cooperation and blending of sectors (Hulgård & Lundgaard Andersen, 2014).

This approach may not be appropriate for every individual with ID, but with the prerequisites and circumstances they had, it worked successfully for this group. For instance, one of the girls showed remarkable capacity for physical labor while displaying profound joy and happiness. The observations showed that when she was working, she really had no time to talk to others; instead she rushed to offer assistance where needed because, as she said, "I *have to* help!" Moreover, she smiled the most when she was feeling useful; the heavier the load, the better. As one teacher said,

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[3]Emphasis implying that the vast amount of garbage made it the most fun.

"Katrine, strong as a bear, carrying these huge bags of garbage with a huge smile on her face. That's when she laughed, when she could run while carrying the biggest bags. She was ecstatic because that's what she likes!" In response to the question of what had been the most fun, Katrine herself said, "to pick up garbage. *A lot*!" Another student, when asked the same question, simply replied, "really, it was good just being here," implying that it was valuable just to be part of this large event, with so many activities to take part in for volunteers as well as spectators. In addition, watching athletes from all over the world, seeing their various team uniforms, and listening to their languages created impressions quite outside the ordinary and were positive experiences.

The goal of the project was for students with ID to learn and master new skills relevant for finding an occupation later on, to experience unity, and to be a part of the same discourse as their nondisabled peers. The teachers of this class emphasized that it is important for these students to be part of the same contexts and discourses as other youths. In addition, by cooperating on very specific tasks, such as opening a rubbish bin (in this case, a three-person job) they got a chance to act together in a new way to solve real world problems through cooperation. As one of the boys said to one of the girls, "You are strong; we are lucky that you are here." This implies that there is value in solving practical jobs together, in a "real" setting. Thus, the LYOG was an arena where the students could appreciate each other's skills in a new environment. All of these are potential sources of social value that is not possible to create inside a classroom.

According to Young (2006), social value is about activities and services valued by a group whose needs are not adequately served by the market or the political system. It is arguable whether all people *need* to volunteer. However, it may be argued that volunteerism is part of the "normal" discourse, as a huge number of people in Norway volunteer on a regular basis (Skille, 2012). Furthermore, according to Bogdan and Taylor (1999), contributing to the society through (for instance) volunteering is important for being part of the community. By volunteering, people get together and form social networks, and there is widespread belief that participation in sports may foster social integration in society (Elmose-Østerlund & Ibsen, 2016).

Observations during the event revealed several situations where the students with ID needed to interact with other volunteers. Many people with ID live highly organized lives and are part of only a few restricted social networks (Søderstrøm & Tøssebro, 2011). The LYOG was an arena where the students were part of a real world setting instead of practicing skills within the confines of a classroom. At the LYOG, they had to interact with many different people from different countries while accomplishing the tasks that needed to be done (such as loosening garbage bags from cans, transporting them to the correct place, and opening the dumpster). The main learning outcome of the volunteer project was closely related to being part of the real world. According to the teachers, being part of society and being as independent as possible are also main concepts that the students needed to learn during their school years.

Several students also got to show other sides of themselves during the event. The teachers were particularly impressed by how one of the boys, Sander, developed during the event. He was also the one who volunteered the most before, during, and after the event. As one of the teachers said, "Really, all of them should have been working for five days in a row; maybe we would have had different learning curves for them as well." As for Sander, the teachers described him as being unable to make his own choices. However, during the LYOG this was not visible, as he became a leader of the group, deciding where to go at what time and the order in which the garbage cans would be emptied. Through volunteering at this event, this particular student got an opportunity to develop new personal characteristics, make independent choices, engage in conversations with other (nondisabled people), and categorize rubbish. All are activities that he normally would not undertake. For the teachers, this led to the discovery of new potential for meaningful work for this particular student.

In regard to finding meaningful occupations for other students, this was one of the main tasks of the school, which is constantly searching for relevant settings where their students with ID might be placed and trained in order to prepare them for life after school. Through the students' volunteer efforts, the teachers discovered skills and characteristics among their students that they had no knowledge of before the event. Thus, the teachers became aware of several work places to approach for place-and-train arrangements.

Social value is, according to Young (2006), inseparable from social activity. For the students with intellectual disabilities in this study, being part of as many social activities as possible may (arguably) be highly important. Sander may be an example as the one volunteer who participated in most of the activities and also the one with the highest reward in terms of personal development. By volunteering in the LYOG, all students received an opportunity to experience what Chalip (2006) describes as

liminality, the sense of being part of something bigger than oneself. With the history of Lillehammer hosting the Olympic Games in 1994, the students got to see themselves as part of that context as well. When talking about the event, almost all the students consistently used the term "the Olympic Games" instead of "Youth Olympics." They had learned about the YOG in school before the event, and the abbreviation "YOG" was written nearly everywhere in the arena. Still, they called the event "the Olympic Games," implying that they saw themselves mainly in an Olympic context. This might also imply that the Olympic context is more valuable than the YOG context.

Finally, the main social value for the students in this study might be the positive experiences and new skills they learned that may help them to live rich, empowering, and diverse lives—in other words, to partake in society. By relying on more empirical studies, contributions are being made in understanding the concept of social value while revealing the potential of sports in a social arena to create this kind of value.

## CONCLUSION

In the beginning, the following questions were raised:

• How can social entrepreneurs create social value for people with intellectual disabilities through volunteer work at a major sporting event?

• How do people with ID experience working as volunteers at a major sporting event?

There is a possibility for social entrepreneurs to create social value for people with ID through participating as volunteers in a major sporting event, as this is a real event, involving real people. It is also about letting marginalized groups participate in the society alongside others and to be a part of discourses that focus on being useful, rather than on their disabilities. Through this, they can learn valuable practical and social skills that may aid them in the everyday life outside of school. People with ID experienced volunteering at the YOG as an exclusive event with rich possibilities to contribute on different levels (locally as well as globally). Furthermore, the event was viewed as a positive and meaningful experience by the volunteers, much due to a careful selection of the tasks they were set to do and through facilitation by persons that knew them well. Additionally, the job they were set to do was experienced as important on its own, not being influenced by whom they were doing it for. Last, it allowed the students to cooperate on practical tasks that needed to be solved, letting them display and

develop personal characteristics that were new to themselves and their teachers.

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Original Research

# A cross-sectional study of sexual health knowledge, attitudes, and reported behavior among Zambian adolescent girl participants in a football program

**Keeva Duffey[1], Joseph Mumba Zulu[2], Benedict Oppong Asamoah[1], Anette Agardh[1]**

[1] Lund University, Sweden
[2] University of Zambia, Zambia

*Corresponding author email:* keeva.duffey@gmail.com

## ABSTRACT

Limited research has assessed whether sports participation can be linked to decreasing risky sexual behavior among adolescent girls in sub-Saharan Africa. The current study aimed to assess whether participation in a football league that provides sexual and reproductive health and rights lessons before each football match strengthened adolescent Zambian girls' sexual health knowledge, attitudes, and behavior. Adolescent female participants in the girls-only football league run by the organization Futebol dá Força (FDF, n=120) completed a questionnaire assessing sexual health knowledge, reported attitudes, and reported behavior. Logistic regressions were used to assess associations between participants' self-reported program exposure and their sexual health knowledge, reported attitudes, and reported behavior. After examining all exposure levels and adjusting for age, participants with at least six months of reported exposure to the FDF program had better sexual health knowledge and attitudes compared to those reporting less than six months exposure (AOR 4.74, 95% CI 1.70-13.19). Those in the more exposed group also had higher odds of reporting using a condom at last sex (AOR=11.64, 95% CI=1.08-124.57). These findings suggest that sports-based educational programs may improve sexual health knowledge and attitudes among African adolescent girls, potentially reducing the risk of sexually transmitted disease and early aged pregnancy.

## INTRODUCTION

Social, economic, and cultural factors play an influential role in shaping adolescents' sexual behavior (Viner et al., 2012). For females, adolescence is a critical period of exposure to sexual and reproductive health risks with potentially serious health outcomes and higher risks of mortality. The World Health Organization (WHO) encourages research to help identify effective interventions for adolescents that prevent early pregnancy and other adverse sexual health outcomes by influencing key factors such as early marriage, coerced sex, and contraceptive access and usage (WHO, 2011).

Adolescence is regarded as a particularly vulnerable period for African girls due to gender discrimination in forms of limited education, early marriage, limited access to health services, sexual violence, and other factors that in turn lead to unplanned pregnancies (WHO Regional Office for Africa, 2012). Regionally, sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) has the highest rate of teenage pregnancy and the highest proportion of women and girls among people living with HIV, with Zambia among the top five in the region (Central Statistical Office of Zambia, 2014; Wamoyi et al., 2014; WHO Regional Office for Africa, 2016). Previous research has found that social, cultural, and economic structural barriers to condom usage in Zambia result from a high degree of stigma due to religion, social and gender norms, lack of knowledge of how to use condoms, and barriers in accessing condoms by adolescents (Benefo, 2010; Pinchoff, Boyer, Mutombo, Chowdhuri, & Ngo, 2017; Yakubu & Salisu, 2018; Kailbala & Drosin, 2011). The abundance of complex factors contributing to SRHR issues creates a demand for quality interventions that can address the many aspects affecting Zambian adolescent girls' sexual health.

In Zambia, some of the current public health challenges among adolescents are high rates of early and unprotected sex, early unwanted pregnancies, and sexually transmitted infections (Central Statistical Office of Zambia, 2014; Kailbala & Drosin, 2011). A 2013-14 nationwide demographic and health survey sampling 3,686 girls aged 15-19, found that 89.4% of girls reported not using any form of contraceptive during sex (Central Statistical Office of Zambia, 2014). The same survey also found that one in three women reported having given birth to their first child by the age of 18 (Central Statistical Office of Zambia, 2014). Despite efforts from various SRHR organizations in the local communities to increase sexual health knowledge among adolescent, condom use remains lower compared to other age groups (Pinchoff et al., 2017), suggesting the need to investigate whether other methods to promote condom use could be more effective for this key population.

The traditional setting for providing reproductive health education has primarily been the school classroom. However, not all children in low- to middle-income countries are attending school, leaving some without access to such lessons (World Bank Group, 2017). Sports can be used as an additional tool with other community-based programs to provide an alternative educational platform to the traditionally school-based educational settings. As reported by the United Nations Office on Sport for Development and Peace and found in numerous studies over the last decade, sports can be a positive tool in health education and disease prevention (Kaufman, Spencer, & Ross, 2013; Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group, 2007; United Nations Office on Sport for Development and Peace, 2014). Not only can sports be utilized for sexual health education for all youth, but sports can also be used as an opportunity for adolescent girls to develop a social network and safe place to confront the daily problems in their lives (Brady, 2005; Hershow et al., 2015; Jeanes & Magee, 2013).

In the United States, general sports participation among adolescent girls has been linked to decreased risky sexual behavior, such as less frequent sexual activity, delayed sexual debut, lower rates of pregnancy, and higher rates of condom usage (Dodge & Jaccard, 2002; Hershow et al., 2015; Lehman & Koerner, 2004; Miller, Sabo, Farrell, Barnes, & Melnick, 1999; Sabo, Miller, Farrell, Melnick, & Barnes, 1999). However, there is limited research investigating whether general sports participation can play a similar role for girls in sub-Saharan Africa (Hershow et al., 2015). Within the past decades, the use of sports for development has grown, with sport being used as a platform for many health promotion/educational interventions (Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group,

2007). For this study, the terms sports for development and sports-based educational programs are used interchangeably and are defined as programs that use sports and physical activity to promote education, health, and social connections (Kidd, 2008). As SRHR encompasses a range of complex issues due to the highly sensitive nature of the topic and related stigma, using a friendly popular platform may be an effective way to promote such sensitive information. As found in a study in South Africa, a girls sports-based health promotion intervention could aid in improved adolescent girls HIV related knowledge and attitudes, although limitations exist concerning the effects that sports for development interventions might have on sexual behavior change (Hershow et al., 2015). Due to complexities and interconnectedness of SRHR challenges, social change among sports interventions could support and link with other SRHR interventions within the family, church, school, and other community settings (Hershow et al., 2015; Kaufman et al., 2013).

Most research conducted on sports-based educational program in sub-Saharan Africa has focused primarily on prevention of HIV through sexual health education. A 2013 systematic review of effectiveness of sports-based HIV prevention interventions concluded that there is strong evidence of at least short-term effects on HIV related knowledge, self-efficacy, along with reported recent condom usage, and that there is strong evidence that a well-designed and sports-based HIV prevention intervention can increase related knowledge, self-efficacy, and condom usage by 20 to 40% (Kaufman et al., 2013). This review found that most evaluations of sports-based HIV prevention interventions had been done in sub-Saharan Africa, commensurate with it being one of the most affected regions in the world, accounting for *66% of all new HIV infections globally* (Kaufman et al., 2013; UNAIDS, 2018).

