

Community Empowerment through Sport and Events: A Conceptual Framework for Sport-for-Development Projects

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Abstract

The number of aid organisations, NGOs and Government agencies pursuing the Millennium Development Goals and seeking to improve the everyday needs and social life of disadvantaged communities through sport and events, has been growing over the past decade. Particularly in divided societies, sport-for-development projects have increasingly been staged to contribute to intergroup togetherness, social cohesion and community empowerment. While the analyses of individual sport and event projects highlights their capacity to impact positively on people and groups, they do not provide strategic guidelines, models or frameworks for community empowerment. However, such models are needed to foster practical research in the area of community development that can inform sport and event planning, management and leverage. In an attempt to fill this gap, this paper presents and discusses the Sport-for-Development (S4D) Framework, which can be used to guide the strategic investigation of sport and event projects and their contribution to direct social impacts and lasting social outcomes for (disparate) communities. Finally, this paper suggests different ways in which the S4D Framework could be empirically tested and validated through both qualitative and quantitative research.

Keywords: Sport-for-Development, Community Participation, Change Agent, Sport Event Framework, Event Outcomes

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Introduction

For several decades, sport tournaments and special events have been acknowledged as contributors to feelings of national identity, social cohesion and communal pride. People have been attending sport events in the stadium, or have been following international competitions via the media to celebrate national achievements and ‘historic’ triumphs. For example, many political scientists and sociologists regard 4th July 1954 as the true birthday of the Federal Republic of Germany (Alkemeyer, 2003). Nine years after the end of World War II and five years after the official founding of the Federal Republic, the German national team beat the great favourites Hungary with a surprising 3:2 in the finals of the Football World Cup in Switzerland, after having been defeated by the same team 8:3 in a preliminary group match. It appears that the ‘Miracle of Bern’ (Wortmann, 2003) was able to restore Germany’s deeply shattered self-esteem and – for the first time in years – allowed its people to stand together and be proud of their country.

While positive social impacts of the 1954 Football World Cup came as a surprise to most of the German population, the excitement and symbolic power of sport and events have also been used purposely as a tool for reconciliation and reunification. In 1995, Nelson Mandela was famously wearing a Springbok cap and shirt following South Africa’s victory in the Rugby World Cup. He symbolically demonstrated the need for the new ‘Rainbow Nation’ to work together and respect each other, highlighting that sport may be the new glue that can hold the South African Nation together (Jarvie, 2003; Jarvie & Reid, 1999). Arguably, the power of sport to unite people and nations was also one of the reasons why Football’s Governing Body FIFA awarded the 2002 World Cup to former rival countries Japan and South Korea. UEFA might have thought along similar lines when awarding the 2012 European Football Championships to Poland and the Ukraine.

The amount of anecdotal evidence suggesting that sport can combine disparate people, communities and nations is overwhelming. However, when trying to find empirical evidence that sport and events have actually contributed to intergroup togetherness and overall community development, it becomes obvious that a lot more qualitative and quantitative research is needed to either confirm or reject this claim. This is not only true for large-scale or mega events, but also for smaller sport-for-development projects that are increasingly implemented as an inter-community development strategy, particularly in the developing world. Here, different aid organisations, NGOs and grassroots initiatives are staging sport and

event programs to contribute to overall peace and reconciliation efforts between disparate communities (see e.g. Gasser & Levinsen, 2004; Schulenkorf, 2010; Stidder & Haasner, 2007; Sugden, 2006). However, organisers are left without suitable strategic frameworks or models that help guiding the planning, management and leveraging of development projects for wider social outcomes. In an attempt to fill this gap, this paper presents the Sport-for-Development (S4D) Framework, which can facilitate and foster much needed practical and theoretical research in the (inter-)community development area.

Community Development through Participation

The term community comes from the Latin *communis*, which means common, public, shared by all or many. Williams (1976: 76), in his famous *Keywords*, describes community as a “warmly persuasive word”, which can be applied either to an existing set of relationships or alternatively a new set which may be realised in the future. Similarly, Elias (1974: xiii) points out that “the use of the term community has remained to some extent associated with the hope and the wish of reviving once more the closer, warmer, more harmonious type of bonds between people vaguely attributed to past ages”. A community is seen as a place where solidarity, participation and coherence can be found (Purdue *et al.*, 2000; Taylor, 2003) and may be described as a network of social relations marked by mutuality and emotional bonds amongst its members.

