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Sport, Conflict and Reconciliation

Exploring the Use of Sports for Peacebuilding and Conflict Resolution

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ABSTRACT

Sport for development and peace (SDP) has become a recognized method of intervention in disadvantaged communities particularly in the developing world. In different regions affected by poverty and conflict, sports, most notably football in its condition as the world's most popular sport, has recently been validated by the international community as a catalyst for social inclusion, conflict resolution and peace. This paper explores the historical background and evolution of sport for development and peace both as a social intervention strategy and as an academic field. Based on existing peace building theories, the present document also aims at highlighting the ways in which sport may support peace building and conflict resolution processes.

Keywords: sport for development and peace, football and conflict resolution, sport and peace building, physical activity and the Millennium Development Goals

INTRODUCTION

The role and impact of sports in society has been a subject of debate for centuries. For many, sport is viewed as a physical activity always associated with competition among nations or teams for pride and glory. Once referred to by English writer and journalist George Orwell as "war minus the shooting" (1945, p.322), sport is also considered by a large sector of society as a practice capable of awakening exaggerated nationalistic sentiments, intolerance and even violence, both in athletes and spectators. For Orwell, the objective of competitive sports was winning over the opponent at any cost while humiliating the rival team and its followers. In his opinion: "serious sport has nothing to do with fair play. It is bound up with hatred, jealousy, boastfulness, disregard of all rules and sadistic pleasure in witnessing violence" (p.322).

But just as sport is oftentimes associated with fierce competition and aggression, sport can also be regarded as a dignified activity and as a vehicle through which the highest moral and corporeal ideals are expressed. In this connection, sport has also the capacity to foster friendship and to unite people around a common activity, sometimes in the most unexpected of circumstances. The famous Christmas Truce of 1914 is a crucial example when German and English troops stopped hostilities during World War I to exchange gifts and play a game of football (Woodhouse 2009, p.27). In doing so, the rival troops validated the potential of sport as an agent of transformation and change as a match of football provided temporary relief to combatants and a granted provisional cease- fire between enemies in times of war.

The idea of using sports to advance peace endeavors, is nevertheless, not a new concept. The first documented use of sports to conciliate in times of conflict dates back to the 9 Century BC in ancient Greece with an Olympian Truce (*Ekecheiria*) intended to stop war between the Peloponnesian city-states during the celebration of the Olympic games. During the truce period, spectators, athletes, artists and their families were able to travel to the Olympic Games and return to their places of origin in total safety (Olympic.org, 2009).

Today, more than a hundred years after the introduction of the modern Olympic Games, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) is part of a worldwide movement composed of governments, UN agencies, the private sector and international and national NGOs, which has become increasingly supportive of the idea that sport is indeed a valuable means to address issues such as social justice and equality. Furthermore, a new strategy for social intervention in disadvantaged communities known as sport for development and peace (SDP) has recently become a platform for the implementation of development and peace projects and the design of research that employs sport and various types of physical activities with the purpose of propelling peace and promoting economic development.

With this introduction, this paper is divided into four parts: the first part will introduce the topic of sport for development and peace both as a strategy for social intervention and as a body of literature and school of thought highlighting relevant academic work in this field and milestones during the last decade. Moreover, in this section I will also claim that sport for development and peace represents an effort to promote peace building via cultural initiatives. The second part will

focus on the benefits attributed to sport. The third section will tackle the issue of football and conflict resolution. Drawing from existing conflict resolution models, this section will also aim at providing an initial assessment as to the extent to which sport and most notably football could serve as a valid tool in supporting conflict resolution processes. Finally, I will conclude by providing some remarks on the opportunities and limitations of SDP as a social intervention strategy and will suggest some areas of interest for future academic research in the field.

1. WHAT IS SPORT FOR DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE?

Sport for development and peace (SDP) has become an acknowledged strategy in underprivileged communities both in the developing and developed world. In different regions affected by poverty and conflict, sport, and most notably football in its condition as the planet's most popular game, has recently been validated by the international community as a tool for economic development and as a catalyst for social inclusion, reconciliation and peace building.

Sport for Development and Peace, as a social intervention strategy, proposes the use of games, physical activity and sports to achieve explicit peace and development objectives including, most notably, the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). Although this approach aims at realizing the rights of all members of society to partake in sport and leisure activities, other non- sport components -most of which are aimed at educating target groups on a variety of social issues- enhance and strengthen sport for development and peace programs and initiatives (Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group, 2008).

