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Declaration

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Sport for Development and Community Building

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1. BACKGROUND

Sport has been recognized as playing a potentially strong role in nurturing individuals and groups beyond physical development. In 2003 the United Nations (UN) passed a motion entitled “Sport as a means to promote education, health, development, and peace.” Although the idea of using sport for non-sport purposes is not new, this UN motion was further recognition that sport has become an increasing part of the humanitarian and developmental efforts of educational, governmental, non-governmental, and private organizations. Associated with this growing acknowledgement, there have been increasing efforts made to scrutinise the potential, as well as the limitations, of sport in achieving a range of personal, community, national, and international development objectives.

This paper will consider the role of sport in terms of (i) peace and reconciliation, (ii) social justice, (iii) education, (iv) health and well-being, and (v) corporate social responsibility. It should be noted that as a field of interest, sport for development is relatively new compared to other topics considered within the Junior Sport Framework. In addition, sport for development is a field in which quantifiable data are limited and traditional (positivistic) research methods are largely inappropriate. In somewhat of a contrast to more established fields of inquiry, the evidence of the impact of sport for development programs tends to be in the form of anecdotal reports, and case examples based upon a steadily building base of empirical research studies. This paper will draw upon this emerging but somewhat limited body of knowledge.

“Sport has the power to change the world, the power to inspire, the power to unite people in a way that little else can.” (Nelson Mandela, 1993)
2. PEACE AND RECONCILIATION

2.1 What we know

A number of sport-based programs exist around the world that have been designed to promote peace and address cross-cultural intolerance through the reconciliation of relationships and the resolution of animosities and issues. Examples include Kicking for Peace in South Africa, The Doves Project in Cyprus, Twinned Peace Soccer Schools Project in Israel, and Football for Peace in England and Israel. In Australia, VicHealth has worked in partnership with Cricket Victoria to develop its Harmony in Cricket Program with Indigenous and non-Indigenous children.

These structured sport programs provide opportunities for social contact across community boundaries, promote understanding of different cultures, help individuals realize that generally people are much more alike than different, and increase participants’ understanding that individuals’ behaviors have an effect on the performance and experience of others. The common element to all programs with peace and reconciliation aims is the positioning of the sporting environment as a place in which people can come together. Fundamental to this view is that participants may work towards a common goal, operate within the spirit (and rules) of the game and, at a pragmatic level, share space and equipment. Participation in these programs has led to social perspective taking (thinking and caring about others), cross-cultural tolerance and friendship, and increased self-efficacy.

2.2 What works

The general consensus amongst sport for development practitioners and academics is that a holistic approach is needed if there is to be any hope of achieving peace and reconciliation aims. Holistic approaches must also be sensitive to the prevailing political, economic, and socio-cultural contexts. More specifically, the following elements of a holistic approach have a demonstrated history of enabling success in sport for development programs:

- Operating a program through a broad-ranging multicultural network (i.e., including organizations from all cultural groups involved).
- Having institutional/government support (e.g., ongoing endorsement, financial assistance, policy undertakings).
• Including an educational or life skills component (e.g., incorporating positive peer interactions).
• Having equal status among members of different cultural groups (e.g., equal representation of working groups).
• Having common goals that ideally require intergroup cooperation to be achieved (e.g., a goal to improve school attendance for children aged 15-17).
• Providing the opportunity for participation of all cultural groups in the initial stages of developing a program creates a feeling of ownership that results in passion and a commitment to making it work (e.g., negotiating program components with all stakeholders prior to program development).
• Providing opportunities for continued cooperation outside of sport (e.g., groups working across school and health sectors).

2.3 What doesn’t work

Peace and reconciliation outcomes are not assured through the use of sport. Indeed sport has been shown, at times, to foster detrimental nationalistic expressions and has been used for imperialistic purposes that run counter to objectives of peace and reconciliation. In general, it is agreed that the following do not work:

• An us/them mentality.
• One-off short-term programs.
• Focusing on winning.
• Competition based on national, racial, ethnic or geographical identity can be counterproductive.

