



JSFD

Journal of Sport for Development

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Book Review

Localizing global sport for development

Lindsey, I., Kay, T., Jeanes, R., & Banda, D. (2017). *Localizing global sport for development*. Altrincham Street, Manchester: Manchester University Press 219pp., £78 (hardback), ISBN 978-1-7849-9406-8

Review by Mitchell McSweeney¹

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As studies continue to proliferate in a variety of areas within the sport-for-development (SFD) sector, the need for analysis of the circumstances and nuances within which SFD programming takes place remains crucial. As the field has recognised the context-specificity of SFD programmes and the communities in which they operate, the importance of understanding the views of those individuals at the local level and empirical studies that explicate and explore such perspectives have been emphasized.¹ In their book, *Localizing Global Sport for Development*, Iain Lindsey, Tess Kay, Ruth Jeanes, and Davies Banda have responded to the call for deeper examinations of SFD by offering a profound exploration and extensive analysis of local, national and international influences on Zambian contexts of SFD and its related components.

Based on multiple studies that range in areas of focus and have been conducted over a number of years since 2006, the authors explore and address a variety of development issues, including HIV/AIDS, gender inequality, and the involvement of non-state actors in relation to SFD in Zambia. The 12 studies used to ground the discussion feature a variety of topics such as: research with SFD NGOs, examinations of health education and sport, evaluations of local SFD partnerships in community development, and collaborative research exploring gender-focused SFD. An assortment of data collection methods

such as in-depth interviews with SFD NGOs and programme participants, focus-group discussions, document analysis, and archival analysis amongst other methods, displays the wide-ranging and thoughtful use of a variety of research methods to support their analysis and findings. Importantly, as the book title suggests, the authors situate their local analysis of Zambian SFD contexts in relation to SFD as a global phenomenon.

In Chapter 1, the authors review the current evidence base of SFD, the critiques and potential benefits of SFD that have been outlined by scholars, the national and international SFD ‘movement’, and the development of the field itself – sketching out how the field of SFD has been somewhat limited in extensive, long-term, local, and empirical studies of SFD. Notably, the authors outline and provide support for the actor-oriented approach they utilize,² (p. 46) stressing that a ‘wide-lens’ approach allows for an examination of the various actors involved in SFD contexts within Zambia such as NGOs, communities, families, the government, and sport officials – as well as the often overlooked participants of programming. In Chapter 2, the authors offer an overview of the country of Zambia in relation to sport and SFD. This provides a strong historical background of how SFD programming has emerged within Zambia and its association to broader socio-political developments in the country. This includes

the neo-liberal undertones impressed upon the country from national and international governing bodies and other governments that contributed to a decreased role of government in public provision (including sport) and the emergence of non-state actors in Zambian society, such as SFD NGOs. Chapter 3 builds on the foundation of the second chapter by examining policies and partnerships in relation to HIV/AIDs in Zambia. Taking an international, national, and local approach, the chapter discusses relationships between NGOs in SFD, international donors, and a number of other organizations within the HIV/AIDs sector. In these chapters and throughout the book, the authors relate their SFD studies to that of the development literature, responding to a call by scholars³ who argued this to be a limitation of the SFD field. In doing so, the authors analyze how broader development policies and structures within Zambia influence the role of SFD at the local level, and provide an explicit example of the complex, multi-layered environment of sports use for development.

Chapters 4, 5, and 6 delve into various dimensions of SFD implementation, programming, and understandings from the perspectives of individuals including practitioners and participants. In Chapter 4, the authors explore how young people and adults view their personal and everyday lives from the standpoint of the issues that penetrate their social contexts (i.e., HIV/AIDs, poverty, and gender relations), which regards locals as ‘insider experts’ --

a necessary element for the production of knowledge in the field of SFD. Chapter 5 turns to how SFD is delivered in a Zambian community, Lusaka, comprising a discussion around the facilitation of sport activities and the community relations involved in such implementation. A focus on SFD peer leaders and their experiences in the delivery of programming, which includes the benefits and challenges they associate with SFD is emphasized – a particularly important contribution due to the limited insights of peer leaders in the contemporary knowledge of SFD. Chapter 6 is perhaps one of the most significant contributions the book provides. A critique of the field is that there is a lack of SFD participants’ views and experiences of SFD initiatives; this chapter offers an in-depth examination of young people’s experiences as participants in SFD programming. The authors discuss the everyday experiences of how young people take up and experience sport itself, not only just specific SFD initiatives, highlighting how sport participants may benefit simply from opportunities in sport and the social connectedness that is garnered from such participation. A great strength of Chapters 4-6 and the book overall is the inclusion of young women’s perspectives who are involved in SFD whether through participation or peer leadership. The authors

discuss how empowerment is defined by young women and is influenced by structures of gender inequality within Zambia that underlie females’ experiences of SFD while also highlighting how resistance to such structures may take place.

Chapter 7, the conclusion, is an examination of the themes that have emerged and been identified by the authors as prominent over the course of their 12 studies since 2006, including the diverse subjective experiences of those involved in SFD and associations between SFD and ‘mainstream development’, which assists in sketching out the local to global of SFD.^{2 (p.181)} They also augment these themes with discussions of their research approach, the impact their research findings may have for scholars and the field – such as the need for examinations of the intricate and multifaceted nuances of local SFD contexts – as well as conversation about knowledge-production approaches in SFD. The localized contexts illuminate the ongoing tensions that have been highlighted by other scholars about sport-for-development and development of sport, discussing how it is hard to detach the two concepts, and in many cases, may simply be better not to delineate and separate the two from one another. Unique insights are offered about how ‘formalized’ management of SFD programmes and their implementation (or overarching approaches) may potentially be detrimental to local contexts, such as in the case of the Zambia Lusaka community, whose informal approach seemed more appropriate in many cases. The exploration of peer leaders and participants’ understandings and experiences in SFD, especially perspectives from young women, and the authors’ continuous connection of SFD to the broader development policy sector of Zambia are of particular significance for the SFD field.

Nonetheless, as with any undertaking of such an extensive exploration of SFD contexts, there remains some challenges and limitations of the book. Although the authors are careful not to provide any specific recommendations of alternative approaches to SFD (due to, as the authors note, display the context-specificity of their findings and adherence to their research approach), this limits the applicability and resonance of their findings to other organizations and scholars. It would be interesting to see further how their various studies may be practical for certain organizations or may lead to program changes that potentially benefits those research participants they worked with in Zambia. Additionally, the study adds a variety of insights into the field of SFD and builds on previous findings by other scholars. However, due to the particular focus on certain

communities in Zambia, it is difficult to suggest that these findings, while beneficial and admirable, are transferable and representative of all Zambian SFD contexts nationwide or other contexts of SFD – a provision of the book that the authors do not strive for given the often overgeneralization of SFD ‘outcomes’ or benefits that may be misaligned with local interests.

As the authors recognize themselves, it is a difficult task to connect a number of different studies as they did within the text, while explicitly showing the connection of themes and findings. Yet, despite this challenge the book itself and the themes are supported well and provide clear connections between studies. Practitioners, policymakers, and scholars would benefit from this detailed account of local SFD contexts in Zambia due to the need to recognize and illuminate how SFD programs are taken up and experienced while influenced by global and national actors and the relevant implications. This book would also provide undergraduate students a strong exemplar of the complexity, challenges, and overall phenomenon of SFD, in a context that is detailed and identifies the various components and actors within programming and implementation. Despite the minor limitations mentioned above, Lindsey, Kay, Jeanes, and Banda’s book offers a timely and in-depth examination of the particularities and nuances of SFD in the Zambian context, and advances necessary understandings of SFD. As the field of SFD continues to proliferate, this book delivers a careful, well thought out, and strong approach of connecting the local to global in Zambian sport for development contexts for scholars, practitioners, and policy makers. This task is by no means easy, and yet, their text tackles this challenge while also providing resonance and unique empirical knowledge throughout each chapter.

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Original Research

Humanistic sports coaching and the Marist organization: A multi-case study in the Philippines

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ABSTRACT

This multi-case study involved coaches who are academics from New Zealand visiting the Philippines on an annual basis and implementing sports coaching programmes underpinned by a humanistic coaching philosophy. The study aimed to gain insight into how sport can be used by the Marist organization in the Philippines to (a) enhance their ability to effectively engage and build relationships within the communities they serve, and (b) to enhance the self-esteem and confidence of pupils in a school set up for children at risk and/or in conflict with the law. A primary objective was for the sports coaching initiative to be self-sustaining and ultimately delivered by graduates from a Marist institute of higher education. For many participants, this experience has been their very first engagement with sport at any level. Individual and focus group interviews revealed that the experience, for many participants and stakeholders, has been ‘transformative’ and ‘inspiring’. The notion of sport-for-all challenged traditional thinking about the role of sport as primarily a competitive enterprise. At the school, pupils adopted a more inclusive model of sport and the programme appeared to provide institute graduates with the confidence, skill and desire to engage through sport with young people in their communities.

BACKGROUND

Recent decades have seen a major increase in sport-for-development (SFD) programmes or sport initiatives claiming to provide social, economic and community benefits.^{1,2} SFD is defined as the ‘intentional use of sport,

physical activity and play to attain specific development objectives in low- and middle-income countries and disadvantaged communities in high-income settings’.³ Many initiatives have been justified by the seemingly unquestioned assumption that sports participation results in enhanced wellbeing, psychological, social, and mental health. However, a review of literature conducted by Sport for Development and Peace (SDP)⁴ suggested these benefits were attributable more to the personal and social interactions that can occur in sporting environments, as opposed to simply through playing sports. Initiatives that had involved community interaction and had demonstrated cultural awareness, provided robust evidence to suggest that the well-being, health and education of participants can be enhanced through SFD.⁵ However, there would also appear to be an abundance of programmes that are largely unregulated and poorly coordinated with little evidence of any rigorous evaluation³ and any claims made of programme efficacy over-reaching the evidence.⁵

The complexity of SFD is illustrated by a proliferation of programmes at a micro, meso and macro-level, and a lack of understanding of the interplay of relations and processes between these levels.⁶ However, it is suggested by Hartmann and Kwauk that it is at the micro-level where the development of normative, commonly accepted ‘character building’ traits are believed to naturally occur simply through the playing of sport and the adoption of commonly accepted sporting values.⁷ (p. 287) What appears to be absent is the understanding that any values emerging are attributable to the pedagogical approaches adopted and the interactions occurring within the sporting environment

created.⁸ Acknowledging this, it is important to provide an overview of the philosophical and pedagogical approaches underpinning the design of the sports coaching initiatives implemented in the current study.

Humanistic Coaching

This study involved sports-coaching academics from New Zealand visiting the Philippines on an annual basis and implementing a sports initiative underpinned by Lombardo's⁹ notion of humanistic coaching. Humanistically designed sport requires a leadership style that acknowledges and meets athletes' needs, where athletes are empowered to reach their own goals, encouraged to become self-aware and self-sufficient, and the emphasis is on individual personal growth.¹⁰ If the sporting experience is constructed in a way that meets the needs of children, sport can be playful and play has been defined as something that is joyous, offering a sense of escapism from the routines of everyday life.¹¹ A humanistic sport initiative requires an approach that encourages conventional coaching behaviours to move away from an over-riding focus on performance, and focus more on the development of the athlete as a human being. Lombardo⁹ (p. 19) was critical of other coaching methodologies that encouraged 'mindless conformism and a sense of pessimism related to the possibilities for (creative) play in the sport setting'.

In our university, our sports-coaching teaching is underpinned by a humanistic coaching philosophy. As educators, we aim to facilitate an environment that encourages our students to be coaches who acknowledge the holistic needs of their athletes. In practice, we draw upon the pedagogical models of a constraints-led approach to skill acquisition,¹² Teaching Games for Understanding (TGfU)^{13, 14} and 'Play Practice'.^{15, 16} Of relevance to this current study is Play Practice, which was designed with an underpinning philosophy that every child is important and aims to provide beginners with sporting experiences that are enjoyable, largely free to experiment and make mistakes without adult criticism, and enable them to become competent enough to continue with a sport if they so wished.¹⁶ Coaches are encouraged to turn practice into play through the use of challenging, relevant games that create enjoyable learning activities. This focus on process instead of outcomes is encapsulated by Launder and Pilitz¹⁵ (p. viii) as encouraging:

... youngsters to focus on the struggle and not the result, to treat their opponents in any sport as the surfer treats the big wave, as the skier approaches the mountain, as the kayaker views the turbulent river: as challenges not as

adversaries.

RESEARCH CONTEXT

The sports coaching initiative began in 2012, and stemmed from the initial desire of a retired colleague from our university to work with the Marist organisation based in an institute of higher education (hereafter referred to as *the institute*) in a large city in the Philippines. Prospective Marist Brothers complete an undergraduate degree in secondary education, majoring in religious education at the institute before they move into under-privileged communities where they work predominantly with young people, often based in a school. Our retired colleague has been a Marist brother, an international-level age-group rugby coach, and a university sports lecturer. During these varied life experiences he witnessed and valued how sport unites people together around common goals (i.e., play, fun) to create close-knit and supportive communities. As a consequence, in 2012 our colleague travelled to the institute with another lecturer from our university to lead a sports coaching initiative for the Marist students.

The initiative was well received and was subsequently extended to be delivered in two other cities based in a southern island of the Philippines. One of the cities operates as an initial training centre (*the centre*) for a large number of Catholic religious orders, the Marist Brothers being only one of these. Young people who consider entering the church as brothers, sisters or priests attend from countries in the Asia-Pacific region for their first year of formative training with their respective orders. The other city hosts a Marist school (*the school*) set up for children at risk and children in conflict with the law.