In the literature there is an overall agreement about the distinction between *geographical* and *interest* communities. The former refers to the population of a particular geographical area – a territorial community, whereas the latter does not require physical proximity but rather focuses on people who share something in common – a functional community (Anderson, 1983; Ingham & McDonald, 2003; Willmott, 1988). Interest communities include people from different local regions or geographical communities that are in *Gemeinschaft* [togetherness] with others. Often, these ensembles share a combination of ‘interest’ and specific characteristics such as ethnicity, religion, political ideology, occupation, sexuality or leisure pursuit (Bender, 1991; Ife, 1995; Willmott, 1988). Examples are the Latino community, the Jewish community, the military, academic or sports communities. Dedicated interest groups tend to show interaction and a common sense of identity even if the relationships amongst members are less personal and/or frequent than those between friends or relatives. Anderson (1983) describes this phenomenon as the ‘imagined community’,

where people share deep sentiments or beliefs and through this make sense of their lives in what may otherwise seem a complex and anonymous world.

In order to create a dynamic interest community, Shaffer and Anundsen (1993) argue that people in groups need to engage with each other and work towards community development. Christenson, Fendley and Robinson (1989: 14) define community development as “a group of people in a locality initiating a social action process (i.e. an intervention) to change their economic, social, cultural, or environmental situation”. To achieve community development, this group of people needs to actively participate in common practices and be committed to making decisions in cooperation with each other (Anyanwu, 1988; Chalmers & Bramadat, 1996). Recognising these requirements, the United Nations (cited in Midgley, 1986: 24) define community participation as “the creation of opportunities to enable all members of a community and the larger society to actively contribute to and influence the development process and to share equitably in the fruits of development”.

Fundamental to the idea of community participation is an emphasis on ‘building from below’ or – in other words – a development that is initiated within communities. Widespread recognition has further defined community participation in planning and development as a partnership built upon the basis of a dialogue among the various actors (stakeholders), during which the agenda is set jointly, and local views and knowledge are deliberately sought and respected (Reid, 2006; Sanoff, 2000; Schneider & Libercier, 1995; Uruena, 2004). This means that for any type of community development projects, communities should be actively involved in the participation *process*, rather than only looking at the final outcome of community development projects. The careful exploration of common problems and subsequently their gradual elimination may well be of more value to participating communities than the final result itself, as participation in (inter-)community projects allows for reciprocal processes, the creation of mutual understanding and appreciation of one another (Botes & van Rensburg, 2000; Fitzduff, 1993; Orjuela, 2003, 2008; Ross, 2000).

Benefits of Community Participation

Participation aims at empowering people. As a result individuals, their communities and organisations gain mastery over their affairs, which means that ‘people centred’ empowerment strategies emphasise human and social development (Florin & Wandermann, 1990). Empowerment – as a collaborative process – should for example enhance individual and collective capacities, improve efficacy, address inequities and, where poverty is

implicated, promote social and economic justice and wellbeing (Reid, 2006; Skinner, Zakus & Cowell, 2008). Wellbeing has been described as “an optimal quality of healthy community life which meets the needs of people living together in communities” (Rural Assist Information Network, 2006). According to Lawson (2005: 147) community participation contributes to wellbeing, as it can help individuals and groups to (1) gain a critical understanding of themselves and their environments, (2) develop collective identities and social solidarity, (3) gain resources and power, enabling them to achieve individual and collective goals, (4) achieve greater equity, and (5) enhance individual and collective capacities to sustain their achievements.

Participatory and co-operational community approaches further promise to advance intergroup relations and may result in a shared feeling of togetherness (Gasser & Levinsen, 2004; Schulenkorf, 2008, 2010). Strategic integration of people from different backgrounds into joint community projects has shown to contribute to increased dedication of individuals and groups, and participation can thus be described as the “engine of community life” (Kenny, 1999: 64). Livermore and Midgley (1998) show in their study of the racially divided southern U.S. city of Baton Rouge that a *genuine* partnership between dedicated groups is a successful way of bridging and overcoming differences and creating inter-community wellbeing. If genuine partnerships are achieved, communities can experience the benefits of active participation by suggesting or receiving ideas, discussing problems, engaging with others and providing recommendations, which contribute to the capacity to function as one unit or team. Livermore and Midgley (1998) argue that genuine partnerships result in active involvement of all participants and final agreement of all principal parties to an issue, which increases the likelihood of successful identification of people with the projects and community life in general.

