

CHAPTER 8

SPORT FOR SOCIAL CHANGE AND DEVELOPMENT¹

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this chapter, you should be able to:

1. Define sport for development and briefly explain its historical significance.
2. Provide examples of individuals, non-profit, and professional sport organizations that have used or are using sport in an attempt to affect positive social change.
3. Explain the challenges facing the field of sport for social change and development and its opportunities for future growth.

INTRODUCTION

When many people think about the nature of the sport industry, they are likely drawn to professional sport with its multi-million-dollar contracts and larger-than-life personalities, or to the frenzy and excitement of big-time intercollegiate athletics. For many, sport is considered a business industry and not an agent for social change. People grow up spending time watching professional and college sports, and money on tickets, merchandise, equipment, and other related products. Often, lives are dedicated to following and supporting these massive billion-dollar sports teams and industries. However, a little-known addition to the industry that has gained a foothold is the proliferation of hundreds of organizations around the globe that strive to use sport to make a positive difference in society. Even professional sport franchises and other traditional elements of the sport industry have launched programs to give back to the community and attempt to create positive social change. Furthermore, there has been a growing social movement towards the use of non-traditional sport practices as a vehicle for social change, reaching communities with messages in ways traditional sport practices cannot.

Sport for social change—the focus of this chapter—is the use of sport as a vehicle or platform for transforming the social structure of a social group or society (i.e., a change in the nature, social institutions, social behaviors, or social relations of a society). Sport for social change can constitute a program or initiative aimed at effecting change (i.e., sport for development) or it can be instances where sport is used as a platform to advocate for a social cause or issue. Within the domain of sport for social change lies the field of sport for development (SFD). We can broadly define SFD as the use of sport to exert a positive influence on public health, the socialization of children, youth and adults, the social inclusion of the disadvantaged, the economic development of regions and states, and the fostering of intercultural exchange and conflict resolution (Lyras & Welty Peachey, 2011). The tremendous growth of this field has been highlighted: “150 sport for development and peace organisations were registered with the unofficial SFDP online platform (<http://www/sportanddev.org>) maintained by the Swiss Academy for Development. Ten years later, that platform features close to 1000 programs” (Sugden, Schlenker, Adair & Frawley, 2019, p. 3)

Generally, organizations or groups involved in SFD design and implement a sport-related program or initiative for the purpose of effecting social change. While the social environment shapes members of a society, people also have the human agency to shape social life by changing its social structures (Eitzen & Sage, 2009). Researchers have acknowledged that sport and its value systems have the potential to influence society for both good and ill (Brevik, 1998), and that sport can serve as a platform to point towards the

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need for societal change (Kaufman & Wolff, 2010). SFD programs, then, actively work at social change through a variety of mediums, such as using sport to target at-risk populations (e.g., HIV in Africa; peace and conflict in Israel, Ireland, and Cyprus; poverty in India, and obesity in the South Pacific), and develop initiatives to help resolve challenges of “the north” (U.S., European Union) that could potentially transform the focus of traditional sport practices to more human-oriented programs, governance, and functions (Ly-ras & Welty Peachey, 2011; Schulenkorf, 2017).

Given this backdrop, we next provide an overview of the philosophy of SFD, followed by a discussion of sport for social change and development’s historical significance, SFD’s global influences, and the application of sport for social change and development in the U.S. Throughout, we showcase and provide examples of how various individuals, non-profit, and professional sport organizations are embracing sport for social change and development. Finally, we examine the challenges facing the field of sport for social change and development and discuss future growth opportunities.

OVERVIEW OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF SPORT FOR DEVELOPMENT

According to Jarvie (2007):

Historically, the potential of sport lies not with the values promoted by global sport or particular forms of capitalism for these are invariably unjust and uneven. The possibilities that exist within sport are those that can help with radically different views of the world perhaps based upon opportunities to foster trust, obligations, redistribution and respect for sport in a more socially oriented humane world (p. 422).

Jarvie’s statement provides an excellent summary of the philosophy of SFD. He suggests that the true value of sport goes far deeper than the economic impact and that its value lies in the influence that can be had on social and interpersonal levels. Sport has been shown to have numerous impacts upon its participants, including fitness, bonding, structure, and social development (Cohen & Welty Peachey, 2015; Eccles & Barber, 1999; Eime et. al, 2013; Marsh & Kleitman, 2002; Silliker & Quirk, 1997). For example, researchers have shown that high school athletes earn better grades (Darling et al., 2005; Dyer et al. 2017), have higher educational and occupational aspirations (Darling et al., 2005; Marsh & Kleitman, 2002), spend more time doing homework (Marsh & Kleitman, 2002; Samarasinghe, Khan & McCabe, 2017), and have more positive attitudes towards school (Darling et al., 2005; Eccles & Barber, 1999) than do non-athletes.