One of the most popular sports played around the world is football (Lee & Kim, 2016). Its popularity and low cost make it attractive and easy to implement in Zambia and throughout SSA (Maro, Roberts, & Sorensen, 2009). Previous research conducted on different football interventions in SSA has found an increase in levels of HIV knowledge and behavior change among at-risk youth (Balfour et al., 2013; Maro et al., 2009). Various grassroots football organizations in SSA are using football as a platform to deliver sexual and reproductive health education with focus primarily on HIV prevention (Balfour et al., 2013; Kaufman et al., 2013; Maro et al., 2009). This study focused on a program run by an international organization called Futebol dá Forca (FDF) that, through its football-based platform in Zambia, promotes education for girls focused on sexual and reproductive health and rights.

**The Futebol dá Forca SRHR Football Program in Zambia**

FDF's Zambian division of its football program operates under the name Southern Province Girls League (SPGL). SPGL was established in Livingstone district in 2014, followed by Choma in 2015. The league is open to all girls free of charge. Girls are typically recruited via word of mouth or through friends who play. The FDF coaches' role within the SPGL is to create a safe meeting place where girls learn about SRHR and encourage girls to exercise their rights on a daily basis. One of the organization's main objectives is community involvement in the promotion of SRHR through attitudinal and structural change. In Zambia, FDF recruits coaches and volunteers from the community by word of mouth. Before each SPGL game, FDF provides facilitated lessons on SRHR, using the football field as the classroom for players and the community spectators. Every game includes one lesson for the girls only (before the game), followed by a lesson for the community spectators (during the warm-up and/or the beginning of each match). Elements of community involvement are important in SRHR programs, as community support and understanding of SRHR services for adolescents help to break down the stigma and religious and community norms that affect adolescent sexual health (Kesterton & Cabral de Mello, 2010).

Like several sports for development programs, FDF is rooted within learning theories such as Robert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) (Kaufman et al., 2013). This theory indicates that learning is a process that occurs in a social context that involves five main elements: knowledge, perceived self-efficacy, outcome expectations, goal formation, and perceived facilitators (Bandura, 2004).

In line with the SCT, the SPGL's typical lesson or elements of knowledge includes a brief lecture and interactive discussions with the participants based on FDF's weekly topics (organized preseason by FDF). Examples of the SPGL discussion topics include: sexuality, reproductive and sexual health, sexual and reproductive rights, sexual violence and abuse, pregnancy, and menstruation. The lessons are conducted on the side of the football field where the girls sit with the facilitator who lectures on the specific topic of the week and after which questions and discussion are encouraged. Exposure to the football lessons on SRHR and the importance of the role of the coach fall under the SCT theory of increasing knowledge and motivation of the health behavior. First, verbal persuasion through group-based events in which people can discuss health behavior (Bandura, 2004; Wight, Plummer, & Ross, 2012) takes

place during the FDF SRHR lessons on the field and with the coach and facilitators throughout the football league. Moreover, the facilitators' component of the theory includes the FDF coaches who are sports leaders who facilitate not only the sports activities but also set examples and become role models for the players by demonstrating the positive behavior through role playing, demonstrations, and discussions from the lessons. Facilitation from the coaches and by watching others perform the positive behavior reflects aspects of the SCT such as outcome expectations and goal formation. Vicarious experience is gained during participation in sports activities, as Bandura states that people learn how to act by observing others and follow through with actions considered appropriate according to what they have previously observed (Bandura, 2004). It can be assumed that from these experiences one has when participating in the activity, if positive behavior is being demonstrated, it can potentially lead to positive action by the participants observing the behavior. Outcome expectations such as setting goals for oneself, which is encouraged by coaches, along with the motivation to play football, may encourage girls to stay in school and to avoid pregnancy, thus contributing to behavior change in these players. Contextual factors that include gender norms, poverty, family, and religion also shape one's agency with regards to meeting goals and outcome (Wight et al., 2012).

Prior to this study, FDF had no explicitly defined objectives regarding the lessons, other than to distribute information about sexual health, nor had there has been monitoring of outcomes. The overall aim of this study was to assess if participation in FDF's football league improved the sexual health knowledge, attitudes, and reported behavior in adolescent Zambian girls. To do this, we examined differences in sexual health knowledge, attitudes, and reported behavior between girls with longer participation in Futebol da Forca's girls' football league and those with shorter participation.

**METHODOLOGY**

**Study Design**

The study used a cross-sectional design with data obtained from a self-administered English questionnaire designed specifically for FDF's participants by the first author with feedback from the other authors. The questionnaire contained 77 structured items covering sociodemographic information, sexual health knowledge and attitudes, reported sexual behavior, and self-esteem that were modified from previous established questionnaires (Family Health International, 2000; Hanna & Tompkins, 1999;

Sayles et al., 2006). Prior to conducting the study, the instrument was piloted with nine school girls aged 12 to 16 to improve its format and relevance as well as the wording and comprehensibility of the questions. FDF was involved in the development of the questionnaire to ensure the topics covered aligned with lecture content.

### Sampling and Data Collection Procedures

In February 2017, questionnaires were completed by 120 girls in two urban districts (Livingstone and Choma) of the Southern Province of Zambia where the SPGL has been running for the past four years. According to FDF, 655 girls ages 10 to 24 played in the SPGL in Livingstone and Choma as of 2016 (n=384 and 271, respectively). To determine the sample size needed from this study population, a sample size calculation was done using a 95% confidence level and a margin of error of 5% (Survey Monkey, 2017). We estimated that the study would need 243 participants for all outcomes to have a margin of error of 5%. Participants were selected using convenience sampling among girls participating in the local SPGL training sessions and games. For invitations to take part in the study, participants were contacted through the program director and coaches, who were first notified of the study and who then established a time during their normal training sessions for questionnaires to be completed. Prior to the recruitment of participants, written parental consent was obtained by the coaches for girls under 18. In all, 250 parental consent forms were distributed within 24 teams in the league. Parents who received forms were those who were present at the training session or in close proximity that could receive the information and sign prior to the training session when surveys were administered. At the survey administration session, all players who were present were informed about the study and invited to participate. Those who wished to participate gave their consent at that time, and if under 18, participation was contingent upon having received written parental consent. Participants completed paper questionnaires on the football fields away from distractions and nonconsenting team members during their practice session. Nearby classrooms were used during two of the 24 survey administration sessions due to overcrowding on the field. When finished, participants dropped the surveys in a secure box and returned to their practice session. On average, participants took approximately 90 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

### Inclusion Criteria

Adolescent girls aged 12-24 playing football in the SPGL at the time of the study were invited to participate.

### Study Measures

Table 1 displays the study measures in detail with descriptions of post hoc dichotomized values for analysis. The exposure measure of length of time playing in the SPGL was dichotomized as six months or more (defined as the more exposed group) and less than six months (defined as the less exposed group). The less exposed group was the reference category. This particular cut off point was determined post hoc by an examination of the distribution of the responses to selected knowledge items according to exposure group. Sexual health knowledge and attitudes outcome measures (Family Health International, 2000; Hanna & Tompkins, 1999) and reported sexual behavior outcome measures were analyzed individually and in aggregate. A filter was used to obtain data concerning reported sexual behavior, whereby participants were first asked to respond to the question "Have you ever had sexual intercourse?" with four response items: "Vaginal," "Anal," and "Oral," with "yes" or "no" response items followed by a single response item of "None of the above." If they answered "yes" to any of the first three items, they were then asked to continue with the sexual behavior questions; those who responded "none of the above" were asked to skip this section.

### Statistical Analysis

Data was manually entered into a spreadsheet and transferred into SPSS by the main author. A subsample of the data was selected at random and reviewed for errors. Correction of the eight errors within the complete data set was done prior to analysis by the main author. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the data and comparisons between all levels of exposure, followed by further analysis of associations between the study outcomes and reported intervention exposure. Logistic regression was used to calculate crude odds ratios (OR) with 95% confidence interval (CI) for the association between the individual knowledge, reported attitudes, and reported sexual behavior items in relation to exposure to the SPGL. Multivariate logistic regression was then conducted to compute age-adjusted odds ratios for associations between the individual knowledge, reported attitudes and reported sexual behavior items, and exposure to the SPGL. Persons with missing values for explicit measures were not included in the statistical analysis concerning that specific measurement. In addition, an aggregate index was created representing the knowledge and reported attitude items combined. Reported sexual behavior items were not included in this index due to many missing values discovered post hoc. An examination of the frequency distribution of the index yielded a cut-off

*Table 1. Description of study measures*

| Study Measures | Dichotomized values determined post hoc for analysis |
|---|---|
| ***Exposure measure*** | |
| How long have you been playing in the SPGL (Southern Province Girls League)?<br>☐ I've never played in the SPGL<br>☐ Less than 6 months<br>☐ Less than 1 year<br>☐ 1-2 years<br>☐ More than 2 years | Less than 6 months *(reference category)*[a]<br>  • I've never played in the SPGL; Less than 6 months<br>More than 6 months<br>  • Less than 1 year; 1-2 years; More than 2 years |
| ***Sexual health knowledge and attitudes outcome measures*** | |
| I think it's ok to have sex without a condom the first time you have sex with a person.<br>☐ Yes<br>☐ No | |
| Is it important to test yourself for STIs?<br>☐ Yes<br>☐ No | |
| Do you know where the closest STI clinic is?<br>☐ Yes<br>☐ No | |
| Have you ever encouraged someone to a sexual health service?<br>☐ Yes<br>☐ No | |
| Most people who are important to me say it's good to use condoms.<br>☐ Yes<br>☐ No | |
| I am confident I can ask to use a condom if I wanted to.<br>(Hanna & Tompkins, 1999,)<br>☐ Yes<br>☐ No | |
| Have you ever heard of diseases that can be transmitted through sexual intercourse?<br>☐ Yes<br>☐ No | |
| Can a person protect themselves from HIV and STIS by using a condom correctly every time they have sex?<br>☐ Yes<br>☐ No | |
| Do you know of any place or person from which you can obtain condoms? (Family Health International, 2000)<br>☐ Yes<br>☐ No | |
| ***Reported sexual behaviour outcome measures*** | |
| Have you ever had sexual intercourse? (Fill in all that apply)<br>☐ Vaginal (penetration of vagina by penis)<br>☐ Anal (penetration of anus by penis)<br>☐ Oral (stimulation of genitals with mouth, lips or tongue)<br>☐ No | |
| At what age did you have sexual intercourse for the first time?<br>☐ 11 or younger<br>☐ 12-13<br>☐ 14-15<br>☐ 16-17<br>☐ 18-19 | 15 or younger<br>16 or older |
| How many sexual partners have you had during the last 12 months? (Family Health International, 2000)<br>☐ 0<br>☐ 1<br>☐ 2<br>☐ 3 or more | 1 or none<br>2 or more |
| Did you use a condom the last time you had sexual intercourse? (Family Health International, 2000)<br>☐ Yes<br>☐ No | |

*Note.* Only items from the questionnaire that were used in this study are presented.

[a] This particular cut-off point was determined post hoc by an examination of the distribution of the responses to selected knowledge items according to exposure group.