Between 2013 and 2016 (four trips) a team of academics from two New Zealand tertiary institutions travelled to the Philippines to deliver the sports initiatives in the three communities. A long-term aim of the project has been for these modules to be self-sustaining. Consequently, a number of graduating brothers who have shown an interest, a belief in the humanistic approach and a talent in coaching have been mentored and trained as the future facilitators.

It was initially important for us, as members of the sports coaching team who held varying degrees of religious beliefs, to marry our principles with the Marist philosophy. Discussions with Marist representatives indicated that their key tenets and values related to the importance of education for all people (especially those from underprivileged backgrounds), not chasing fame or possessions, building community, making people from all cultures and

backgrounds feel at home, and working for peace and unity (Marist Brothers, personal communication, July, 2013). Visiting the Philippines in the first year of the project and witnessing the work conducted in impoverished communities made us comfortable with the notion that we were philosophically aligned with the work being conducted. It should also be acknowledged that, as a team, we were united in a belief that a more humanistic approach to sports coaching can nurture an environment more conducive to a sport-for-all approach than one focused on performance and outcomes. This project provided an opportunity to advocate for this approach with non-traditional sporting communities.

RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The study aimed to gain insight into how sport can be used by the Marist organization in the Philippines to (a) enhance their ability to effectively engage and build relationships within the communities they serve, and (b) to enhance the self-esteem and confidence of pupils in a school set up for children at risk and/or in conflict with the law.

METHODOLOGY

This current study is a multi-case project¹⁷ where several cases are bound by an overarching issue—referred to by Stake as a *quintain*—being explored through the specific individual cases. The study adopts Stake's instrumental case study approach¹⁷ (p. 2) the purpose of which is to gain deeper insight into an issue where the 'qualitative understanding of cases requires experiencing the activity of the case as it occurs in its context and in its particular situation'. The boundaries of case studies typically relate to time, place, context and activity.¹⁸ The cases studied in this research relate to three different sites where the principles of humanistic coaching are drawn upon to underpin the delivery of three sports initiatives.

The quintain that binds the cases relates to our interest in whether (or not) the application of humanistic coaching principles can encourage a paradigm shift in thinking about the role of sport in providing social and community benefits. At an individual case level, we were specifically interested in examining: (a) participants' awareness of the potential of sport as a vehicle to connect with other human beings (*all three sites*); (b) how equipped participants from non-traditional sporting backgrounds felt they were to deliver games-based activities to children (*institute and centre*); and (c) how sport can be used as a vehicle to enhance feelings of self-esteem and confidence (*school*).

Positioning Self

Carolan, Forbat, and Smith recommend that case study researchers identify their philosophical approach and that the positioning of self is made overt.¹⁹ This study aligns itself with a social constructivist paradigm where we acknowledge our view of the world as constructed by our perceptions of our environment, alongside cultural and social practices.²⁰ The study drew upon our expertise in sports coaching, but was situated within a context working with a religious order. As outlined previously, there appeared to be clear philosophical alignment between the Marist organisation and the sports coaching team.

Methods

Overview

Qualitative case study research is characterised by researchers spending time on site, remaining in touch with the activities of the case and continuously reflecting on and interpreting events.²¹ Throughout the study, researchers recorded their observations through reflections and asked others for their observations, normally through interviewing. During the five years of this project and aligning with recommendations for qualitative case study research, multiple data collection methods were utilised.¹⁸ See Table 1 for details.

Participants and Data Collection

Members of the research team delivered the sport modules. Working conditions were difficult, and the theory and practical modules were often delivered in extremely hot outdoor covered settings (basketball courts). Participant recruitment and data collection (detailed below) therefore reflects a pragmatic approach driven by on-site constraints of climate, time and place. Focus group and interview questions primarily focused on participants' perspectives of the modules, their perceived value of an approach to sport underpinned by a humanistic philosophy, and the perceived value that these modules could add to their community-based work.

Semi-structured Interviews

These were conducted with identified key stakeholders of the project (see Table 1).

Focus Group Interviews

Twelve focus group interviews (see Table 1) were conducted over a three-year period.

Table 1. Data Collection Methods and Participants

Method	Venue	Participants	Number of Participants
Focus groups	Institute	Four groups of 1 st -year students	Between 6 and 8
	Institute	Four groups of 2 nd year students	Between 6 and 7
	Institute	Four groups of 3 rd year students	Between 6 and 8
Interviews	Institute	Rector	
	Institute	Dean of Studies	
	Institute	Graduates	3
	Institute	Marist teacher	
	Centre	Marist brothers mentored to run future programmes	5
	Centre	Lead Marist brother	
	School	Colleague who initiated programme	
Reflective journals	Centre	Marist coordinator of modules	
	All	Research team members	4
	Varied	Research team members	4
Research team reviews			

Reflective Journals

These journals were maintained on-site by four members of the research team throughout the project.

On-site Research Team Reflective Meetings

These were conducted at the end of each annual programme.

Data Analysis

Case study research requires an integrated interpretation of the case data.¹⁷ All interview, focus group and reflective meeting data were recorded, transcribed and reviewed by members of the research team. Analysis was ongoing throughout the project. Thematic analysis of the data was conducted drawing upon guidelines from Braun and Clarke²² and—specifically in relation to case study—from Stake.¹⁷ In concurrence with Stake,²¹ as qualitative researchers we are interested in a diversity of perspectives, and a process of triangulation of a broad range of data enabled us to clarify meaning by looking at the cases through different lenses. Annual meetings were conducted to capture thoughts and reflections on the data. Acknowledging that our interrogation of the data is influenced by awareness of the research questions that underpin the study, the approach to the analysis was data-

driven and initially inductive. The software package *Weft QDA* was utilised to systematically code data of interest. On completion of the project, the coded data was revisited and codes were collated into identified themes related to each case. Subsequent meetings discussed these themes and the final dominant themes and sub-themes were confirmed and agreed upon. The final stage of the analysis involved the examination of themes in relation to how they addressed the quintain that binds the three cases. The primary author then wrote the synthesis obtaining critique from the research team and a faculty colleague experienced in case study research.¹⁷

Ethics

Full ethical approval for this study was received from our university's ethics committee. Pseudonyms are used throughout the presentation of results.

RESULTS

The Case Studies

According to Stake, there are a number of possible approaches to a multi-case study.¹⁷ We present a qualitative multi-case approach, paying particular attention to the situational uniqueness of each case.¹⁷ The findings of each case are offered here and the discussion section examines

how the collective cases contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the quintain.²³ In this section, each case is reported separately with representative excerpts presented for each theme. Stake²¹ (p. 456) advises caution against the oft-claimed notion that one should let the ‘case tell its own story’. The findings here represent our interpretation of ‘the story’, however the larger participant excerpts presented are representative of times when we felt that participants’ words told the story far more powerfully than we could, and these vignettes represent an insight into how they constructed meaning for themselves from their experiences.

Case Study One: The Institute

The male students studying at the institute complete their teaching and religious studies over three years. The majority of these students are Filipino, although smaller numbers of students are from other countries within the Asia Pacific region, including for example, Papua New Guinea, Vietnam, Solomon Islands, India and Indonesia. Upon graduation, the Filipino Marist brothers will often initially work as religious teachers within Marist schools in the Philippines. The other graduating Marist brothers will return to work in schools or under-privileged communities within their own countries or other areas of the world.

Members of the project team deliver two concurrent one-week modules at the institute. Prior to the introduction of the modules, students participated in weekly physical activity sessions taken by a senior brother. These adhered to a command-centred coaching style²⁴ very instructional and heavily reliant on drills and repetitive practice activities. The module delivered to first-year students is an introduction to sports coaching where the underpinning humanistic philosophy is outlined. The second module is for second and third-year students, and builds on the principles introduced in the introductory course. This final-year module has a greater focus on theory, discussion and reflection in order to provide the students with deeper understandings of the coaching approach they have been introduced to. All students are given practical coaching opportunities working with children from a local Marist school to develop the skills and confidence to design and implement games-based sessions, based on the principles of Play Practice. Although numbers vary, approximately 10 students attend the introductory module, and up to 15 students attend the final-year module. Ages of participants range from mid-20s to late 30s with the majority being in the mid to late-20s age group.

Our analysis of participant interviews, focus groups and reflective journals identified three major themes. These related to: blended philosophies, transformative experiences, and the benefits of humanistic coaching (sub-themes were personal development and applied benefits).

Theme 1: Blended Philosophies

An important consideration for the research team was an alignment of the philosophy of humanistic coaching with the aims of the Marist order. Interviews with key stakeholders from the institute revealed this was a shared consideration. As the Rector states,

From the beginning when [name removed] started to approach us, there was a wonderful synchronicity on what you could offer and what we needed.

This synchronicity was seen at two levels: at a philosophical level and at a level of the relationship between humanistic coaching and teaching. The following excerpt represents a typical comment, this time from the Marist brother responsible for the coordination of the module at the institute:

The psycho-spiritual approach, the spiritual side is implemented into everything [students at the institute] do, and this [module] is no different, what I have seen is that this subject has a very strong spiritual pastoral component and that’s what attracts me, it makes them a better teacher but [also] makes them a better brother and . . . grow as human beings.

Strong correlations were made by all participants interviewed between education (a key Marist driving principle) and humanistic coaching as witnessed or experienced in this module. As an Institute graduate noted:

I remember the famous saying of our founder that in order to educate children you must love them and love them all equally. You need to see children as human beings in terms of this module, you are dealing with human beings who have their own experience, their own background, their own story, their own feeling. You should not have favouritism in the classroom, and those people who felt they are not being loved or not being focussed on [are] left behind, they are not going to learn. I mean that’s how I see the philosophy in this [coaching] module, and in terms of what the Marist philosophy is trying to tell us.

Theme 2: Transformative Experiences

Although a small number of the students were clearly interested in sport, the majority of participants had no significant interest. Their perceptions of sport and what sports coaching entailed conformed to what is commonly regarded as a traditional command-centred approach to coaching.²⁴ The Dean of Studies stated, “From what I have seen coaches can be hostile, they can be very harsh, because they want to win. You can always forget that players can be sensitive.”

The pre-eminent theme to emerge from all data related to the transformative impact the introduction of a humanistic approach to sport—a radically different approach than they had been exposed to before—had on participants. Participants used terms such as ‘transformative’, ‘conversion’, ‘a 360-degree turn around’ to refer to their experiences. An extended extract from an Institute Graduate encapsulates these observations:

This course turned all of my perceptions upside down, I realised that I looked at sports just in competition, we need to play to win something, to prove that we are better than other people, to be more manly, to have status. I've realised especially something I cannot forget [this week], the focus is really the child, their development. We want to produce athletes who can think critically who are not just there for us to win the game. Sometimes I observe that coaches are just using athletes to win a specific game, and it's all the self-actualisation of a coach. Who cares about if this athlete will learn anything, [once] he's not playing with me, who cares? I have realised that the athlete-centred approach is more of the athlete's development from the moment he or she can play up to the time when they are old but can have an active life. So it's not just the end product to win a competition or become famous, but it's more on the aspect of being human, you produce a person not just a scoring machine that will benefit you. So you are really producing a formed human being, that's what I have realised.

Theme 3: The Benefits of humanistic Coaching

The benefits of this coaching approach were seen at two levels: personal development of the students and for children in an applied setting, as the rector notes:

We have a very cultural and Marist understanding of education, our whole philosophy of education is that it's not just in the classroom, it's about presence with young people. If you are with them outside of the classroom, sitting on the side coaching then you're going to get closer

on the side-line than you'll ever get teaching him. He'll say things and share things with you at football training that he will never tell you in the classroom, so it's giving [the students] the skill to be close to kids in an informal setting, where they can talk to you about whatever they want to talk to you about. Now to do that they need to have some sort of skill, something to facilitate the kids, so it sits with our philosophy. I've said many aren't interested in sport, so they move it through to the fact that they get confidence in themselves and therefore that spills over into a lot of things. The significant part of the holistic thing of the programme you're doing, and that's why we're pleased with it, it's helped with all these different elements.

There were accounts that provided evidence of this personal development and acquired confidence in an applied setting, as the local teacher points out:

I observe some brothers [in the school], they built a relationship with some of the [pupils] through sports, they join with them playing basketball, soccer. Then after that they have this kind of bonding, they have a relationship.

Additionally a first-year student maintains:

Sport is a universal language of expression. I believe this project is meant to help us as people to teach children how to love sports and express themselves through the love of sports. It is also very important to bring this into the social context, the Filipinos are sports loving people who love to be with [a] group, so I believe it will gather people together in all aspects and all perspectives of life, sports can bring them unity.

Case Study Two: The Centre

The one-week module in the city that acts as the centre for initial training for religious orders is delivered by two members of the project team. The focus of this programme is on introducing the philosophy that underpins our approach to coaching, to show through practical examples and participant experiences that sport can be fun, inclusive, and the skills learnt in a practical setting in this module can be used to help them connect with young people in the communities they serve. Over the four years of the project, numbers have varied each year with between 50 and 100 participants attending. Participants, both male and female, are drawn from a large number of religious orders (up to 15 orders) based on a southern island in the Philippines. The age range is between 17 years of age and the late 40s, with the majority of participants aged between 17 and 25. Participants are predominantly Filipino, but a significant

number are also from a range of countries in the Asia-Pacific region. Although these participants are just beginning their long (five to seven years) journey to become brothers, sisters, or priests alongside their studies they are all actively working in severely under-privileged communities.

The dominant theme identified from our analysis of interviews with stakeholders based at the centre and from research team reflections related once more to a transformative experience in regards to the understanding of what sport is, and what sport can be. A second theme was related to the broader implications for the use of sport in the communities they worked in.