Coalter (2007) also articulates five major benefits of sport participation: (a) physical fitness and improved health, (b) improved mental health and well-being, (c) personality development, (d) socio-psychological benefits, and (e) social capital. The last benefit has received considerable attention among SFD scholars. Drawing from Putnam (1995), social capital is defined as the “features of social organization such as networks, norms, and social trust that can facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit” (p. 66). In other words, sport has the ability to bring people together and enhance their relationships in a unique way. It can allow members of the community to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives, something that might occur through ‘bonding’ and ‘bridging’ individuals into a larger united group (Putnam, 1995). Bonding social capital occurs when individuals from similar social strata are linked together, whereas bridging social capital refers to linking together individuals from different social strata (e.g., linking together marginalized participants in a SFD program with their volunteer coaches). These bridging relationships allow disadvantaged persons the opportunity to access other societal resources to change their life situations.

Sport programs, especially in a team atmosphere, have the ability to maximize social capital, as they build cohesion, bonding, and capacity (Adams, Harris & Lindsey, 2018; Shilbury et al., 2008). Sport also has the capability to provide connections between diverse groups, which potentially would not exist without the medium of sport. Finally, sport can facilitate social capital by developing social inclusion, as it creates an opportunity to make friends and form relationships that can minimize social isolation and solitude (Adams,

Harris & Lindsey, 2018; Sherry, 2010; Spaaij, 2009a). This is something nearly everyone has experienced at some point of their lives. A daughter or son might 'bond' with a parent on a fishing trip or golf excursion. That same child might 'bridge' and gain social capital on a youth sport team with an individual from a different neighborhood or a unique demographic with whom they might not normally share an experience.

As previously noted, beyond benefits on a personal level, sport has been influential within various social justice initiatives across the globe. SFD initiatives include: using sport to create dialogue between different cultures to bridge divides (Schulenkorf, 2017; Sugden, 2008); building social capital among urban youth and in underprivileged communities (Skinner, Zakus, & Cowell, 2008; Spaaij, 2009a); using sport to diminish crime and promote awareness and activism (Burnett, 2006; Crabbe, 2000); and utilizing soccer to help homeless participants make positive changes in their lives (Sherry, 2010). We describe examples of initiatives such as these in more detail throughout this chapter.

SPORT FOR SOCIAL CHANGE AND DEVELOPMENT'S HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

The impact of sport and the notion of sport for social change and development can be traced to ancient times when the Olympic Games caused wars to cease and truces to form. In modern society, the Olympics have continued to serve as a platform for athletes to advocate for social causes and social change. For example, Jesse Owens won four gold medals during the 1936 Berlin Olympics, which featured strong Nazi propaganda that touted White supremacy. During a time in America when many African Americans were denied equal rights, Owens' athletic feats rose above racism and served as an inspiration for people around the country. During the 1968 Olympics in Mexico City, sprinters Tommie Smith and John Carlos made their prominent political statement on the podium by wearing black gloves and raising their fists to represent Black Power. Afterwards, both athletes experienced abuse, received death threats, and were ostracized by the US Olympic Committee for years after their actions. During the 2000 Games in Sydney, Cathy Freeman served as an advocate for Aboriginals, whom had long been victims of racism in Australia, by receiving the honor of lighting the Olympic flame.

Beyond the Olympic movement, sport for social change and development is grounded in the idea that sport speaks a simple, common language that can unite divergent peoples irrespective of religion, race, gender, social background, and nationality. The interest in the field stemmed out of a response to communities in need (Green, 2008), and from the belief that meaningful social change could be enacted through sport in people's daily lives. While SFD initiatives have their roots in events such as the Olympics mentioned above or programs designed to help wounded veterans in World War I (Burnett, 2001), they have become more formalized in the past two decades. Many countries (United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, Ireland, Finland, South Africa, U.S.) have utilized sport and recreation-based programs for social outreach intervention, often combined with additional philanthropic efforts to enhance efficacy (Coalter, 2007; Hartmann, 2003; Schulenkorf, 2017).