Participation also promises disadvantaged communities the capacity to help themselves through newly established connections or networks (O’Keefe & Hogg, 1999; Uruena, 2004). To achieve the desired positive outcomes of community participation projects, people have to be encouraged to work with each other – they need to develop structures and a network in which everyone has a specific place and in which every person can contribute and be genuinely valued by others (Ife, 1995; Sugden, 1991). Inclusiveness, the building of trust and appreciation, as well as a common sense of purpose are of critical importance, and should be fostered within all community development projects (Ife, 1995; Skinner *et al.*, 2008; Uruena, 2004). This does not mean that critical discussions, disagreements and arguing are to be

avoided; they should even be encouraged, as long as efforts are productive and allow for development towards collective decision making, compromising and eventually problem solving. According to Peck (1988: 88), “genuine communities may experience lovely and sometimes lengthy periods free from conflict. But that is because they have learned how to deal with conflict, rather than avoid it”.

Challenges of Community Participation

The proponents of community participation make a powerful and emotionally appealing case, and the process of community participation receives strong theoretical support in the literature (Botes & van Rensburg, 2000; Cuthill, 2003; Ife, 1995; O’Keefe & Hogg, 1999; Reid, 2003, 2006; Sanoff, 2000). In practice, however, the community participation approach has its problems and challenges.

Theoretically, community participation means participation of *all* people. However, Ife (1995) argues that in all but the smallest and simplest societies is impractical to expect that all members of a community will be actively involved in the decision-making and participation that is required. Creighton (1995) believes that there are always people in a community who do not care about social projects, while there are others who do not have the time to participate. This is particularly relevant for community projects in developing countries, where individuals and groups often do not possess the resources to take over time-intensive community roles, as they are primarily concerned with their own survival (Orjuela, 2003). This restriction leads to another problem that arises in community development work, which is a lack of participation of lower socio-economic groups in the organisation and implementation of community projects (Campbell & McLean, 2002; Gittell, 1980; Skinner *et al.*, 2008). When disadvantaged people or groups cannot or do not participate, this results in a skewed representation of the overall community in development projects. Botes and van Rensburg (2000) therefore consider the integration and empowerment of people who initially do not have the capacity to participate as one of the biggest challenges in the community development process.

A community’s norms also have an influence on people’s willingness to participate in community projects. Specific customs and traditional ways of behaving in the community can determine whether people and groups will participate actively and cooperatively in community affairs (Reid, 2006). At the same time, norms and values determine to a great extent the manner in which individuals and groups cooperate or resist. In cases where people

or groups with different socio-cultural or ethnic backgrounds come together for joint projects, cultural misunderstandings and differences in perceived group status may occur. Particularly when people are disenfranchised by government approaches and feel inferior in comparison to the mainstream community, there may be suspicion and resistance to participate in government supported projects.

Furthermore, the community participation process is often considered time-consuming and costly, and the outcomes of participation can be uncertain and ineffective (Botes & van Rensburg, 2000). Gow and van Sant (1983) state that the requirements needed to communicate with and coordinate all stakeholders are often beyond the limits of the number of project staff, governmental personnel and local residents involved in the process. These challenges can lead to a lack of clarity in allocated management roles, hierarchy orders or staff responsibilities, which makes the management of community projects inefficient. Reid (2006) argues that if the project team does not guide the community participation process appropriately, expectations of citizens in the participation process may not be achieved, which can lead to disillusionment among the community and a reduced number of people wanting to be involved in future projects.

Overall, many experts believe that communities – particularly those in developing countries – cannot function autonomously without the assistance of external support agencies. In an attempt to overcome the risk of communities being overwhelmed by development projects, governments and policymakers have increasingly advocated external support from aid agencies, facilitators or ‘change agents’ in community projects.