Although it is clear that sport alone is not a panacea to the world's most pressing issues or that it will guarantee peace, sport can be regarded, according to the international NGO Right to Play, as a "highly effective tool in a broader toolkit of development, and should be applied in a holistic and integrated manner with other interventions and programs to achieve optimal results" (Right to Play, 2010).

SDP and international cooperation

Validated by the international community as an agent of change, sport began to be used as a tool to advance peace and development initiatives in the 90's. The most significant developments in the field, however, have taken place during the last decade[1] thanks to a series of partnerships and strategic alliances between key international actors which include national governments, nongovernmental organizations, sports federations and multinational companies, especially through Corporate Social Responsibility programs (Giulianotti 2011, p.208). A time line of key events in the SDP field during the last decade include:

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[1] P. Donelli (quoted in Giulianotti and Armstrong, 2011) estimates that by 2007 approximately 400 NGO's in the field of sport, development and peace were in operation and an average of 10 more NGO's were being created per month (379).

- In 2001, the United Nations Office on Sport for Development and Peace (UNOSDP) is introduced by Kofi Annan to coordinate UN efforts to bring together in a cohesive manner, the worlds of sport, peace and development. Former Swiss president Adolf Ogni is appointed as Special Advisor to the UN Secretary General on Sport for Development and Peace. The same year the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) announces it will use sport to promote social and economic development.

- In 2003 the first Magglingen International Conference on Sport for Development and Peace takes place and the same year international experts in the SDP field are brought together at the International First Step Conference in the Netherlands (USAID, n.d.).

- The Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group (SDP IWG) is established as an inter-governmental policy initiative to promote the integration of SDP policy recommendations into national development strategies in 2004. The European Commission launches the European Year of Education through Sport (EYES) the same year (Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group, 2008).

- UN declares 2005 International Year of Sport and Physical Education (IYSPE) and the World Summit announces it will support SDP interventions (Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group, 2008). Also in 2005, the Federation International de Football Association (FIFA) begins working with the NGO Streetfootballworld to promote programs around the world aimed at using football and other sports as tools for social development (FIFA, 2009).

- In 2006 the African Union introduces the International Year of African Football (Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group, 2008).

- In 2007 the First African Convention acknowledges the potential contributions of sport to education. FIFA, the South American Football Confederation (CONMEBOL) and the Confederation of North, Central and Caribbean Association Football (CONCACAF) joined the IDB to initiate development opportunities through football for young people living in precarious conditions in Latin America and the Caribbean (FIFA, 2009).

- During the opening ceremony at the Olympic games in Beijing 2008, the international community ratified the value of sport to promote development and peace worldwide (Olympic.org, 2010).

SDP and academic research

There exists a developing body of academic literature in this newly explored field and current social scientific work into SDP has been enhanced by research, mainly in the form of case studies, aimed at

assessing the impact of SDP projects on communities. Among the most informative of these investigations are the following:

- John Sugden (2008) explains the challenges of using football to promote sustainable peace between Palestine and Israeli youth. Furthermore, in 2009 he puts forth a new way of doing sport for development and peace work, an approach that is neither idealistic nor merely pragmatic. In this sense, he advocates for the notion that sport for peace work should operate in conjunction with regional and national policy processes and include local talent and knowledge (p.49).

- On a similar line of thought, Bruce Kidd in his *Cautions, Questions and Opportunities in Sport for Development and Peace* (2011) calls for a "critical eye" when examining and apprising SDP interventions.

- Football for Peace (F4P)[2], an academic and grassroots initiative with ongoing sport for peace building and conflict transformation projects in the Middle East, has been bringing together for the last ten years Israeli and Arab children to play soccer together in non-threatening settings (Savir 2008, p.75). In this regard, regular reports and academic papers are produced predominantly by scholars from the F4P affiliated research institutions such as at the University of Brighton, UK, appraising current sport for peace interventions.

- Richard Giullianotti and Gary Amstrong (2011) suggest that sport-based peacemaking and conflict transformation interventions present the military institution with a new way to strengthening and creating positive connections with civilian populations (p.379), hence facilitating reconciliation efforts in affected communities.