While it is impossible to list the thousands of moments in sports history that have had a direct impact on society, there have been several prominent occurrences in the last 100 years that deserve mention. One of the most memorable social justice moments in sport happened in 1947 when Jackie Robinson broke the color barrier for the Brooklyn Dodgers. This event transcended far beyond sport and had a direct impact on racial segregation in the United States. Another one of the most recognizable athletes in history, Muhammad Ali, served as a civil rights activist in his opposition to the Vietnam War. This protest cost him his heavyweight title and four years of his career. In defense of his decision to boycott the war, Ali stated in 1966:

Why should they ask me to put on a uniform and go ten thousand miles from home and drop bombs and bullets on brown people in Vietnam while so-called Negro people in Louisville are treated like dogs and denied simple human rights? (Zirin, 2008, p. 147)

Another relevant sport moment that impacted racial equality was the 1995 Rugby World Cup. This was the first major sporting event in South Africa that took place following the end of its apartheid. Nelson Mandela, who became the first Black president of South Africa after serving 27 years in prison, stepped onto the field wearing the team jersey and presented the championship trophy to the captain of the Springboks (South Africa's national team), who was a famous White athlete in the country. The symbolism of this event was much larger than the South African rugby team's victory on the field, as this moment signified a prominent step toward reconciliation and the unification of White and Black South Africans. The events that transpired over the 1995 Rugby World Cup inspired books, movies, and documentaries including the film *Invictus* starring Matt Damon and Morgan Freeman, which was nominated for many awards.

Billie Jean King, a female tennis player who defeated Bobby Riggs in a "Battle of the Sexes" match in 1973 while an estimated 90 million viewers watched, has been considered one of the leaders in women's rights. In 1974 she founded the Women's Sports Foundation, with a mission dedicated to promoting athletic opportunities for women. King stated, "In the '70s we had to make it acceptable for people to accept girls and women as athletes. We had to make it okay for them to be active. Those were much scarier times for females in sports" (Schwartz, no date).

Even more recently, Colin Kaepernick, former quarterback of the San Francisco 49ers used the National Football League (NFL) platform to protest the treatment of African Americans by police officers. In 2016 he knelt during the National Anthem, a very polarizing decision that would eventually cost him his job. As Kaepernick said, "To me, this is bigger than football and it would be selfish on my part to look the other way. There are bodies in the street and people getting paid leave and getting away with murder" (Wyche, 2016). Kaepernick went on to donate over a million dollars to a variety of non-profit initiatives and still uses his platform to inspire change.

The above examples illustrate a handful of ways in which famous sports athletes, teams, or moments have had an influence on society beyond the playing field, using sport as a medium to advocate for some type of societal change. Although NBA great Charles Barkley stated, "I am not a role model" in a Nike commercial, athletes will always inspire emotions and reactions from the fans they touch. Because of this passion they arouse, they have the capability to serve as change agents simply through their actions on and off the field.

SPORT FOR DEVELOPMENT'S GLOBAL INFLUENCE

As previously mentioned, SFD falls within the broader concept of sport for social change. Within the last decade, SFD has received support from many prominent organizations and affiliations. One of the most impactful endorsements came from the United Nations (Kidd, 2007). In 2003, the United Nations (UN) published an article entitled "Sport for development and peace: Towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals" (UN, 2003), which was the first step towards the global promotion of sport as a tool for social justice initiatives. Representing 192 member states, the UN is one organization that encompasses the entire planet and can have a global impact. More recently, the UN has identified sport as a key contributor toward their Sustainable Development Goals (U.N. Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2017). In 2013, April 6th, the UN officially recognized April 6th as International Sport for Development and Peace Day. This announcement only furthered the UN's dedication and promise to use SFD as part of its long-term development agenda.

