



The Link of Sport and Global Development

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Routledge Handbook of Sport for Development and Peace

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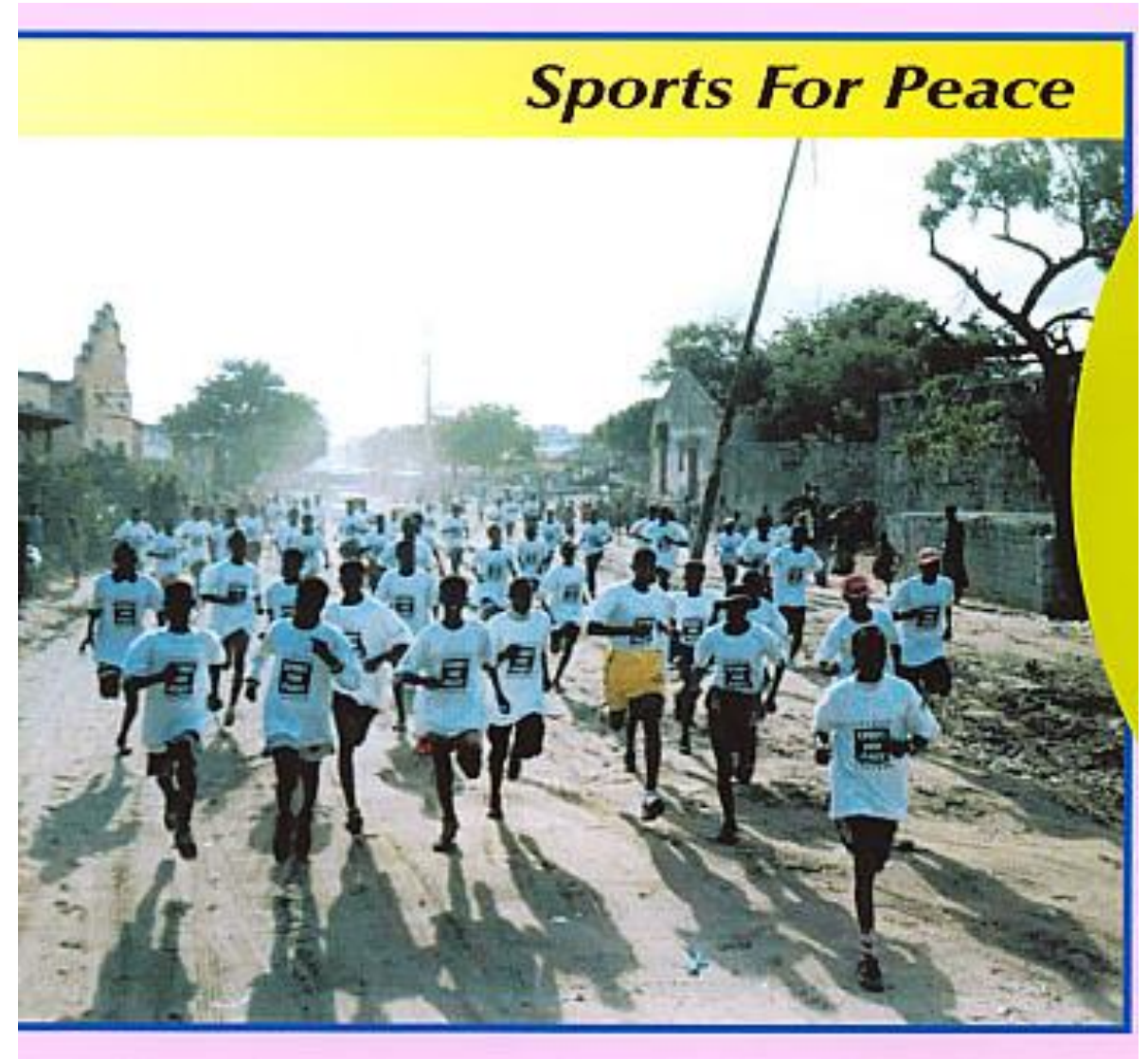
Sport and Global Development: SDP

Sport for development / Sport for Development and Peace (SDP):

Where sport is used to promote a wide range of social benefits

This is the main global space where sport links to global development

Usually SDP involves non-governmental organizations (NGOs) running sport intervention programmes with young people



SDP – Key Aspects

Most SDP is in low and middle-income countries (LMICs)