2.4 What we don’t know

Given that sport for development as a research area is relatively new, there is little published empirical literature. As a result, there are many questions that remain unanswered. Broad and important questions that may shape the field in years to come include:

• What are the best educational and sports themes to include in a program?
• What are the long term effects of these programs?
• What are the organizational components that hinder positive change and development?
• How are programs variously experienced by participants of all genders, ethnicities, and abilities?
3. SOCIAL JUSTICE

3.1 What we know

Examples of prominent existing programs include Street Soccer (sport as a mechanism for engaging homeless and marginalized people and promoting social inclusion) and Midnight Basketball (providing a safe, constructive activity during late-night [high crime] hours). The basic idea of sport programs with social justice aims is to provide an alternative to the potentially destructive activities of the street. Subsequently, sport and recreation are often promoted as ways of protecting against boredom and preventing crime for "at-risk" young people through access to appropriate activities within a supportive social environment. Cameron and MacDougall (2000) suggested that sport and physical activity can be a “fantasy that allows one to escape from the day to day reality of family conflict, homelessness, or the temptations to use alcohol, drugs or inhale petrol” (p. 22). The specific value of sport is highlighted by previous work which has shown sport to be effective at recruiting and retaining hard-to-reach individuals that are typically the target population of social policy initiatives.

The success of sport-based social intervention programs, however, is largely determined by the strength of the non-sport components. For example, in the American cities that adopted Midnight Basketball, crime rates (both violent crime and property crime) declined significantly faster than cities without Midnight Basketball. The drops in crime, however, cannot be attributed solely to a small number of individuals being off the streets for a few hours each week. Potentially the community-based sport programs enable community members to feel directly connected to their communities and positively served by social services and law enforcement. In an Australian context, it has been argued that it is unrealistic to expect that sport and recreation programs alone can have an ongoing impact on young people’s behaviors if not considered within the broader context of young people and their needs. One study examining attitudes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in an urban context found these young people did not view themselves as at-risk and therefore may not respond to programs developed from this perspective. Similarly, they did not view sport as a way to “save” them from risky behaviours.

3.2 What works
As mentioned above, the success of sport-based social intervention programs is largely determined by the strength of the non-sport components.

Accordingly, to address risk factors in children and youth, programs should seek to:

- Engage with communities to develop “bottom-up” approaches (e.g., finding out what communities and individuals do well at and struggle with at a local level).
- Include support staff who can link participants to community support systems and services (e.g., making use of established networks of community liaison personnel).
- Provide activities that suit individual and community needs (e.g., programs may be different in each community).
- Value participation in activities over skill development and competition outcomes (i.e., programs should not be about identifying talent or win and losses).
- Include specific programming for education, mentoring, skills training, and personal development (e.g., plan to include curriculum and personnel to achieve important non-sport outcomes).
- Use a strengths-based approach that takes what individuals and communities are doing well as the starting point for program development (e.g. avoid focusing on correcting deficits).

3.3 **What doesn't work**

To be clear, participating in physical activity does not directly influence deviant behavior. The quality of adult leadership is crucial to program success. For programs to achieve their social justice aims operators must carefully consider the factors described in the section above. Similarly, there are aspects that must be avoided because they serve to thwart any gains. These include:

- Assuming that sport on its own automatically has a pro-social, anti-risk influence (i.e., recognizing that sport is not automatically a positive social force).
- Having those involved in the programs being passive recipients of programs rather than active participants involved in identifying their own needs and shaping interventions.
- Using a deficit model (focusing on identifying and addressing problems).

3.4 **What we don't know**
Although there is great intuitive appeal for the use of sport for diversion, rehabilitation and escape, there is much that we do not know about sport’s capacity to achieve these significant aims.

Examples of questions yet to be thoroughly considered include:

- What specific effects do these programs have on the individual participants and the community at large?
- Sport definitely recruits participants, but what is the best structure/content of programs aimed at decreasing crime and drug use?
- What differences in outcomes are there between sports programs sponsored by local neighborhoods and community organizations versus sports programs paid for by parents who seek competitive and highly regarded programs and coaches for their children?
4. EDUCATION

4.1 What we know

In addition to sport potentially decreasing at-risk behaviours in young people, sport is viewed as an attractive activity that may be used as a lure to recruit people into educational situations. More specifically, participation in sporting programs and sometimes spectatorship at sporting events have been promoted as means to increase engagement in education and promote school attendance. For example, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) uses sporting events and associated awareness campaigns to advocate for girls' education.