*Table 2. Demographic and background characteristics of participants for total sample and exposure-level subgroups*

| | Total<br><br>n=120 (100%) | Never played in SPGL<br>n=17 (14%) | Less than 6 months<br>n=16 (13%) | Less than 1 year<br>n=17 (14%) | 1-2 years<br><br>n=36 (30%) | More than 2 years<br>n=34 (28%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Mean age in years (SD)** | 14.8 (2.6) | 13.2 (4.0) | 14 (1.4) | 14.2 (1.6) | 15.7 (2.6) | 15.4 (2.2) |
| **Living status[a]** | | | | | | |
| Mother | 32 (28) | 7 (21.9) | 6 (18.8) | 5 (15.6) | 8 (25.0) | 6 (18.8) |
| Father | 2 (2) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 2 (100.0) |
| Both parents | 62 (52) | 8 (12.9) | 7 (11.3) | 8 (12.9) | 18 (29) | 21 (33.9) |
| Grandparents | 16 (13) | 2 (12.5) | 0 (0) | 1 (6.3) | 4 (25) | 9 (56.3) |
| Guardians | 16 (13) | 2 (12.5) | 4 (25.0) | 3 (18.8) | 6 (37.5) | 1 (6.3) |
| Other adults | 3 (3) | 1 (33.3) | 1 (33.3) | 0 (0) | 1 (33.3) | 0 (0) |
| **Education** | | | | | | |
| Less than primary school | 29 (24) | 10 (34.5) | 5 (17.2) | 6 (20.7) | 6 (20.7) | 2 (6.9) |
| Primary school | 40 (33) | 4 (10) | 5 (12.5) | 5 (12.5) | 12 (30.0) | 14 (35.0) |
| Secondary school | 50 (42) | 3 (6) | 6 (12.0) | 6 (12.0) | 18 (36.0) | 17 (34.0) |
| **Where players get sexual health information[a]** | | | | | | |
| Coach | 65 (54) | 13 (20.0) | 9 (13.8) | 7 (10.8) | 22 (33.8) | 14 (21.5) |
| Family | 29 (24) | 2 (6.9) | 4 (13.8) | 7 (24.1) | 11 (37.9) | 5 (17.2) |
| Friends | 25 (21) | 3 (12.0) | 3 (12.0) | 4 (16.0) | 10 (40.0) | 5 (20.0) |
| School | 66 (55) | 6 (9.1) | 8 (12.1) | 9 (13.6) | 20 (30.3) | 23 (34.8) |
| Health Center | 48 (40) | 1 (2.1) | 7 (14.6) | 9 (18.8) | 21 (43.8) | 10 (20.8) |
| Social Media | 18 (15) | 1(5.6) | 2 (11.1) | 5 (27.8) | 8 (44.4) | 2 (11.1) |
| Football Ground | 26 (22) | 3 (11.1) | 4 (14.8) | 2 (7.4) | 10 (37.0) | 8 (29.6) |
| **Participated in sexual health lessons from FDF** | | | | | | |
| Yes | 110 (92) | 13 (11.8) | 13 (11.8) | 17 (15.5) | 33 (30) | 34 (30.9) |
| No | 10 (8) | 4 (40.0) | 3 (30.0) | 0 (0) | 3 (30) | 0 (0) |
| **Sexual Intercourse[a]** | | | | | | |
| Vaginal | 25 (20.8) | 3 (12.0) | 4 (16.0) | 2 (8.0) | 12 (48.0) | 4 (16.0) |
| Anal | 3 (2.5) | 1 (33.3) | 1 (33.3) | 1 (33.3) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) |
| Oral | 7 (5.8) | 1 (14.3) | 1 (14.3) | 1 (14.3) | 3 (42.9) | 1 (14.3) |
| None | 84 (70) | 12 (14.3) | 12 (14.3) | 13 (15.5) | 21 (25.0) | 26 (31.0) |

[a] Measure with multiple response alternatives.

point, whereby persons with up to three "no" responses were categorized as having adequate knowledge and reported attitudes, and those with four or more "no" responses as having poor knowledge and attitudes. Crude and age-adjusted odds ratios were used to examine the association between index response subgroups (up to three vs. four or more) and exposure to the SPGL.

## Ethical Considerations

The ERES COVERGE Institutional Review Committee in Zambia granted ethical approval for this study. Participation was voluntary and based on informed consent from the participant and, for those under 18, written consent from a parent or guardian. Confidentiality and anonymity were ensured throughout the study.

## RESULTS

### Social Demographic Characteristics

Out of 250 participants invited to participate, 129 participants (51.6%) were eligible for the study by means of signed parental consent. An additional 12 girls over the age of 18 participated. After further refusal (n=15 among those under 18 years whose parents gave consent) and age criteria not met (n=6), a final total of 120 participated in the study, yielding a 48% response rate (120/250). The sample represented 18% of the total FDF program population (120/655).

Table 2 displays the demographic and background characteristics for the entire sample and for the different

*Table 3. Knowledge, attitude, and reported behavior items with odds ratios among all levels of participant exposure*

| | Outcome N (%) | OR | 95% CI | AOR | 95% CI |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Knowledge and Attitude Variables** | | | | | |
| **Knowledge of sexual diseases (Yes)** | | | | | |
| Never played in SPGL | 12 (11.7) | 1 | | 1 | |
| Less than 6 months | 14 (13.6) | 2.92 | .48 - 17.86 | 2.7 | .43 - 16.87 |
| Less than 1 year | 13 (12.6) | 1.35 | .29 - 6.26 | 1.2 | .26 - 5.89 |
| 1 to 2 years | 34 (33.0) | 7.08 | 1.21 - 41.46 | 5.8 | .92 - 36.63 |
| More than 2 years | 30 (29.1) | 3.13 | .72 - 13.67 | 2.6 | .55 - 12.37 |
| **Encouraged someone to a sexual health service (Yes)** | | | | | |
| Never played in SPGL | 7 (9.3) | 1 | | | |
| Less than 6 months | 8 (10.7) | 1.43 | .361 - 5.66 | 1.18 | .25 - 5.57 |
| Less than 1 year | 9 (12.0) | 1.61 | .414 - 6.24 | 1.29 | .28 - 5.88 |
| 1 to 2 years | 26 (34.7) | 4.13 | 1.21 - 14.09 | 1.98 | .48 - 8.19 |
| More than 2 years | 25 (33.3) | 3.97 | 1.16 - 13.58 | 1.97 | .47 - 8.20 |
| **Important to test yourself for HIV/STIs (Yes)** | | | | | |
| Never played in SPGL | 11 (10.7) | 1 | | 1 | |
| Less than 6 months | 13 (12.6) | 2.36 | .48 - 11.73 | 2.3 | .46 - 11.55 |
| Less than 1 year | 15 (14.6) | 4.09 | .69 - 24.24 | 3.96 | .66 - 23.81 |
| 1 to 2 years | 35 (34.0) | 19.09 | 2.07 - 176.26 | 17.66 | 1.81 - 172.56 |
| More than 2 years | 29 (28.2) | 3.16 | .80 - 12.51 | 2.96 | .70 - 12.55 |
| **Knowledge of where STI clinic is (Yes)** | | | | | |
| Never played in SPGL | 13 (12.9) | 1 | | 1 | |
| Less than 6 months | 12 (11.9) | .923 | .188 - 4.54 | .79 | .15 - 4.07 |
| Less than 1 year | 13 (12.9) | 1.00 | .205 - 4.88 | .83 | .16 - 4.3 |
| 1 to 2 years | 33 (32.7) | 3.39 | .66 - 17.25 | 2.36 | .42 - 13.44 |
| More than 2 years | 30 (29.7) | 2.30 | .50 - 10.67 | 1.67 | .33 - .8.58 |
| **Confident to ask to use condoms (Yes)** | | | | | |
| Never played in SPGL | 10 (10.5) | 1 | | 1 | |
| Less than 6 months | 10 (10.5) | 1.17 | .29 - 4.73 | .98 | .23 - 4.21 |
| Less than 1 year | 16 (16.8) | 11.2 | 1.19 - 105.13 | 9.4 | .97 - 91.63 |
| 1 to 2 years | 32 (33.7) | 5.6 | 1.36 - 23.14 | 3.38 | .75 - 15.25 |
| More than 2 years | 27 (28.4) | 2.7 | .76 - 9.66 | 1.7 | .43 - 6.66 |
| **Condoms usage protects against HIV/STI (Yes)** | | | | | |
| Never played in SPGL | 10 (14.5) | 1 | | 1 | |
| Less than 6 months | 9 (13.0) | .90 | .23 - 3.58 | .77 | .19 - 3.22 |
| Less than 1 year | 9 (13.0) | .79 | .20 - 3.06 | .66 | .16 - 2.66 |
| 1 to 2 years | 20 (29.0) | .88 | .27 - 2.82 | .54 | .15 - 1.93 |
| More than 2 years | 21 (30.4) | 1.13 | .35 - 3.71 | .76 | .21 - 2.70 |
| **Its ok to have sex without condom with a new partner (No)** | | | | | |
| Never played in SPGL | 14 (14.9) | 1 | | 1 | |
| Less than 6 months | 13 (13.8) | .93 | .16 - 5.45 | .93 | .16 - 5.45 |
| Less than 1 year | 12 (12.8) | .51 | .10 - 2.61 | .51 | .10 - 2.6 |
| 1 to 2 years | 28 (29.8) | .75 | .17 - 3.28 | .75 | .17 - 3.28 |
| More than 2 years | 27 (28.7) | .96 | .21 - 4.45 | .96 | .21 - 4.45 |
| **Know where and/or from whom to obtain condoms (Yes)** | | | | | |
| Never played in SPGL | 9 (11.7) | 1 | | 1 | |
| Less than 6 months | 5 (6.5) | .40 | .10 - 1.68 | .40 | .10 - 1.68 |
| Less than 1 year | 12 (15.6) | 2.13 | .52 - 8.76 | 2.13 | .52 - 8.77 |
| 1 to 2 years | 28 (36.4) | 3.11 | .91 - 10.69 | 3.11 | .91 - 10.70 |
| More than 2 years | 23 (29.9) | 1.86 | .56 - 6.13 | 1.85 | .56 - 6.13 |
| **People who are important, say to use condoms (Yes)** | | | | | |
| Never played in SPGL | 11 (10.8) | 1 | | 1 | |
| Less than 6 months | 10 (9.8) | .76 | .18 - 3.27 | .64 | .14 - 2.93 |
| Less than 1 year | 16 (15.7) | 7.28 | .75 - 71.11 | 6.10 | .60 - 61.78 |
| 1 to 2 years | 32 (31.4) | 3.64 | .83 - 16.02 | 2.44 | .50 - 12.02 |
| More than 2 years | 33 (32.4) | 15.00 | 1.58 - 142.72 | 10.64 | 1.05 - 107.66 |
| **Reported Sexual Behavior Variables** | | | | | |
| **Sexual partners in last 12 months** | | NA | NA | NA | NA |
| **Sexual debut (16 and above)** | | | | | |
| Never played in SPGL | 6 (31.6) | 1 | | | |
| Less than 6 months | 1 (5.3) | .17 | .01 - 2.98 | .14 | .01 - 2.76 |
| Less than 1 year | 4 (21.1) | .33 | .04 - 2.77 | .28 | .03 - 2.67 |
| 1 to 2 years | 3 (15.8) | .33 | .04 - 3.2 | .24 | .02 - 3.2 |
| More than 2 years | 5 (26.3) | .42 | .05 - 3.31 | .32 | .03 - 3.24 |
| **Condom used during last sexual activity** | | NA | NA | NA | NA |

*Note.* OR = crude odds ratio; AOR = age-adjusted odds ratio; CI = confidence interval; NA = Not applicable due to too few responses.

levels of exposure groups. Age was normally distributed, with a mean age for respondents of 14.8 years (SD 2.63). Roughly half (52%) of the participants reported living with both parents. Those who lived with their mother only was second largest group with 28%. The majority of participants had completed a secondary school level education (42%), whereas a majority of the participants that completed less-than-primary-school never played in the SPGL (35%). Sixty-five players (54%) stated they received sexual health information from their coach, which was roughly equal to the proportion of players who stated they received sexual health information from school (N=66, 55%). A majority of participants (n=84) reported no form of sexual intercourse activity.

**Sexual Health Knowledge, Attitude, and Behavior**

Table 3 shows the results of logistic regressions for individual knowledge and attitude items with crude and age-adjusted ORs (AOR) among all levels of exposure (only items yielding evidence of association are shown). All results that had showed evidence of an association in the crude analysis maintained such evidence when adjusting for age, although the ORs were reduced in magnitude. Age was determined to be a confounder by calculating the magnitude of effect (crude $^{OR}$ - adjusted $^{OR}$/adjusted $^{OR}$). All variables that showed an evidence of association in the crude and adjusted analyses had a greater than 10% absolute difference between exposure groups. Compared to participants reporting playing in the SPGL less than six months, participants who reported playing in the SPGL more than two years had greater odds (AOR=10.64, CI 1.05-107.66) of reporting having people who are important to them tell them to use condoms. Participants who reported playing in the SPGL one to two years had greater odds (AOR=17.55, CI 1.81- 172.56) of valuing the importance of testing themselves for HIV/STIs. Reported sexual behavior items showed no evidence of association among any exposure levels.

Table 4 details the sexual health knowledge, attitude, and reported behavior responses by item among all FDF participants in the SPGL study with less than six month and greater than or equal to six month exposure groups (less exposed and more exposed), n (%), crude and age-adjusted OR of the individual knowledge and attitude responses, knowledge and attitude index items, and self-reported sexual behavior items among the participants, along with the binary regression analysis of the crude and age-adjusted odds ratios of the sexual knowledge and attitude index and the sexual behavior outcomes are shown. Higher reported exposure to the FDF program was associated with increased odds of girls reporting having people important to them say

to use condoms (AOR=5.42, 95% CI 1.70-17.25). More exposed girls were almost three times more likely to report feeling confident in asking to use a condom when having sex (AOR=2.94, 95% CI 1.08- 8.01). More exposed girls were also three times more likely to endorse the importance of testing for STIs and HIV (AOR=3.19, 95% CI 1.07-9.55) and almost three times more likely to report knowing where to get condoms (AOR=2.94, 95% CI 1.22-7.12). The knowledge and reported attitude index results indicated that participants exposed to the FDF program for six months or more had almost five times higher odds of having adequate sexual knowledge and reported attitudes compared to the less-exposed group (AOR=4.74, 95% CI 1.70-13.19). For the reported sexual behavior measures, condom usage during last sex maintained an evidence of association after adjustment for age, showing that longer-exposed participants were 11 times more likely to report using a condom during their most recent sexual activity (AOR=11.61, 95% CI 1.08-124.57).