Kofi Annan, who previously served as Secretary General of the UN, offered further support for the role of sport in working for social change at the Olympic Aid Roundtable in Salt Lake City:

Sport can play a role in improving the lives of individuals, not only individuals, I might add, but whole communities. I am convinced that the time is right to build on that understanding, to encourage governments, development agencies and communities to think

how sport can be included more systematically in the plans to help children, particularly those living in the midst of poverty, disease and conflict. (UN, 2005a, p. 1)

As Sugden and colleagues (2019) note, there are over 1000 SFD initiatives globally. Attempts to investigate the impacts and effects that these organizations have on their target audiences have only scratched the surface. Some researchers have examined the impact of sport in countries that have suffered through war-time tragedy and violence. For instance, Armstrong (2002, 2004) examined football's (soccer) impact in Liberia, where it has been used as a tool for reconstruction and child protection, demonstrating how the game can be used to build social cohesion. More recently, scholars have examined the many ways sporting initiatives have aimed to address the plethora of issues in the South Pacific such as obesity, domestic violence, and communicable diseases (Sherry, Schulenkorf, Seal, Nicholson & Hoye, 2017). Gasser and Levinson (2004) looked at an organization in Bosnia, and Herzegovina, examining the Open Fun Football Schools that use soccer to promote social cohesion between otherwise hostile groups. Another organization that uses sport to reach out to different ethnic communities is the Asian-German Sport Exchange Programme (AGSEP). This organization attempts to contribute to overcoming intergroup rivalry and minimizing ethnic boundaries on a community level (Schulenkorf, 2010).

The social movement of sport for development and peace has also had a positive impact in some marginalized societies (Kidd, 2008). A program founded in the slums of Kenya, the Mathare Youth Sports Association (MYSA), uses soccer as a method of inclusion in an attempt to create safe space for females and to assist with school retention. The girls wear the MYSA jerseys with a sense of pride, creating a noticeable sign of group affiliation and belonging (Brady, 2005). Hayhurst (2013) investigated the influence of a martial arts program in Uganda designed for young girls as a way to challenge gender norms and provide fitness opportunities for women. The Ishraq program, an initiative in Egypt directed at girls aged 13-15, provides a safe atmosphere for girls to be active and play games such as table tennis or handball (Brady, 2005). This organization has the goal of providing a protective learning environment for girls in an area that normally would not be secure for them. In India, an organization called Magic Bus has an annual positive impact on 375,594 impoverished children in slum communities. It uses sport and recreation "to help children and young people break out of the crushing cycle of poverty. Magic Bus works with India's poorest communities and children using an award-winning activity-based curriculum" (Magic Bus, 2019, para 1).

Olympic Aid and Right to Play are two organizations that reach out to impoverished countries. Established and funded by Olympians around the world, these groups provide coaching and mentoring in African, Asian, and Middle Eastern nations along with attempting to promote healthy child and community development. Another organization that began in 2003 out of Namibia, Physically Active Youth (PAY), addresses the high dropout rate (as high as 50%) that occurs after grade 10 in that country. The initial pilot program, which combined daily sport activity with academic counseling and sex education, resulted in 75% of the students passing the 10th grade.

Sherry et al. (2011) evaluated the impact of the Homeless World Cup, a soccer initiative aimed at helping homeless individuals make positive changes in their lives. In this study, the authors determined that a fan's perspective towards marginalized groups (in this case homeless individuals) could be shifted and changed to a more positive light by attendance at the event. Sherry (2010) also interviewed participants of a homeless soccer team in Australia and determined that homeless players increased their social capital and reengaged with society through the intervention. This work built on previous studies suggesting that social bonding through sport can have an impact on marginalized groups (Collins, 2004; Jarvic, 2003).

Street Soccer USA (SSUSA) is also using soccer to combat homelessness in 16 cities in the U.S. SSUSA attempts to achieve three major goals for participants: building community and trust through sports; requiring participants to set 3-, 6-, and 12- month life goals; and empowering individuals by marrying clinical services to sport programming and providing access to educational and employment opportunities (SSUSA, 2019). Research has shown that SSUSA has not only had a prominent impact on the clients they attempt

to serve, but also on the volunteers who donate their time and energy towards the program (Cohen & Welty Peachey, 2015b; Welty Peachey, Cohen, Borland, & Lyras, 2013).

In Israel, Football 4 Peace (F4P), has a mission that includes: providing opportunities for social contact across community boundaries, promoting mutual understanding, engendering in participants a desire for and commitment to peaceful coexistence, and enhancing soccer skills and technical knowledge (Sugden, 2008). The goals are part of an overarching effort aimed to bridge the divide between Israeli and Arab cultures in Israel that have been constantly teetering on the prospect of war. Through the use of soccer, F4P currently reaches out to over 1,000 children of both cultures and is located within 24 mixed communities.