In Australia, the Sporting Chance Program and the No School, No Play initiatives both promote sport and recreation as vehicles to improve school attendance and achievement for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people. The No School, No Play initiative particularly uses elite sporting organisations to run programs with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander high school students, whilst the Sporting Chance Program uses both elite sporting achievers and education engagement strategies for students in primary and secondary school. Evaluation reports for educational programs in the sport for development area indicate greater levels of school attendance, improved attitudes to schooling, greater parental and community involvement with school, increases in self-esteem for participants, and achievements in other areas such as leadership and mentoring.

4.2 What works

Common to all successful programs is the presence of high-quality educational experiences provided by well-qualified leader(s). In short, there is no benefit in using sport to attract individuals to sporting environments that foster negative experiences; a situation that would actually serve to disenfranchise sport participants. In contrast, the following have been shown to be effective in achieving educational outcomes through sport:

- Engaging high quality physical education teachers, coaches, and other sport leaders because they determine the quality of the educational experience for participants (i.e., professionally qualified with strong reputations as practitioners).
- Connecting participants with ongoing, high-quality experiences through established, reputable, and skilled educational bodies and institutions.
• Focusing on the development of the whole individual rather than predominantly on the development of physical skills.
• Providing non-threatening (physically and psychologically) experiences that will encourage life-long engagement.

4.3 What doesn’t work

As described above, when the quality of the educational experience linked with sport programs is poor, participants are likely to become disenfranchised and cynical regarding involvement in sport more generally. There are sometimes unexpected negative effects even when the quality of experiences are high. Examples of unintended negative outcomes from the discussed Australian programs include:

• Dissatisfaction from others in the school community who weren’t afforded the same access to opportunities as the Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander students.
• Disproportionate opportunities given to boys through boys-only Sports Academies and a disproportionate emphasis on male-oriented sports.
• The exclusion of large numbers of students with average sporting abilities and the perpetuation of the belief that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are good at sports (but not academics) when the focus is on elite sporting abilities.

4.4 What we don’t know

Although there is much anecdotal evidence about the achievement of educational outcomes through sport for development programs, there is a great deal that remains unknown. For example, the following remain relatively unclear:

• Whether formal schooling outcomes of students improve through engagement with these programs.
• The most effective way of conceptualising and evaluating “engagement” in education.
• How the impact (e.g., social, financial, psychological) of these programs differs across urban and rural/remote contexts as well as developed and developing countries.
• What role sporting scholarship programs offered through educational institutions play?
5. HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

5.1 What we know

Sport has a long history of being used to improve mental, physical, and social well-being. Increasingly sedentary lifestyles, particularly for those in developed countries, have contributed to increased prevalence of non-communicable disease such as cardio-vascular disease, cancer, and diabetes. There is a large body of empirical evidence supporting the positive effects of physical activity as part of a healthy lifestyle. Sport for development programs may target health and well-being at local, regional, and national levels through the promotion of healthy lifestyles choices, raising awareness of communicable disease, and communicating health-related messages to at-risk groups. For example, programs combining physically active games with mental skills training have been shown, at least in the short term, to significantly increase the life satisfaction, self-worth, and happiness of orphans, teenagers living in poverty, and former gang members. Although the games are fun and may be the main draw card for attending these programs, they are also designed to improve trust, communication, and problem solving, as well as serve as a vehicle through which the various mental skills can be applied (e.g., goal setting, self-talk, attention/concentration).

Similarly, a number of sport programs have been designed with the intent of decreasing the spread of AIDS. Examples include Sport for Life, Kicking AIDS Out, and EMIMA ("Elimu, Michezo na Mazoezi" – Swahili for “Education, Sport, and Exercises”). Generally these programs are designed to assist at-risk children in developing sport skills and acquiring AIDS education and HIV prevention life skills. Peer coaches are not only effective in transmitting knowledge about HIV/AIDS and safe sex practices, but actually have been found to be more effective than the traditional HIV/AIDS education provided in the regular school system in Tanzania.