The Change Agent

The concept of community participation has been introduced as a promising strategy for stimulating project initiation, community empowerment and overall social development (Gschwend & Selvaranju, 2007; Henley, 2005; Ife, 1995; Reid, 2003, 2006; Sanoff, 2000). However, in order to avoid the problems of overwhelming communities with the staging of development projects, several authors highlight the importance of establishing creative and cooperative partnerships with external institutions or change agents which are able to guide and support the process (Lawson, 2005; Naparstek, Dooley & Smith, 1997). Change agents are defined by Schulenkorf (2010: 119) as: “external parties who help adversaries establish contact, open negotiations and develop projects for cooperation and sustainable development to end a dispute in a mutually satisfactory agreement”. Midgley (1986) suggests that change agents are a

crucial factor in the planning and implementation phases of community projects, as they can facilitate contact and help creating a common platform for cooperation within and between communities. The assistance of a change agent is particularly helpful in intergroup settings where inter-community relations have historically been fraught with difficulties, and where communities have only limited human and financial skills and resources (Stiefel & Pearse, 1982; Uruena, 2004).

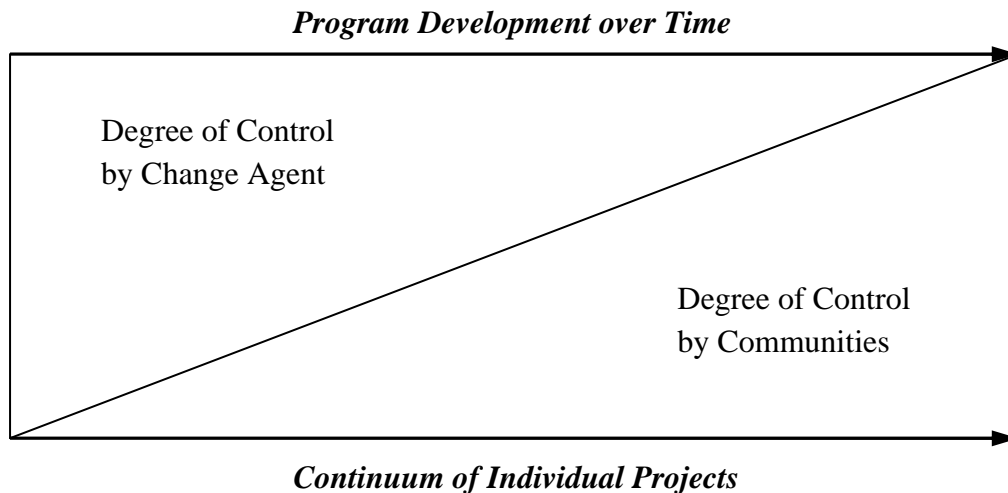
Change agents have become more and more involved and successful in community development work, as they can mobilise support and inculcate an attitude of confidence and co-operation amongst participating community groups and their respective members. Skilled change agents are supposed to guide and teach communities how to use their capacities and to cooperate effectively (Ife, 1995; Lawson, 2005; Uruena, 2004). External knowledge can thus be combined with local input, and communities are expected to benefit from the newly acquired methods, skills and activities. The importance of an external change agent within the strategic community development process is highlighted by Kramer and Specht (1975: 14), who explain that a change agent helps the community “to engage in planned collective action in order to deal with social problems ... aimed at social change.” They go on to explain that of particular importance are both the interpersonal processes of working with communities, and the technical tasks of “identifying problem areas, analysing causes, formulating plans, developing strategies, and mobilising the resources necessary to effect action.”

When projects are initiated or guided by outsiders there is, however, the danger that they may employ a dominant paternalistic approach to management (Botes & van Rensburg, 2000; Stiglitz, 2002). The change agent may unconsciously or consciously have the feeling of ‘knowing what’s best’ for communities, which may result in local input being undervalued (Midgley, 1986; Willmott, 1988). The misuse of power and the drift from a ‘bottom up’ towards a ‘top-down’ approach may prohibit communities to show and experience their own full potential, which might lead to community uncertainty and resistance. This problem often arises when international change agents employ a ‘Western approach’ to leadership and management, and focus on using human capital and the commitment of workers to a predetermined plan (Skinner *et al.*, 2008; Vail, 2007). Avery (2004) identifies this management approach as ‘classical leadership’, which aims at rapid returns on investment, mostly in the form of economic development.