**DISCUSSION**

This study found strong evidence that among girls participating in the SPGL, exposure to longer involvement in the SPGL contributed to strengthened sexual health knowledge and improved attitudes. Girls who reported participating in the SPGL for six months or more had better sexual health knowledge, reported attitudes, and higher reported usage of condoms during their last sexual activity than those with less than six months of participation.

Based on the overall knowledge and reported attitudes findings, it can be inferred that exposure to FDF's sports-based educational program for six months or more may strengthen sexual health knowledge and attitudes. This improved knowledge may stem from more exposure to the sexual health lessons offered at the football field and/or influences from coaches and teammates. Another factor might have been the consistent exposure to the coach who is trained as a SRHR facilitator. Informal discussions with a coach during practices throughout the season could also have had an effect, as half of the participants stated that they received sexual health information from their coach.

The evidence of better knowledge and reported attitudes in the more exposed group could indicate that a sports-based platform for SRHR education might be a useful approach to improve sexual health among adolescents. Knowledge of where to obtain condoms, the importance of testing for STIs/HIV, and having people close to you encourage condom usage can be considered important elements in adolescents' sexual health knowledge and attitudes (Reid & Aiken, 2011). As these results demonstrate the importance

*Table 4. Knowledge and attitude items and index and reported behavior items with odds ratios among dichotomized exposure levels of participants*

| | N (%) | OR | 95% CI | AOR | 95% CI |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Knowledge and Attitude Variables** | | | | | |
| **People who are important to me say to use condoms (Yes)** | | | | | |
| Total | 102 (85) | | | | |
| ≥6 months | 81 (93.1) | 7.43 | 2.45 - 22.50 | 5.42 | 1.70 - 17.25 |
| <6 months | 21 (63.6) | 1 | | 1 | |
| **I am confident I can ask my partner to use a condom when having sex (Yes)** | | | | | |
| Total | 95 (79.2) | | | | |
| ≥6 months | 75 (86.2) | 4.28 | 1.68 - 10.86 | 2.94 | 1.08 - 8.01 |
| <6 months | 20 (60.6) | 1 | | 1 | |
| **It's important to test yourself for STIs (Yes)** | | | | | |
| Total | 103 (85.8) | | | | |
| ≥6 months | 79 (90.8) | 3.86 | 1.34 - 11.15 | 3.19 | 1.07 - 9.55 |
| <6 months | 24 (72.7) | 1 | | 1 | |
| **Knowledge where to obtain condoms (Yes)** | | | | | |
| Total | 77 (64.2) | | | | |
| ≥6 months | 63 (72.4) | 3.84 | 1.64 - 8.96 | 2.94 | 1.22 - 7.12 |
| <6 months | 14 (42.4) | 1 | | 1 | |
| **Knowledge and Attitude Index** No to 0-3 items[a] | | | | | |
| Total | 98 (81) | | | | |
| ≥6 months | 68 (78) | 5.63 | 2.111 - 15.04 | 4.74 | 1.70 - 13.19 |
| <6 months | 30 (90) | 1 | | 1 | |
| **Sexual Behavior Variables** | | | | | |
| **Condoms used in last sexual activity (Yes)** | | | | | |
| Total | 33 (27.5)[b] | | | | |
| ≥6 months | 17 (70.8)[b] | 19.43 | 2.03 - 185.72 | 11.61 | 1.08 - 124.57 |
| <6 months | 1 (11.1)[b] | 1 | | 1 | |

*Notes.* Only items yielding evidence of association are shown. OR = crude odds ratio; AOR = age-adjusted odds ratio; CI = confidence interval. 1 = reference category

[a] No to 0-3 items is considered adequate knowledge/attitudes

[b] n = (%) total number of responses and % of the proportion of those who responded to the questions, excluding missing values (%).

of prevention of sexual health risks, they also support one of the program's goals of encouraging safe sex practices in young adolescent girls. As discussed below, this study reinforced previous research suggesting that sport-based programs and using the football ground as a classroom for SRHR lessons can be an additional method for delivering important health messages in limited resource settings such as this one.

It is important to note that, although knowledge is considered the precondition for behavioral change, an increase of SRHR knowledge alone may not be sufficient to affectively change behavior (Bandura, 2004; O'Leary, 2001). Elements of SCT such as individual self-efficacy in performing a behavior and sociostructural factors potentially play a greater role in the behavior change process (Burke et al., 2009; Kwasnicka, Dombrowski, White, & Sniehotta, 2016; Zimmerman, 2000). Longitudinal studies of sports-based educational programs might bring insights into where and when behavioral change succeeds, beyond only increasing knowledge. These may be complemented by qualitative studies exploring the complex relationship between the community and individual adolescent behavior change.

The results measuring participants reported sexual behavior showed that reported condom usage increased with more reported exposure to the program. However, results for measures concerning sexual debut and sexual partners showed no evidence of an association with increased exposure. The nonresponse of 72% of the participants to the reported sexual behavior items highlights an important limitation of this study in accurately measuring reported sexual behavior. The reason for the large number of missing responses is unknown and several factors may have influenced both the response rate and response accuracy due to risk of desirability, selection bias, and recall bias. The prominent role of the Christian faith and social-cultural norms in influencing SRHR education in Zambia could have played a part in the reported sexual behavior responses. As the sample consisted of young girls, these norms could have posed potential barriers to response due to the fear that their parents might inquire how they responded to the questions.

The findings from this study supplement previous research concerning sports-based educational programs targeting HIV in SSA, where improved sexual health knowledge and reported attitudes have also been indicated (Balfour et al., 2013; Kaufman et al., 2013; Maro et al., 2009; Woodcock, Cronin, & Forde, 2012). The current findings indicate the potential utility of using sports-based programs in SSA to promote SRHR among adolescent girls and perhaps particularly where access to adequate information might be limited.

## LIMITATIONS

Important methodological limitations need to be considered. The cross-sectional study design can only describe associations between measures, and causation cannot be inferred. The small sample size of 120 participants is a limited representation of the program (18%) and a larger margin of error of 8% occurred than initially projected (5%) for the sampling size. This study did not conduct a power calculation for the minimum detectable effect on outcomes prior to analysis. Some results had broad confidence intervals due to the small number of participants who responded. Because exposure was self-reported, it is possible that the study over- or under-estimated the program's effects. Underreporting and misreporting of sexual behavior may have occurred due to desirability or recall bias. Selection bias might have influenced the results, since participants who were readily available might be the "ideal" participant for the program, and their responses might have been more positive than other participants who did not participate in the study, thus possibly leading to overestimates of associations.

Other methodological limitations included lack of information on sociodemographic measures such as family income and religious background as potential confounders or possible effect modifiers. Although information on education was available, this measure was not included in the analyses due to inconsistencies in the way participants had reported their level of education. Although the lack of background information is a limitation, age was adjusted for as an important confounder. Since exposure to the program was broadly defined, it was not possible to determine what aspect of the program was potentially most influential in increasing knowledge. It is also possible that the group with less than one year of exposure could have included participants in the group with less than six months exposure. Post hoc determination of the exposure level that was deemed to be important for the analysis is acknowledged as a major weakness in this study. However, the questionnaire did not include more detailed items concerning length of exposure, and the ability to analyze finer gradations of exposure length might have led to other results. Therefore, caution is warranted in the interpretation of the results and conclusions. Regarding the survey instrument, limitations in the validity of the indicators used to measure the sexual knowledge, reported attitudes, and reported behavior variables should be kept in mind. The index analysis included all persons regardless of missing responses in the eight knowledge and attitude questions; the effect of nonresponse was considered minimal due to few missing values (only three participants with one missing item).

The small number of participants reporting sexual activity might be due to the participants' young age (mean of 14.8 years, whereas the median reported age of first sexual intercourse for girls in Zambia is 17.3 years) (Central Statistical Office of Zambia, 2014). The administration of the questionnaire on the open football grounds near community members might have affected responses to certain items due to the inability to create a sufficiently private environment for answering sensitive questions. Off season posed challenges in securing a sufficient sample size. In addition, desirability bias may be present, in that participants who were fully committed to the FDF program may have preferentially agreed to participate. The presence of a male assistant knowing the participants well enough to identify them could also have caused a lack of confidence and trust in answering truthfully, potentially contributing to desirability bias. Requiring parental consent might have influenced these girls' responses and response rates and/or introduced selection bias into the study.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, using sports as a platform for SRHR education may assist in improving sexual health knowledge, reported attitudes, and reported condom use among adolescent girls in Zambia and potentially in other parts of SSA where access to formal SRHR education might be limited. These findings support the use of public health interventions that attempt to promote sexual behavior change and knowledge among adolescent girls who are at risk of STIs and early pregnancy. Future evaluations should establish baselines, use a comparison group, and determine program participation based on objective monitoring data rather than self-reported exposure. Further in-depth qualitative and quantitative research is needed concerning the social and cultural factors influencing adolescent girls who participate in sports programs in sub-Saharan Africa and how sports participation might affect their sexual behavior. Understanding the social impact of sports on adolescent African girls through robust research would help future policy makers, researchers, and organizations understand the experiences and social impact of such projects.

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## CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

At the time of data collection and drafting the manuscript, Keeva Duffey was not employed by Futebol dá Força. Since submission of the manuscript for publication, she has become an employee working for their global program. All other authors have no conflict of interest.

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## Original Research

# CrossFit Sarajevo: Positioning against dominant ethnonational narratives

**Vedran Maslic[1]**

[1] University of Gothenburg, Sweden

*Corresponding author email:* vedran.maslic@gmail.com

**ABSTRACT**

More than 20 years since its bloody war, Bosnia and Herzegovina continues to suffer under structurally imposed ethnic divisions. Sustained by the country's leaders who rely on ethnocentric narratives fuelled by "memory politics," they distort historical events for the benefit of their ethnic group. This paper relies on Positioning Theory to explore whether CrossFit Sarajevo, a grassroots initiative, created necessary conditions to challenge these ethnocentric narratives within the club. Relying on interviews with 13 of its members, the paper explores what impact positions, actions/acts, and storylines can have on the creation of a cohesive and respectful multiethnic community. According to its findings, this paper suggests that such organizations indeed have significant potential challenging divisive narratives. Embracing egalitarian and inclusive positions appears to have established a common code of conduct within the club's members, contributing to the creation of a distinct sense of belonging and social trust. These have manifested in humanitarian projects undertaken by the club that seek to help some of the most disadvantaged in the broader community. Ultimately, this project highlights the important role grassroots organizations can play in postviolence settings and suggests further exploration into the influence and permeability of such initiatives in the broader society.

**INTRODUCTION**

Established as a social enterprise in 2014, CrossFit Sarajevo (hereafter CFS) brought together individuals on a quest for a healthier lifestyle while seeking to offer a hub for bridging imposed ethnic, but also gender, vocation, age, and ability barriers (CrossFit Sarajevo, 2013). As the first licensed CrossFit venue in Bosnia and Herzegovina (hereafter BiH), it sought to unite those otherwise divided and thereby contribute to community development in a postviolence setting. That BiH is such a society, beset foremost by ethnic divisions exploited by powerful elites for their own ends, has been well documented (Belloni, 2001; Fearon & Laitin, 2000; Leonard, Damjanovic, Simic, & Aldikacti Marshall, 2016; Sekulić, Massey, & Hodson, 2006). This has left the country in a perpetual state of conflict among the various groups, continuing their fight for survival (Woodward, 1997).

A novel approach to understanding the dynamics of prolonged conflicts is through Positioning Theory (hereafter PT), which seeks to broaden our understanding of conflict from one merely confined to the battle between the "good guys" and the "bad guys" (Moghaddam, Harré, & Lee, 2008, pp. 3-4) to explore how conflict is sustained through context-specific rights and responsibilities. PT also acknowledges that conflicts may evolve over generations while being nourished by beliefs, customs, and habits. This article initially explains the present divisions in BiH through PT before exploring whether sport can activate inclusive, egalitarian, and unifying positions, which can result in reduced conflict between belligerents embedded in mutually accepted storylines (Louis, 2008).