It is efforts like F4P that highlight the value of sport on a global level in facilitating social change. There are other initiatives that are attempting to fulfill similar missions as F4P. One example is Peaceplayers International, whose mission is to unite, educate, and inspire young people in divided communities through basketball (Peaceplayers, 2019). This non-profit reaches out through basketball in efforts to unite communities such as the Irish Catholics and Protestants in Ireland, the Turkish and Greek Cypriots in Cyprus, and Whites and Blacks in South Africa. Finally, in 2014 the Invictus Games, a new international event inspired by Prince Harry, Duke of Sussex, had its inaugural launch in London. Aimed to “use the power of sport to inspire recovery, support rehabilitation and generate a wider understanding and respect for wounded, injured and sick Servicemen and women,” (Invictus Games, 2019) the Games are widely attended and can be viewed in many countries.

As can be seen in these examples, SFD initiatives have the ability to allow sport to transcend poverty, bigotry, and racism (Coalter, 2007; Kidd, 2007). Burnett and Hollander (2003) suggest it is human instinct to want to play, roughhouse, run, catch, jump, and so on. Kids will be kids, no matter the culture or environment that surrounds them, and in turn, their participation in sports and the desire to be active will also translate nearly anywhere. The goal in SFD is to take these natural desires and instincts and harness them into scenarios that “can foster peace and development and can contribute to an atmosphere of tolerance and understanding” (UN, 2005b, p. 1).

CURRENT APPLICATIONS IN THE UNITED STATES

Whether a transnational corporation committed to corporate social responsibility, an international aid organization pursuing the Millennium Development Goals, or a grassroots non-governmental organization (NGO) seeking to meet the everyday needs of disadvantaged communities in the Global South, it is increasingly common to herald sport as a new engine of development and social development through sport as a new social movement. (Spaaij, 2009b)

Even though SFD is not yet recognized as a well-known area within the sport industry, it is relevant and becoming more widespread in the U.S. and globally. While many aspects of the sport industry focus on financial and marketing issues, the social aspect of the industry and developing a human connection are as important as promoting and selling a product to consumers. Social justice initiatives may commonly be implemented in an effort to engage in corporate social responsibility (CSR), which as Spaaij (2009b) indicates in the above quote, can be considered an aspect of SFD. CSR can be defined as activities aimed at promoting some type of social good, going beyond the economic interests of the organization and its legal requirements (Giulianotti, 2015; McWilliams & Siegel, 2001). Babiak and Wolfe (2009) suggest that “nearly all professional sport teams have established charitable foundations over the last decade and a half” (p. 720) mainly in an effort to build relationships and good will amongst local stakeholders. However, often SFD initiatives are designed and implemented by sport businesses for reasons beyond pure altruistic intentions. For instance, Levermore (2008a) mentions, “Sport-in-development corporate partners may use the schemes primarily to further their own concerns” (p. 63).

Criticisms aside, beyond the social justice and philanthropic benefits that can result from CSR, these endeavors help promote and endorse the sport industry to the general public and consumers. Sports teams develop social links and create emotional associations based around the product. Within this vein, many professional sports leagues in America are embracing a philanthropic philosophy in an effort to immerse themselves in the local community and use sport to help address various social issues. For example, Major League Baseball's (MLB) Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities initiative focuses on introducing baseball to low income areas around the U.S.

MLB designed and implemented this program to engage in CSR and to achieve a positive outreach amongst potential future fans of the sport. This initiative has also produced some famous athletes that have come from urban environments, such as CC Sabathia and Justin Upton, whom were featured in nationwide commercials endorsing the endeavor. One of the NFL's programs, Play 60, has centered on the activity levels and fitness of young Americans and even aired commercials that featured President Obama playing football with NFL players Drew Brees and Troy Polamalu. In addition, the National Basketball Association's NBA Cares initiative was successful in countering the bad will that was created from the Ron Artest melee (where an NBA player, after first being assaulted by fans, ran into the stands and attacked a fan), as the program profoundly influenced fans' perceptions of players in the league (Giannoulakis & Drayer, 2009).

However, SFD initiatives in the U.S. go far beyond the professional sports leagues and the individual players. Nearly every professional sports franchise has a foundation or initiative in which they make efforts to give back to the local community. The same can be said for minor league teams and niche sport organizations. Ranging from the sport of squash (e.g., Squashbusters, a non-profit that uses squash to reach urban youth in Massachusetts) to lacrosse (e.g., Lacrosse the Nations, a non-profit that uses lacrosse to promote education and healthy living), and everything in between, SFD can be found almost anywhere that sport exists. Simply put, the concept of using sport to improve the lives of others encompasses a wide spectrum of endeavors. SFD can vary from as small as a local college soccer team volunteering time to play soccer with under-privileged urban youth at a neighborhood YMCA, to as large as a global Olympic movement which aims to use sport to foster peace and understanding between cultures and countries.