Theme One: Transformative Experiences

This theme is, from our perspective, encapsulated by the perspective that Pedro shared during an interview. Pedro is a graduate of the institute who is now a Marist brother working as a teacher on the island where the centre is located, and one of the graduates being mentored to take over the responsibility for the running of these programmes from 2018. During the week of the module in 2016, he spoke powerfully to the participants about his negative experiences as a child in relation to sport. Pedro said,

I feel that in this role [being mentored to run the programmes] that I would be able to utilise what I had learnt through three years at [the institute] and this [module] interests me a lot and for me the module here is inspiring those seminarians and sisters who have apprehensions about sports and I think I am possibly able to share my experiences with them as a non-sport thinking person, I think I can possibly inspire them to change their perspectives about sports. Also because teaching and coaching are related, then I think that perhaps I can draw upon my experiences as a teacher to help me prepare people as coaches. As a child I was not really that kind of sports-active person because of my physique and it kept me in the house playing non-physical games and non-physical sports. When I grew up I had this apprehension about sports—it was very difficult for me—but after the coaching module at [the institute] I was able to change my perspective and disposition about sports. For me coaching now does not mean you will have the acquisition of very complex skills. I think now that coaching is more about how you manage people. For me it is confidence in leading and helping the participants build their confidence in leading groups, how you communicate and develop planning skills. Another thing I have learned is the importance of being creative as a coach. This module has encouraged me to

develop my creativity—you have to be very creative to make games which are fun—and to develop social skills of our players. These are skills coaches have to develop. And the critical thinking – why are we giving this activity to our players? What is the purpose of having this type of activity? When I was a child I thought sport was not for me, but sport is for everyone, sport is for everyone. We just have to change the way our people look at sports. So that is why we as a coach have to be infectious of our energy, to empower everybody that sports is fun, is simple. It was very rewarding this week, when I spoke [in front of all the participants] about my childhood, my physique, and that I felt I could not participate. My skills were not good enough and I did not feel I could participate so I did not. One of the participants came up to me after and said that he could relate as that was his story also. And he could now see how sport could be for everybody. It had changed his perspective.

Theme Two: Broader Implications of Sport

Interview data revealed to us that the influence of the coaching modules on the young participants had resulted in reflection from a number of senior Marist brothers about the wider benefits that sport could have in their communities. In the region where this second case study was situated, a history of marginalisation has resulted in a long conflict between government troops and Muslim rebel groups. The lead Marist brother in the centre stated:

It is not just about sport. I am thinking about implications for peace. As you know we have problems here. I see that we can use sport as a tool to promote inclusivity and participation and bring our communities together.

These sentiments were echoed by a Marist brother based at the institute, who saw opportunities in this region for sport to bring communities together:

Some of the existing projects [in the area where the centre is located] are breaking down barriers between Muslim and Christians, so through doing basketball as well they can go beyond that by doing lots of other worthwhile activities to harmonise their relationship with other parts of the communities and in the slums as well.

Case Study Three: The School

This aspect of the project had a different focus. One member of the project team visits the school annually and runs a sports module for the boys at the school. The participants in this module are 30-plus boys aged between 10 and 20 years

who have been ‘street kids’ and/or in significant trouble with the authorities. The staff who facilitated sport at the school previously utilised an approach that saw the boys mostly simply playing basketball for their designated physical education (PE) time. Prior to the researcher’s visit, there was little awareness of the holistic potential of sport for young people. The module drew upon the ‘five Cs’ model of positive youth development (PYD): competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring.²⁵ PYD is a strength-based approach, aimed at helping youth achieve their full potential. In conjunction with working directly with the boys at the school, a secondary objective was to upskill the staff in the use of physical activity and sport to achieve holistic outcomes through professional development sessions and the modelling of facilitation methods.

Conducting interviews was difficult in this environment due to scheduling constraints and language barriers, and the data collected is predominantly represented by the research team member’s reflective journals and her recorded informal observations and conversations at the school. These are supplemented by an interview conducted with her at the end of the fourth year of the module alongside an interview conducted with our New Zealand colleague who initiated the entire Philippines project based on his observations and interactions with staff at the school.

Theme One: Blended Philosophies

The research team member reflected upon her experience at the school:

A humanistic approach was reflected in most other aspects of the work at the school except in their sport. In one regard this made the idea of humanistic coaching natural, as the philosophy of the sport programme—based on the 5 Cs—aligned with the philosophy of the school. However, it was also very challenging changing the engrained traditional perception the staff held of the role of sport so that PE could move away from just traditional basketball games and more towards purposeful activities grounded by a holistic curriculum, and implemented with a humanistic coaching approach.

Although the staff clearly saw the potential of sport, there was a clear lack of confidence primarily through their lack of knowledge of sport and of their ability to implement the sports programmes themselves.

Theme Two: Transformative Perspectives

Another dominant theme identified in this case study was a transformative perspective once again related to sport,

leading on to an identified sub-theme—changes in behaviour of the boys—that resulted in the development of increased self-confidence and a more inclusive approach to sport. Over the four years of visiting the school, the research team member who delivered these modules witnessed significant changes in perspectives and resultant behaviours. She reflects:

The school wanted me to develop a sport programme that taught the boys broader life and social skills. [Physical education] sessions for them up to this point had just been about playing basketball and if you are good at basketball you play and if you are bad or younger you don’t play. So trying to teach them new activities and games they have never tried before, encouraging them to communicate, to lead each other, where they get acknowledged for how well they work as a team, how well they run their coaching sessions, through doing that they started seeing their own leadership potential and ability to be a good team member. One example is a boy—and he was a street kid for many years before he was found and put in this school—he started off really shy but he saw his leadership potential and by the third year I visited he was probably one of the most influential people in the group, looking out for the younger ones, and incorporating everyone where previously you never saw those older ones looking out for the younger ones. All of the activities recognise their need to work together, and this is encouraged all through the games that we play. We then talk about the kind of social skills they have developed through the games, how they have been given an opportunity to contribute and to have a go and work together and help each other. Through being exposed to small-sided inclusive games they start to see that it is not fun when you leave people on the side, when you are not participating, they now scale activities to cater for different ability and confidence levels, everybody is included and the challenge level is right so people are able to enjoy the activities.

Furthermore, a New Zealand colleague added that, “I visited three times and the changes I witnessed in the boys’ attitude was amazing. How inclusive they had now become. It was inspirational to see.”

DISCUSSION

The single case studies presented above have unique contextual purposes and situations. They are studied, however, as manifestations of the quintain, as it is the quintain that we seek to understand.²³ Restated, the quintain in this study relates to our interest in examining if the application of humanistic coaching principles can encourage a paradigm shift in traditional thinking about the role of

sport. The dominant common theme identified across all three cases related to a change in thinking about sport, which a number of participants referred to as 'transformative'. It is important, however, that we as researchers acknowledge a critique of SFD programmes that 'as it is likely that *any* social interventions will produce individual successes, such testimonies tell us little about *how* various programmes operate and why they have differential and contingent impacts for the wider sample of participants'.⁶ The multi-case study approach adopted in this study enables us to provide information about the 'how', but an analysis of the 'why' is a more complex undertaking.

It would seem clear from the findings of this study that a humanistic approach to sport coaching can transform thinking about the role and purpose of sport. The change in thinking witnessed in this study was evident at a range of levels, from the stakeholders who have traditionally not engaged with sport, through to the participants. Further, this transformation in thinking was evident for both those participants who enjoyed sport and those who perceived that sport was not for them. At the school however, although the staff recognised the potential holistic value of sport, the transformation was predominantly visible through the changed behaviour of the boys who have adopted a more inclusive model of sport. In the Philippines—as in New Zealand²⁶—the dominant discourse pertaining to sport would appear to conform more to the notion that sport is an outcome-focused enterprise driven by a win-at-all-costs attitude. For the group, who up until this point in time had mainly negative perceptions of sport and of their ability to participate, it is perhaps not unsurprising that a radically different approach to sport—an approach that aligned with their core humanistic principles—would engage them. The fact that the other group, the sports enthusiasts, also engaged so readily with these new concepts is possibly of greater interest.

There was a parallel here with the work we conducted in New Zealand. In a similar approach to the one adopted in the Philippines, our New Zealand students are exposed to a coaching degree that is underpinned by humanistic coaching principles. However, there is resistance from many of these students to move away from more traditional methods of coaching and adopt more athlete-centred approaches. One potential explanation for this is that these students in New Zealand have subscribed to what has been referred to as the 'sport ethic'.²⁷ It is suggested that the vast majority of people involved with sport—the fans, coaches, and players—unquestioningly accept the norms of what sport is and should be. This includes for example, an over-riding focus on performance, striving to win, playing on through

pain, and stereotypes of what it means to be an athlete, which are reinforced through the media who seem to uncritically laud these qualities.²⁸ As a result, in societies including New Zealand and apparently the Philippines and other Asia Pacific countries, unless you conform to the norms of sport, people like Pedro will continue to consider sport as something 'not for me'.

Based on the findings of this study compared to our experiences running similar courses in New Zealand, it would appear that the relatively unchallenged transformation in thinking that occurred at all three case sites was a result of an alignment between the humanistic coaching principles introduced by us and the philosophy of the Marist organisation. This is perhaps best summed up in a research team review meeting at the end of the modules in 2014, where one member stated:

You don't need to teach them about athlete-centred principles. They already get it. When you ask them in session one, what qualities does a coach need? They respond with 'integrity', 'humility', 'considering all people'. In New Zealand I ask the same question and the answers are 'good communication skills', 'knowledge of the game', 'confidence'. In the Philippines it is easy to teach, you just shift their thinking a little from thinking they are coaching sport, to thinking that they are connecting with people. It is humanistic.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of an instrumental case study is not to produce findings that are generalized to other situations, rather it is to use the case to provide insight into an issue.²¹ The issue here relates to examining if sport could be used in non-traditional settings to help organisations build relationships and engage with the under-privileged communities they work within. Using humanistic coaching principles and drawing specifically upon the principles of Play Practice, this study suggests there is potential for people's commonly held notions about sport to be challenged. In doing so, a recognition that sport can be more than simply a competitive enterprise predominantly for the talented and the competent, and instead can be something that is inclusive, fun and community-oriented has immense potential for humanistic organisations working with young people. Readers of this multi-case study will ascertain if the findings of this study are applicable to their own situations.

The findings of this study appear to confirm the ideas presented by SDP⁴ that sport can be an effective mechanism to create a space for positive social interactions and the

building of relationships where holistic benefits can accrue. In presenting these findings, we also attempt to address a critique of SFD studies conducted to date; a lack of acknowledgement that these holistic benefits are attributable to the pedagogical approaches adopted.⁸ A further critique of SFD programmes has been related to a lack of rigorous evaluation. We plan to support the Marist order as they continue to facilitate these initiatives and we will continue to visit to monitor, evaluate and support their progress in this regard. A further aim is to capture the experiences of graduated Marist brothers as they begin their work in their schools and communities.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors would like to acknowledge the Hugh Green Foundation for their ongoing generous funding of travel to the Philippines, and for their recognition of the positive role that sport can play in under-privileged communities. We are indebted to Terry Horne, who instigated the project and has been a major driving force supporting the work we do. To the many benefactors including Pat McLaughlan, Tony Garelja, John Green, Dr. David Ewen, Steve Anich, David Kapeli, Paul Graham, Gray Horrell(AGS), and Rick Johnston who have donated sporting equipment, we thank you. We would also like to offer our heartfelt appreciation to the hosting Marist communities and the wonderful people we met who always made us so very welcome during our visits.

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Commentary

‘Sport for development’ in Japan**Chiaki Okada¹**¹ Osaka University, Graduate School of Human Sciences, Japan*Corresponding author email: chiaki@hus.osaka-u.ac.jp***INTRODUCTION**

Although the field of Sport for Development (SfD) has been progressing in the international community for some time,¹⁻³ the Japanese government only recently began looking for ways to contribute to the field during Tokyo's bid to host the 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Promoting Tokyo's bid, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe introduced the 'Sport for Tomorrow (SFT)' programme to bring the joy of sports to at least 10 million children in 100 countries by 2020.⁴ However, the progress made as of 2016 indicates that reaching this target would be difficult at the current pace. Japan's sluggish economic growth is creating various problems for the sports world in Japan, and the significance of aiding developing countries through sport has not been properly explained. Most Japanese people are unfamiliar with both SfD and SFT, although the scope and amount of SFT activities are expected to increase as the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games approach.

To begin with, we need to question if the Japanese trial of SFT has the same concept as the international society has for SfD, or if it was actually the paper tiger for success in the bidding for the 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Although Japan has started SfD initiatives, going along with the current trend of the Olympic/Paralympic bidding, this trial could be temporary and could very well disappear from Japan after 2020, if the concept of SfD is not widely recognized and has not gained status in the context of sport development.

This commentary firstly examines Japan's scant experience

with SfD prior to the Olympic bid made in 2013, although most of such activities were dominated by Sport Development (SD) programmes mainly in developing countries. Secondly, the paper examines the background against which SFT was launched in Japan, and the environment in which SFT exists. Finally, the issues currently facing SfD in Japan are enumerated and actions that can be taken to ensure SfD survives in Japan after 2020 are examined.