Classical leadership approaches are often not sensitive to the developing world context and to sustainable socio-cultural development within and between communities in particular. Western change agents do not always have the requisite 'cultural work' skills within or among given communities, which means that their work can benefit substantially from local input and participation. It is argued that only a fruitful cooperation between communities and change agents can lead to the empowerment of people and groups that enhances individual and collective capacities, efficacy, as well as social and economic justice and wellbeing. To achieve these aims, the change agent should not be serving as a dictating force but as a supportive enabler and facilitator for projects and network of partnerships between residents, management, and community organisations (Kramer & Specht, 1975; Sanoff, 2000; Schulenkorf, 2008; Skinner *et al.*, 2008). A change agent is expected to foster grass-roots participation and integrate people and communities from different backgrounds, so that they 'rub shoulders' in common tasks and seek common goals. As a supporting contact, the change agent has to try and foster collective solidarity by respecting and using the individual characteristics of each community in a way that every group is satisfied (Lawson, 2005; Midgley, 1986; Uruena, 2004). Further, change agents need to be aware of different forms of intergroup intolerance, discrimination and prejudice which may be prevailing. They need to be proactive in challenging negative stereotypes and also give others the confidence to do so (Taylor, 2003).

Finally, to achieve a sustainable form of development, local communities need to be empowered by receiving an increased amount of responsibilities over time. Change agents have to be committed to transferring power and control to the locals, once they are prepared and trained for the upcoming challenges of program ownership. Once the local communities have learned the skills necessary to plan, manage and leverage projects themselves, change agents are supposed to take a step back and reduce their overall influence. The philosophical approach that underpins this gradual development process is illustrated with Schulenkorf's (2010: 126) philosophical Model of Community Empowerment, presented in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Schulenkorf's Model of Community Empowerment



The Model of Community Empowerment shows that communities and change agents have a varying degree of control of the different individual projects that form part of an overall development program. In the initial stages, change agents are largely in control of project planning and management processes, while the degree of community responsibility is low. In order to change power structures and to achieve community empowerment, in a step-by-step process expert knowledge, skills, responsibilities and ultimately control needs to be transferred from the change agent to the empowered communities, who are expected to guide and lead projects in the long-term.

The Sport-for-Development Approach

If community development must stimulate participation and initiative, then Auld and Case (1997) argue that the overriding goal is the integration of people within a community in a context in which they can interact with each other, nurture each other, and participate together in decision-making. Borgmann (1992) claims that the coming together of people around a meaningful leisure activity presents such a positive context. He argues that a ‘community of celebration’ can be established through leisure activities. Within this context, sport programs and special events are often seen as a promising way to encourage communication and communal celebration, as they have a certain ‘intrinsic power’ to activate people, remove barriers between groups, and change people’s attitudes and behaviour (Brown, Brown, Jackson, Sellers & Manuel, 2003; Frye, 1995). Indeed, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2002) suggests that participation in sport and cultural activities can provide people and groups with a sense of togetherness, belonging and support during interaction. Participation in inter-community sport events may thus be the starting point for the forming of community networks and bonds important for social cohesion. However, in

his critical review on sport-based community building activities Coalter (2007) highlights that sport is not *a priori* good or bad, but needs to be strategically planned to be conducive of personal and group development. He argues that to achieve positive beliefs, attitudes, intentions and behaviour, the social context and people's experiences with 'others' need to be pleasant and/or beneficial.

Empirical support for this claim comes from Yuen's (2005) research on leisure activities in the context of a 4-week international youth camp, which explored the possibility of building community and social cohesion in a group of children from various countries. The camp allowed for participating in leisure as a shared experience. It was found that social learning as a form of reciprocal exchange was an important factor for connecting with others. Some children participated in the camp community by adopting facilitative and supportive roles during skill development activities, while others benefited from 'learning by doing' exercises. Overall, the leisure activities enabled the creation of common ground and interests for an engagement in reciprocal relationships, and children from different historical, linguistic and cultural backgrounds experienced a sense of belonging and a *taste* of community.

Two examples from sport-for-development programs in South Africa further demonstrate the success of 'bottom-up' community initiatives which are supported by an external NGO as the change agent. The "Australia-South Africa Junior Sport Programme" and the "Active Community Clubs Initiative" were introduced by the South African Government in cooperation with Australian experts acting as change agents (Burnett, 2001, 2006). Both projects centred on the principle of 'building development around people' and provided equitable sports opportunities for disadvantaged youth in an attempt to develop a broad participation base. Burnett argues that the leisure context of the projects was conducive to community participation and the establishment of a positive intergroup atmosphere. She believes that an even bigger success factor was the inclusion of the external change agents who acted as impartial supporters within both programs. Burnett concludes that the change agent's presence and involvement contributed to an enhancement of community through establishing reciprocal trust, respect, self-esteem, and overall wellbeing within communities.