By harnessing people's excitement towards the sport industry, and combining that with philanthropic education and life experience, there is an excellent opportunity to reach out to those who could potentially spend their future working, improving and advancing SFD programs. Showing people a feel-good story, like a veteran losing a leg and continuing on in competitive sports or a homeless person using soccer to get off drugs and off the street, captures their attention and enhances their desire to become involved in SFD in some capacity. This cyclical nature of SFD is one of the major reasons so many initiatives are able to succeed. Not only are people around the world being helped through the use of sport, but the employees, donors, and volunteers of SFD initiatives are also impacted in positive ways.

Like most non-profit organizations, SFD programs involve a painstaking process to become established and effective. It takes far more than simply tossing a ball out onto a field or throwing money at a group of disadvantaged children to achieve positive impact. It is important to note that passion for sport and altruism, while important factors, are not sufficient on their own to drive successful outcomes. If a program is designed poorly is key stakeholder do not properly evaluate results or impact these initiatives could fail to implement change or even yield negative outcomes (Welty Peachey, Musser, Shin & Cohen, 2018). There is a significant amount of work that goes into creating an organization that can have an impact and be sustainable over time. In a growing field such as this, there needs to be constant innovation and research to assess what is successful and what needs improvement. Burnett and Uys (2000) discuss methods to evaluate the impact of SFD programs, focusing on three major themes: (a) demographics of the area targeted, (b) program delivery and management, and (c) individual and social aspects such as community involvement. Similarly, Schulenkorf (2017) emphasizes the importance of realistic goal setting and that "SFD can perhaps only be a starting point . . . for more concerted efforts on advancing community

development” (p. 249). The need for diligent research and efficient program implementation is even more critical than ever in today’s strained economic climate.

CHALLENGES

Thus, myriad and varied sport organizations around the globe have begun to implement sport-based initiatives with a social change mandate. As a relatively new field, however, SFD and sport for social change present a number of key challenges that must be addressed by policy makers, researchers and practitioners in order to move the field forward: (a) program efficacy, (b) limitations of SFD initiatives, (c) lack of theoretical frameworks, and (d) fragmentation of SFD organizations.

Program Efficacy

The first challenge is that the efficacy of these programs in achieving impact and long-term, sustainable social change remains in question. While many SFD programs claim significant impact on participants (e.g., enhanced self-esteem, intergroup acceptance) and broader society (e.g., enhanced social capital, active citizenship), in many cases, the sport programs are poorly planned and do not provide scientific evidence about their effectiveness (Coalter, 2010; Kidd, 2007; Levermore, 2008b; Lyras & Welty Peachey, 2011). Many SFD programs do not have the internal capacity to carry out effective monitoring and evaluation, and thus this essential element is often neglected. In addition, there is a poor understanding of the conditions and mechanisms needed for achieving positive outcomes in specific settings (Coalter, 2007; Harris, 2018; Jarvie, 2003). For instance, effective mechanisms and organizational structures for a sport intervention in Ghana could vary greatly from the mechanisms and structure required to achieve the same positive outcomes in Norway. In addition, the strategies used to aid children suffering from malnourishment could vary from SFD techniques that target peace initiatives in war-torn countries. More longitudinal research is needed on both the outcomes of sport-based interventions and on the most effective structures, mechanisms, and processes for achieving these outcomes in specific contexts.

Limitations of SFD Initiatives

Coalter (2010) outlines a second challenge for the field: the recent proliferation of SFD organizations could represent a form of neo-colonialism, with the main strategies for these programs being formulated in the West and then exported to other less-developed nations, promoting new forms of dependency. He cautions those involved in SFD work to avoid forming “overly romanticized, communitarian generalizations about the ‘power’ of sport for development” (p.1386). In other words, while sport can be an effective intervention tool in certain settings and under certain conditions, it is not the “cure all” that can solve every society’s problems all of the time. SFD scholars are challenged to recognize this limitation and look for ways to package sport with other forms of interventions (e.g., arts, music, and education) to most effectively realize the power of sport for social change and development.