In Australia, sport and leisure, including physical activity, have been seen by many Indigenous people as an important part of social life in Aboriginal communities where families and communities can meet and develop social and community links. In this sense, health may be viewed beyond the individual as it extends to the well-being of the family and community. Sport and physical activity are also seen as important in the promotion of a healthy lifestyle and in minimizing risk factors for chronic disease amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. However, research shows that in an urban context, there is a need for safe
spaces to play and a diversity of opportunities beyond football and netball. In addition, participation needs to be promoted beyond organised sport to recreation and leisure activities.

5.2 What works

Previous work has demonstrated that the conditions under which the activity takes place can heavily influence the health outcomes achieved (or not achieved). As a result, it is suggested that sport for development programs seek to:

- Encourage participants to work with each other by promoting input and discussion to ensure content is personally and culturally meaningful.
- Ensure program leaders have a good understanding of the social context (e.g., life circumstances, cultural practices) in advance of any program implementation. Ideally, local leaders may be engaged to operate programs (with ongoing support and training where appropriate).
- Provide a variety of opportunities for different sport and recreation activities.
- Carefully consider prescription of activity to ensure participant safety as well as the achievement of health goals. Program content may vary from low impact activities (e.g., walking) to high impact sports (e.g., 80 minutes of moderate intensity activity).

5.3 What doesn’t work

Attempting to achieve health and well-being outcomes through sport can be highly problematic even if well-intentioned. Some approaches that have been consistently shown to be highly ineffective include:

- Lecturing at participants.
- Disregarding the culture of the participants (e.g., assuming that because a program ‘works’ in one setting that it will automatically work in another).
- Adopting a “one-size-fits-all” approach to the promotion of sport and recreation.

5.4 What we don’t know

Even within the field of health promotion there is ongoing debate about the optimal combination of type, frequency, and intensity of physical activity required to achieve health outcomes in different populations.
Although this remains a general concern in the specialised area of sport for development, there are also specific gaps including:

- What age is best for instigating programs?
- What is the ideal length and session duration for these programs?
- How long do the positive effects gained through participation in these programs last?
- What effect does being a peer coach or peer mentor have on future life achievements of these leaders?
- Does participation in sport at a young age influence life-long healthy behaviours?
6. CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY

6.1 What we know

Corporate social responsibility occurs when businesses go beyond providing profits to shareholders by conscientiously giving back to society. Corporations are increasingly being expected to play a supportive role in the community through employee volunteering, strategic philanthropy, corporate donations, and community-driven development. When corporations actively support the community, they not only help the community, they also generate favorable publicity, employee commitment and morale, and a positive corporate reputation that can lead to a stimulation of customer demand and greater customer loyalty. It should be noted that there is often a degree of cynicism regarding the motives of those businesses that engage in corporate responsibility programs. For example, it is suggested that some businesses do so solely for the commercial benefit resulting from improved reputation and/or to deflect attention from questionable operating practices. Despite this existing cynicism, sport for development programs funded through corporate responsibility channels can add value to programs beyond financial support. For example, program impact may be enhanced through involvement with companies that are highly influential and have global reach. There may also be the opportunity to learn from partner organizations and further leverage human resources for mutual gain.

Organizations (e.g., sporting clubs) that are seeking charitable donations can consider that there are two main types of philanthropy: commercial and adoptive. In commercial philanthropy individuals donate money because they believe they will receive something in exchange that has commercial value (e.g., access to tickets or parking). Adoptive philanthropy, however, happens when donors have the primary goal of benefiting the organization. New donors tend to be commercially motivated, and they tend to be limited by ceiling effects (i.e., the value of what they are getting in exchange for their money). Adoptive philanthropy often involves greater amounts of money, but it only tends to occur when individuals have high levels of involvement and identification with the organization to which they are giving.

