

## SECTION I. THE CONTRIBUTION OF SPORT TO DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

### Chapter 2

## Sport in Development Work and Peace-building

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The use of sport to support development and peace is not new; many development agencies have for years included sport in their work. There has, however, been a very noticeable upsurge in the use of sport since the millennium, and it has now become a substantial movement in its own right. Today sport is being widely used by many agencies to promote social change.

But sport is not a panacea for global social and economic challenges. Grandiose assertions that ‘the power of sport’ can ‘change the world’ have been received with scepticism by experienced development practitioners, many of whom regard these claims as unrealistic and/or uninformed.

The purpose of this guide is to provide a nuanced, measured and credible account of the specific contribution that sport can offer. The benefits of sport are not automatic or universal but they can be achieved through well-designed approaches with appropriate planning, monitoring and evaluation that respect the importance of on-going programming and guard against abuse and poor quality provision.

This requires integrating sport within development activities and agendas, and ensuring its use is underpinned by a number of principles, as described in chapter 3.

### 2.1 The potential of sport to contribute

The last two decades have seen a rapid increase in the use of sport for development and peace-building. Leading international bodies have formally recognised sport as a contributor, alongside other interventions, to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and to address social, economic and development challenges and global public health. The sport for development and peace (SDP) movement has gained increased profile and credibility, and today sport is being widely used by many agencies to promote social change. It is seen as a form of social activity that offers opportunities to:

- Convey core principles that are important in a democracy, such as tolerance, solidarity, co-operation and respect;

- Foster inclusion for individuals and populations otherwise marginalised by social, ethnic, cultural or religious barriers;
- Allow individuals to experience equality, freedom and empowerment.

The benefits of sport are considered especially relevant for the most vulnerable including the poor and excluded, girls and women, people with a disability, those living in conflict areas, and those recovering from trauma. This makes sport a relevant partner in a range of development work to support these groups. Thus, a growing number of established global development agencies have begun including specifically planned sport interventions in their broader strategy,<sup>1</sup> an approach that recognises sport can best serve development objectives by being integrated into the policy domains to which it can contribute.

## 2.2 Adopting sport as a tool in development and peace

Sport is not a panacea for global social and economic challenges, but used appropriately it is a valuable cross-cutting tool that can significantly strengthen established development approaches. At local level, sport is often used because community, school and health professionals, and volunteers find it is an effective way of working with their target groups, especially young people. The potential of sport to contribute to strategic goals for development has been increasingly recognised, and endorsed in formal declarations at the highest levels of international policy. Agencies such as the United Nations are not prepared to miss out on the contribution that this ‘low-cost, high-impact’ tool can make to advancing development goals (United Nations 2003).

The United Nations has been prominent in global efforts to promote the capacity of sport to support development and peace-building. Whilst realising that sport is not a ‘magic bullet’, the UN views well-designed sport-based initiatives as practical and cost-effective tools that add to its strategies for achieving development and peace objectives. Beginning in 2003, UN member states have unanimously adopted a series of resolutions recognising sport as a means to promote education, health, development and peace, and the UN Office on Sport for Development and Peace has been set up to ensure a more systematic use of sport in these roles. The establishment of the UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Sport for Development and Peace (2003) reflected the growing status of sport in UN development by bringing together significant

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international agencies already experienced in using sport in their work. These included the International Labour Organization (ILO), UNESCO, the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNICEF and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), and indicates the wide policy relevance recognised in sport. Subsequent to this, the Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group (SDP IWG) was established to collate evidence and assess the potential contribution of sport to development. The SDP IWG 2008 landmark report *Harnessing the Power of Sport for Development and Peace: Recommendations to Governments* (SDP IWG 2008) provided unprecedented analysis of the potential contribution of sport to development and peace and was fully endorsed by the UN Office on Sport for Development and Peace.

Commonwealth countries are also significant leaders in efforts to utilise sport as a tool to promote development and support peace-building efforts. Commonwealth leaders have long endorsed the role sport can play in achieving the Commonwealth's goals of democracy and development, in particular highlighting the potential of sport to engage and promote the development of youth. This recognition is reflected in declarations and resolutions made in key pan-Commonwealth and global platforms. Commonwealth Heads of Government have identified the vital importance of sport in assisting young people to stay healthy, contribute to society and develop into leaders of their communities.<sup>2</sup> Commonwealth sports ministers have also consistently affirmed their conviction on the importance of sport for development and peace (Commonwealth Secretariat 2010b). Regional bodies including CARICOM, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community and the African Union Commission have repeatedly highlighted the role of sport in development efforts.

### **2.3 The growth of sport in development and peace work**

The use of sport to support development and peace is not new; many international aid bodies have for years included sport in their work. Sport has long been an obvious activity for organisations such as UNICEF to use in work with young people, while others have employed it in more specific situations, for example the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), which has run sports activities in refugee camps in Africa, Asia and

Eastern Europe since the late 1990s. There has, however, been a very noticeable upsurge in the use of sport for development and peace since the millennium, and it has now become a substantial movement in its own right.