Lack of Theoretical Frameworks

Third, there is a lack of theoretical frameworks undergirding sport interventions, which subsequently constrains effective monitoring and evaluation. Ziegler (2007) notes that sport management scholars should strive to develop tenable theory that is encompassing of “sport and physical activity involvement for people of all ages, be they normal, accelerated or special in status” (p. 298). Furthermore, Coalter (2007) explains that SFD scholars should strive to advance theory to understand the conditions, structures, and processes that can promote social change through sport. Recently, several scholars have provided conceptual frameworks that may be useful in advancing SFD and sport for social change theory. In Social Leverage Theory, Chalip (2006) positions sport events as having the ability to build social capital and strengthen the social fabric through two interrelated themes of liminality and *communitas*. Liminality is the concept that something more important than sport is taking place at an event, and that there is a collective energy and vitality that makes social rules and distinctions less important and which transcends sport. This liminality enables discourse and brings together divergent groups that might not otherwise interact, thereby facilitating the formation of new networks that can have both cognitive and affective impacts. Sport thus creates a safe

space for sensitive issues to be explored, symbolized, and considered. The sense of community that is engendered through liminality is then labeled *communitas*.

To enable and facilitate the development of liminality and *communitas*, Chalip (2006) recommends that event organizers can foster social interaction and evoke a feeling of celebration by employing several structural and process elements. Organizers should enable sociability among event visitors, and create event-related social events, such as parades and concerts, to produce a celebratory atmosphere. Organizers should also facilitate informal social opportunities and incorporate ancillary events, such as arts and music activities, as a complement to the sport programming. Finally, organizers should theme widely, using symbols, colors, decorations, rituals, narratives, and stories to “make a visual statement that something special is happening” (Chalip, 2006, p. 117). Chalip then suggests that the celebratory nature of sport events creates the link between liminality and *communitas*, which facilitates the development of social capital and which can be leveraged to address social issues, build networks, and bring community action leading to social change.

As another example of a theoretically grounded framework, Lyras and Welty Peachey (2011) developed Sport-for-Development Theory (SFDT) to help understand the structures and processes of SFD initiatives that can facilitate impact, produce liminality and *communitas*, and develop social capital. Using grounded theory methodology, SFDT was developed out of the Doves Project in Cyprus, a SFD initiative aimed at addressing issues of social exclusion among Greek and Turkish Cypriots. SFDT proposes that blending sport with cultural enrichment (e.g., arts, dance, and music) and educational activities (e.g., life skills, goal setting, global issues awareness, and human rights) can provide a platform to help address various social issues and challenges. Much like Social Leverage Theory (Chalip, 2006), SFDT holds that the blend of sport with educational, festive, and cultural dimensions creates conditions of belonging, fosters a creative sense of community, and promotes peak experiences, all of which are essential for personal development and well being. Furthermore, others have emphasized the necessity for further evaluating the impact and effectiveness of these SFD initiatives. Schulenkorf (2012) introduced a sport-for-development framework (S4D) and aimed to “understand and guide the strategic investigation of sport and event projects and their contribution to direct social impacts and long-term social outcomes” (p. 10). Similarly, Coalter (2013) developed a program theory aimed to identify the relationships between sport-for-change programs and their effectiveness.

Fragmentation of SFD Organizations

Finally, a last challenge is the current fragmentation of organizations involved in SFD and sport for social change work. Many of these small organizations operate in a vacuum in disparate regions of the world, with little opportunity to interact and share best practices with other SFD organizations to create a mutual learning community. This fragmentation has hampered the growth of the field, as many well-intentioned organizations and programs are not able to connect with similar organizations to learn from each other. However, strides are being made to build these bridges and reduce the isolation of organizations within the field. Several international conferences are now offered each year that bring together SFD practitioners, policy makers, and researchers to share ideas and formulate action steps.

FUTURE GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES

Despite the challenges facing the SFD field, there remains a number of exciting future growth opportunities. Many governments around the globe are beginning to recognize the power of sport to effect social change and that sport can serve as another engine of development in the 21st century. While SFD is typically associated with sport programs and interventions taking place in low income countries or developing nations, there is a growing recognition and proliferation of programs using sport as a vehicle for social change in higher income nations and more developed countries. The U.K. and Australia, in particular, have embraced sport within policy circles as a necessary ingredient for a development mandate. Within the U.S., there are organizations such as SSUSA and the Boys and Girls Clubs of America beginning to launch sport interventions in the inner cities and rural America. Despite the White House’s establishment of the Office

of Olympic, Paralympic and Youth Sport in 2009, an initiative meant to promote the values of the Olympic Movement and support youth participation in sports, the U.S. as a whole has been slow to embrace a SFD mandate. Thus, there is need and a future opportunity in the U.S. and abroad for many more organizations to initiate programs using sport to help address societal ills.

