



Sport-for-development: an emerging field

It is not often that academics are afforded the challenge to respond to market forces and make sense of the complex world of practitioners and stakeholders to constitute a field of study. This is very much the position that academics find themselves as global interests are increasingly focused on an emerging body of knowledge associated with sport-for-development. The appointment of the first Special Adviser to the United Nations Secretary-General on Sport for Development and Peace in 2001 brought global recognition to the potential wider role of sport in addressing the Millennium Development Goals (Beutler, 2008; Coalter, 2007). In 2005 (31 January to 2nd February), following the announcement of the International Year of Sport and Physical Education, a group of academics, government and development agencies, as well as leading NGOs attended a workshop in New York (UNICEF, 2005).

During this workshop attended by 31 participants from eight different countries, including nine UNICEF representatives (from Georgia, Rwanda, Brazil, the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Panama, Zimbabwe and New York), the concepts of +sport and sport+ were debated and various issues discussed and tools introduced to “measure” the impact of sport-for-development programmes. Extended research in the field since 1997 has revealed that recognition for research originating from the “Global South” is still not on par with that of academia from the “Global North”. Contributing to the ICSSPE Bulletin is therefore an opportunity to share some insights that emanated from experience designing, implementing and reporting on 13 sport-for-development research projects in the “Global South”. These projects have included assessments of the United Kingdom-South Africa Sports Initiative for the British Sports Council (in 1997), the Australia-South Africa Sport Development Programme’s Junior Sport Component (in 1999), followed by the Australia Africa 2006 Sport Development Programme (in 2002 and 2004), and the Active Community Clubs’ Initiative as

part of the Australian Sport Commission's outreach programme (2008-2010). The relatively longitudinal research conducted on these development programmes initiated by the Australian Sport Commission in South Africa, Swaziland and Botswana provided the scope for experimental work. Various research designs were tested (experimental-control, pre-post comparisons and Participatory Action Research) and a tool was designed to assess multi-level impact (macro-, meso- and micro-levels) according to the envisaged programme-related deliverables.

To ensure that findings and management efficiency and programme effectiveness could be measured, the tool Sport-in-Development Impact Assessment Tool (S·DIAT) was developed. The tool was packaged to include mixed methods (interviews with key decision-makers, focus groups and questionnaires) to ensure triangulation and data synthesis among a purposive sample of research participants. For nuanced and context-meaningful insights, it became clear that local researchers had to be trained and a collaborative approach followed. The tool was refined to include a "training component" and up to date, about 250 local research collaborators were trained, ranging from peer educators (as fieldworkers) to decision-makers and managers who would then understand monitoring and evaluation in depth and be able to come up with effective strategies, systems and evidence-based practices and programmes.

Logic models and reciprocal agency formed the basis of deductive and inductive approaches for two interlinked components, namely i) programme management and delivery and ii) social impact (human and community levels). These two components were labeled "indicator bands" and each were further unpacked according to "indicator fields" that could be tailored and adapted to assess a variety of interventions. Local studies followed such as the assessment of strategic partnerships of Sport and Recreation Institutions for cooperative governing for the Tshwane Metropolitan Council (in 2002), and the impact of community sport in Klipspruit West (in the Johannesburg Metropolitan in 2005).

Bigger projects were to follow and Sport and Recreation South Africa (the National Department) requested research to determine the effect of the new South African dispensation on the status of South African women and girls in the various sectors of sport and recreation. All South African government departments had commissioned a ten year (retrospective) impact study (tracing change from 1994 to 2004). Most significant findings indicated racial tensions and entrenched patriarchal values manifested in hegemonic practices across a broad

spectrum of sectors (Burnett, 2004). In another national study, a multi-year study (from 2004 to 2006) was conducted to determine the impact of *Siyadlala* (a community based mass participation programme), followed by a similar study of the School Sport Mass Participation Programme in 2008. Political changes and restructuring at the national level prevented a post-impact assessment and the baseline with insights obtained through retrospective or recall of “most significant changes” was captured.

In 2008, the FIFA World Cup awarded to South Africa, attracted major international development agencies. The most influential of these agencies is GIZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit), who have established a Public Private Partnership (PPP) with the national department of Sport and Recreation South Africa. This agency embarked on an ambitious sport-for-development course by developing a programme (Youth Development through Football) and several related initiatives funded by the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the European Union.

An initial contextual screening was conducted in South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Lesotho, Zambia and Mozambique to select GIZ/YDF partners that would be able to deliver tangible and intangible results according to a set of pre-designed indicators. This research provided meaningful insights and criteria for selecting partners, especially Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), to deliver programmes according to the GIZ/YDF sport-for-development philosophy. A baseline study followed with the selected partners for pre-post, multi-site comparison over a period of four years (2008-2012). As a “learning” organisation, the research offered strategic information on pre-designed indicators and a system was developed to regularly measure and report on Indicator Monitoring Scores. More countries and partners were added, to include 10 African countries (adding Kenya, Rwanda, Ghana, Namibia and Swaziland). For determining impact, 10 partners were visited in seven countries in 2011, followed by visiting 14 partners in five countries for the final impact assessment in July 2012 as partnerships changed and a core set provided comparative data. The methodology was refined to measure programme and delivery components (quantity and quality), as well as social impact (measured as changed in aspects such as self-efficacy, social skills, multiple relationships, HIV/AIDS knowledge and attitudes, and health-related behaviours based on life-style choices).