Kunz (2009) in her research on sport and play as a post-disaster relief strategy found that sport coaches – who act as facilitators, mediators or 'change agents' between individuals and groups – play a crucial role in the psychological rehabilitation efforts of traumatised children. Importantly, looking at the impacts of sport on the social development and wellbeing in Bam,

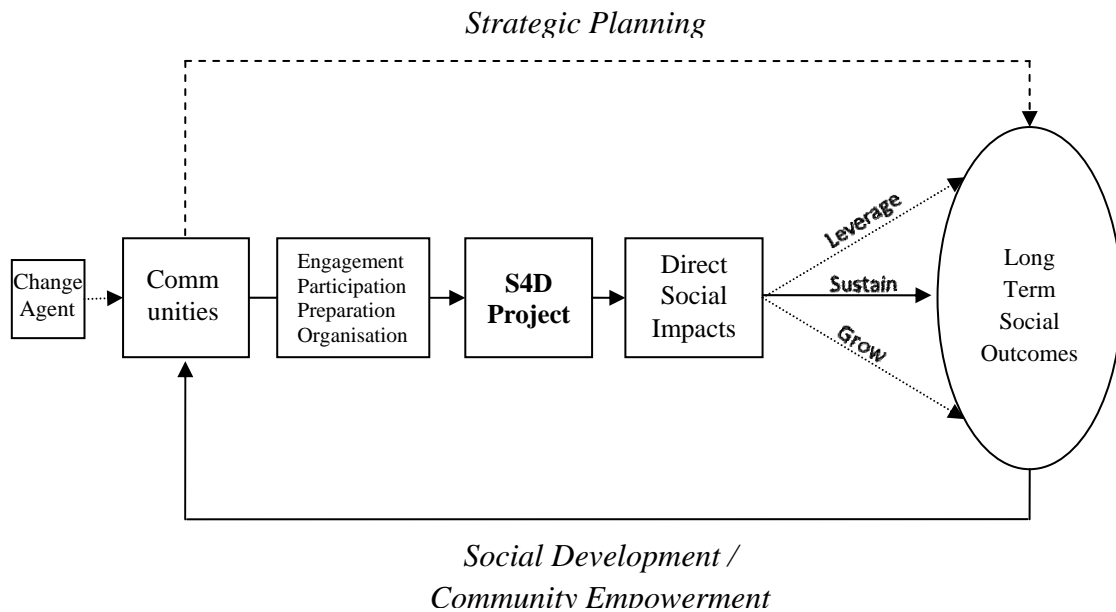
Iran, she argues that the positive effects generated through sport intervention projects should not be seen in isolation, but need to be incorporated in further strategies to achieve wider social outcomes for individuals and their communities. For example, sport projects could be expanded to include workshops on health education, conflict management and violence prevention as a form of leverage for wider social outcomes.

While the analysis of sport and event projects highlight sports' invaluable capacity to impact positively on people and groups, it does not provide strategic guidelines, models or loose frameworks for community empowerment and overall social development. Indeed, Chalip (2006) argues that a suitable strategic framework guiding the study of social utility of sport and event programs is currently not available. However, such models are needed to foster practical research in the area of community development that can inform sport and event planning, management and leverage. In an attempt to fill this gap, this paper presents and discusses the Sport-for-Development (S4D) Framework, which can be used to guide the strategic investigation of sport and event projects and their contribution to building social capital, enhancing local capacities and achieving overall community empowerment.

Strategic Planning for Community Empowerment: The S4D Framework

Conceptual frameworks are used in research to outline the links of different theories and concepts, and to show their distinct relationships with each other (Veal, 2006). In answering Chalip's (2004, 2006) call for a process oriented framework guiding the social utility of sport and event projects, this paper proposes the Sport-for-Development (S4D) Framework. The S4D Framework draws together findings from theoretical and practical research on Community Participation, Sport-for-Development, and Sport and Event Management and describes an *ex ante* approach towards guiding the strategic planning and investigation of sport and event development projects. It integrates and visualises the social processes generated through participatory sport activities and should be understood as a loose frame towards community and/or inter-community empowerment.