- With regard to sport as a cultural manifestation and its relevance in creating sustainable peace, Tom Woodhouse (2009) highlights the importance of innovation and creativity in peace building and proposes the use of cultural tools, including sports, as a way to energizing the field of peace studies and conflict transformation (p.29). In the updated version of his Contemporary Conflict Resolution (2011), he elaborates on the importance of sport in peace building processes and highlights the current initiatives between academic institutions and football clubs to promote peace and education programs. Moreover, Woodhouse suggests further research on the involvement of professional football clubs and associated foundations on communities undergoing peace building and conflict transformation processes (pp.353-355).

There have also been some exploratory investigations at the Masters level in the area of SDP particularly the works of Borsari Serena (2009) who applies models of conflict transformation to the arena of sports drawing from case studies from a number of African nations. Serena also presents current initiatives on the continent using sport as a tool to address a variety of social problems. Equally enlightening is the research carried out by Jonathan Lea-Howarth (2006), investigating the potentiality of football in conflict resolution and reconciliation in African nations.

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[2] Football for Peace website: *http://www.football4peace.eu/*

SDP as a vehicle to promote peace building through cultural initiatives

The incipient use of sport as a conflict resolution tool constitutes a fresh and innovative effort by a broad range of actors to promote peace building through cultural initiatives. In recent times, peace building has been energized and enriched by the involvement of creative activities such as the arts, music, popular culture and remarkably of sports, providing according to Woodhouse, " a powerful source of peace-building energy and a passion that is not always apparent in the formalized processes of political conflict resolution" (2009, p.18). Moreover, the UNESCO, in its campaign to promote and accelerate interest in the cultural dimension of peace building (Woodhouse 2009, p.20), indicates that in order to achieve the goals of peace and development, it is paramount to recognize the cultural dimensions of sport which in its view has not sufficiently been analyzed through academic work and calls for the defense of, and support to, Traditional Sports and Games (UNESCO 2009, p.8). Sport, both as a cultural expression and as a common denominator across societies, has an unparalleled capacity to break through geographic and cultural barriers uniting people around a common activity and hence, it has become a valid cultural manifestation to promote change in communities affected by violence and conflict.

2. CHARATERISTICS AND BENEFITS OF SPORT

In addition to its known health benefits, sport possesses unique qualities that facilitate peace and conflict resolution processes. "Harnessing the Power of Sport", a publication by the Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group (SDP IWG) identifies additional benefits of sport as highlighted below:

Sport is universal

Sport, games and physical activity in general are activities present in virtually every society across the globe. The popularity of sports transcends political, national and ideological frontiers and it is a practice enjoyed by spectators and athletes alike.

Sport's ability to connect people

One of the most important attributes of sport is its capacity to connect peoples and communities in an extremely effective manner. These communities, when they are inclusive, turn into important sources of social networking fostering community capacity to work cooperatively. Furthermore, sport has emerged a global mass entertainment and has become one of the most-far reaching communication stages in the world today.

Sport's potential to inspire and motivate

By shining light on what people can do, sport inspires and motivates individuals. In addition, sport promotes self-esteem, physical and mental health and fosters positive connection with others (Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group, 2008).

Furthermore, a four-year study headed by Professor Fred Coalter from Sterling University and conducted by the charity International Development Through Sport (IDS), the UK-based charity Comic Relief and the organization UK Sport International, was done to test the hypothesis " sport contributes to personal development and well-being in disadvantaged children and young people". The investigation, which analyzed the effectiveness and impact of eight organizations from Africa and India employing sports in different ways, was recently released and among other findings, it concludes that:

- On the area of personal development, sport programs do have an impact on the self-steam and perceived self-efficacy of participants as the majority of them underwent a transformation in their self-evaluation. Most interestingly, the scores of those participants with the lowest self-esteem evaluations at the beginning of the research, increased significantly by the end.

- With regard to gender equality and women's empowerment, attitudes towards women's involvement in sport and education were reinforced across participating programs.

- Research concluded that sport proved to be an effective medium for the dissemination of information about HIV and other health-related issues to young people.

- Participants reported that sport trainings had boosted their confidence both through meeting and addressing issues with peers and coaches as well as by developing their leadership skills (Coalter, 2010).

In relation to the value of sport to prevent violence and promote peace building, the consulting firm SCHWERY circulated a document in 2008 in which the following conclusions were reached:

Sport and violence

The relations between sport and violence, revolves around the idea that this activity may be instrumental in preventing deviant and antisocial behavior as well as it can potentially assist in the rehabilitation of offenders. The study also points out that children members of sport clubs have a lower proportion of delinquent activities.