SPORT DEVELOPMENT (SD) AND SPORT FOR DEVELOPMENT (SfD) IN JAPAN**Activities of official development assistance**

Official development assistance (ODA) in Japan has included direct grants to developing countries in the form of development funds, the provision of personnel and equipment, and technical aid aimed at improving technological capacities in certain fields. Development funds given to developing countries, together with other grants, are used to purchase the materials, equipment, and services needed for socioeconomic development. In particular, they are offered to regions in developing countries with relatively low income levels. The Japanese government created the Grant Assistance for Grassroots and Human Security Projects in 1989 to fund small-scale projects (e.g., constructing gymnasiums for people with disabilities), which are 10 million yen or less, and conducted by municipalities, educational or medical institutions, NGOs, and other entities in developing countries.⁵ The funding is mostly handled by Japanese

Keywords: Tokyo; Olympics; Paralympics; Sport for Tomorrow (SFT); Official Development Assistance; commentary

diplomatic offices overseas. Cultural Grant Assistance has existed since 1975, primarily to support culture and higher education (e.g., providing tatami mats, which are straw mats for Judo). Sport can be seen within all these categories as a grassroots activity, as related to ‘human security’, and as a part of culture.

In addition, technical assistance related to sports has been offered through the Japan International Cooperation Agency’s (JICA) volunteer programmes and the Grassroots Technical Cooperation Project. Here, the largest SD- and SfD-related activities the Japanese government has engaged in are providing volunteers. JICA volunteers are selected using examinations based on requests for assistance. After spending about 70 days training in Japan, they are dispatched overseas for around two years. As of 2016, the largest of these—Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV)—had sent more than 42,000 volunteers to 88 countries since its creation in 1965. About 10% have been involved in sports—or slightly over 4,000 volunteers.⁶ When JOCV first started going overseas, volunteers involved in Judo—a Japanese specialty—made up more than 70% of the sports department. Since the 1980s, the importance of educational assistance has increased, and more volunteers have been sent to take part in ‘physical education.’⁷ Since developing countries make various kinds of requests (e.g., guidance for their national teams or help in increasing grassroots-level involvement), volunteers must possess varying levels of qualifications. This also means that SfD programmes and activities overlap with traditional SD aspects of development.

Sports-related assistance in the form of technical aid is also provided through the Grassroots Technical Cooperation Project. This project funds the activities of Japanese universities, municipalities, foundations, and other groups that benefit communities in developing countries, and is considered a form of ODA. Though small in number, these projects have been carried out in Laos, Cambodia, Kenya, and Malaysia. Overall, while sports-related international assistance is being provided in the form of funding and technology, such projects comprise only a small percentage of overall ODA expenditures and the amount of funding is small compared to that provided by other developed nations.

Activities of sports-related organizations

While the scale of international assistance offered by sports-related organizations is not large, several groups have been operating for many years. The Japanese Olympic Committee, Japan Sports Association, Kodokan Judo

Institute, and other groups are involved in such projects and they are inviting or dispatching coaches, athletes, and sports administrators. These groups are also deeply, if indirectly, involved in sports-related ODA projects (e.g., providing advice with grants and offering supplemental technical training for JOCV). Still, unlike other developed countries, these activities do not have policy backing as a field of development, and their work is strongly associated with exchange initiatives.

Recently, the J. League made contributing to developing countries part of its ‘Asian Strategy.’ In the global soccer market, which includes broadcasting rights fees, more than 200 billion yen is said to flow from Asia to Europe every year.⁸ The Asian Strategy aims to develop soccer in Asia to reverse this flow. Beyond knowledge transfers for managing professional leagues and increasing top-level support, initiatives have included hosting skill clinics and providing balls and uniforms to increase a region’s soccer population. Initiatives have also areas less directly related to soccer, such as anti-disaster education, dietary training, and tourism marketing. Projects have been conducted in Thailand, Vietnam, Brunei, Myanmar, Indonesia, Malaysia, Qatar, Singapore, Cambodia, East Timor, the Philippines, Laos, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, Nepal, Taiwan, and Hong Kong. The projects have been carried out in a diverse array of settings, including refugee camps, schools, and communities damaged by natural disasters. A range of partnerships have been formed to include Japanese club teams, aid organizations, companies, and the media. This could be described as a leading initiative in Japan’s SfD involvement.

At the same time, the Japan Volleyball Association’s ball bank has collected more than 6,000 volleyballs from around Japan—including almost-new game-used balls from official tournaments. The Japan Volleyball Association’s ball bank has also collected poles, nets, antennas, ball cases, and other equipment, donating them to developing countries through over 30 initiatives. However, in contrast to the activities by J-League, the activities of the ball bank could be regarded as a classical SD involvement.

Activities by public-service groups

Comparatively few NGOs in Japan are active in SD and SfD. Suzuki et al.⁹ identified a total of 35 groups, including NPOs, general incorporated foundations, and voluntary associations. According to that study, these groups were characterised by (1) a preponderance of activities aimed at popularising sports or fundraising, (2) a large number of baseball-related groups, (3) a large number of groups by the

former JOCV, and (4) a recent increase in student groups. In addition, many top athletes founded groups after their retirement.

While Suzuki et al.⁹ looked merely at groups that provided aid to developing countries, the numbers of groups carrying out SD or SfD activities inside Japan have sharply increased since 2000. For instance, various initiatives were launched after the Great East Japan Earthquake of March 2011 to provide sporting opportunities to children affected by this disaster.¹⁰ Such sport activities addressed the problem of the lack of exercise and the need for emotional support among the 380,000 people evacuated to 2,000 school gymnasiums and other centres.

Moreover the Japan Foundation was established in 1972 as a quasi-governmental corporation under the jurisdiction of the Japanese Foreign Ministry, with the objective of promoting interpersonal exchanges in Japan studies, Japanese language education, art, publishing, film, and culture. Its projects such as sending sports instructors abroad and subsidising lectures could be categorized as SDP and many activities have involved Karate, Judo, and other martial arts.

A few universities and research institutes also carry out SD- or SfD- related activities. Rare opportunities for research exchanges specifically involving SfD exist, such as the annual conferences held by the International Health and Sport Studies section of the Japan Society of Physical Exercise and Sport Science since 2002.¹¹ In 2013, the Japan Society for International Development included a planning session on ‘new roles for sports’ in its 13th annual spring conference. Recently, the Japan Society of Physical Education, Health, and Sport Science has considered creating a new field of ‘international sports development.’ The University of Tsukuba and the National Institute of Fitness and Sports in Kanoya offer a joint master’s degree programme on ‘International Development and Peace through Sport’ and are expanding their research sites.¹² Overall, this suggests that public service groups are a growing body in the SfD space and they are expected to provide increasing opportunities to SfD practitioners and researchers.

SfD IN SPORTS POLICY AND THE TOKYO 2020 OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC GAMES

In October 2015, the Japanese government created the Japan Sports Agency as an external bureau of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology. The idea was to unify sports policies that had for years been

carried out by multiple ministries and agencies—including the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology; the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, the Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry and the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism—were considered, but creating a new government agency amid the global trend toward slimmer central administrations and the decentralisation of power to local authorities was not easy. With Tokyo chosen to host the 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games, people involved in sports realised a long-awaited opportunity—the creation of an agency composed of five departments: a policy department, sports for health department, competitive sports department, international department, and Olympic /Paralympic department (time limited).

The SD- and SfD- related activities to be carried out by the Olympic/Paralympic department were swiftly decided during Tokyo’s Olympic bid. In Prime Minister Abe’s final presentation for the bid, he laid out the ‘Sport for Tomorrow’ programme for Japan to contribute to international societies through sports until 2020. The goal of SFT is to bring the joy of sports to at least 10 million children in 100 countries by 2020 through projects that (1) support the creation of sports academies, (2) contribute to sports internationally through strategic bilateral partnerships, (3) strengthen international anti-doping activities, (4) develop the Olympic/Paralympic involvement nationwide, and (5) study the idea of a digital sports archive. Although the plan was allocated about 1.22 billion yen in the Sport Agency’s budget for the fiscal year 2016 and 1.17 billion yen for the 2017 budget,¹³ it is difficult to clarify what percentages of the budget will be practically used for the SD and SfD programmes in the fields. However, the specific mandate, goals and conditions listed above would suggest that a large proportion will be allocated towards traditional SD initiatives.

Projects that contribute to sports internationally through strategic bilateral partnerships can be considered Japan’s version of SfD. These include exporting Japanese-style physical education to schools in developing countries and supporting the hosting of sporting events. The Sports Agency has contracted an SFT consortium composed of the Japan Sport Council and other related organizations to carry out the projects. Its working committee is composed of 12 organizations, and, as of January 2017, it counted 256 groups among its members, including local governments, sports associations, companies, and NGOs.¹⁴

Since SFT was launched, its budget and membership appear to have grown favourably. Yet, when its actual

contributions to developing countries are examined, it has had very limited effects.¹⁵ SFT will need to generate more results if the promise of reaching 10 million people in 100 countries is to be realised. Actually, Japan is unlikely to come close to achieving this under the current framework, where the executive office's job mainly involves accrediting consortium members' activities as SFT projects. This suggests that the billion yen budget from the national government has barely been effectively used. Moreover, as activities carried out voluntarily with private funds are also counted as part of SFT, the true measure and impact of the programme is difficult to ascertain. Given this state of affairs, members of the consortium will start demanding specific outcomes or benefits sooner rather than later.

CONCLUSION: ISSUES AND PROSPECTS FOR SfD IN JAPAN

Some developed nations carefully introduced the concept of SfD many years ago, and have pursued policies and research in a manner that reflects activities actually conducted in developing countries.¹⁶ Meanwhile, it seems that Japan abruptly opened the SFT umbrella to coincide with its bid for the 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Before then, only a limited number of SfD projects were quietly conducted as a part of ODA or by NGOs. There was little discussion of SfD as a field, with very few people involved in SfD administration, policy, or research. Those who were involved in SfD often performed that work separately from their regular career responsibilities, or as a small part of them, and few were SfD specialists.

Although there are several reasons that Japanese people may be unfamiliar with the concept of SfD, two significant historical and cultural arguments were put forward. Firstly, Sawamura¹⁷ argued that a restrictive attitude to expanding Japanese ODA in the 1980s existed because "the government of Japan and the Japanese people required proper and understandable reasons for providing ODA to developing countries. Such a situation may be different from that in many American and European countries, where people generally have had a Christian background and Western charitable values."¹⁷ (p.27) Additionally for most Japanese, topics concerning immigration problems, ethnic conflict and multiculturalism, as well as international development activities are not part of their daily lives.

Another perspective is that Japanese sport culture has not matured and diversified at the same rate as other developed nations. Uchiumi et al.¹⁸ described that "generally speaking, the area of sport (in Japan) is conservative and sometimes reactionary."¹⁸ (p. 103) It seems that since the 1990s, the

general understanding of and attitude toward sport in Japan has not changed much. Looking forward to the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games, dynamic changes in sport and related areas by the leadership of the new Sports Agency are now expected and in line with these, and SfD should be included as a central pillar.

If this can be realised strategically, Japan will benefit from its sport-specific knowledge and resources. As described earlier, more than 4,000 JOCV are or have been taking part in JICA programmes. Experienced volunteers have spent an average of two years engaged in sports-related activities in developing countries, and are now active both in Japan and overseas in schools, national institutions, research institutes, sporting associations, regional municipal institutions, competitive associations, professional leagues, private companies, NPOs, and NGOs. If a framework were created to take advantage of their experience, many would likely participate enthusiastically. This could involve people supporting athletes around the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games, particularly those from developing countries. Building on people's volunteer experiences abroad, a great service could be provided as individuals would be familiar with foreign languages and customs. Such a service at the Games could be a unique characteristic not yet found at previous Games hosted in other countries.

In addition to creating opportunities for the limited number of people already involved in SfD, support must be provided to create a new stratum of people who show interest in SfD. If SFT's target of 10 million people in 100 countries is to be achieved, a system needs to be created to fund the activities already being conducted around the world, and a framework needs to be created that educates the Japanese public that the budget is being used appropriately. Without support mechanisms, it will not be easy for people involved in sports to fully understand international cooperation or to create trusting relationships with people in developing countries. At the same time, it will not be easy for people involved in international aid to explain the value of sports or to carefully execute the detailed social and sporting aspects of running tournaments, creating curriculums, and other sport-related projects. Funding, information, and a framework for sharing past experiences are needed to carry out joint SfD projects, and in the SFT, the Japanese government should not simply demand that members of the consortium produce results. The SFT committee needs to provide added value and stockpile the wisdom gained from conducting the projects. Increasing the number of people involved in SfD and gaining practical knowledge from carrying out projects will

help ensure that the concept of SfD survives in Japan beyond 2020. Effective collaborations with several related sectors in SfD will be highly demanded and discussions need to be begun early about who should handle related policies after 2020.

Having a comprehensive understanding of the opportunities and limitations of SfD (e.g., lack of funding, materials, personnel, and other essentials) — and being actively involved in SD and SfD projects from a practical and research perspective — can provide hints about how sports should develop in Japan. Thanks to the opportunity afforded by the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games, Japanese sports administrators have undertaken a first proper engagement with SfD. As previously suggested, ingenuity and strategic planning is needed to ensure the sustainability of SfD projects associated with mega-events such as the Olympic and Paralympic Games.^{19,20} As this report has highlighted, Japan should use its knowledge around sport to not only achieve positive SD and SfD outcomes in the lead-up to the Games, but also take the opportunity to establish itself as a leader in this space through strategic investment in human resources and supportive policy frameworks.

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Original Research

The impact of the Hoodlinks Programme on developing life skills and preventing youth violence in Guatemala City

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ABSTRACT

Hoodlinks is a sporting program focused on the development of Olympic Values that is run in two of Guatemala City's most violent zones. A total of 116 (80 males; 36 females) athletes (average age = 13 yrs.) participated in this study along with 5 coaches. Using a mixed-methods longitudinal design, athletes completed a series of questionnaires 6 months apart that assessed their level of aggressive and caring behaviours, use of life skills both in and outside the Hoodlinks program, and their overall quality of experience within the program. Interviews with athletes, their parents/guardians, and the program's coaches also took place at both time periods. Results showed high positive experiences in the Hoodlinks program at both time periods, significant increases in the use of life skills within the Hoodlinks program as assessed by their coaches, and significant increases in overall communication skills. Interviews with the participants highlighted the importance of running the program directly in high risk areas and the positive impact that the program had on the development of life skills for the athletes, the positive changes within the communities where Hoodlinks took place, and the additional levels of support that the Hoodlinks program had provided to athletes and their families. Recommendations for helping athletes transfer the life skills learned within the program to their everyday lives are provided.