In the Sport for Development and Peace sector, many studies have explored how grassroots sporting organizations

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*Table 1. Ethnic composition of FBiH and RS in 1991 and 2013*

| Year | FBiH | | RS | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1991 (%) | 2013 (%) | 1991 (%) | 2013 (%) |
| Bosniak | 52.09 | 70.4 | 28.77 | 13.99 |
| Croat | 22.13 | 22.44 | 9.39 | 2.41 |
| Serb | 17.62 | 2.55 | 54.32 | 81.51 |
| Other[a] | 8.16 | 4.61 | 7.53 | 2.09 |

[a] Individual identifying as part of a small national minority or not identifying with one of the three dominant ethnic groups.

can contribute to conflict transformation in postviolence settings (Darnell, 2012; Giulianotti, 2011; Parry, 2012; Svensson & Woods, 2017). However, no other studies seem to have explored the impact of such organizations through the lens of PT. This is almost certainly the case for CrossFit, whose impact in postviolence settings remains, to date, uncharted. This is surprising noting the sport's recognized ability to build cohesive communities (Belger, 2012; Brogan, Benson, & Bruner, 2017; Dawson, 2015; Pickett, Goldsmith, Damon, & Walker, 2016; Whiteman-Sandland, Hawkins, & Clayton, 2016; Woolf & Lawrence, 2017). Seeking to remedy this deficiency, the purpose of this case study is to explore whether inclusive, egalitarian, and unifying positioning within a grassroots project can help build cohesive multiethnic communities and thereby challenge dominant ethnonational narratives in postviolence settings. The paper will draw on PT to explore how individuals contextualize their lived experiences in relation to others and thereby contribute to the perception of conflict or its absence (Louis, 2008). To achieve this, the research relies on insights made apparent through interviews with 13 members of CFS and will be guided by the following central question:

Did CFS create conditions that challenged dominant ethnonational narratives prominent in BiH and, if so, how?

This central question will be supported by the following subquestions:

**1.** What positions (rights, responsibilities and duties) did CFS assume as a club?

**2.** How did positions encourage some and discourage other behaviors in CFS?

**3.** In what way did the CFS storyline shape the interpretation of actions into specific acts?

By answering these questions, this project aims to contribute to an enhanced understanding of PT and how it

may be applied in the recovery process in postviolence contexts.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Structural Homogenization

More than two decades have passed since the war between 1992 and 1995 that left more than 100,000 dead (Tabeau & Bijak, 2005) and nearly half the citizens of BiH displaced (Belloni, 2001; Dahlman & Tuathail, 2005). Its cessation was secured through the Dayton Peace Accords (DPA), which declared 51% of the country as the Bosniak- and Croat-dominated Federation of BiH (FBiH), and 49% as the Serb-dominated Republika Srpska (RS). Although initially a result of ethnic cleansing and displacement, the association of entities with a particular ethnic group set the course for ongoing ethnic homogenization in BiH (Sekulić et al., 2006). Table 1 below compares the ethnic composition of FBiH and RS between the 1991 census hypothetically overlapped with post-DPA borders (Marko, 2000, p. 95), and figures from the 2013 census (BHAS, 2016, p. 54). It shows that a formerly diverse and mixed BiH has been progressively reshaped into artificially created monoethnic territories (Eriksen, 2001).

Lederach (1997) points out that reconciliation "is built on mechanisms that engage the sides of a conflict with each other as humans-in-relationship" (p. 26). As a result of the ongoing homogenization, such engagements in BiH are fewer. O'Loughlin (2010), through his 2005 study, shows that 41% of the country's citizens only have friends from their own ethnic group. A more recent study suggests that approximately 50% of the country's population seldom or never spend time with people of other ethnicities or a different way of life (UNDP, 2009). The Pew Research Center (2013) showed even more recently that for 93% of BiH Muslims, all or most of their close friends are also Muslim. Even more telling is the finding by United Nations Development Programme and Oxford Research International (2007), suggesting that social trust is "virtually

non-existent" in BiH (p. 14), as only one in fourteen believe that other people can be trusted. Hence, even though 47% want friends from other ethnic groups (O'Loughlin, 2010), when faced with a gross social trust deficit and increasingly homogenous surroundings, cross-ethnic engagements become increasingly less likely.

Enabling this divide is the Constitution of BiH—Annex 4 of the DPA—which proclaimed that the country's three presidents must come from the three "constituent peoples"—Muslim Bosniaks, Orthodox Serbs, and Catholic Croats (United Nations General Assembly, 1995)—thereby pronouncing them as the only legitimate identities (Belloni, 2009). To retain their grip on power and unimpeded access to the country's resources, frequently used for their own gain (Fearon & Laitin, 2000), the country's leaders exploit ethnicity and use tit-for-tat tactics, historical claims of victimization, and looming security threats posed by opposing groups to instill fear of the other (Belloni, 2001; Fearon & Laitin, 2000; Franović, 2008; Leonard et al., 2016; Moll, 2013; Santander, 2016; Sekulić et al., 2006). Alas, they have securitized ethnicity, resulting in narratives best summed up by Ignatieff (1993): "where you belong is where you are safe, and where you are safe is where you belong" (p. 10). Bassuener (2018) explained the impact of BiH leaders succinctly at a recent U.S. Congressional hearing on the legacy of DPA:

Bluntly put, Bosnia and Herzegovina's political elite constitutes a political-business-organized crime-media nexus which can currently a) keep what they stole, b) remain positioned to keep stealing, and c) remain unaccountable politically and legally. Nothing that the European Union can offer the country is better—for them and their business model—than that. (p. 2)

Making matters worse is the overt and public bias of the media (Santander, 2016). According to Freedom House (2013), media outlets "behave as rivals and are generally organized along ethnic lines" (p. 95). Such partitioning is sustainable—and perhaps inevitable—when ongoing homogenization constrains contact between different ethnic groups (Clark, 2009). Thus, the structural divisions imposed by the DPA have deepened ethnocentric narratives (Santander, 2016), encouraging each side to continue "fighting for statehood; only their means of securing territory and national survival have changed" (Woodward, 1997, p. 29).

To ensure longevity of these narratives, education is used to strengthen ethnonational belonging and group identity (Santander, 2016). Kovač, Tveit, Cameron, and Jortveit

(2017) showcase this through the "two schools under one roof" concept in which two different systems of education, each with their own teaching and administration staff, cater for two ethnicities but coexist in the same building. They, as well as Majstorović and Turjačanin (2013), show how different curricula, including different history books, often result in competing views of the country's historical and geopolitical conditions. This absence of objectivity perpetuates ethnic hierarchization and subordination across generations and ensures it permeates lived experience of different groups, where questioning the common narrative fuels a sense of in-group betrayal (Obradović & Howarth, 2016). This is also why many in BiH consider the term "reconciliation" as controversial and inflammatory (Haider, 2011).

**Beyond Reconciliation**

Reconciliation has become recognized as a key component of peacebuilding and, according to Santander (2016), includes measures such as transitional justice initiatives, accountability processes, and strengthening the rule of law. However, most such initiatives in BiH have failed to achieve their stated objectives, and some have even contributed to further division (Santander, 2016). A well-known example of such failure is the proposed Truth and Reconciliation Commission launched between 1997 and 2006. According to Dragovic-Soso (2016), although well intentioned, the commission relied on international intervention, lacked local elite support, and, most important, did not resonate with the BiH population. Ultimately, it proved to be another top-down initiative that failed to include the people affected by the conflict, which is a feature ascribed to many failed reconciliation efforts in BiH (Santander, 2016). Conversely, underpinning the bottom-up approach is the belief that those affected by conflict should be considered a valuable resource in peacebuilding, rather than merely recipients of it (Lederach, 1997). Leonardsson and Rudd (2015) suggest that long-term survival of peace can only occur through its local production and reproduction, where "outside actors can lend valuable support but are never more than bystanders in decisions on what type of peace is to be built" (pp. 826-827).

As a result, bottom-up approaches have gained increasing attention, particularly through the successes of small, grassroots initiatives whose overt goals are decoupled from "reconciliation." One example in BiH is the Association of Mushroom Gatherers and Nature Lovers in Mrkonjić Grad. Frequented by members from FBiH and RS, its focus is the preservation of nature and sharing of knowledge but an invaluable consequence is the creation of knowledge but an

invaluable consequence is the creation of friendships across ethnonational lines (UNDP, 2009). Other examples include a number of agricultural and dairy associations that have established trade across entities, as well as hobby groups bringing together enthusiasts from diverse backgrounds. This creation of collective experiences without the pressure to "reconcile" has led to the development of relationships characterized by reciprocity and trust between members of these communities (Haider, 2011). Such interactions can facilitate an increased knowledge of the other and consequently lead to a positive shift in attitudes by reducing prejudice and stereotyping (Schulz, 2008). Another approach has received broad-based endorsement for having the potential to reduce social tensions and promote reconciliation, notably in postviolent conflict nations. This approach is examined below.

**Sport for Development and Peace and CrossFit**

In the Sport for Development and Peace sector, sport was recently acknowledged as enabling reconciliation and was included in the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (United Nations General Assembly, 2015). An example of sport's ability to build cross-ethnic relationships is the Open Fun Football Schools (OFFS), popularized in BiH among other countries. Focused on children, its aim is to have fun and build friendships through football while de-emphasizing competition and contest (Gasser & Levinsen, 2004). Other prominent examples include the work of Streetfootballworld and Football Friends. Both organizations run multiethnic tournaments for children from diverse backgrounds, giving them an opportunity to build diverse ties at a young age (Vest, 2014). While this is only a snapshot of active grassroots sporting initiatives, there is little disagreement about the ability of sport to create spaces where cohesion and a sense of community can be nurtured (Darcy, Maxwell, Edwards, Onyx, & Sherker, 2014; Darnell, 2012; Giulianotti, 2011; Parry, 2012; Svensson & Woods, 2017). Unfortunately, this fact remains largely unnoticed at the policy and institutional level in BiH (UNDP, 2009).

A sport unexplored thus far for its potential in Sport for Development and Peace is CrossFit, widely recognized for its ability to build a strong sense of belonging and community (Belger, 2012; Brogan et al., 2017; Dawson, 2015; Pickett et al., 2016; Whiteman-Sandland et al., 2016; Woolf & Lawrence, 2017). According to Dawson (2015), CrossFit has become the fastest growing fitness regimen in the world and is a form of intense exercise consisting of Olympic weightlifting, gymnastics, and cardiovascular exercises. CrossFit gyms are simple in appearance and

comprise large open spaces usually located inside industrial facilities, earning them the apt title of a "box." Since its inception in 2000, CrossFit has experienced phenomenal growth, with more than 14,000 boxes operating across the globe as of March 2019 (CrossFit, 2019).

Setting it apart from regular gyms, CrossFit boxes are equipped with equipment such as Olympic bars, kettlebells, pull-up bars, gymnastics rings, climbing ropes, and sand bags. Exercise is done in groups led by a coach who explains the Workout of the Day (WOD) before leading a warm-up and practice of the technical components of the day's movements. This can range from lifts such as the snatch, clean and jerk, squats, and deadlifts to gymnastic movements like pull-ups and push-ups. Once the technical component is concluded, the class completes the WOD, which differs every session and consists of movements completed in varying repetitions bounded by a set time or number of rounds completed (CrossFit, 2002). What makes CrossFit appealing to all fitness and ability levels is the mantra that the "needs of an Olympic athlete and our grandparents differ by degree not kind" (CrossFit, 2002, p. 10). Hence, every workout can be scaled with lighter weights or modified movements, allowing even complete novices to partake.

This deliberate focus on inclusivity and belonging allows CrossFit to connect individuals from all walks of life (Brogan et al., 2017; Knapp, 2015; Pickett et al., 2016; Whiteman-Sandland et al., 2016; Woolf & Lawrence, 2017). Equally, it has allowed for the participation of individuals with disabilities and injuries, many of whom reportedly regained their self-esteem and sense of worth by their involvement in the sport (Cecil, 2002). One recognized factor that sustains this egalitarian approach is the almost expected norm of cheering each other on during WODs (Dawson, 2015). As summed up by Belger (2012), "CrossFit culture is infused with the expectation that you will sweat together and cheer each other on with mutual support . . . you may expend almost as much energy encouraging each other as you will exercising" (p. 213).

This continually affirmed sense of community has shown potential to contribute positively to the creation of social ties and friendships (Pickett et al., 2016). Highlighting its prospective uniqueness, other researchers have concluded that CrossFit, much like the aforementioned grassroots initiative OFFS, relies on shared experiences and a common goal to create an inclusive culture (Brogan et al., 2017). Additionally, CrossFitters usually train at a resident venue, allowing sustained contact with the same individuals from

diverse ethnic, vocational, gender, ability, or age group demographics (Whiteman-Sandland et al., 2016). Should a box prove capable of creating an environment void of identity politics, it could "create interdependency between the groups and thereby accelerate the process of reducing prejudice and stereotypes in inter-ethnic group conflicts" (Schulz, 2008, p. 34).