BUT: lot of SDP in high-income nations also

Most SDP is focused on youth

Huge growth – hundreds of SDP organizations and programmes across the world

Sport seen as excellent tool or ‘hook’ for engaging young people in personal and social development

ALSO: Not only modern sports – includes different physical activities e.g. parkour, ‘action sports’, capoeira, hiking, dance, etc

Major focus on education



Sport and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (2015 onwards)

Article 37:

“Sport is also an important enabler of sustainable development. We recognize the growing contribution of sport to the realization of development and peace in its promotion of tolerance and respect and the contributions it makes to the empowerment of women and of young people, individuals and communities as well as to health, education and social inclusion objectives.”



UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)



SDP organisations constantly refer to the SDGs

Understanding Development: Positive and Negative Aspects

Positives: rises in life expectancy, child mortality, absolute poverty levels, education, science, technology, social and political relations

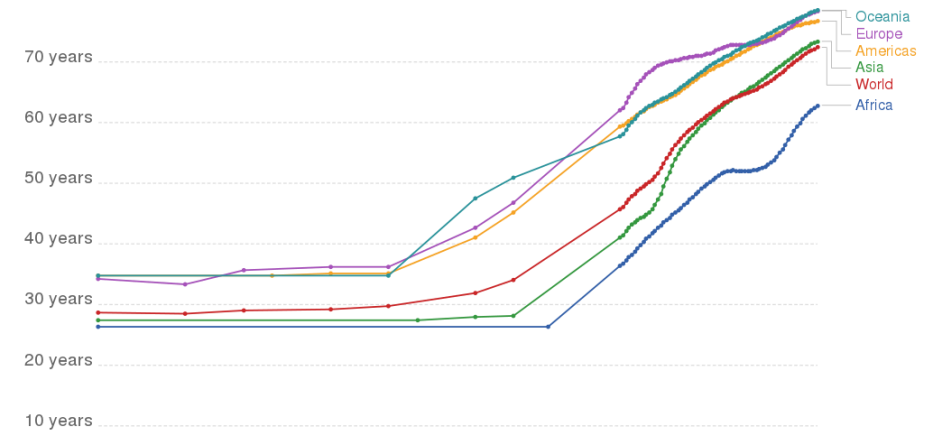
‘The Great Escape’ – from deprivation and early death (most societies)

Negatives:

Colonialism and oppression, huge inequalities, destruction of cultural traditions disempowerment, too much emphasis on economic development (e.g. growth)

SO: favour more social, cultural, democratic and inclusive understandings of development...

Life expectancy



Possible Approaches to Development

1. Capabilities approach:
enabling people to have
the freedom and the
opportunity to have
lifestyle they value
(Sen, Nussbaum)



Possible Approaches to Development

2. Transformational approach: development across four areas:

- economy (e.g. work)
- politics (e.g. represent citizens - democracy)
- society (e.g. equal rights)
- public administration (e.g. efficient, transparent, corruption-free)

(Viterna, J. & C. Robertson)



Possible Approaches to Development

3. Local empowerment:

- Promote capabilities of communities - especially marginalised groups
- Equal rights, opportunities, respect for difference
- Engage local communities in development programmes
- Development not imposed on local communities
- Adapt development to local contexts



Development Approaches for Sport/SDP?

Enable SDP programmes and agencies to promote:

- Capabilities
- Transformation across four areas
- Empowerment of local communities