BACKGROUND

Guatemala has the fourth highest homicide rate in Central

America and the fifth highest in the world.¹ Since 2000, the homicide rate has doubled from 3000 deaths per year to just over 6000 per year with the vast majority (89%) of the victims (and the perpetrators) being adolescent and adult males under the age of 30. The homicide rate for males aged 15 to 29 in Central America is four times that of males in this age range living in other regions of the world.² The costs associated with violence in Guatemala are close to \$2.2 billion per year or 7.7% of the country's total GDP.¹ Finding sustainable and cost effective ways to reduce youth violence is one of Guatemala's most urgent public health and economic issues.

The World Health Organization³ (p. 29) suggests that "developing life skills can help young people to avoid violence, by improving their social and emotional competencies, [and] teaching them to deal effectively and non-violently with conflict". Life skills have been defined as "...the abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life."⁴ (p. 8) By developing life skills, students "... learn self-protection, ways to recognize perilous situations, cope and solve problems, make decisions, and develop self-awareness and self-esteem."⁵ (p. 30) Violence prevention programmes that focus upon the development of life skills cost a fraction of the costs of treating victims of violence and show significant net savings when compared to the costs of treating victims of violence and punishing those who commit acts of violence.⁶

Participation in sport programmes has been linked to the

Keywords: life skills; violence prevention; Guatemala

avoidance of criminal activities,⁷ risky behaviours⁸ and gang membership⁹ due to their potential in fostering the development of life skills amongst youth.¹⁰ The use of sport programmes for this population has been identified by leading organizations such as the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the United Nations (UN) as one of the most cost effective ways to address conflict and violence. The International Olympic Truce Foundation recognizes the role that sport plays to initiate conflict prevention and resolution. Resolution A/RES/68/9 passed by the United Nations¹¹ also recognizes that "sports can foster peace and development and can contribute to an atmosphere of tolerance and understanding." When life skills are intentionally taught through sport, they can result in higher levels of problem solving skills¹² which in turn form a critical foundation for children and youth to effectively deal with issues such as conflict and violence.^{13, 14}

However, participation in sport does not automatically guarantee positive outcomes such as the attainment of life skills. A report released by UNICEF⁵ points out that sport can be an avenue for bullying and hazing, physical maltreatment, emotional and psychological abuse, sexual violence, and discrimination. While there is support that life skills can be learned implicitly through sport under the right conditions,¹⁵ the majority of the literature has stressed the importance of developmentally and individually appropriate sport programmes delivered by trained and competent coaches and teachers who intentionally teach life skills within a supportive socio-cultural environment focused upon positive youth development as the most effective way to intentionally foster the development of life skills.^{13,15-18} Or stated more succinctly "... life skills must be taught, not caught."¹⁹ (p. 78)

The area of sport for development and peace has been recognized as one of the fastest growing areas of research and development in the sporting literature.¹⁰ However, despite a rapid increase of sport for development programmes around the world, there is a paucity of behavioural research that has systematically investigated the impact of these programmes on its participants over time. In addressing this issue, the present study aims to better understand the impact of a sport for development programme called Hoodlinks on the development of life skills and aggression levels amongst youth who live in high crime areas of Guatemala City.

Literature Review

Despite the lack of research that has specifically and

systematically conducted behavioural research over an extended period of time, a number of studies contribute to our understanding of the role of sport in the development of life skills amongst children and youth. The Sports United to Promote Education and Recreation (SUPER) programme is one of the few programmes that have consistently and repeatedly examined such behavioural changes. A typical SUPER lesson lasts 45 minutes and includes: "learning the physical skills of a particular sport, practicing the physical skills, and learning life skills related to sports and how these skills are applied outside of sport."²⁰ (p. 44) Examples of life skills that are taught as part of the sporting instruction include team-building, goal setting, problem solving, positive thinking, overcoming obstacles, positive self-talk, stress management, appreciating diversity, confidence and courage.²⁰ Goudas et al²¹ reported the findings from 17 SUPER sessions (10 to 15 minutes each) integrated into basketball and volleyball lessons. The youth participants in the programme reported higher levels of knowledge about using life skills and increased beliefs about their ability to control negative thoughts. Papacharisis et al¹² reported that boys and girls averaging 11 years of age reported significantly higher levels of knowledge about life skills, goal setting, problem solving, and positive thinking following eight SUPER sessions (15 minutes each) integrated into soccer and volleyball lessons over a two month period. Brunelle et al²¹ also used the SUPER programme during a one-week golf academy with 13 to 17 year old boys and girls. Their results showed that after receiving five SUPER workshops (45 minutes each) during a weeklong intervention, participants reported significantly higher levels of social interest, social responsibility, and goal knowledge. Those who completed a community service component continued to report higher social responsibility and empathetic concern scores six months after the intervention compared to those who did not complete a community service component related to their SUPER training workshops.

The importance of peer interaction and providing an avenue for the application of life skills in sport has also been identified as a key feature in their development. Holt et al²² reported that in both team and individual sports, former competitive athletes identified the role that sport played during adolescence in the development of positive social skills. They also indicated that these skills had carried on into their adulthood. Finally, Mandigo et al²³ reported the results of a longitudinal study over a three-year period that examined the role of physical education (PE) on the development of life skills with Salvadoran students. Their interviews with school principals, PE teachers, and students revealed that all three groups were able to identify specific

examples of how PE helped foster the development of life amongst students at the school.

At a very basic level, participation in sport can be a diversion from delinquent behaviour. This has been referred to as the averting-mode of crime prevention.²⁴ When youth are participating in sport, they are less likely to be "on the streets" and hence are diverted from committing crime. However, others^{24, 25} have challenged the long-term sustainability of sporting programmes that are simply designed to avert youth from participating in criminal activities. Rather, the focus should be on if and how sport could encourage behavioural changes by fostering the development of positive life skills. Following a systematic review of 38 peer reviewed international articles examining the relationship between sport participation and crime prevention, Ekholm²⁴ (p. 6) concluded that "... sport as a means of crime prevention should emphasize non-sport components such as education in non-violence and moral values, de-emphasize competition, and deploy a rational and explicit development plan." Such approaches are consistent with a social change-mode of crime prevention that are designed to foster positive social behaviours through direct educational approaches. Intentionally integrating more pro-social approaches to sport through education is also supported by Bailey¹⁶ (p. 399) who highlighted that "... appropriately structured and presented activities can make a contribution to the development of prosocial behaviour, and can even combat antisocial and criminal behaviors in youth." However, in order for sport programmes to have the kind of impact in the prevention of youth violence, they should focus on both the needs of the community and the individual. Coakley¹³ suggests that sport programmes where participants develop feelings of being physically safe, personally valued, socially connected, morally supported, personally empowered, and hopeful about the future are much more likely to have a positive impact upon the development of all participants. For example, grassroots sports programmes such as Open Fun Football Schools (OFFS) and Football 4 Peace (F4P) highlight the positive impact that programmes run by trained local instructors at the community level can have on helping to develop conflict resolution skills between youth from Bosnia and Herzegovina²⁶ and Israel and Palestine²⁷ respectively. Such programmes highlight the importance of cultural understanding and solving conflict peacefully by fully integrating cultures together through football as opposed to demonstrating cultural superiority in football.

Research Context

The Hoodlinks programme takes place within the capital of

Guatemala. Guatemala City is divided into 22 zones. The Boxing and Taekwondo programmes take place in Zone 18 while Athletics, Badminton, Boxing, Judo, and Gymnastics programmes take place in Zone 7. Zone 18 is the most violent area within Guatemala City with 62 homicides reported in the first five months of 2014. This represents 25% of all homicides in Guatemala City during that period. Zone 7 had the fifth highest homicide rate with 16 reported homicides during the first five months of 2014, which represented 6% of homicides. Combined, these two zones where the Hoodlinks programs take place account for close to one third of all homicides in the capital.²⁸ Implementing this programme directly in the most high-risk areas of Guatemala City is a primary mandate of Hoodlinks. As a result, the Hoodlinks programme uses a variety of existing infrastructure directly within each zone to run its programming. In some cases, the programme is run in a small room in a community centre that is located near the entrance of a particular barrio. In other cases, local parks that are accessible on bus routes located in a central area of a zone are used.

The Hoodlinks programme was started by the Guatemalan Olympic Foundation (GOF) in 2012 to directly address growing concerns around youth violence. The various federations of these sports provide support in the form of equipment and training for Hoodlinks coaches. Each Hoodlinks coach receives training related to Olympic Values, technical and tactical overview of each sport they are coaching, sport administration, coaching pedagogy and basic sport science principles. The goal of the programme is to: "... place education of Olympic Values and sport at the service of the harmonious development of humankind with a view to promoting a peaceful society concerned with the preservation of human dignity." ²⁹ (p. 1)

Each month, the programme focuses upon one of the educational themes from the Olympic Values Education Program (OVEP). These themes include Joy of Effort, Respect, Fair Play, Balance of Mind, Body, Spirit, and Pursuit of Excellence. These themes are taught in a number of different ways by the coaches. Coaches are typically former athletes who receive additional training from the Guatemalan Olympic Foundation on how to implement the themes into their daily lesson plans. Strategies such as talking directly to the athletes about each theme and playing games that focus on the development of outcomes related to each theme are commonly utilized throughout the programme. Coaches also attend regular workshops that focus on a number of topics that have included how to develop a lesson plan, sport and peace, supporting personal growth for athletes, and being a positive leader for children.

Athletes in the Hoodlinks programme are eligible to receive a scholarship to support their primary or secondary education by helping cover the costs of school tuition, school supplies, and school uniforms. Athletes must maintain good grades and regular attendance at school and in the Hoodlinks programme to maintain their scholarship. Athletes in the Hoodlinks programme are also provided with access to tutors who are available on-site to assist the athletes with their homework.

Parents and family members of the athletes are also encouraged to be actively engaged in a number of areas of the programme. Workshops for parents on topics related to the goals of the programme, parenting tips, sport and peace, and healthy development are provided on a regular basis by the Guatemalan Olympic Foundation. Parents of athletes who receive a scholarship are also required to commit to ensuring their children attend Hoodlinks and school on a regular basis, attend workshops and meetings convened by the Hoodlink organizers, and assist their children with their academic progress. In some cases, family members will participate with their children in the sporting activities as was evident during one of the site visits by the lead author who witnessed a grandmother and a mother participating in the Boxing programme alongside their grand/daughter.

The purpose of this study was to review and understand the athletes' experiences in the Hoodlinks programme to date and examine whether it had an impact on the development of life skills and on levels of aggression of the participants over a six-month period. Measuring aggression rather than actual violent behaviours in this group was important due to aggression levels, particularly amongst boys, which serve as a predictor of violent behaviour as they get older.³⁰ Hence, targeting the reduction of aggressive behaviours in children and youth has been shown to be critical with any intervention aiming to reduce youth violence amongst adolescents and adults.

METHODS

A mixed-methods approach that attempted to balance the importance of both qualitative and quantitative methods was utilized. A mixed-methods approach is an effective way to examine real world issues because it "... focuses on research questions that call for real-life contextual understandings, multi-level perspectives, and cultural influences...and... integrates or combines these methods to draw on the strengths of each."³¹ (p. 4) It is an effective approach for the purpose of this study as it enabled the researchers to examine both the current impact of the programme, any potential changes over a six-month time

period, and potential reasons for trends in the data over time. For example, the use of questionnaire data enabled the researchers to see if there were any changes over the six-month time period in any of the behavioural variables. The use of the interviews with the athletes plus their parents and coaches helped to shed further light on the nature and potential causes of any changes that might have occurred during the same period.

Participants

A total of 116 (80 M; 36 F) athletesⁱ participated in the study. Informed consent for athletes was provided by their parent/guardian. Athletes also provided informed assent to participate in the study. This represents 77% of all athletes registered in the Hoodlinks programme. Athletes ranged in age from 9 – 19 years (average age = 13 years.). Of the 116 athletes, 62 (53%) had been in the programme for less than 1 year and 54 (47%) for more than 1 year. Sports represented included Athletics, Badminton, Boxing, Judo, Gymnastics, and Taekwondo. In addition to the athletes, five of the coaches provided informed consent to participate in the study. The five coaches who volunteered to participate in the study were all males and represented the sports of Badminton, Boxing, Judo, Gymnastics, and Taekwondo. All research protocols were approved by the Brock University Research Ethics Board and approved by the Scientific Review Committee from the Universidad Pedagógica in El Salvador.

Coach's assessment tool

Hoodlinks coaches completed the Life Skills Assessment Scale³² for each athlete at the beginning and end of the study. Hoodlinks coaches assessed each athlete's level of interaction with others, ability to overcome difficulties and solving problems, initiative, ability to manage conflict, and ability to understand and follow instructions (total of 5 items) on a scale of 1 (Does not do) to 5 (Does independently). An overall Life Skill Score was then obtained by taking the mean score of all five ratings. Kennedy et al³² reported strong internal reliability, inter-rater reliability, and test-retest reliability when used to observe youth aged eight to 16 years of age. Evidence of construct validity was also presented.