However, while CrossFit has received broad accolades, Dawson (2015) highlighted the potential negative impact of the sport. Due to its apparent ability to build close ties between members, she questioned whether CrossFit should be considered a cult and whether the sense of belonging between members can lead to socially exclusive behavior and homogeneity. Although her findings suggest that this risk can be mitigated, it does raise the question of whether CrossFit can build excessive amounts of bonding between its members, thus creating strong out-group antagonism. This caution is noteworthy for a country like BiH, already beset by excessive and damaging homogenization.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND KEY CONCEPTS

According to Moghaddam et al. (2008), PT allows researchers to shift their focus from conflict to the flow of talking and writing that occurs within a given hostile action. They highlight that patterns of belief, customs, and habits have a significant impact on the way conflict is verbalized. Hence, as explored by Louis (2008), it is through the analysis of talk and text within a conflict that we can determine a community's and an individual's constructed meaning and negotiation of a particular grievance. He elaborates how these beliefs manifest in speech and text is dependent on which narratives or storylines surrounding a conflict are embraced by a particular community. However, Moghaddam et al. (2008) as well as others (Harré, 2012; Harré, Moghaddam, Cairnie, Rothbart, & Sabat, 2009), are careful to point out that conventions of speech and action are unstable, contestable, and temporary. In other words, they are not entrenched and our experience is not predetermined but is rather "co-created or co-developed by the contributors to the discourse (or conversation)" (Schmidle, 2008, p. 190). This suggests that participants in communicative events not only promote certain explicit beliefs through the talk and text used but continuously rewrite the narratives and storylines underpinning them. To explain this evolving and dynamic process, PT relies on three concepts detailed below: positions, actions/acts, and storylines (Harré, 2012).

### Positions

Positions are understood as clusters of disputable and potentially fleeting and short-term "rights, obligations and duties" (Harré, 2012, p. 193). In other words, every position in every context dictates certain freedoms and constrains. Adoption of a position assumes both a discourse repertoire as well as a hierarchy or structure of rights for those using this repertoire (Davies & Harré, 1990). Once an individual assumes a particular position, they inevitably see the world through its lens. This includes all associated "images, metaphors, storylines and concepts which are made relevant within the particular discursive practice in which they are positioned" (Davies & Harré, 1990, p. 46).

According to Louis (2008), behavior safe from retribution or punishment from one's group defines what is socially acceptable. In other words, the group's orientation toward a given issue establishes desirable and suitable clusters of rights, obligations, and duties (or positions) that members of a certain in-group as well as an out-group should assume. In BiH, the dominant narrative gives one's ethnic identity significant importance and through this operationalizes it by making it the foremost position from which individuals negotiate their environment. This ethnicity-based position defines the acceptable cluster of rights, obligations, and duties of those assuming it and may manifest as nonnegotiable actions or as rules and regulations to be adopted by a group (Harré, 2012).

An individual may position themselves, known as *reflexive positioning*, or there can be *interactive positioning*, where an individual is positioned by others (Davies & Harré, 1990). In BiH, even if one rejects the ethnonational narrative as well as the rules and regulations representing it, other individuals or the group will have a "tendency to determine your ethnic category based on your name, dialect or discourse" (Majstorović & Turjačanin, 2013, p. 18). In other words, due to the structurally imposed importance of ethnicity, an individual in BiH is likely to have an ethnicity-defined position assigned to them, which corresponds to the dominant narrative. This unintentional or forced interactive positioning has a significant impact on those affected by it, as—regardless of their rejection of this position—they live their lives in terms of the continuously produced self, even if they are not responsible for its production (Davies & Harré, 1990).

### Actions and Acts

The second set of concepts underpinning PT are actions and acts. The former are specific behaviors performed by individuals. The latter, on the other hand, are how those

behaviors are socially understood (Louis, 2008). Every different setting (or position) involves different conventions and rules on how different acts are to be accomplished (Harré & Slocum, 2003). This is why, for example, we are likely to accept criticism from a friend or a spouse but may interpret it as offensive coming from a stranger. The *action* of providing criticism is a meaningful and intended performance, whereas the *act* is what this action means to the interlocutors based on circumstances and context (Harré, 2012).

However, individuals do not have an infinite amount of possible actions. Rather, they are limited to actions permitted by a given context. These are actions that one *may* do, even though they are drawn from a much broader repertoire of those that are physically and physiologically possible (Harré & Slocum, 2003). These actions include verbal and nonverbal communication, as well as behaviors directed at a single conversational partner or a broader audience (Louis, 2008). In the case of CFS, this includes actions carried out by coaches as well as members and suggests that all of these behaviors are regulated by what an individual *may* do in that context. In other words, the setting and positions of CFS allow for only some actions out of a broad repertoire to be performed and, as such, limit the range of *acts*—interpretations of actions—that exist.

## Storylines

Storylines "give meaning to actions and define them as acts" (Louis, 2008, p. 26). The dominant storyline in BiH is clear—structurally imposed divisions are necessary to keep the peace following the end of hostilities in 1995 (Clark, 2009). As suggested by Moghaddam et al. (2008), in all conflicts, regardless of culture, there persists a storyline of the "good guys and the bad guys" (p. 3). To keep the storyline alive, conflict—perceived or real—between those characterized as "good" against those who are "bad" must be maintained. Harré et al (2009) note, "the moral high ground must be seized and the enemy positioned as morally base" (p. 9).

In BiH, the dominant narrative declares other ethnicities as the "bad guys" and aggressors, while those of one's own ethnicity are portrayed as the "good guys" and defenders (Clark, 2009). Embracing the dominant storyline or narrative affords rights and obligations to the access of resources (such as employment, social standing, acceptance, inclusion, and welfare) based on one's ethnicity, thereby promoting a desired position in most public discourse. This emphasis on ethnicity in positioning promotes and reinforces a storyline that frames the unfolding of most public engagement. Perhaps more important, it provides a

broad spectrum of interpretations to actions carried out by groups or individuals, some of which can be understood as inflammatory. Such a volatile environment is far from conducive to the creation of understanding or reconciliation and is the unfortunate reality in BiH today (Bassuener, 2018; Bassuener & Mujanovic, 2017; Moll, 2013; Santander, 2016).

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Strategy and Design

This study adopted an inductive approach, seeking to align data interpreted qualitatively with theoretical concepts after the collection process (Bryman, 2012). Hence, from an epistemological perspective, the study assumed an interpretivist position as it sought to understand, rather than merely explain, human behavior (Bryman, 2012, p. 28) by shedding light on how members of a particular social group interpreted the world around them. This study is indeed a third interpretation, as the author is "providing an interpretation of others' interpretations" (Bryman, 2012, p. 31), which is subsequently explained through an appropriate theoretical perspective—PT. This fact, without diminishing the knowledge derived, is a recognized limitation of such qualitative research (Bryman, 2012).

Noting the unstable, contestable, and temporary nature of positions, the ontological position assumed in this study is that of constructivism. Described by Bryman (2012) as a position "that asserts that social phenomena and their meanings are continually being accomplished by social actors" (p. 33), it becomes a useful vehicle for exploring— through PT—the ongoing creation and development of our reality. The sheer notion of assuming a position, that is its "rights, obligations, and duties," implies the existence of a specific belief system (Harré & Slocum, 2003). In other words, the way we cognitively construct a position and associated belief systems manifests in corresponding acts and shared expectations between interlocutors. It is this constructed understanding of phenomena and its associated meaning that studies such as this one seek to unravel (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

To answer the central and subresearch questions, this project relied on interviews with 13 members of CFS. As the purpose of this study was to interpret a story within its own context and gain insight into the lived experience of the participants, interviews are considered the most appropriate method (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). Due to the inductive nature of this study, semistructured interviews were employed to allow fluid exploration of topics. Further, and noting the author's familiarity with all participants

*Table 2. Participant demographic data*

| Participant | Gender | Age group |
|:---:|:---:|:---:|
| A | M | 20-29 |
| B | M | 20-29 |
| C | M | 20-29 |
| D | F | 20-29 |
| E | M | 20-29 |
| F | F | 20-29 |
| G | M | 20-29 |
| H | F | 20-29 |
| I | M | 30-39 |
| J | M | 30-39 |
| K | M | 30-39 |
| L | M | 40-49 |
| M | F | 40-49 |

(discussed below), using a less formalized approach allowed for a natural and conversational interaction to unfold.

### Participants

Seeking representativeness, the study's participants covered a broad demographic spectrum relative to the sample size. To explore differences in perceptions between the duration of membership, participants who joined within 1 month, 6 months, 1 year, and 1.5 years of opening were interviewed. To replicate gender representation, which according to the club's owner is 30% female and 70% male, four participants were female (31% of the sample) and nine were male (69% of the sample). Additionally, as the study sought to understand how the leadership team contextualized their role, four participants were coaches, one of whom is also the owner of the box. The mean age of participants at the time of interviews was 32 years, which is assessed by the author as representative of the mean age of the club's members. The participants' alphabetic indicator, gender, and broad age group are captured in Table 2 below, but whether they are a coach or client, duration of membership, and their vocation were intentionally excluded to protect participants' privacy.

Due to the sensitivities surrounding ethnic identity, this data is decoupled to further ensure participants' anonymity and is presented separately in Table 3 below. Additionally, relying on the Census of Population, Households, and Dwellings in BiH (BHAS, 2016, p. 55), the ethnic composition of Canton of Sarajevo has been added for representative comparison.

As evidenced by the figures above, a statistical, cantonal representative sample was not achieved, though given the necessarily small sample size, this would always be difficult. However, in terms of broad patterns such as the biggest ethnic group and inclusion of minorities, it is assessed that the project achieved broad representation. All ethnic identifications represented in the national census were included in this study providing diverse insights and thereby meeting the study's intent.

### Positionality

The author founded and managed CFS for the first 18 months of the club's existence and is therefore familiar with the studied environment and participants. Such a relationship helped shed the outsider label allowing for a "natural" exploration of inner workings of the community (Van Mannen & Schein, 1979). However, this familiarity inevitably increased the potential for bias. Seeking maximum transparency, this research relied on eight criteria proposed by Tracy (2010) as necessary for successful qualitative research. They are (a) ethics, (b) rich rigor, (c) credibility, (d) worthy topic, (e) sincerity, (f) resonance, (g) significant contribution, and (h) meaningful coherence. To respond to a criticism by Smith and McGannon (2017), who state that most researchers apply the criteria selectively, all eight were considered during this research. However, due to its scope, only the first three are discussed in this paper, while the latter five remain open to the reader's own judgment.

*Table 3. Ethnic composition of CFS participants compared to that of the Canton of Sarajevo*

| Ethnicity | Participant | Canton of Sarajevo |
|---|---|---|
| Bosniak | 5 (38.4%) | 346,575 (83.8%) |
| Croat | 2 (15.4%) | 17,520 (4.2%) |
| Serb | 2 (15.4%) | 13,300 (3.2%) |
| Other | 3 (23.1%) | 28,075 (6.7%) |
| Undeclared | 1 (7.7%) | 7,250 (1.8%) |

## Ethical Considerations

Tracy (2010) highlights that several practices amount to ethics in qualitative research—procedural, situational, relational, and exiting ethics. Procedural ethics refer to institutional requirements and encompass mandates such as "do no harm, avoid deception, negotiate informed consent, and ensure privacy and confidentiality" (p. 847). The institutional approval for this research was granted by the author's university prior to research being conducted. During fieldwork, all participants were informed that their involvement is voluntary, confidential, and occurs only with their consent. Due to the author's familiarity with participants, seeking signed consent was deemed inappropriate but was obtained verbally and captured in the interview recordings, discussed further below.

Situational ethics implore the researcher to question whether any harms of the study are outweighed by its moral goals (Tracy, 2010). The need to discuss ethnicity bears such risk, but the author's familiarity with participants mitigated misunderstanding sufficiently. Similarly, relational ethics, or the way a researcher engages with participants, implies the need for cultural understanding and mutual respect (Tracy, 2010). Noting the author's familiarity with the cultural context (CFS as well as participants), this dimension of ethics is considered as appropriately addressed. Last, exiting ethics dictate the need for ethical consideration after collection and publication so as to avoid misrepresentation as well as unjust and unintended consequences (Tracy, 2010). Due to the sensitivities surrounding ethnicity in BiH, focus on exiting ethics remained at the forefront throughout the project. Thus, all ethnic affiliations remain decoupled from participants' demographic data or citations presented in the study's findings.

## Rich Rigor

Tracy (2010) highlights the need to assess the sample size, interview setting, interview conduct and questions asked, as well as credibility of data analysis. The following subsections describe each component in detail.