Another future growth opportunity is to develop academic/practitioner partnerships to advance the rigor of monitoring and evaluation of SFD programs and organizations. As mentioned previously in this chapter, a challenge for many SFD organizations is conducting effective monitoring and evaluation due to insufficient resources and capacity (Welty Peachey & Cohen, 2016). Thus, there is tremendous opportunity for academicians, both within sport disciplines and without, to partner with practitioners to construct and implement monitoring and evaluation strategies. Currently, these partnerships are being formulated in a number of countries and with several programs. For example, Sherry (2010) formed a partnership with the Australian Street Soccer team, and assessed the long-term impact of team member's participation in the Homeless World Cup. Many additional organizations, have reached out to academic researchers in an effort to begin ascertaining their impact on the communities they aim to serve. The increase in empirical studies on the topic of SFD in academic journals is reflective of the increased collaborations taking place. In the U.S., in addition to faculty at institutions of higher education becoming involved in monitoring and evaluation of SFD programs, a number of think tanks have become interested in SFD and sport for social change. For example, the Aspen Institute, a think tank in Washington, DC, dedicated to fostering open-minded dialogue on contemporary issues, has added a sports and society component to its organization, with a mission to "convene leaders, foster dialogue, and inspire solutions that help sport serve the public interest, with a focus on the health needs of children and communities" (Aspen Institute, 2019).

Another future growth opportunity for SFD is to cultivate student engagement within higher education institutions. SFD and sport for social change is an area that few college students know much about, and therefore, there is opportunity to educate students about SFD through classes and service learning opportunities. Experiential learning and service learning have become far more prominent in sport management programs. For example, the University of Connecticut has established its Husky Sport initiative with a mission to "collaborate with community and campus partners to support youth and college student development through shared teaching, learning, and practice committed to equity" (Husky Sport, n.d.). In existence since 2003, the Husky Sport initiative has yielded over 200,000 hours of engagement with students and practitioners in the Greater Hartford, Connecticut area (Husky Sport, n.d.). Based upon this example, there would be benefit to other higher education institutions designing courses in SFD and sport for social change where students can actively work in the local communities to translate classroom learning into practical application. Finally, in addition to the need for classes in SFD, another growth opportunity is for students to volunteer and seek employment with SFD organizations. These organizations offer a rich opportunity for students to apply management, coaching, human relations, finance, marketing, and other skills in an environment working for the greater social good, which can be a rewarding and inspiring career track.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The purpose of this chapter was to acquaint students with the field of sport for social change and development, and to highlight examples across the globe as to how sport is being used to better society. We began by providing an overview of SFD, which was followed by a discussion of sport for social change and development's historical significance and important milestones in its development. We then highlighted a number of individuals, organizations, and initiatives around the world and within the U.S. that have used or are using sport in some capacity to address social problems. Finally, we concluded the chapter by examining some of the challenges facing the SFD field that may hinder its growth, as well as opportunities for future growth and development of the field, including ways that students can become actively involved. It is our hope that students have been challenged in this chapter to rethink their concept of sport and to consider how they may embrace and actively promote the power of sport to affect social change.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How do you define sport for development?
2. Explain the origins of sport for development and sport for social change, and describe three key moments of historical significance.
3. Describe two sport-for-development initiatives working at a global level and two that are working within the U.S.
4. What are some of the key challenges to the field of sport for development?
5. Where are growth opportunities for the use of sport for development and social change? Could you think of any specific ways a sport for development initiative could positively impact your local community.

RECOMMENDED READINGS

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- Schulenkorf, N., Sherry, E., & Rowe, K. (2016). Sport for development: An integrated literature review. *Journal of Sport Management*, 30(1), 22-39. (Offers an overview of the current research in the field.)
- Tygiel, J. (2008). *Baseball's great experiment: Jackie Robinson and his legacy, 25th anniversary ed.* Oxford University Press, USA. (Tygiel tells the story of Robinson and other African-American players and how their actions impacted baseball and American desegregation).

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