Athlete questionnaires

Athletes were asked to complete the following battery of questionnaires that assessed their development of life skills and levels of aggression (total of 145 items). These questionnaires were administered at the beginning and end

ⁱ The term athletes is used to describe the youth participants in this study as this is the term used by the Hoodlinks program.

of the study period (i.e., August 2015 and March 2016). A research assistant was available on site at all times to assist athletes with any questions they had or to provide clarity regarding reoccurring issues.

*Part A: Aggression, caring and cooperation scale.*³³⁻³⁵

Nineteen items measured the self-reported frequency of aggressive behaviours (e.g., hitting, pushing, name-calling, threatening) and the frequency of caring and cooperative skills over a seven-day period. There was a total of 11 items measuring the frequency (ranging from 0 – 6) of self-reported aggressive behaviors over a seven-day period. Each point represents one aggressive behaviour reported over that period. Scores can range from 0 to 66. For the caring and cooperative measure, there were eight items measuring the frequency (0 – 6) of caring/cooperative behaviour over a seven-day period. Similarly, each point represents one caring/cooperative behaviour reported over the past 7 days. Scores can range from 0 to 48. These items were modified from a 30-day recall survey³⁴ to a seven-day recall in order to be consistent with and to provide a comparison to Oprinas et al's³³ aggression scale format. The target audience for these scales was grade three to eight (or eight to 14 years of age). Dahlberg et al³⁵ have reported its internal consistency to range from .88-.90 for measures of aggression and .60 for the caring and cooperation scale.

*Part B: Life skills scale.*³⁶ This questionnaire contained 115 items that provide an overall life skills score and sub-scale scores ranging from 1 (Never) to 5 (Always) measuring levels of: i) Decision making skills; ii) Problem solving skills; iii) Empathy; iv) Self-awareness; v) Communication skills; vi) Interpersonal relationship skills; vii) Coping with emotions; viii) Coping with stress; ix) Creative thinking skills, and x) Critical thinking skills. A copy of the scale was purchased from Dr. Vranda and permission was provided to use the scale for research purposes. An overall internal consistency alpha coefficient of .94 for the overall life skill score and test-retest reliability coefficients ranging from .70 to .95 have been previously reported when used with adolescents 13 to 16 years of age. Given the lack of a viable alternative to measure life skills with youth at the time of the study, it was determined that athletes aged nine and older could still complete the questionnaire with assistance from the research assistant should they require help with the wording.

*Part C: Youth Experience Survey – Sport.*³⁷ This 27-item questionnaire generated for youth aged nine to 19 used a Likert scale ranging from 1 (Not at All) to 4 (Yes, Definitely) to assess the degree to which the Hoodlinks programme developed the following skills: i) Personal and

social skills; ii) Cognitive skills; iii) Goal setting; and, iv) Initiative. MacDonald et al³⁷ report strong internal consistency scores using Cronbach Alpha which ranged from .82 to .94 for the various subscales.

Hoodlink coach interviews

In-depth semi-structured interviews with the five Hoodlink coaches took place in August 2015 and then again in February/March of 2016. The average time of the interviews was 26.5 minutes in August and then 25.8 minutes in February/ March 2016. The interview guide was developed to help obtain a richer sense of the type of experiences that athletes have had in the programme and to better understand changes that coaches had seen in their athletes since they joined the Hoodlinks programme. The in-depth interviews with the coaches gathered insight into:

- a) Hoodlink coaches' experiences of teaching for non-violence.
- b) Their perceptions of the impact that the Hoodlinks programme has had upon athletes such as noticeable changes in behaviour both within and outside the Hoodlinks programme.
- c) The role of the Hoodlinks programme to support the development of life skills.

Athlete and parental/guardian interviews

Baseline semi-structured interviews were conducted with 38 athletes (23 males; 15 females) and at least one of their parents/ guardians. To facilitate a representative sample, a mix of athletes representing gender, sport, and age were selected. Availability of the parent/ guardian and the athlete to participate in an interview were also a factor in interview selection. The ages of the athletes who were interviewed ranged from nine to 17 years with an average age of 12.7 years. The average time of the interviews was 21 minutes.

Semi-structured interviews were once again conducted with 20 athletes (10 males; 10 females) and at least one of their parents/ guardians. The ages of the athletes who were interviewed in this phase of the study ranged from nine to 17 years with an average age of 12.7 years. The average time of the interviews with the athletes and their parents was 17.7 minutes. All of the Hoodlinks sports were represented by the athletes. These 20 athletes were part of the original cohort of 39 who were originally interviewed at baseline. Due to time constraints, it was not possible to re-interview all 39 athletes. The 20 athletes were chosen using

their scores from the questionnaire data collected at baseline as a guideline. Scores for each variable were converted into a z-score. Z-scores reflect the number of standard deviations away from the group mean. The higher the z-score (either positive or negative) the further away from the group mean for that particular variable. Z-scores from each of the variables were then added together to produce an overall z-score. Using this as a general guideline, an equal representation of athletes who had a high overall positive z-score and a high overall negative z-score was identified. In addition, an equal representation of males and females and equal representation from each of the Hoodlinks sports was attempted. The intention of this selection criterion was to attempt to re-interview athletes who initially scored high on the baseline questionnaires and low on the baseline questionnaires to produce a more heterogeneous sample.

The purpose of these interviews was to explore the impact that the Hoodlinks programme has had upon the athletes both inside and outside of the programme. For example, these interviews explored:

- a) Why their son/ daughter joined the programme
Any noticeable behaviour changes since starting the programme.
- b) The development of life skills both within and outside the programme.
- c) Any examples of how they have applied what they have learned in the programme into their everyday life.
- d) The role of the Hoodlinks programme to support the development of life skills.

All interviews took place directly at the Hoodlinks site and were conducted in Spanish by a research assistant hired in consultation with the Guatemalan Olympic Foundation. With the participants' permission, interviews were digitally recorded to ensure that the interviewer was able to accurately capture the participants' ideas and opinions. All digital files were transcribed verbatim and then translated into English for analysis.

Data analysis

Quantitative questionnaire analysis. SPSS 22.0 was used to analyse responses to the questionnaire data. Repeated Measures Multivariate Analyses of Variance (MANOVA) were used to test for possible changes from time one to time two. Only data from athletes who completed both the pre and post measures were included in these analyses.

Qualitative Interview Analysis. All English transcripts were uploaded into the Dedoose software package to assist data analysis. Using a coding system, data was identified as coming from either the athlete, parent/guardian, or coach. Data was also coded as Baseline and Follow-up interview. An inductive approach using a content analysis was then used to explore patterns and themes amongst the data.³⁸ Relevant interview excerpts were tagged for possible themes that began to emerge from patterns within the data. Once all the data was reviewed and possible themes were identified, the data was re-examined for possible duplicate themes within participant data sets and re-examined to ensure consistency in themes and important patterns across participant data sets were captured.

RESULTS

While 116 athletes completed the pre-measures, only 86 (62 males; 24 females) athletes completed both the pre- and post-questionnaires. This represents 73% of all athletes in the study. Possible reasons for attrition (i.e., not completing the post questionnaire) include relocation, change in school schedule (e.g., now attend school during the same time as the programme is offered), or being absent on the day of the postquestionnaire.

Data was then screened to ensure accuracy of data input and for outliers to ensure that each variable was normally distributed. All of the skewness levels were within acceptable ranges of ± 2.0 thereby conforming to assumptions of normal distribution required for analyses of variance.³⁹ Five (four pre-measures and one post-measure) of the total 54 variables had kurtosis levels that exceeded the recommended levels of ± 3.0 . However, due to the relatively small sample size of 86, the adequate skewness levels for each variable, the strong psychometric properties of the questionnaires, and the robustness of multivariate analyses, no data were eliminated or transformed in the analyses.

Questionnaire results

Table 1 provides an overview of the descriptive results of the pre- and post-measures for each variable. A significant multivariate effect for the within subject variable of time was found: $\lambda (18, 67) = .519; p < .001, \eta^2 = .48$. Subsequent univariate analyses indicated significant within-subject effects for Communication Life Skills $[F(1, 84) = 8.83, p < .01, \eta^2 = .095]$ and the Coaches' overall rating of athletes' Life Skills $[F(1, 84) = 27.14, p < .001, \eta^2 = .244]$. In both cases, the mean score at Time 2 was significantly higher than the reported score at Time 1. Subsequent

Table 1. Means and standard deviations of participants who completed both pre and post questionnaires and coach observation ($n = 86$)

	Pre Mean	SD	Post Mean	SD
<i>Aggression, caring and cooperation scale</i>				
Aggressive behaviours	6.2	5.9	5.5	5.6
Caring behaviours	16.7	10.3	16.5	10.4
<i>Youth experience survey</i>				
Personal and social skills	3.2	0.5	3.2	0.5
Cognitive skills	3.3	0.6	3.3	0.6
Goal setting	3.4	0.6	3.4	0.5
Taking initiatives	3.5	0.5	3.5	0.5
<i>Life skills scale</i>				
Decision making	3.4	0.4	3.4	0.5
Problem solving	3.7	0.5	3.7	0.6
Empathy	3.5	0.6	3.6	0.5
Self awareness	4.0	0.6	4.1	0.7
Communication	3.5	0.5	3.7	0.5
Interpersonal skills	3.9	0.5	4.0	0.5
Managing emotions	3.6	0.6	3.6	0.6
Managing stress	3.6	0.6	3.5	0.6
Creative thinking	3.7	0.6	3.8	0.6
Critical thinking	3.5	0.6	3.6	0.6
<i>Life skills assessment scale (observation)</i>				
Interacting with others	3.8	0.9	4.1	0.9
Overcoming problems and difficulties	3.4	1.0	4.0	1.0
Taking initiative	3.6	1.2	4.2	0.9
Managing conflict	3.4	1.1	3.9	1.1
Understanding/following instructions	4.1	0.9	4.4	0.9
Overall	3.7	0.8	4.1	0.7

Repeated Measures of Analysis revealed that the coaches' observation ratings for each of the individual life skill ratings of Interacting with others [$F(1,85) = 7.25$; $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .08$], Overcoming difficulty [$F(1,85) = 14.78$; $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .15$], Taking initiative [$F(1,85) = 12.84$; $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .13$], Managing conflict [$F(1,85) = 10.88$; $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .11$], and Listening to and following instructions [$F(1,85) = 14.86$; $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .15$] were significantly higher at follow-up compared to baseline.

Repeated MANOVAs were also conducted to explore the potential impact of Sex, Type of sport (combative vs non-combative), Location (Zone 7 vs Zone 18) and Years in the program (Less than 1 year, More than 1 year). There were no significant multivariate or univariate interactions between Time and sex and Time and years in program. However, there was a significant univariate interaction effect for Time x Location for the coaches' Life skill ratings. [$F(1, 84) = 4.65$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .053$]. Follow-up Pairwise T-tests revealed that the coaches' overall Life skill ratings of athletes in Zone 7 significantly increased from

Time 1 to Time 2 [$t(1, 68) = 5.76$; $p < .001$] while coaches overall Life skill ratings of athletes in Zone 18 did not significantly change [$t(1, 17) = 0.49$; $p > .05$].

Significant univariate interactions for Time x Type of sport for the coaches' Life skill ratings [$F(1, 84) = 4.14$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .047$] and Critical thinking life skills [$F(1, 84) = 4.83$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .055$] variables were also found. Follow-up Paired T-tests revealed that while coaches' overall Life skills ratings significantly improved for those in both non-combative sports [$t(1, 32) = 4.13$; $p < .001$] and combative sports [$t(1, 52) = 3.61$; $p < .01$], subsequent one-way ANOVA's demonstrated that at Time 2, coaches' ratings of Overall life skills were significantly higher for those in non-combative sports compared to those in combative sports [$F(1, 84) = 0.22$, $p > .05$]. These differences did not exist at Time 1 [$F(1, 84) = 4.11$, $p < .05$]. Paired T-tests revealed that Critical thinking skills significantly improved from Time 1 to Time 2 for those in combative sports [$t(1, 52) = 3.61$; $p < .01$] but not for those in non-combative sports [$t(1, 32) = 0.76$; $p > .05$].

Table 2. Themes and sub themes identified by group and time

	Athlete		Parent		Coach	
	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre
# Interviewed	20	39	20	39	5	5
# of Coded Excerpts	96	317	82	303	72	41
Safe place to play						
Adult supervised			✓	✓		
Financial support				✓		
Alternative to delinquent activities						
Provides a diversion	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Alternative to being in dangerous streets	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Discourages substance use		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Take in aggressive athletes						✓
Interpersonal skills						
Aggressive behaviours	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Collaboration					✓	
Communication	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Conflict resolution	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Helpful			✓			
Gender equity					✓	
Fair play	✓					
Jealous		✓				
Leadership	✓	✓				
Respectful of others	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Social cohesion	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Teaching others		✓				
Teamwork	✓		✓			

Interview results

Five core themes related to the impact of the Hoodlinks programme emerged from the qualitative analysis: i) Provides a safe place for youth to play; ii) Provides an alternative to delinquent behaviours; iii) Supports the development of positive life skills (both interpersonal and personal); iv) Provides other forms of support; and v) Has a broader community impact. These themes were consistent from the Baseline interviews and 6-month Follow-up interviews. Table 2 provides a breakdown of the occurrence of each sub-theme based upon time (Baseline and follow-up) and participant (coach, athlete, and parent/guardian).

Themes

1. Safe place for youth to play

Many of the parents spoke about the dangerous communities in which they lived. Zones 18 and seven have some of the highest rates of violence in Guatemala City. Many parents spoke about not letting their children play outside in the street and having to leave their children alone at home because they had to work and/or because the child's other biological parent did not live with them. Therefore, the children were either at school or inside the

home watching TV, playing video games, or doing other indoor activities. The following quote provides an example of the type of neighbourhoods many of the participants live in and the fear that parents have of letting their children outside to play.