## Sample size

It is acknowledged that a sample size of 13 participants may be considered small. Seeking to minimize the impact of this while optimizing the diversity of participants, this study adopted a nonprobabilistic, purposive sampling approach. This allowed the author to subjectively select participants based on their demographics. While not always accurate, this approach resulted in representation across gender, vocation, age, ethnicity, and time in training. Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2016) suggest that a sample of this size is sufficient as data saturation in similar research occurs by the time 12 interviews are conducted. This assessment proved accurate during this study as consistent themes became evident early on, which were later confirmed during the coding process.

## Interview setting

Eleven interviews were conducted in Sarajevo December 15-20, 2017 in secluded and comfortable environments. Six interviews occurred in quiet cafes, two in private areas at the participants' place of work, and three at the author's residence. A further two interviews were conducted via Skype on April 19 and 22, 2018. One of the Skype interviewees was approached as their influence on building cohesion between different ethnicities was mentioned by five previous participants. The second Skype interview was conducted with a young member of the club to explore their perspective of the alleged sense of community in CFS. The interview guidelines for these interviews remained identical to the preceding 11. The average duration of interviews was 46 minutes, with the shortest lasting 27 and the longest 67 minutes.

## Interview conduct

Before commencing field work, an interview guide (Appendix 1) was constructed as a memory prompt for areas

of investigation, as suggested by Bryman (2012). While the overall project was inductive, the interview guide categorized the author's phenomena of interest, such as a sense of community, egalitarian values, group belonging, and disregard for ethnicity. Seeking to explore the participants' view of their social world in relation to these categories, questions were intentionally broad and exploratory in nature. Used in a semistructured way, such questions allowed for areas of interest to become apparent for further exploration through follow-up questions.

All interviews were recorded to ensure accuracy of data and subsequent transcriptions. Although conscious of the "observer's paradox," which suggests that a recording device inhibits researchers from observing interviewees in their natural state (Labov, 1972), as the author is not an outsider but rather peerlike, personal stories quickly unfolded, allowing the speakers to "forget" the recording device (Labov, 1972). Further, recording of interviews negated the need for note taking and allowed for a natural flow in conversation. Additionally, as mentioned previously, verbal consent was obtained from all participants with the caveat that recordings will be kept on a standalone hard drive to ensure participants' privacy protection.

To allow for fluid and complete expression of opinions, 12 interviews were conducted in Bosnian and one in English. Due to the author's native fluency in both languages, this was determined as the best approach to allow participants the complete repertoire of expressions commensurate with one's native fluency. Concepts discussed in one language may be understood differently when translated into another. As such, on a few occasions where the direct translation could be misconstrued or have dual meaning, it was adjusted to communicate the participants' intent, as recommended by van Nes, Abma, Jonsson, and Deeg (2010).

**Data analysis**

To analyze the data, all interviews were first transcribed and subsequently coded. While consideration was given to coding by an additional researcher, Bosnian language and time were significant constraints. Additionally, as suggested by Smith and McGannon (2017), significant doubt exists over the effectiveness of interrater reliability. As a result, all interviews were transcribed and coded by the author using the following sequential and systematic approach, as suggested by Creswell and Creswell (2018):

**1.** Organization and preparation of data. All interviews were transcribed in Microsoft Word and resulting documents

code named to ensure participant privacy.

**2.** Reading of the data. All transcriptions were read to generate key themes and concepts present in the data.

**3.** Coding of data. Two interviews that extensively discussed topics of interest were selected for pilot coding by hand. Emerging categories were compiled and formed the baseline for coding using NVivo software.

**4.** Categories and themes. The coding process led to the emergence of 31 individual categories (Appendix 2).

**5.** Choosing categories. An unequal distribution of codes against categories identified dominant themes and, once analyzed for a theoretical link, lead to PT.

**Credibility**

Credibility for qualitative research is achieved through thick description, triangulation, and multivocality (Tracy, 2010). The first implies in-depth illustrations to provide enough detail so that the reader may come to their own conclusions. Notwithstanding a genuine attempt to uphold these ideals by the author, it is ultimately up to the reader to judge its success. Triangulation urges the researcher to use two or more sources of data, theoretical frameworks, types of data collected, or multiple researchers (Tracy, 2010). The scope and resources of this research limited triangulation to the exploration of multiple theoretical frameworks, ultimately resulting in the reliance on PT to present its findings. While a recognized limitation of this study, its findings should encourage further investigation. Last, multivocality requires a researcher to display emphatic understanding and emerges out of an understanding of the context and actors within a particular setting (Tracy, 2010). It is suggested that multivocality can be achieved through familiarity, friendship, or intense collaboration with participants (Tillmann-Healy, 2003). Noting the author's familiarity with the context and participants, it is assessed that multivocality was achieved.

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

**Positions**

In the case of CFS, all 13 participants made apparent the existence of certain positions within the box that encouraged some rights, obligations, and duties, while discouraging others. Some were related to the expectations of the coaches, while others referred to acceptable norms of behavior imposed by members on each other. As outlined

previously, positioning is achieved either interactively, where a person is positioned by another, or reflexively, where a person positions themselves. Noting that the purpose of this project was to assess how positions inside the box shaped behavior of its members, this paper discusses interactive positioning.

Overall, CFS members appear to have embraced an open and egalitarian approach toward all individuals, regardless of ethnic identity. When asked to what extent ethnicity plays a role in CFS, all 13 participants expressed that it has no role within the box at all. Their collective response is best summarized by Participant D, who explained that "we are all the same. No one looks at ethnicity . . . we're all here to train, to learn something new, and to support each other." When asked why ethnicity was not a feature of discourse in the box unlike in the broader society, the response by Participant A—representative of responses by a further six participants—is telling: "the biggest impact on that were the coaches. They never allowed anything like that to ever become a factor. . . . The coaches were the people who set the pace, who set the environment." Further, Participant D implied an involuntary influence because the coaches "behaved toward us in that way, and then we somehow learned that that's how we train here." In other words, it appears that through their own communication, coaches regulated—and bounded—what was acceptable. This finding is in keeping with the notion put forward by Davies and Harré (1990), who state that positions are not necessarily intentional, as individuals live their "life in terms of one's ongoingly produced self, whoever might be responsible for its production" (p. 48). The coaches, as representatives of the club's vision and values, appear to have dictated appropriate positions, which were ultimately adopted by the members. No divergence in responses was observed between participants, regardless of ethnicity, gender, age, vocation, or length of time training.

According to PT, although positions are disputable and contestable, they translate to a limited repertoire of behaviors one may do. In CFS, it appears that stepping outside of what is a socially permissible behavior would draw immediate criticism by the coaches as well as the community. This became evident through responses by 11 participants who expressed—in slightly different ways— that any ethnic division was immediately challenged. In other words, as expressed by Participant E, "as soon as there was any, you know, religious talk, it simply wasn't allowed. [The coaches] simply didn't allow those types of topics." This was a common opinion, shared also by ethnic minorities, and highlighted that coaches would intervene if discussion headed in an undesirable direction. Shedding light on how this was done, a participant explained the

reaction of a coach when he referred to a member not part of their dialogue by his ethnicity. According to the participant's recount, the coach gave the participant a look that clearly showed concern over such ethnicity-based references, causing the participant to immediately apologize and make clear that "I didn't say that because I hated him or anything, but because I couldn't remember his name" (Participant A). This example, while highlighting interactive positioning by coaches, also provides an insight into the unconscious interactive positioning in the broader community, where ethnicity, even with all its divisive qualities, still features prominently in everyday discourse.

Another interesting example elaborated on by six participants that demonstrated this active enforcement of permissible behaviors was the occasional presence of ethnicity-based jokes. Although permitted inside the club largely because, as expressed by Participant B, "[such jokes] make mockery of the [country's] system, and these banal divisions imposed on us," they would be stopped before getting out of control. As suggested by Participant I, "some individuals may go too far, but not because they mean it, but because they lack the awareness of when to stop." Mostly, it was the coaches that interrupted such jokes to safeguard against the growth of unwanted seeds of division. However, it appears that members also readily enforced accepted behaviors. A participant explained how she confronted a member (M1) after a training session about the public animosity expressed toward the ethnicity of a coach by M1's friend, another member (M2). Agreeing that such discourse was inappropriate, M1 subsequently discussed the issue with M2 in an attempt to highlight that ethnicity-based slurs are not conducive to creating a comfortable training environment. Seemingly unable to adapt to what was socially permissible in CFS, M2 "in the end left" (Participant M). Another participant, suggesting the collective community response to any public and divisive ethnonational positions explained that one "would stand out completely. Everyone would look at you and ask what's wrong with you? [They would ask] 'Are you crazy?'" (Participant I).

These examples highlight how the coaches, and consequently also the members, interactively imposed certain rights, obligations, and duties on other box members and thereby mutually regulated each other's behavior. In other words, they adopted positions that discouraged ethnic discrimination of any kind and reinforced these through intervention when necessary.

While previous research suggests that training in a group setting encourages "mutual surveillance" and thereby compliance with the exercise regimen (Dawson, 2015;

Markula & Pringle, 2006; Sassatelli, 2010), based on findings in CFS, it would appear that this mutual regulation can have a similar moderating effect on divisive and ethnonational sentiments. Hence, and echoing comparative findings by Louis (2008), it appears that members of CFS may not have always strategically chosen a position but were rather adjusting to the norms of their environment. In the case of CFS, and to answer the first subquestion of this project, it appears that the positions assumed by the club were consistently inclusive, egalitarian, and uniting in nature, putting the positions in line with the club's vision of seeking to bridge imposed ethnic, but also gender, vocation, age, and ability barriers (CrossFit Sarajevo, 2013). The result is that one either had to adapt to the rules, rights, and obligations accompanying these positions, or they would ultimately leave. A third option was seemingly not on offer.

### Actions and Acts

These apparently inclusive, egalitarian and uniting positions encouraged in CFS are in stark contrast to those evident in the broader BiH society. As discussed previously, interethnic relations in BiH are heavily influenced by the country's leaders, who continue to adopt positions that sustain and further embed fragmentation along ethnonational lines. The result is a society that mutually and interactively positions the other as the "bad guy" in the interest of perceived self-preservation. The following section presents findings that outline how such divergent positions impact actions and acts present in a community.

In BiH, everyone, as suggested by participant E, "can feel [the division]. You can cut it with a knife." However, as highlighted by Participant B, "this [division] is imposed on us and we are forced to think like this." The result is that individuals of one ethnicity will "stick to their own. They go to their own cafes, shop in their own shops. They only go to another [ethnicity's] area if they have to" (Participant E). These actions, as explained by Harré (2012), should be viewed as meaningful and intended performances, and, when interpreted by an individual, derive an act with specific social meaning of that action. In BiH, the social meaning of this imposed segregation is clear—you are only safe surrounded by your own kind. This is contrary to CFS, where one's ethnicity does not appear to matter, even though, as described by participant G "you know [ones'] ethnicity] just by knowing [their] name." Such a disposition appears to have activated only a limited number of positions, all of which appear to encourage unity and a sense of belonging. Although previous research on CrossFit has shown the sport's ability to achieve this (Belger, 2012; Brogan et al., 2017; Dawson, 2015; Pickett et al., 2016;

Whiteman-Sandland et al., 2016; Woolf & Lawrence, 2017), it is encouraging and significant that a comparable finding exists in BiH, a postviolent conflict nation deeply divided along ethnonational lines. CrossFit appears to have the ability to inspire mutual accountability, perhaps due to the collective nature of training that encourages a commitment to a mutual goal, which can morph into more than merely success on the gym floor, but also into improved interethnic relations.

As suggested by Harré and Slocum (2003), activation of certain positions limits the resulting range of possible actions individuals have a right, obligation, and duty to perform. In the case of CFS, it appears that members were positioned in such a way, initially by coaches and later mutually, that they were denied actions that could be interpreted as ethnically biased and divisive. As explained by Participant C when asked how individuals of minority ethnicities felt in CFS, "when they see what the atmosphere is like, what's important [in the box], then they don't even need to pay attention to those things." Participant D surmised that "we are all the same. No one looks at ethnicity . . . we're all here to train, to learn something new, and to support each other." Indicative of a collective sentiment, another participant, who identifies as a member of an ethnic minority, expressed that "I have never felt that someone treats me differently because of my ethnicity."[1] This is an encouraging finding and suggests that CFS may have indeed avoided ethnonational sentiments present in the broader society.