Sport and peace building

Sport congregates people, breaking through social, religious and cultural barriers, making this activity a useful educational tool. In this connection, peace building becomes a natural progression of this theme and this idea has been replicated in many regions across the globe (Schwery Consulting, 2008).

The Swiss Agency for Development published a booklet on Sport for Development and Peace and Peace in 2005. The findings on the influence of sport in conflict transformation are listed below:

Sport and conflict resolution

Sport can reinforce interaction between communities, peoples and societies and hence plays a part in maintaining open channels of communication in open or dormant situations of conflict. In conflict and post-conflict situations, sport can support building a beneficial outlet for people affected which is directed towards peaceful reduction of hostilities and tensions. In addition, sport can contribute to managing trauma after natural disasters or violence in refugee camps, for instance (Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, 2005).

3. SPORT AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION APPROACHES

Although there is growing interest in interventions using sport to advance conflict resolution initiatives, there is, according to Coalter (2006) limited research in this field. Moreover, as pointed out by Sugden and Haasner (2009) only a few sport for peace interventions are grounded in existing conflict resolution theories (p.1). Nevertheless, based on existing research in the area of sport for peace, investigations addressing the use of sport for conflict resolution have made use of –or could potentially be grounded in–peace building theories such as Galtung's 3 Rs (1998), Lederach's web-approach to peace building (2005) and Schirch's use of rituals (2005) . This is, however, not a comprehensive inventory of approaches available to interpret and assess the role of sport to advance conflict resolution efforts. With this in mind, in the next session I will use Galtung's 3R's approach to peace building to illustrate some of the ways in which the sport may serve as an agent of transformation and change.

Galtung's 3R's: reconstruction, reconciliation, resolution

For Galtung (1998), the holistic process of peace building includes 3 R's or key factors: (1) Reconstruction of peoples and places after violence; (2) Reconciliation of the parties in conflict and (3) Resolution of animosities (p.8).

Reconstruction

Galtung in turn divides reconstruction in turn into four subcategories: rehabilitation, rebuilding, restructuration, reculturation (1998, pp.53-61). Sport can benefit each of these subcategories by providing rehabilitation and healing through psycho-social programs; in reculturation by serving as a hook by getting people involved in sport activities and by establishing self governing sporting clubs and leagues based on accepted cultural regulations strengthening in this way civil society and democratic processes. In Sierra Leona a football tournament was established featuring teams made up of mixed-tribe footballers with the purpose of reducing inter-tribe conflict by fostering a sense of national identity as opposed to tribal rivalry (Lea–Howarth 2006, p. 17). In restructuration, sport for peace programs can facilitate the building of relationships thus facilitating social inclusion and rebuilding by physically constructing sporting facilities where people can socialize and meet (Kuvalsund, 2005). FIFA has played a central role in rebuilding sport facilities in regions affected by conflict and violence. For instance, this organization promised funds to rebuild a football pitch in Gaza which had been bombed by Israel. Moreover, after the American invasion of Afghanistan, the national stadium, site of executions, was repaired and reopened (Lea-Howarth 2006, p.16).

Reconciliation

This stage aims at (re) building positive relations between enemies who have formerly been both victims and perpetrators. In regard to this process, Lederach (2005) emphasizes the importance of being imaginative in developing new reconciliation methods. The use of sport for reconciliation is thus, one of such original development in this field. Sport can contribute to building a more positive environment by regaining a sense of security and normality (Serena 2009, p.11). Hoglund and Sundberg (2008) identify instances in which sport has contributed to reconciliation in South Africa at three different levels:

a) Reconciliation at the national level through symbols

Sport provided a space to represent the idea of the country being a multicultural nation or "rainbow nation". In the 1992 Olympics, South Africa's first Olympic appearance since the 1960s when international anti-apartheid protest led to its exclusion from the event, the Olympic team, consisting of both black and white athletes, flew in an airplane covered by the country's flag. This provided an opportunity to utilizing sport as a way to portraying the political and social shift of the nation.

b) Reconciliation through communal activities

A direct use the sport can be found in demobilization and integration processes, rehabilitation of child soldiers and the use of football in refugee camps. In addition, through football tournaments and competitions, people have a chance to network with members of other communities. Sport constitutes an easy and low-cost opportunity for people to socialize and to strengthen community ties.

c) Reconciliation through individual development

The use of sport for individual development rests on the idea that in order to be at peace with society you have to first be at peace with yourself. In order to achieve this, a number of SDP programs in the country use life skills training, gender empowerment, HIV awareness in addition to the football component of these interventions (pp.807-814). In the particular case of South Africa, Sugden (2009) points out that perhaps the single most valuable lesson of SDP interventions in this multicultural nation is that if programs are permeated with the right values and managed correctly, even in the most divided of societies sport can play a fundamental role in promoting peace and reconciliation (p.7).