I prefer them to be locked down at home, I prefer to buy them some movies, and leave them watching TV because if I am not with them, they cannot go out because I go out to work and if something happens to them outside and I do not know. Oh no! Oh my God! I cannot give them permission to go out because sometimes young people with shotguns pass close to where we live... (Parent, baseline)

The addition of the Hoodlinks programme within the communities gave their children a place to play under adult supervision at no cost. For the most part, parents viewed these places as safe because there were adult coaches there to watch over their children.

My son did not have the opportunity to go to another place because the place we live at is dangerous, so he hadn't been able to go. So now that we had the opportunity to come here [to the programme], my son is too excited. So he told me to come here and thanks God, here we are and I even do the [Boxing] practice with him... (Parent, baseline)

Table 2 continued. Themes and sub themes identified by group and time

	Athlete		Parent		Coach	
	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre
# Interviewed	20	39	20	39	5	5
# of Coded Excerpts	96	317	82	303	72	41
Personal Skills						
Appreciation		✓				
Awareness	✓					
Confidence	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Decision making					✓	
Excellence					✓	
Goal setting	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Health			✓	✓		
Honesty	✓	✓				✓
Leadership					✓	
Motivated			✓	✓	✓	✓
Personal responsibility	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Problem solving	✓				✓	
Resilience		✓	✓	✓		
Self defense		✓		✓		✓
Self improvement	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Self-regulation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Skill improvement	✓		✓	✓		
Stress management	✓		✓			
Provides other forms of support						
Received a scholarship		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Academic support			✓	✓	✓	
Bond with coach				✓	✓	
Family time	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Basic necessities				✓		
Parent workshop			✓			
Community wide impact						
Prevents gang membership			✓	✓		✓
More peaceful				✓		
Kids having fun		✓	✓			

Another athlete in a follow-up interview stated: “I always come to train and no longer keep me locked up [at home].”

2. Hoodlinks provides a diversion from delinquency

Several of the parents commented that without Hoodlinks, their children would be tempted to participate in delinquent activities.

When the Olympic Foundation hadn't arrived yet, there were some people who came to try to convince young people to be gang members. But we thank God because when the Olympic Foundation started the project in here, all the young people joined and this place gets full. Little by little the situation has been more calmed. (Parent, baseline)

One of the main outcomes identified by participants of the Hoodlinks programme was that it kept the kids “off the streets” and diverted their attention away from other, and in many cases more dangerous activities. These two athletes identified the important role that Hoodlinks played in their community: “It was something different for the neighborhood because everybody used to be outside doing bad things ... now everybody is doing good things, doing

sports.” (Athlete, baseline) Another athlete in a follow-up interview noted, “I think Hoodlinks has helped many young people because they are not in troubles, drugs or gangs any more they are training and focused on sport.

Coaches also identified with the role that Hoodlinks had of helping kids get off the street and participate in more positive prosocial activities offered through the programme. One coach in a baseline interview, stated:

I think that if programs like this were implemented, we would reduce delinquency rates considerably because it would be possible to keep the minds of the children busy, their bodies would be working, they would be thinking of a better future, and we would avoid gang members to come and influence them to do bad things.

3. Athletes learn life skills in Hoodlinks

Participants, parents, and coaches all identified the positive impact that the Hoodlinks programme had on learning various life skills. The type of life skills that participants identified were grouped under either Interpersonal or Personal life skills.

a) Interpersonal. Interpersonal skills refer to skills that individuals use to interact with others. Table 2 provides a summary of participants who identified specific interpersonal skills during both the baseline and follow-up interviews.

i) Respectful of others. All three groups mentioned becoming more respectful of others as a result of their participation in Hoodlinks. Athletes typically identified being more respectful of their coach, for others in the programme and for those outside the programme such as friends, family members, and teachers as an important life skill learned in the programme. An athlete in a follow-up interview stated:

In a Badminton competition you have to apply fair play because some points the judge don't see well and can score it or not. But if we are honest, the truth must be first of all. We have to respect the opponent because this is only a competition they are not our enemies. After the competition we can talk or be friendly with them.

Another athlete in a follow-up interview stated: "About respect, I have learned to respect decisions and opinions of others, because all of us have different way of thinking," while another athlete in a baseline interview noted, "I have learnt respect. You have to be respectful everywhere you go: the house, the school, and other places."

ii) Social cohesion. Social cohesion, or the opportunity to make friends and develop a social network through the Hoodlinks programme, was also identified by all three groups. For the athletes they felt that Hoodlinks had provided them with an opportunity to make new friends. Some had commented on how much easier it was to make friends at Hoodlinks compared to school. Athletes also commented on how Hoodlinks had taught them the importance of developing friendships and positive interactions with others. An athlete in a follow-up interview maintained, "At school we used to do homework in a group and it is necessary to know how to work with others. If we do not work in group it can be more difficult." These positive interactions were also noted by one of the coaches in a baseline interview, "At the beginning of the project, they pass in front of others and did not speak. The project came and help them to be friendly, and communicate better and avoid conflicts between them..."

iii) Conflict resolution. The ability to solve conflict in a more peaceful manner was another interpersonal skill that the athletes, parents, and coaches all felt that Hoodlinks taught the athletes. Strategies such as walking away and not

getting into a fight and to intervene when they saw a friend start to fight were identified by athletes as conflict resolution skills learned during the Hoodlinks programme. Parents also commented that their children had become less aggressive at school and at home and noticed less use of fighting to solve problems since participating in the programme. As this parent noted, her son has also passed on these strategies to his brothers at home: "Well, he try to talk with his brothers if they are fighting to avoid a worse fight. He don't like his brothers or others fighting. I can see a big change in my son." (Parent, follow-up)

iv) Other interpersonal skills. Table 2 provides a summary of the other types of interpersonal skills identified by the participants. For the most part, these interpersonal skills promoted pro-social behavior such as helping generate leadership qualities, being able to communicate and collaborate better with others, helping others and helping out more at home, using more elements of fair play, and being able to defend oneself.

b) Personal skills. Personal skills refer to skills that individuals have and that impact people primarily at a personal level.

i) Self-regulation. All three participant groups commented on improvements to athletes' self-regulation skills. Specifically, many noted improvements in the athletes' temperament and ability to control their anger to avoid getting into fights. "I think so because in the past, my temper used to be like bad and since I come here, I have improved a lot. I don't get angry anymore. I try to handle things better." (Athlete, baseline)

ii) Self-improvement. Participants identified areas of self-improvement, particularly with sport skill techniques such as improved flexibility and striving towards excellence. Other areas of self-improvement included not using foul language and stopping substance use of tobacco and drugs. The following quote by an athlete in a follow-up interview highlights how Hoodlinks has motivated them to be a better person:

Personally [Hoodlinks] has changed me a lot. Sometime ago, I used to answer bad to my mother, go out (on the street), but no more... I do not stay on the street. I prefer to use that time to read, to study. The behavior with my parents and brothers has improved. Definitely, the impact has been amazing. I was so rebellious but no more.

Parents in particular commented that athletes were discouraged from abusing substances such as drugs, alcohol,

and tobacco because it would negatively affect their sport performance. One parent in a baseline interview stated:

Yes, there are many guys who practice with us, in the past, they used to smoke marijuana, but they have stopped because they already realized on how that substance affects their performance.

iii) *Personal responsibility.* Personal skills pertaining to personal responsibility was identified by all three participant groups. Athletes and parents mentioned that Hoodlinks had taught them to be responsible by being punctual and arriving to the programme site on time and by assisting others. For example, one parent in a follow-up interview talked about the importance her son learning to be responsible by helping others in the neighbourhood without expectation of payment: “The most important value he has learned is responsibility, discipline and that he avoid problems. Now he helps me a lot at home.”

iv) *Goal setting.* The impact of Hoodlinks to help the athletes set individual goals was another theme common to all three groups of participants. As this athlete in a follow-up interview and one coach identified, Hoodlinks helped them not only to set goals, but also to track and monitor their personal goals in and outside of sport:

Most of them have set goals for life. Before the project they were aimless, do not know what they want, and neither what sport they were good [at]. But Hoodlinks programme helps us to understand, learn and focus on something that we really like and we know we are on the right track.

v) *Other.* A number of other themes were identified less frequently by participant groups. These included appreciation, confidence, honesty, motivation, decision-making, leadership, problem solving, stress management, striving for excellence, and resilience. Although not as frequently mentioned by all of the groups, these themes are important to recognize as contributing factors in the role Hoodlinks plays in these communities.

4. Hoodlinks provides other types of support

Parents commented on the additional support that the Hoodlinks programme provides in the form of academic support, scholarships, parent workshops, family support, and basic necessities. Often times, parents cannot afford to have their children attend school due to the additional costs (e.g., uniforms) or require their children to work to earn money for the family. However, by receiving a scholarship,

the families are able to afford to have their children attend schools. Athletes must maintain good academic standing and have regular attendance and positive behaviours to continue to receive the scholarship throughout the school year. One parent in a follow-up interview noted:

I tell to my kids they have to approach the benefits Hoodlinks give them, because this year I don't have money to continue studies. But thanks God and Foundation, three of my children have scholarship; that is one of the reasons I am grateful. The last year I got fired it was a difficult time for us. So I told them they have to take all blessings...

For many of the parents, they felt that participation in the Hoodlinks programme also encouraged success at school. Parents felt that athletes learned to be more disciplined through the programme and therefore were more likely to do their homework than to play on the streets during their free time. Coaches in particular stressed the importance of doing well in school and completing their homework. Another parent in a baseline interview maintained:

Until now that the foundation arrived to this place, they are doing so much for many kids because I see that there are many children who are getting benefits because of this project ... Last year, he did not do well at the school. But this year he has been doing great thanks to coach X who has been insisting him to do homework.

The coaches also served as mentors to many of their athletes and became someone with whom they could go to for advice. As one coach noted in a follow-up interview:

But I have seen significant changes on my athletes to someone it is difficult to stop bad habits like smoking, for example; because one of them came to training smelling of marijuana. (Despite they not smoke during training) but now I see that they are honest with me and told me: "teacher I smoked, I did this, or I did not do that"; I think we've created that bond of sincerity and honesty and I can work with them in a better way, get close and if they allow me, suggest some things. They are sincere with me and then I can work with them in a better way, approach and advise them like a friend.

5. Changes within the community

Parents in particular noticed positive changes in their community. They described it as more calm or peaceful. For example, one parent in a baseline interview stated:

Well, thanks God it has been calmed. I realized that there was a change when the project started because in the past, there was much delinquency, groups, and all the stuff. But now that the project started, I see here in Las Torres that there was a change. Almost every day you see people playing at the football court, so every group that arrives has their own rules, they leave and then another one comes at around 5:00 or 6:00 p.m. The ones from here arrive and they play at until 9:00 p.m. That is the change that I have seen.

Parents and athletes also commented about the joy and fun that the programme had brought to the community. One parent in a follow-up interview stated, “Before the project there were many kids who were doing bad things, but when the project came it was a shock for us, because it is free. We can train, learn and have fun.”

When asked what would happen if the Boxing programme left their neighbourhood, this parent responded in a baseline interview, “But I think that it can continue being here, it is better to me if it is here because the peace will continue in this area. If they leave and go to start at another place, there is going to be violence again.”

Coaches also stressed the importance of ensuring that the programme is sustainable in the communities to which they have made a commitment to offer programming. One coach in a baseline interview emphasized:

The acceptance of the people [in the community] also counts. At the beginning it is going to be something like: Oh well, there is a project which just comes for certain period of time and then it is going to leave. At the beginning it is very complicated, but you have to...we have to demonstrate them the project as it is, the vision that you have.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to understand the athletes’ experiences in the Hoodlinks programme to date and whether it had an impact on the development of life skills and levels of aggression over a six-month period. While the number of self-reported aggression and caring/cooperation behaviours did not change over the six-month period, the number of self-reported aggressive behaviours over a seven-day period was low at baseline (mean of 6.2 out of a possible max score of 66) and remained low at the end of the study (mean of 5.5). Similarly, the number of caring/cooperative behaviours reported over a seven-day period at baseline were moderate (mean of 16.7 out of a maximum score of 48) and remained moderate at the end of

the study (mean of 16.5). Whether these low levels of aggression and moderate levels of caring/cooperative behaviours reported at the start of the study was a result of previous participation in the Hoodlinks programme could not be determined. However, results from both the YES-Sport and the interview data suggested that many athletes had already had a positive experience leading up to the start of the study. For example, scores from the YES-Sport questionnaire indicated that athletes in the Hoodlinks programme had positive experiences both at baseline and at the six-month follow-up period (see Table 1). On average, athletes indicated that they felt that the Hoodlinks programme had helped them to further develop personal and social skills, cognitive skills, goal-setting skills, and initiative skills. In addition to the questionnaire data, interviews with the athletes, parents, and coaches all highlighted various personal and interpersonal life skills that they felt were being further developed and applied within the Hoodlinks programme (see Table 2). Based upon the responses to the YES-Sport questionnaire and the interviews, it would appear that their experiences within the Hoodlinks programme were positive and consistent with the development of life skills. Not only were positive experiences reported at the beginning of the study, but also were maintained six months later during the follow-up period. In a recent study by Nanayakkara,⁴⁰ students in Sri Lanka improved their critical thinking, reflective judgement, decision-making, and self-correction skills after spending six months in a programme that integrated Olympism Education and Conflict Resolution strategies. The changes were the same regardless of gender or ethnicity. Bean et al⁴¹ also utilized the Youth Experience Survey to assess girls’ experiences in a physical activity programme geared towards the development of life skills. Similar to the results in this study, athletes from low-income families reported high quality of experiences where life skills were intentionally taught through sport. Qualitative results from interviews in the same programme also highlighted the development of similar personal (e.g., emotional regulation, goal setting) and interpersonal life skills (e.g., respect, responsibility, social interaction) as those reported in this study.⁴²

Coaches’ assessments of the athletes’ ability to interact with others, overcome difficulty, take initiative, manage conflict, and listen to and follow instructions each increased significantly during the six-month study. These results are particularly encouraging given that these are indicators of the athletes’ application of the life skills that they have learned in the programme. While athletes reported moderate levels of life skills using the self-report Life Skills Questionnaire (LSQ) at both time one and time two, only

the Communication variable significantly increased. During the interviews, athletes could identify with many different life skills related to being respectful towards others, positive social interactions with others, more peaceful conflict resolution strategies, controlling aggression through self-regulation strategies, personal goal setting, and personal responsibility for social and personal improvement. However, they often had a difficult time articulating how they were implementing them outside of the programme. This evidence suggests that athletes may require further support on how to transfer their life skills outside of the sporting environment. The ability to internalize the development of a life skill is critical if youth are to be expected to apply the same life skill outside of the sporting environment.¹⁸ Previous research by Nanayakkara⁴⁰ highlighted that when Olympic Values were practiced and intentionally taught through games and sport activities that are focused upon conflict resolution, secondary students in Sri Lanka were better able to make the connection to applying these values at home, school and the community.