A component of CrossFit that appears to have contributed toward this sense of unity was the mutual cheering on of each other during WODs. Echoing findings by Dawson (2015), all 13 participants highlighted the expectation of athletes who had completed the designated workout to cheer-on and support those still working. Participant G expressed that "training is not finished until all are finished," while Participant I described this action as an "unwritten rule, that the one who finished a workout last gets the greatest amount of cheering." What appears to be ultimately expressed through this seemingly simple action, as summed up by Participant M, is "that sense of belonging. It's not the case that you finish your work and then go shower. You are simply shaped into behaving like that." What becomes particularly relevant for the BiH context is the mutuality of this action regardless of any ethnic or other identifiers. Members appear to interpret the action as exclusively positive as well as an essential part of training, which corresponds to the findings by Dawson (2015). As aptly summed up by Participant D, "I would not finish half of those workouts without that support. And I know it is the

same for others. They wouldn't be able to finish either without us cheering on from the side." In other words, the fact that members cheer on other members appears to continuously reaffirm that everyone is equal, regardless of their ethnic denomination. "That is that community. That's what we mean when we say we'd help each other out" (Participant E). Through these actions, CFS reinforced its position of inclusiveness during every workout, which appears to have allowed for only correspondingly inclusive interpretations to exist.

A further interesting and significant finding, potentially indicative of CFS uniqueness as compared to the broader community, was the evidence of mutual trust between members. When asked whether they expected to have a lost wallet returned first in their neighborhood and second in CFS, a stark contrast emerged. Ten participants expressed very little or no chance of having a wallet lost in their neighborhood returned. Indicative of the diminished social trust discussed previously, Participant J stated that "I'm not even sure whether my closest relatives would return it any more." Overall, the most common response is well-captured by Participant F, who explained that "if I lost my wallet somewhere in Sarajevo, I don't think I would see it again. I am 90% certain of that." When answering the same question in relation to CFS, all 13 participants explained that they expect their wallet to be returned. One response, representative of the collective sentiments, highlighted that "in the box people leave all sorts of things behind and nothing has ever gone missing. Everybody looks after each other. A wallet would be 100% returned and not a mark2 would be missing" (Participant K). Although, according to the owner and coaches, nothing has ever been reported stolen in the box, what is more significant is that members perceive the box as overwhelmingly trustworthy. It is possible that this overwhelming perception of trust may be a further consequence of inclusive, egalitarian, and uniting positions and the resulting repertoire of actions deemed acceptable within CFS. Further, actions of cooperation and mutuality such as cheering each other on consequently allow for only a limited number of inclusive interpretations to exist thus limiting the way any theft is conceived within CFS. The alleged absence of items going missing implies that no action exists that could be interpreted as an act of theft. Based on the unanimous nature of responses to the prospect of a lost wallet being returned in CFS, it appears that such an act is simply inconceivable.

To answer the second subresearch question of this project, it would appear that it was the coaches—and as a result also the members—who actively encouraged certain behaviors. Their influence in dictating behavior is perhaps a result of

the way CrossFit classes are held. A coach leads the class by first introducing the workout and later the warmup, technique work, and finally the WOD. They ultimately have a captive audience that, as a result, appears to be influenced by interactive positioning, which dictates acceptable and discouraged behaviors, giving the community what appears to be a clear code of conduct. Anything that may undermine the cohesiveness of the community was actively discouraged, while actions that promoted unity and mutuality, such as cheering each other on as well as trust, were actively endorsed and promoted.

**Storylines**

Unlike the ethnicity-dominated "good guy" and "bad guy" storyline prevalent in BiH discussed previously, the storyline of CFS appears to be different. The club, from its founding, actively pursued a narrative void of divisive rhetoric or identity politics. When asked what made CFS unique when compared to the broader society, a theme consistently expressed by all participants was an overwhelming sense of belonging. Although a recognized product of CrossFit (Pickett et al., 2016), it is a seemingly unique feature in the BiH society. All participants expressed that CFS not only accepted everyone but also made everyone welcome, regardless of their ethnic denominations. The venue was perceived as immune of ethnic divisions and, as described by Participant L, "a sterile place in which daily politics could simply not enter."

In a country defined by identity politics and ethnicity-based structural divisions, this sense of belonging was a feature readily embraced by all participants. It anchored CFS, as echoed by seven participants, as a place where everyone is perceived as equal: "You are all there together in one space training with someone you don't know, and you simply do not care whether they are Serb, whether they are Croat, or whether they are Spanish" (Participant F). Participant C surmised that "there is no division there, everyone works together, everyone is united. People do not see these imposed differences." In the minds of the participants, this notion of unity and belonging and absence of ethnic divisions appears to have created a distinct storyline that represents a key aspect of CFS. Once it was constructed and attached to CFS, this storyline became a defining feature of the box and shaped how members interacted and perceived each other. It also shaped how members of CFS perceive CrossFitters from Banja Luka, the capital of RS. Participant K explained that there is no difference between CrossFitters from FBiH or RS, and that when they visit regional competitions in Croatia and Serbia, other CrossFitters do not refer to them "as athletes from Sarajevo or Banja Luka.

They say, here come the [athletes from BiH].” This inclusive feature of CFS was also identified as aspirational for the wider BiH community by Participant L, who said that

*CFS and that whole story up there is a metaphor for the kind of life . . . the kind of life people want to have in BiH. A community free of ethnic, religious, or nationalistic principles, where there is still no loss of identity. You are still the same you, an individual, but you are part of a community with kind and honest principles.*

Echoing this distinct difference between CFS and the structural homogenization discussed previously, one participant, identifying as a Bosniak, explained how the dominant narrative outside the box not only restricts his access to other ethnicities but also actively undermines the development of relationships with them, especially Serbs. As an example of such pressure, he recalled a situation when he and a friend, also identifying as a Bosniak, saw a CFS member, who identifies as a Serb, while shopping in town. After greeting, chatting, and saying goodbye to his Serb friend with as much goodwill as he would inside the box, his Bosniak friend queried why he was friends with the Serb. According to this respondent and echoed by the other 12 respondents as well as reflected in the literature reviewed above, this is the stereotypical narrative dominating everyday life in BiH.

An interesting extension, and potentially a by product of the mutually supportive, ethnicity void and egalitarian storyline that appears to have been adopted by the CFS community, is the overwhelming patronage of the club's humanitarian activities. Since its founding, members of CFS have consistently organized charity events to collect funds, clothing, and toys for the most socially disadvantaged children in BiH, never bringing their ethnicity into the equation. Twelve participants discussed this charity work and interpreted it as representative of what the CFS community stands for and its core value of helping those in need. Participant F explained it as "combining something that feels good with something that does good. You are helping your society. You feel better when you make a few, or even a single, child happy." What is potentially more significant, as highlighted by five participants, is the apparent influence of such a storyline on those who otherwise do not support charities in their everyday life. Indicative of the claim made by Moghaddam et al. (2008) who suggest that rights and duties associated with certain storylines "are passed on one to another informally" (p. 12), all five participants highlighted that even though one may not support such activities, doing so was considered part-

and-parcel of belonging to the CFS community. As summarized by Participant L, "this is what it means to belong to that community. To belong to that idea." Hence, and to answer the third subquestion of this project, it would appear that the storyline within CFS was one of community, belonging and sharing one's good fortune with those most disadvantaged in the broader society. Such a storyline seems to be actively supported and corresponds to inclusive positions and actions adopted by the club.

Returning to the central question of this paper that sought to explore whether CFS created conditions that challenged the dominant ethnonational narratives in BiH, it would appear that it in fact has. To achieve this, the community relied on inclusive and egalitarian positions and actions/acts, reinforced by a storyline grounded in unity, sense of belonging, and equality. Based on the responses by these 13 participants, CFS appears to have united diverse individuals, regardless of their ethnicity, but also gender, vocation, age, or whether they are coaches or clients. It has also succeeded in creating conditions that challenged the dominant ethnonational narrative present in BiH. Further, the absence of a gap between the perceptions of coaches and members suggests that a common narrative or storyline exists within members of CFS. Positions encouraged by the coaches, and consequently by the members, giving life to actions that could only be interpreted as reinforcing the storyline, may be a useful lens to describe these consistencies. As neatly surmised by one of the participants, "Division, segregation, discrimination, none of that exists in CFS" (Participant L). Ultimately, a project such as CFS, albeit small in scale, gives hope that a structured and deliberate approach can indeed lead to a reduction of structurally imposed divisions in postviolent conflict contexts.

**Conclusion**

More than two decades since the cessation of hostilities, BiH remains a nation divided. Facing a continuing homogenization of its two entities, the opportunities for the country's citizens to build multiethnic relationships are decreasing. Sustaining this ongoing divergence are the country's leaders who rely on ethnocentric rhetoric to retain their power and influence. Making matters worse, the ongoing division has permeated into schools, spanning the division across generations and ensuring it becomes an enduring feature of life in BiH. Grassroots organizations, sporting in particular, have proven capable of combating some of **these** challenges. This project sought to investigate whether a CrossFit club, heretofore unexplored in this context, has helped challenge dominant ethnocentric narratives in a postviolence context. Relying on PT as a lens

to evaluate its impact, and the CFS community as a case study, this project showed that such grassroots ventures indeed can serve to counter divisive narratives. To achieve this, CFS appears to have relied on inclusive and egalitarian positions within the club, which defined acceptable rights, obligations, and duties to be adopted by its members. Enforced first by the club's coaches, these translated into a specific set of actions that, due to their limited repertoire, could only be interpreted in line with the positions they represented. Behavior deviating from the accepted code of conduct was challenged and discouraged. This sentiment translated into an overwhelming level of social trust between the club's members, which was continuously reinforced by mutually beneficial behavior such as cheering each other on during workouts. This in turn facilitated the creation and adoption of a storyline that matched the unifying and egalitarian positions and actions/acts, which ultimately enabled the club to undertake humanitarian work that positively affected the broader BiH community. As a result, CFS indeed appears to have created a community that actively—although perhaps unconsciously—challenges the dominant ethnonational narratives prominent in BiH.

## NOTES

[1]Alphabetical identifier withheld to ensure participant's identity remains disguised.

[2]Mark refers to the Bosnian currency Bosnian Convertible Mark (BAM).

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**Appendix 1: Interview Guide**

| Category | Question |
|---|---|
| Ice-breaker/rapport | ➢ When did you start training at CFS?<br>➢ What made you come back to CFS after the first training session? |
| CrossFit | ➢ What type of people train CrossFit?<br>➢ Why do you train CrossFit?<br>➢ What is the effect of CrossFit on you and on others? |
| CFS community | ➢ How do individuals treat each other in CFS?<br>➢ What, if anything, makes CFS different to other sport clubs in Sarajevo? |
| Values, trust, and belonging | ➢ What are the values of CFS?<br>➢ If you lost your wallet in your neighborhood, would you expect it to be returned and why?<br>➢ If you lost your wallet in CFS, would you expect it to be returned and why? |
| Communication | ➢ What difference is there, if any, in the way people communicate in CFS compared to the broader community?<br>➢ What channels are used for communication between members of CFS?<br>➢ What channels are used for communication between CFS and the broader community? |
| Ethnicity | ➢ To what extend is ethnicity important in CFS? What about in the broader community? |
| CFS as part of a broader Sarajevan community | ➢ What does the broader community think about the CFS community?<br>➢ What role does CFS play in the broader society? |
| Overall perceptions | ➢ In five or ten sentences, describe your overall experience of CFS. What does this experience mean to you? |

**Appendix 2: Coding Categories, Sources, and References**

| Name | Sources | References |
|---|---|---|
| 1. CFS values | 13 | 14 |
| 2. Sense of belonging | 13 | 42 |
| 3. Cooperation | 13 | 26 |
| 4. Trust | 13 | 22 |
| 5. Equality | 6 | 20 |
| 6. Self-confidence | 6 | 16 |
| 7. Motivation | 7 | 13 |
| 8. Discipline | 7 | 9 |
| 9. Dedication | 5 | 8 |
| 10. Merit-based | 5 | 6 |
| 11. Tolerance | 4 | 4 |
| 12. Honesty | 1 | 2 |
| 13. Enthusiasm | 5 | 13 |
| 14. CF in general | 13 | 82 |
| 15. Lasting change | 11 | 45 |
| 16. Gender related | 8 | 32 |
| 17. BiH situation in general | 10 | 29 |
| 18. Sport in general | 2 | 7 |
| 19. Effects of CrossFit | 13 | 104 |
| 20. CFS uniqueness | 11 | 92 |
| 21. Expectation of coaches | 13 | 61 |
| 22. Expectation of members | 13 | 48 |
| 23. Ethnicity related | 13 | 54 |
| 24. Community self-preservation | 9 | 31 |
| 25. Humanitarian work | 12 | 32 |
| 26. CFS vs broader community | 7 | 25 |
| 27. Ethnicity jokes | 5 | 23 |
| 28. Communication | 6 | 23 |
| 29. Role of CFS in broader community | 6 | 18 |
| 30. Recruitment of new members | 7 | 10 |
| 31. Becoming/being a coach | 5 | 12 |

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