NOTE: Wide diversity of programmes – so different priorities and emphases

Programmes often have very practical objectives e.g. improving health knowledge



Specific Development Challenges in SDP

A. Sustainability of programmes, organizations

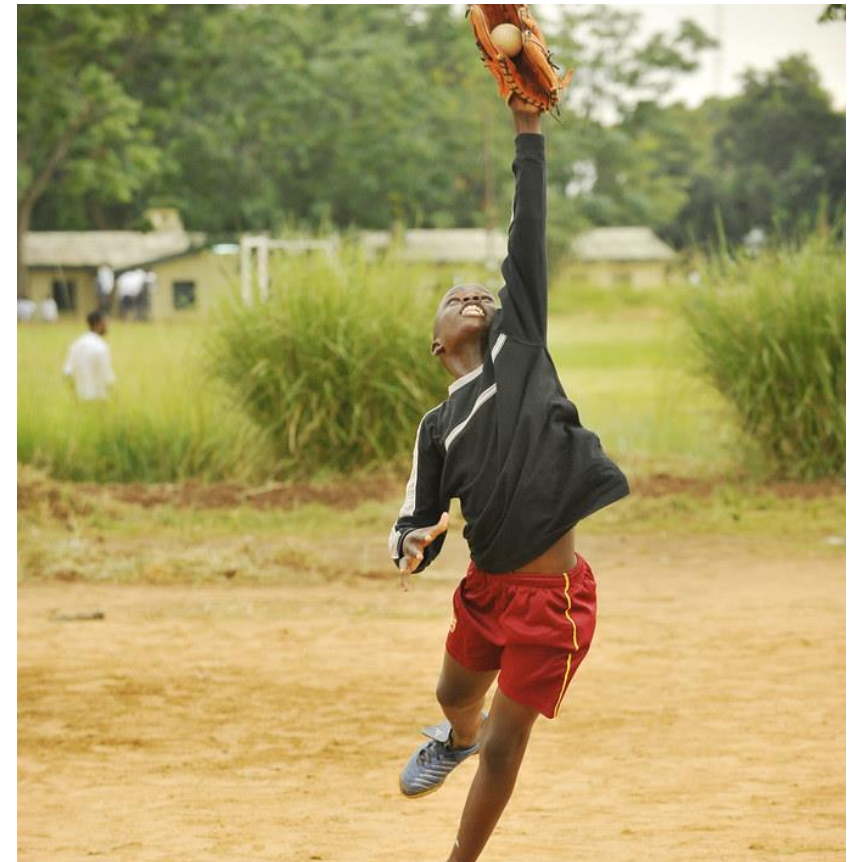
- Constant challenge: attract donors, build partnerships
- Covid stopped many programmes and disrupted funding
- Post-Covid-19 – SDP will be very depleted, especially in global South
- Social enterprise model as possible solution: mix business and social agency



Specific Development Challenges in SDP

B. Improve SDP's credibility in global development sector?

- SDP is often seen as a strange domain by other development organisations
- Need more partnerships and integration within global development system
- UN is key...
- Ensure that SDP is not seen as mere PR area for 'sportswashing' e.g. nation-states, corporations



Specific Development Challenges in SDP

C. Reduce fragmentation and lack of coordination between agencies

- Lack of coordination among different stakeholders
- Often, competition between stakeholders e.g. NGOs in battle for funding
- Who will lead the global sector?



Specific Development Challenges in SDP

D. Decolonise SDP and global development

- Crucial issue!!!
- SDP dominated by 'global North' agencies
- SDP research is dominated by global North academics
- How can SDP empower global South, and find ways to decolonise structures and societies?



Specific Development Challenges in SDP

- E. Go beyond 'sport' to include dance, music, culture, the arts, outdoor life
- Sport/competitive physical games are not for everyone
 - Try to reach different user groups
 - Adapt activities to the local context – e.g. Cape Verde – batuku as well as football, other sports



Specific Development Challenges in SDP

F. Tackle difficult development issues that put pressure on most powerful stakeholders

e.g. nation-states, major corporations, international agencies

Issues might include civil rights, human rights, climate change, the environment, inequality

Engage with campaign groups and issues

This is crucial if SDP is to build capabilities, advance transformational development, and secure local empowerment



Specific Development Challenges in SDP

G. New themes, issues and participants?

- Environment, refugees are important – SDP slow to recognise these?
- SDGs have a global focus, so can be 'blunt instrument' – need to focus on local issues
- Many nations still not fully involved in SDP
- Capabilities and empowerment approaches can help here



Specific Development Challenges in SDP

H. Identify 'what works' and 'scale up'

- Very wide differences between SDP agencies in the quality or standards of their work
- SDP agencies should share what they do, and 'what works'
- 'Scale up' what works locally, so that it reaches national or international levels



Lessons for Academic Research on Sport/Global Development?

- Capabilities approach, transformational development, and local empowerment
- Combine bottom-up (grassroots) and top-down (sectoral) perspectives
- Go beyond Anthropology 101: community-level research, analysis; and engage with contemporary theory/research
- Engage with development studies field, and global development issues
- Engage with new scholars, academic communities
- Decolonise – global South voices and perspectives
- Explore rights-based development themes, with wider set of stakeholders



Thank you for
your attention...