The one self-reported life skill from the LSQ that did increase significantly was Communication. It was also a common strategy that parents and athletes identified during interviews on how the athletes dealt with conflict both in and outside of the programme. Athletes often articulated that when confronted with aggressive behaviours from others or when seeing their peers engaged in aggressive behaviours, they would often resort to communication skills by avoiding physical aggression to solve problems and to tell others to “stop fighting.” Sport, it would seem, can provide an opportunity for athletes to practice their communication skills in a safe environment and can be an effective way to avoid conflict. Previous research with ex-gang members in Mexico found that games which focused on the development of communication, teamwork, trust and problem solving significantly improved perceptions of happiness, life satisfaction and self-concept.⁴³

The type of sport may have varying effects on athletes. In the case of this study, non-combative sports such as badminton, athletics and gymnastics elicited increases in coaches’ observation of overall use of life skills in their athletes compared to athletes in combative sports such as boxing, judo, and taekwondo. Conversely, athletes in the combative sports self-reported higher levels of critical thinking skills after six months of participation compared to those in the non-combative sports. While at first glance it may seem counter-productive to use combative sports to assist in the reduction of youth violence, previous research does support the use of such sports to facilitate life skills. Wright⁴⁴ (p. 150) provides an insightful glimpse into the

culture of boxing and why it is such a positive sport for adolescents who are high risk and previous offenders of violent behaviours:

The environment inside the gym presents an alternative to their life outside. It is focused, supportive and respectful of space and others. When a young person enters the gym, he or she can embrace an engaging atmosphere and become a focused boxer. Gaining an athletic ethic through the groups helps the youth not only begin to form a positive self-identity that will help them live a fulfilling life, but it also encourages a practice of self-preservation.

Chinkov et al⁴⁵ also provided support for a link between participation in combative sports and the development of life skills. They interviewed 16 Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu athletes who had been participating in their sport anywhere between two and 20 yrs. Common life skills that the athletes reported as a result of their participation in Jiu-Jitsu were respect for others, perseverance, self-confidence, and healthy lifestyles. While positive results have been found for the use of combative sports (and non-combative sports for that matter), what is less understood is whether different sports produce different types of life skills. Following up on Chinkov et al’s⁴⁵ study with Jiu Jitsu athletes, they were not provided with specific “life skills training” as part of their lessons. They identified the culture and ethos of the sport as a main contributor to foster life skills. Other research has found that sports that have a high degree of physical contact and that often encourage a culture of aggressive behaviour against opponents (e.g., American football, ice hockey) tend to produce more incidences of unsportsmanlike behaviour compared to sports that have only a moderate level of contact (e.g., basketball, baseball/softball, soccer, lacrosse).⁴⁶ Following an extensive review of research examining the impact of various sports on the psychological experiences of youth, Evans et al⁴⁷ recommends that further research is required to understand the contextual and environmental factors that influence a young person’s experience when playing different type of sports. This study adds further support for examining the impact of different types of sports on life skill development.

Parents often reported that their children were spending more time focusing on doing well in the programme and doing well at school rather than participating in delinquent behaviours manifested on the streets in their communities. Previous research with child soldiers in Sierra Leone highlighted that a football programme geared to help reintegrate youth after a civil war played an important role in distracting youth from delinquent behaviours and served as a psychological coping mechanism for participants to

help them divert their memories away from the horrors of war.⁴⁸

The decision to take the programme directly to athletes within two of the most dangerous Zones of Guatemala City has been a very important one to ensure access to the programme. Providing children and youth with a safe place to play is consistent with Article 31 of the United Nations⁴⁹ Convention on the Rights of the Child, which states: “Parties recognize the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.” Athletes and parents described the feeling of being held hostage in their own homes due to the dangers right outside their houses. The only place where many athletes were allowed to go previously was to school and then straight back to their house. Once at home, they were not allowed to go outside due to the dangers on the streets. However, with the addition of the Hoodlinks programme in their communities, it became a place where the children and youth of the community were allowed to go by their parents. Athletes described these experiences as being a form of liberation from their homes where they often felt locked up when they were not at school. These results provide further support for the importance of running life-skills based programming directly in the areas where it is most needed. Similar findings from a study with the South African Buffalo City Soccer School (BCSS) located in the Buffalo Flats community in the East London area have also been reported.⁵⁰ The Buffalo Flats community is reported to have a high level of unemployment and inadequate access to basic infrastructure such as health facilities, law enforcement and basic necessities. The BCSS programme focuses upon the development of life skills through soccer. Participants who were interviewed in the programme described the BCSS as a safe place where they can go to get off the streets and hence stay away from getting into trouble.

CONCLUSION

The results from this study support the importance of embedding sport programs directly in neighbourhoods at high risk of violence. As many of the parents in this study commented, the streets outside of their homes are dangerous. Before Hoodlinks arrived in their community, the children and youth in the community were either “locked inside their homes” when not at school or were outside on the streets either participating in or being subjected to delinquent behaviour. With the arrival of the Hoodlinks programme, the children and youth now had a safe and welcoming place where they could go during their leisure time. While at the Hoodlinks programme, athletes developed a positive social support network with their

coaches and their peers and reported positive experiences throughout the duration of the study. Through sporting activities, they also had opportunities to learn, develop, practice, and apply numerous personal and interpersonal life skills. Coaches noticed significant improvements after six months of their athletes’ use of life skills such as interacting with others, overcoming difficulty, taking initiative, managing conflict, and listening to and following instructions. The athletes themselves reported significantly higher levels of communication skills six months after their baseline assessments. While further efforts are needed to help the athletes make the connections between the life skills learned in Hoodlinks and the application of these skills in their day-to-day lives, parents and coaches had started to notice changes within the home and within community. Parents in particular noticed that their children had started to develop good study habits at home for their schoolwork and were taking their academic responsibilities more seriously. This was incentivised through the use of a scholarship that families could access should the athletes maintain participation in the programme and continue to perform well academically and maintain a 95% attendance record in school. Athletes were also more helpful at home and were getting along better with their siblings. Parents also felt that their communities had become more peaceful with the arrival of the Hoodlinks programme and feared that if the programme were discontinued, violence levels would escalate. Overall, the results over a six-month period are quite encouraging with respect to the development of life skills of athletes in the programme. Exploring the potential for programme expansion to serve more youth and more communities using similar programme structures to encourage regular participation appears warranted given the positive results from this study.

AUTHOR’S NOTE

Funding for this study was provided by Olympic Studies Centre through the Advanced Research Programme. The Olympic Studies Centre has provided their permission to reuse material in this manuscript from the final report that is posted in their digital library. The original report can be found here: <https://library.olympic.org/Default/doc/SYRACUSE/165820/the-impact-of-the-hoodlinks-program-to-develop-life-skills-and-prevent-youth-violence-in-guatemala-j>.

The authors also wish to thank and acknowledge the following individuals from the Guatemalan Olympic Foundation for their contributions and support throughout the study: Maria Jose Paiz, Mónica Garrido, Fabio Torres, Juan Ricardo Rivas and Amapola Arimany.

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Editorial

JSFD in times of change: A reflection on milestones met and challenges ahead**Nico Schulenkorf¹, Emma Sherry², Justin Richards^{3,4}**¹University of Technology Sydney, Australia²Swinburne University of Technology, Australia³University of Sydney, Australia⁴Community Sport, Sport New Zealand

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In March 2013, the *Journal of Sport for Development* (JSFD) published its first issue as an online, open-access academic journal explicitly dedicated to sport for development (SFD) research. JSFD's mission was to embark on a journey towards advancing, examining and disseminating best practices and evidence of effectiveness from programs and interventions that use sport to promote 'international' development in the seven thematic areas of: education, disability, gender, health, livelihoods, social cohesion, and peace.¹ Five years from its inauguration, it seems timely to look back and reflect on some of JSFD's organizational developments, key achievements, and future challenges.

Since its inception, JSFD has achieved a number of important milestones. Most importantly, the journal has established itself as a reputable scholarly outlet that is attractive and relevant to researchers, practitioners and policymakers from around the world. More specifically, JSFD has published a total of six volumes with two issues per year. This has included a special issue on disability published in 2016, and another special issue on SFD in Latin America published in 2018. The special issue focusing on Latin America is a particularly important achievement, as JSFD has always aimed to encourage contributions from academics and practitioners from low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) across the globe, which are traditionally under-represented in scholarly research.² Overall, over 150 submissions from scholars spanning 34 countries have been received to date, and 136 experts from different nations have been engaged in JSFD's double-blind peer-review process. Finally, JSFD's editorial board has grown to represent an internationally acclaimed group of academics and practitioners with

largely diverse backgrounds and an equal gender balance. The JSFD editors and editorial board aim to "practice what we preach" with a strong focus on equity, access and diversity.

The ongoing growth of JSFD demands fresh ideas and energy from the diverse group of people that is leading the academic development of the sector. To that end, the co-editors of JSFD have collectively decided to step aside and warmly welcome a new team to lead the journal forward. The new co-editors – Kate Merrill, Per Svensson and Meredith Whitley – were recently appointed through a highly competitive open recruitment process. Kate has been invaluable to JSFD in her original role as managing editor, ensuring quality administration of the journal, and brings to this new role an exceptional level of expertise and enthusiasm. Her historical involvement with JSFD will also ensure the continuity of its core founding principles. This will be complimented by the addition of Per and Meredith, who have both been long-term supporters of JSFD as publishing scholars, reviewers and advocates in the field. They will bring novel perspectives to the journal and we look forward to benefiting from their combined knowledge and expertise.

The outgoing co-editors are confident that the journal will continue to flourish under the new leadership and are excited to see how JSFD evolves in the time ahead. We recognize that the new team of co-editors will develop their own agenda for the growth of the journal, but before we sign off we would like to exercise our editorial license one last time to issue them with a few challenges going forward...

1) Further diversification

Despite JSFD's success in engaging scholars from across the globe, we challenge the new editorial team to further diversify in regard to both geographical and cultural representation. We acknowledge that this diversification is a difficult process, given the relatively small number of academic positions in LMICs that are specifically relevant to SFD. However, more can and should be done in the future to engage with – and benefit from – scholars in LMICs across the globe who have expertise in sport-related development work.

2) Maintain and sustain

JSFD was founded and has always been run on a voluntary basis to ensure it could be sustained, despite a volatile SFD funding environment. The journal was built on the premise that knowledge that can improve the lives of others should be disseminated and accessed free of charge. We challenge the new editorial team to maintain this model of free information sharing, which is particularly pertinent in LMICs where scholars and practitioners contend with very limited access to academic journal subscriptions and resources.

3) Academic kudos

JSFD is a relatively young outlet for scholarly work and faces challenges in an academic environment where there is an increasing focus on journal rankings and impact factors. We challenge the new editorial team to solicit academic articles from leading scholars in the field and further build the reputation and citation profile of JSFD. The wheels have been set in motion for JSFD to be indexed in the Emerging Sources Citation Index. This development would provide JSFD with an important mark of quality and legitimacy; moreover, it promises to improve JSFD's visibility through direct affiliation with the Web of Science. We feel that this presents an immediate organizational priority for the new leadership team.

4) Relevance of output

JSFD has always focused on producing research outputs that are pertinent to policy and practice. The relevance of traditional academic outputs is being increasingly questioned and the way information is generated and consumed is rapidly evolving. We challenge the new editorial team to embrace innovative approaches to research and novel ways to communicate with JSFD's target audience. This includes publishing evaluations developed in

partnership with industry and practitioner co-authors and continuing to encourage research at the intersection between theory and practice.

5) Breadth and depth

The contributions to JSFD since its inaugural issue have been wide and varied. However, there have been areas of work relevant to JSFD that have not featured strongly in the journal. The lack of published research about livelihoods and gender equity within the SFD sector has previously been noted in a review of existing studies.² We challenge the new editorial team to further establish the evidence-base in these under-published areas and to continue to work with guest editors to develop special issues tackling novel areas of research.

In closing, we look back on when JSFD was conceived six years ago as an open-access, peer-reviewed academic journal managed by a dedicated group of inter-disciplinary scholars. A key goal was to publish high-quality SFD research that was attractive to fellow researchers, implementers and policymakers from around the world. We believe that with the groundwork firmly laid, the new leadership trio – with support from JSFD's incredible operations team – is well positioned to steer the journal to new heights.

The Outgoing Editors

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