Methodological developments responded to the strategic needs of the donor, although

researchers were given absolute freedom to investigate and report on “intended” and “unintended” consequences. An additional aspect was also to conduct research on the formation and functionality of the Sport for Social Change Network, a Nike South Africa initiative co-funded by GIZ. Processes of webbing, networking and network formation have been traced to produce strategic information for decision-making by the selected representative leadership. This research project did not only provide rigorous evidence of impact, but also delivered information on different types of development dynamics and models. The initial +sport and sport+ models are still dominant, but integrated and hybrid approaches also emerged.

During this research, it also became clear that boundaries exist and sport alone cannot bring about desired change to deep-seated social problems. It became clear that with higher levels of social functionality - from the individual, household, school and community - the easier change will occur along a continuum of “high risk”, “vulnerability”, “coping”, “resilience” and “thriving”. The relevancy of context and new paradigms explaining notions of collective consciousness (as opposed to individual consciousness embedded in Neo-liberalism) are crucial in making sense of data.

It also became clear that advocacy and praxis are very much part and parcel of developmental research where human values are celebrated and the focus is on the improvement of the quality of life of vulnerable or high risk individuals and collectives. Research conducted for other development agencies in the field of sport (e.g. The Australian Football League, A Chance to Play of Terre des Hommes, the JAG Foundation) provided forums for the empowerment of participants and institutions, steering change in a positive direction based on local understanding, needs and expectations.

In a more pragmatic way, the research informed some innovation in resource development. A post-graduate student well versed in the Football 4 Peace curriculum (designed by scholars from the University of Brighton), was recruited to collaborate with South-African based students, peer-educators and participants in developing two Life Skill Manuals – one for primary school and one for secondary school learners. Most popular indigenous games were selected from a national study conducted in 2001/2 (when eleven tertiary institutions collaborated), and adapted to facilitate the learning of 11 key values. A pilot study was conducted during July 2012 and the results are still to be written up.

The lessons learnt from sport-related impact assessments could also be transferred to health and educational interventions with adaptations to the methodology and programme characteristics, as well as models of delivery. Development agencies or foundations as the Corporate Social Investment (CSI) section of mining companies (e.g. Rössing Foundation from Rio Tinto in Namibia and Palabora Foundation in South Africa) provided the forum for impact assessments across a wide spectrum of educational programmes. Impact assessments of multiple corporate programmes presented a further development of the research paradigm. There is a shift from the initial philanthropic “giving”, to an ethical paradigm of “responsibility” and giving, with a most recent trend of “social investment” – evident in fourth wave contemporary management practices.

An equally challenging study entailed an investigation on the role of sport-related entities at the 23 public South African universities, assessing their delivery across seven identified “pillars” of engagement (Burnett, 2010). The report is entitled *Delivery for the Sport Industry by South African Universities* and provides i) background information of different institutions, ii) a profile of all sport-related entities (e.g. academic departments, bureaus and service or specialized units) across the main “pillars” of delivery, iii) an overview of aggregated data reporting on collective delivery, self-identified good or innovative practices and challenges, and iv) concluding comments. Seven “pillars” of delivery was developed through several rounds of discussion by members of the umbrella body, University Sport South Africa (USSA). It includes the following aspects:

- Education and training according to different professional and disciplinary compositions;
- Research mainly relating to post-graduate, staff, inter- and multi-disciplinary research with the identification of highly innovative research.
- Community engagement reporting on various projects run by staff, students and institutions with an analysis of 73 community outreach projects.
- Sport participation provided at different levels across a wide spectrum – from elite and competitive leagues to hostel and social leagues with gender breakdown and numbers of most popular sports.
- Resources in terms of physical (infrastructure), financial (e.g. sport bursaries and budgets), and human resources (e.g. staff, coaches, etc.) inclusive of retention and employment trends.

- Marketing, sponsorships and commercialization in terms of marketing academic programme, corporate sponsorship, the Lotteries National Distribution Fund, FIFA's investment in upgrading fields and income-generating activities.
- Stakeholders, strategic partners and networking.

Main challenges pertain to fragmented service delivery, lack of support from executive leadership, lack of resources, the pressure to produce “third-stream” income and the multi-campus sport facilitation following the merger of several institutions in 2005. The lack of strategic research, binge drinking and facilitation of athletes with disabilities were also identified as challenges by research participants. Good practices informed successful strategies of intra- and inter-institutional and sectorial collaboration to build and share expertise and resources across a national spectrum, emanating from “pockets” of excellence at universities.

From working in multiple spheres of tool development, methodological standardization and validation, in addition to impact assessments, it is evident that a new role is emerging for academics, namely, being an advocate for change. Academics need to respond to the challenge of forging meaningful, strategic partnerships with local communities and collectives of research participants to facilitate social justice, positive change and giving marginal groups a voice. As practitioners and academics become linked within a developmental framework with multiple and complex relationships (including power relationships), sport-for-development will continue to gain momentum as a social movement.

References

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