Although the notion of corporate responsibility has its origins in relation to multi-national corporations, businesses of all sizes have engaged in this form of self-regulation. Indeed even the sporting sector has adopted models of corporate responsibility with many professional sporting franchises funding community outreach programs. For example, Australian Rules Football and Rugby League organisations have regularly partnered with Indigenous
communities in promoting health and physical activity. These programs are not without issues, however, as they tend to focus on a small subsection of the community (elite level male footballers) and may serve to reinforce an unrealistic expectation that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children will all be good at football. These programs are often “fly-in, fly-out” programs to remote communities where long-term change is difficult to effect and to measure.

6.2 What works

There are many opportunities that exist for sport for development programs to take advantage of models of corporate responsibility. However, this area remains largely untapped with both sides unsure of how to progress effectively. Even when partnerships are made, both sides may feel somewhat aggrieved at the end of the program. To make the most of the potential there are a number of considerations that may assist, including:

- Having community stakeholders take part in the decision making of corporate community involvement (e.g., allowing community representatives to decide between several models of program focus and operation).
- Having full public disclosure and transparency of strategic initiatives (e.g., providing thorough accounts of funding, selection, and delivery of programs in public documents such as annual reports).
- Using a strategy driven by values to determine efforts of corporate social responsibility (e.g. linking corporate strategic plans to philanthropic efforts).
- Recognizing different motives for donations and matching the respective motives for giving with appropriate solicitations (e.g., organizations and communities discussing the degree of fit between each other’s values and priorities in initial meetings).
- Developing and working towards long-term strategies that foster long-term sustainability and viability in programs (e.g., identifying and supporting ongoing training needs to ensure program continuity when staff move on).
- Engaging in true partnerships in which all stakeholders have their say (e.g., soliciting and responding to multiple viewpoint on issues such as program target participants, locations, and hours of operation).

6.3 What doesn’t work

Part of the reason that corporate responsibility funds remain relatively untapped is that there are many pitfalls in supporting sport for development programs through corporate responsibility sources. Some ways of operating that should be avoided include:
• Engaging in corporate community development activities without direct community participation and consultation.
• Considering mostly the needs of the sponsor (and not those of the community).
• Viewing the partner only as a “cash cow.”
• Failing to appreciate the long-term ramifications of some commercial sponsors (e.g., sport associations with tobacco, alcohol, fast-food suppliers).

6.4 What we don’t know

Because corporate responsibility policies are a relatively new advent in the business world, there are a great number of questions that remain unanswered. Our understanding of the potential benefits and limitations of this area are further clouded because of the inherent complexities of evaluating programs, the success in which a number of stakeholders have vested interest. For these reasons there are a number of key questions that require further investigation including:

• Is the nature and role of corporate social responsibility different in a sporting context than in other business settings?
• What is the long-term impact of “fly-in, fly-out” visits of corporate football clubs on remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
7. ADVICE TO ASC

1. Provide relevant training (e.g., financial accountability, educational techniques, program management) to relevant stakeholders.

2. Encourage universities, NGOs, practitioners, and policy makers to work together (e.g., form working groups with each of these categories represented).

3. Foster a collaborative and inclusive environment to promote the development of innovative programs (e.g., ensure access and widespread communication through strategies such as announcements in local papers, open meetings, and blogs).

4. Persuade coaches, teachers, and policy makers to encourage children from different populations to participate together in sport (e.g., provide cultural awareness training so that sport leaders feel comfortable including those from different cultural backgrounds into existing programs).

5. Consider including sport in cultural festivals or include cultural activities at sporting events (e.g., food stalls, music).

6. Promote public recognition of successful programs.

7. If running a major sporting event, actively involve the local community in the decision-making process and encourage the use of local knowledge and community-based suppliers.

8. Involve community and grassroots organizations in major events so individuals within communities gain skills (e.g., in program delivery) and community well-being is fostered.

9. Consider both commercial and adoptive donors for sporting organizations that rely on philanthropy.

10. Mobilize and engage the local community and interest groups to leverage event resources for community benefit (e.g., approach established community organizations such as youth groups, religious groups, schools, and Aboriginal cooperatives to be involved in event development and delivery).

11. Consider sport as just one of many components in the area of sport for development (e.g., along with health promotion and social work).
8. REFERENCES