Part of the nation's success on using sport a tool for transformation and change, as indicated by Keim (2003) in his research on the role of sport in post-apartheid South Africa, lies in the fact that key measures were implemented to change the profound structures of sport. These changes took place at two levels: firstly sport-governing bodies introduced a set of strategies that guaranteed that the assumption of multiculturalism inspires not just high performance athletes and elite organizations but more importantly the masses affiliated with sport one way or another. Second, at the grassroots level, schools and communities sport-based initiatives have developed programs that

address not only inter-racial harmony but also to tackle a wide range of social programs including HIV, juvenile crime and violence.

Resolution

A potential contribution of sport in resolution processes is that it provides a sub-systemic nucleus around which social networks can be formed and where members can be taught about resolving conflict. Football for peace (F4P), an academic and grassroots initiative with ongoing sport for peace building and conflict transformation projects in the Middle East, has been bringing together for the last ten years Israeli and Arab children to play football together in non-threatening settings (Savir 2008, p.75). F4P's coaches use conflicts that may arise among participants, to introduce "teachable moments", a space utilized to encourage children to learn how to solve disagreements in a constructive way (Lea –Howarth 2006, p.13).

Additional practical peace building approaches to examine the impact and validity of sport as a tool for social transformation and change may include Lederach's web-approach to peace building (2005) as it emphasizes the creation of strategic networks. These networks (web-making processes) are particularly relevant for NGO's. As they are middle level actors, they are strategically placed to get people together and promote dialogue (Sugden and Haasner 2009, p.2) and to bring to the attention of local and national authorities, community needs as well as grassroots efforts to promote social change. Additionally, Schirch's use of rituals (2005) may provide a framework to assess the validity of sport as a peace building tool. This approach emphasizes the use of rituals in order to "humanized" those –victims and perpetrators– who, due to violence, have dehumanized other people –or have been dehumanized– by others. In this context, a ritual can take the form of physical activity or a sporting event.

Current initiatives football for peace and conflict resolution

Sierra Leona

The football festival in the Bo region of Sierra Leona has been one of the few activities to bring people together during the war. Football in post-conflict Sierra Leona has been instrumental in bringing life back to normality after or even during conflict (Van der Niet 2010, p.49).

Football for hope movement (worldwide)

Launched in 2007, the Football for Hope Movement's main goal is to establish a quality seal for sustainable human and social development programs focusing on soccer as the central instrument in the areas of (1) health promotion; (2) peace building; (3) children's rights and education; (4) anti-discrimination and social integration and (5) the environment, thus supporting the best practices on the pitch. The program is developed through a network that includes football associations, committed clubs and players, professional leagues and commercial partners as well as local organizations advancing social development (FIFA, 2009).

Open fun schools (Bosnia and Herzegovina)

Created in 1998 to encourage the reintegration of divided communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, this grassroots youth football program has extended to the former Yugoslav Republic (FYROM) of Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro, Croatia and Georgia. Since its inception, Open Fun Schools has organized tens of thousands of children from antagonistic communities to play football together (Gasser and Levinsen 2004).

Football for peace (Israel, Jordan and Northern Ireland)

Football 4 Peace International (F4P) is an activity-based community relations and reconciliation initiative The project began in 2001 bringing together two communities and 100 Jewish and Arab children. Today the program in Israel involves 24 mixed communities with over 1000 children. Run by local teachers and coaches, this project uses football to bring together children from both sides of the border regardless of background and religion. F4P also operates in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland and in 2009, F4P began operating in Jordan (Football4peace).