Figure 2: S4D Framework



The SD Framework is divided into the three interrelated areas of Strategic Management, Direct Social Impacts and Long-Term Social Outcomes. First, strategic management includes the planning, organising and conducting of the S4D project. Here, the external change agent and local communities decide to engage and participate in development activities and work towards social outcomes and community empowerment objectives. Through active and reciprocal engagement, local knowledge is joint with external expert input, which – according to Sugden (2006), Stidder and Haasner (2007) and Schulenkorf (2010) – is the recipe for staging culturally appropriate and professionally managed sport and event projects. The strategic management phase further includes a discussion on strategies to achieve desired long-term social outcomes. Indeed, to maximise project benefits for both active participants and the wider community there is the need to look beyond the direct impacts of the actual project and investigate opportunities for sustaining and leveraging the sport initiative.

Second, participation at the S4D project leads to direct social impacts, which come in the form of social experiences. These include opportunities for active socialising, celebration, or the enhancement of skills and capabilities. From an inter-community perspective, sport projects may bridge social gaps between groups, for example by encouraging teamwork, intergroup learning and reciprocal skill development (Yuen, 2005). The leisure atmosphere prevailing before, during and after S4D projects is seen as conducive of new contacts to be made and relationships to be established. Positive social impacts can for example lead to an

improved social connection with ‘others’, which in turn influences intergroup behaviour in the newly established ‘imagined sport community’ (see Anderson, 1983). On the other hand, negative social impacts may result in a revival of historical and prejudicial stereotypes.

Finally, direct social impacts may be developed into long-term social outcomes. In other words, the different social experiences made at an event can be maximised to achieve lasting social consequences, such as an increase or decrease of the stock in social capital, and/or (inter-)community capacities. For example, first contacts made at an event could be developed into trustful friendships or inter-community networks, which then makes a real change in intergroup relations. In order to sustain and leverage social impacts beyond event borders, strategic cooperation between participating groups and links with key players in the community need to be sought, for example with the government, the educational sector and/or the media (Chalip, 2004, 2006; O'Brien, 2007). If these stakeholders have a clear idea about the desired long-term outcomes of sport events, they can plan, manage and support accordingly. They could for example engage in, contribute to, or report about event-related activities such as street festivals, community workshops, cultural shows, or social/educational marketing campaigns. Such event-related socio-cultural activities are likely to lead to additional positive outcomes such as an increase in (inter-)community capacities and the communities’ quality of life.

As an example, the ‘Games for Peace’ initiative in post-Tsunami and post-war Sri Lanka is attempting to contribute to lasting social development and reconciliation between disparate Sinhalese, Tamil and Muslim communities (see www.agsep.com). Organised by the external change agent Asian-German Sports Exchange Programme (A.G.S.E.P.) and supported by local ethnic communities, different sport and event projects are organised on a fortnightly basis that aim at inter-community togetherness, cultural learning and sport development. These sport-for-development weekends try to teach children sport and swimming skills and do so in a culturally diverse environment. Every two weeks the sport projects provide over 150 young participants a space to socialise, learn new skills, and celebrate diversity rather than suffering from it. Importantly, the organising team had thought about strategies to develop direct social impacts into long-term social outcomes. For example, they aligned the sport event projects with certain social issues and linked the event to local primary schools, the regional swimming club and the local, regional and national government. While primary schools prepared children for the event by communicating and teaching socio-cultural norms and values such as intergroup togetherness and reconciliation, the swimming club promoted

its sport (through posters and demonstration performances) as both a ‘lifesaver’ and a healthy and exciting leisure activity in Sri Lanka. The governmental Health Department contributed to the event by running an educational workshop for parents on social health issues such as protection against Tetanus and Hepatitis. This way, social leverage was achieved and social learning expanded beyond the participants to more people in the community. This example shows how direct social impacts can be sustained, grown and leveraged to achieve long-term social outcomes. Children are now prepared to interact with ‘foreigners’ inside and outside of school; first contacts made at the event have the chance to develop into deeper friendships through continuous engagement with the swimming club; and the overall community may be better aware of health issues and engage in actions towards reducing preventable illnesses.