Contemporary sport within development takes diverse forms, from transnational programmes to small-scale, grass roots activity, making it difficult to plot the scope and spread of this work. Kidd (2008) identified 166 organisations engaged in sport for development and peace projects, while Lyras et al. (2009), using different terms of reference, found that the number of known sport for development providers and projects had risen from around 200 in 2005 to over 1,500 in 2009. Some of the best known instances of sport and development work include the United Nations designation of 2005 as the International Year of Education and Sport; the work of the international organisation, Right to Play, based in Toronto and operating in multiple countries; and programmes such as International Inspiration, the international legacy programme of the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games delivered by a partnership of UK Sport, UNICEF and the British Council. A number of in-country programmes have also gained significant exposure through their involvement in international platforms and their participation in research, including Magic Bus in India, the work of the Caribbean Sport and Development Agency and South Africa's Sports Coaches Outreach (SCORE).

While the sport for development and peace movement has boosted the use of sport in development during the last decade, it also benefits from earlier and more local origins. Many in-country partners long pre-date the international programmes through which they have become known to the wider sport and development movement, for example the Mathare Youth Sports Association project in Kenya began in 1987 and Zambia's NGOs Sport in Action and Edusport were founded in 1998 and 1999 respectively. More significantly, there is a substantial level of locally initiated sport that remains relatively invisible within the international sphere (Lindsey and Grattan 2012). There are many cases where sport is being used by community, education and health groups who are not formally associated with organised sport programmes and not formally identified as sport providers. This work is significant as it indicates widespread local traditions of sport activity initiated by local populations. This strengthens the value

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of sport as a tool that can serve immediate, localised, specific development needs.

## **2.4 The positive use of sport**

As sport has become more recognised in formal policy, a strong advocacy movement has grown up around sport for development and peace. This has been useful in drawing attention to the potential contributions of sport to development and peace work, but has also sometimes been counter-productive. Grandiose assertions that ‘the power of sport’ can ‘change the world’ have been received with scepticism by experienced development practitioners outside the sport sector, many of whom regard these claims as unrealistic and/or uninformed. While this is an understandable response to a nascent sport sector that has relatively recently become active in development and peace environments, it is disproportionate to dismiss sport in this way. To do so risks rejecting out of hand a tool that can be an important mechanism for making specific, positive contributions to formal policy goals.

The purpose of this guide is to provide a nuanced, measured and credible account of the specific contribution that sport can offer. While the evidence base is mixed, it includes considerable support for claims that positive development outcomes can often be attained through sport participation, coaching, peer leadership or administration, especially for young people who take on sport leadership roles (Bailey 2006). These benefits do not occur automatically, or in all situations, or for all types of people but managed appropriately there is no doubt that sport and physical activity can make direct and indirect contributions to development. The guide therefore builds on the approach adopted by the Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group in its ground-breaking report to governments (2008), which offers a realistic assessment of the empirical basis for applying sport within development work. More specifically, this guide considers how the best evidenced impacts of sport can be directly applied to specific, formal Commonwealth development goals to strengthen policy and delivery. Some potential impacts are listed in Box 2.1 below.

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**Box 2.1 The potential impacts of sport on development goals**

Direct and indirect contributions to physical and mental health and well-being:

- regular physical activity;
- health education and messaging;
- potential to empower and improve the health of the elderly.

Direct and indirect contributions of sport as an engagement and mobilisation tool to:

- engage participants, particularly young people, in wider development programmes such as those related to developing life skills, education, health and gender empowerment;
- build social relations in contexts where these are important forms of social support, such as teacher-student and other adult-youth relationships for young people with limited parental/family networks, and connectivity across some socio-cultural divides (Long et al. 2002; Crabbe 2009).

Direct and indirect contributions of sport to personal and community development and inclusion, including:

- developing 'life' skills that can transfer to non-sport contexts, for instance when decision-making and communication developed in team sports transfer to classroom behaviour (Kay et al. 2008);
- delivering beneficial impacts that extend beyond the individuals who actively participate in sport programmes – for example, young people discuss with their peers what they learn from HIV/AIDS education delivered through sport is discussed by young people with their peers, and girls relay to their parents and extended family the health, hygiene and fertility lessons delivered through girls gender empowerment programmes (Kay and Spaaij 2011);
- working with excluded and vulnerable groups who do not engage with other institutions – e.g. those who do not attend school (Jeanes 2010) – including addressing gender inequalities and improving the lives of girls and young women through physical empowerment, which increases their confidence, physical fitness, skill development, leadership capabilities, social networks, and education levels (Hayhurst et al. 2009);
- providing a safe social space that can be used in conflict situations as a neutral platform for dialogue and interaction.

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guaranteed, and that sport can deliver negative as well as positive experiences. This reinforces the need for well-designed approaches with appropriate planning, monitoring and evaluation that respect the importance of on-going programming and guard against abuse and poor quality provision. It is therefore of paramount importance for sport-based approaches to address how sport is incorporated in development and peace, and to especially ensure that attention is given to 'doing no harm'. This has implications for policy development and programme implementation, and requires taking proactive steps to counter potential negative impacts on participants and other actors (Innocenti Research Centre 2010).

## **2.5 Delivering effective sport interventions**

The benefits of sport are not automatic or universal but they can be achieved. Sport and development practitioners and analysts consider that sport-based programmes are most likely to contribute to broader human and social development if they are delivered in intentionally planned and appropriate ways. This requires integrating sport within development activities and agendas, and ensuring its use is underpinned by a number of principles (Grove et al. 2004) derived from lessons from within SDP itself and from the wider development sector.