Project goals for peace international (Goles por la Paz)

The Goals for Peace Project (Goles por la Paz in Spanish) was born both as an academic and a grassroots initiative in the areas of conflict transformation, community development and South-South cooperation. This project is the first cooperation at the grassroots level between Colombia - where the project was implemented in Ciudad Bolivar, a locality in Bogota which is home to the second largest internally displaced population in the world- and the Philippines, where the project was developed in the Negros Oriental region. Using the power of football, Goals for Peace is aimed at empowering young people to initiate change, promote pro-active reform and develop a culture of peace in their communities through the practice of sport (Cardenas 2012).

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

On sport for development peace interventions

On the practical side, several claims can be made with regard to sport/football as a legitimate tool to advance conflict transformation and peace building:

- Because its cross-cultural nature, sport has a unique way to break through barriers of all kind and therefore can be a major component of any social intervention.

- Team sports force participants to interact which can contribute to building relationships on and outside the field. Moreover, participants may use situations of conflict that naturally arise out of these interactions, to find innovative ways to solve disagreements (e.g. football matches without referees as a way to encourage participants to negotiate the rules of the game).

- Sport can be a fun activity to be involved in, and positive values learned during games, especially, team cooperation and fair play, could potentially be lessons to be replicated in

daily life. Moreover, it provides a hook to attract at-risk populations into sport in order to provide other social services.

- Football's main contribution to conflict resolution is its universality; it crosses frontiers inspiring and motivating children to be like their favorite footballers. Footballers must be aware of their influential role and should, when appropriate, support peace initiatives and related humanitarian causes (e.g. Didier Drogba's role in promoting dialogue in divided Ivory Coast; Zidane as Good Faith Ambassador; FC Barcelona's footballers agreeing to contribute 0.7% of their salaries towards humanitarian causes of the FC Barcelona Foundation, etc).

- Successful SDP interventions should take into consideration the specific cultural dynamics of the places where these programs take place and apply the most suitable sport (e.g. cricket as opposed to football in India or Pakistan; gender awareness and sensitivity in regions where this is a major issue, for instance mixed-teams not always plausible in some countries).

On cautions and limitations of the use of sport

There are also limitations to using sport for conflict transformation:

- Sport is commonly associated with competition and has in many instances, led to violence on and off the field.

- Although sport could address many of the factors included in conflict transformation processes, this activity is by no means a comprehensive and holistic peace building strategy (Lea-Howarth 2006, p.44) and should not be propagated as a panacea to cure the world's most pressing issues; sport alone will not create any significant social change.

- Sport coaches may know little or nothing about peace building; conversely, peace builders (and researchers?) are usually not trained on sport coaching or may not know the particularities of the sport.

- Most importantly, sport for development and peace interventions should be regarded as one more component of a complex multidimensional process to building sustainable peace.

On sport for development and peace as an academic field

- Academic research in the area of SDP is still at an embryonic phase and therefore, much remains to be done. Given this field's relative infancy, as suggested by Giulianotti (2011), researches have to investigate far beyond case studies, so that more analytical investigations are produced (p.208). In relation to sport as a facilitator of peace and conflict transformation undertakings, it is pertinent to point out that most studies in the

area are not grounded in existing conflict resolution theories, impeding a more in-depth evaluation of the claims attributed to sport.

- Sugden and Haasner (2009) underline the value of more research in the field in order to construct and share a more robust body of knowledge and in doing so, providing a wider understanding of the impact of SDP interventions (p.10).

- There have been, however, recent partnerships between academic institutions and sport clubs and foundations to promote further research on the contributions of sport to support peace and conflict resolution. One particular project involved a partnership agreement between the Open University of Cataluña (OUC) and today's most successful football team, FC Barcelona, whereby the football club would logistically support the peace and education programs of the university (Woodhouse 2009, p.28). Furthermore, the University of Monaco, in partnership with the University for Peace, recently launched the masters program Sustainable Peace through Sport.

Recommendations and further research

- Monitoring and evaluation is certainly one aspect of SDP programs that create considerable challenges to their implementers. Reports should not be limited to narrating simple outputs but they should be means to rationally analyze and assess the impact of SDP interventions and the ways in which programs could be improved. Moreover, academic institutions may support this process by developing sound M&E systems conjunctly with NGO's and grassroots.

- Sustainability and long-term vision of programs must be considered as early as during the planning stages.

- Research and programs that are grounded in peace building theories will certainly offer a much deeper knowledge of the benefits attributed to sport as a agent of transformation and change.

- Further research on the involvement of professional football clubs and associated foundations on communities undergoing peace building and conflict transformation processes is strongly suggested.

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