Looking back at the S4D Framework, the long-term social outcomes are embedded in a cyclical process towards social development and community empowerment. This means that the outcomes of a project will influence (inter-)community relations and people’s attitudes and intentions to a) participate at the next project, and b) engage in further community activities. Only if the positive impacts and outcomes outweigh the negatives, social development with its benefits of additional social capital and capacity building have a chance to prosper.

Importantly, the change agent’s and communities’ willingness to engage in a process towards transferring management power is a decisive element for community development (see Livermore & Midgley, 1998; Schulenkorf, 2010). Only if change agents are dedicated to train locals and gradually transfer project responsibility and control to communities, sustainable development and community empowerment can be achieved. For this reason, the change agent box in the S4D Framework is slightly removed and linked with a dotted line to the circle of development, as the change agent’s influence on the project is expected to reduce to a minimum over time.

Overall, the S4D Framework highlights that active participation and positive engagement are central to social development and community empowerment. Only if people are committed to achieve social development can sport event projects play an enabling role in bringing disparate groups together and contribute to capacity building and empowerment in an integrated way. For this to happen, sport-for-development initiatives have to be strategically planned, managed and leveraged to achieve the desired long-term outcomes. The focus needs to be on making things happen, rather than leaving them to chance, which suggests that the communities should be seen as both the source and the beneficiaries of the social development concept.

Suggestions for Further Research

Sport and event researchers, planners and governments are becoming increasingly aware of sports and events' social potential. Despite this growing enlightenment it is argued that our understanding of this phenomenon still has some distance to travel. The following discussion looks at two specific ways in which research on the Sport-for-Development topic may be advanced.

First, rigorous empirical research in different development settings is needed to validate the concept of sport for social development, and to confirm the S4D Framework as a suitable guide for the strategic management of (inter-)community development projects. Despite an increase in practical development projects around the world, not many studies have investigated their long-term social, cultural, psychological and educational outcomes. While sport and event projects have shown to be a successful starting point and catalyst for social development within and between communities (Gasser & Levinsen, 2004; Kay, 2009; Stidder & Haasner, 2007), it is not clear how durable the newly established relationships are. The question remains if a lasting change in intergroup relations can be achieved through sport-for-development projects. As continuous community engagement, increasing responsibility and local event ownership are described as success factors for projects in developing countries, long-term research is needed to determine whether projects actually develop, friendships endure and networks continue to flourish. Also, it needs to be investigated if the lessons learned and recommendations made about sport events' potential for social development are actually understood, remembered and incorporated by organisers, stakeholders, policymakers and the wider community.

Second, collaborative research agendas could be developed between different research institutions engaged in sport event development projects. Such agendas would help the establishment of more holistic monitoring and investigation methods and instruments. From a qualitative perspective, research could evolve around an examination through case studies of selected project sites in divided societies. A mixed methods approach including focus groups, observations and in-depth interviews could be used, as research has proven this combination to be appropriate for an in-depth analysis of a specific case (Kay, 2009; Schulenkorf, Thomson & Schlenker, 2009; Sugden, 2006). Indeed, a closer focus on critical and self-reflective observational research would be helpful to prevent reification of stakeholder views, and to generate a strong analysis of what works, what does not work, and why. From a quantitative perspective, survey-based questionnaires and post-project evaluations could be

implemented as an adjunct to qualitative work. Systematic and comparative research of different sport-for-development projects can thus lead to the identification of both strengths and weaknesses, and advantages and disadvantages in strategic planning and management approaches.

Conclusion

The number of grassroots organisations, NGOs and Government bodies using sport and event projects for social development purposes has been increasing over the past decades. Particularly in divided societies, sport-for-development projects have been staged to contribute to intergroup togetherness, inclusive social change and local capacity building within and between communities. However, there has been a dearth of models and frameworks that guide the strategic investigation of the social utility of (inter-)community sport and event projects. This paper contributed to filling this gap by presenting and discussing the process-oriented Sport-for-Development (S4D) Framework, which can guide the strategic investigation of sport and event projects and their contribution to direct social impacts and long-term social outcomes for (disparate) communities. The S4D Framework highlights the importance of looking beyond direct sport event impacts and strategically planning for the maximising of social benefits through sustaining, growing and leveraging sport and event activities. Future research needs to empirically test and validate the S4D Framework through both qualitative and quantitative approaches, to determine its suitability in guiding sport-for-development planning and management.

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