



RESEARCH ARTICLE

HARNESSING THE POWER OF SPORT FOR MANAGEMENT RECONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT AND PEACE BUILDING IN POST-CONFLICT: TOWARDS SOCIAL INTEGRATION CHIEVING THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

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ABSTRACT

Sport is an international language. Its ability to cross cultures enables sport related programs to bridge social and ethnic divides. As a result, sport can be a powerful tool to promote peace, both symbolically on the global level and very practically within communities. The power of sport can be used as both a tool for preventing conflict as well as element for building sustainable peace. When applied effectively, sport programs promote social integration and foster tolerance. These core values are the same as those necessary for lasting peace. In post-conflict environments in particular, this can work to reduce tensions and generate dialogue. This study shed lights on the potential contribution of sport within the process of peace and reconciliation, From trauma healing toward social integration. The fundamental elements of sport make it a viable and practical tool to support the achievement of the millennium development goals.

INTRODUCTION

In the wake of war, disaster, or humanitarian crisis, sports programs can play an important role in relieving stress, healing emotional wounds, restoring a sense of normalcy, and creating an opportunity for healthy social interaction. In camps for refugees and internally displaced persons, where people are away from home and often have little to occupy their time, sports activities can be a welcome break from the monotony of day-to-day life and a rare opportunity to have fun. As in other settings, sports activities have the added benefit of gathering people together and can be used as an opportunity to conduct public education activities (Giulianotti, 2011a). The social benefits derived from physical activity are numerous and well documented – long-term health benefits, stronger and more secure communities, closer family units, social cohesion through its ability to break down social and cultural barriers and bringing people from different backgrounds together, providing venues where people can meet and interact, providing an opportunity to serve as a volunteer in the community, teaching people about respect for other people and property, getting people of all ages involved in their

communities, giving people a sense of purpose and addressing social issues such as conflict and crime. Furthermore, active participants benefit from developing and improving a variety of skills, including management and administrative, problem solving, communication, coaching and mentoring and leadership skills. Sports programmes can also empower and promote the inclusion of marginalized groups, especially women, the youth, rural communities and people with disabilities. An active lifestyle can meaningfully prevent chronic diseases and/or delay the onset of debilitating symptoms (Giulianotti, 2011b). In addition to the social benefits, sport is big business making substantial contributions to national, regional and local GDP. Sport can be used to spur economic development. The construction and rehabilitation of sports facilities and development of sport for entertainment create employment and marketing opportunities. The manufacturing of sports equipment also serves as a source of jobs. Furthermore, sports programs can be used as a training ground for a new work force, teaching skills that make young people more employable and productive. The value of sport as a social connector is one of its most powerful development attributes. Because it is a common language that can bridge cultural, ethnic, and geographic divides, many initiatives use sport to promote the reconciliation of communities or nations in conflict. Programs may operate at a local level, creating

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ethnically mixed teams or clinics, for example. They may also operate on a national or regional level, promoting the interaction of people from different locations. Sport also plays a role in international diplomacy, helping establish communication within civil society that sometimes paves the way for political dialogue. Community sport networks are an important source of social networking, helping to combat exclusion and fostering communities' capacity to work collectively to realize opportunities and address challenges. If the population involved is broadly inclusive, the connecting dimension of sport can help to unify people from diverse backgrounds and perspectives, establishing a shared bond that contributes positively to social cohesion. Emerging evidence highlights the impact of sport in relation to creating stronger communities and addressing issues of community safety, including reductions in anti-social behaviour, reductions in the propensity to commit crime, and reductions in the 'fear' of crime amongst the wider community. Research in this field show that sport has the ability to overcome social barriers and empower individuals. It can help to increase social cohesion, and provide opportunities for engagement in community life through voluntary work. Well-designed sport and physical activity programs are powerful tools for fostering healthy child and individual development, teaching positive values and life skills, reducing conflict and criminal behaviour, strengthening education and preventing disease (particularly HIV and AIDS) (Kay, 2013; Kay, 2010; Hartman, 2011). These programs can help empower and promote the inclusion of marginalized groups, especially women, the youth, rural and people with disabilities. Sport's unparalleled popularity and reach also make it a highly effective communication and social mobilization tool. to enhance social cohesion, better understanding and cooperation between the different cultural groups.

### Sport For Development And Peace

Sport for Development and Peace refers to the intentional use of sport, physical activity and play to attain specific development and peace objectives, including, most notably, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Successful Sport for Development and Peace programs work to realize the right of all members of society to participate in sport and leisure activities. Effective programs intentionally give priority to development objectives and are carefully designed to be inclusive. These programs embody the best values of sport while upholding the quality and integrity of the sport experience. Strong Sport for Development and Peace programs combine sport and play with other non-sport components to enhance their effectiveness. They are delivered in an integrated manner with other local, regional and national development and peace initiatives so that they are mutually reinforcing. Programs seek to empower participants and communities by engaging them in the design and delivery of activities, building local capacity, adhering to generally accepted principles of transparency and accountability, and pursuing sustainability through collaboration, partnerships and coordinated action (Levermore, 2009). While Sport for Development and Peace is widely seen as an emerging field in the area of development, its antecedents can be traced back to antiquity when the Olympic Truce was first used to establish temporary peace between warring states, to allow for competition among their athletes. There is no doubt that sport has historically played an important and diverse role in virtually every society. However,

formal recognition of the value of sport with regard to development and peace is far more recent (Kidd, 2008).

### Conceptual Framework

In a development context the definition of sport usually includes a broad and inclusive spectrum of activities suitable to people of all ages and abilities, with an emphasis on the positive values of sport. In 2003, the UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Sport for Development and Peace defined sport, for the purposes of development, as "all forms of physical activity that contribute to physical fitness, mental well-being and social interaction, such as play, recreation, organized or competitive sport, and indigenous sports and games" (UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Sport for Development and Peace, 2003). This definition has been accepted by many proponents of Sport for Development and Peace, which is the paradigm consolidate the current program of research (Fig 1). Support for Sport for Development and Peace is rooted in the recognition that sport possesses unique characteristic at enable it to harnessing particular value to development and peace processes.

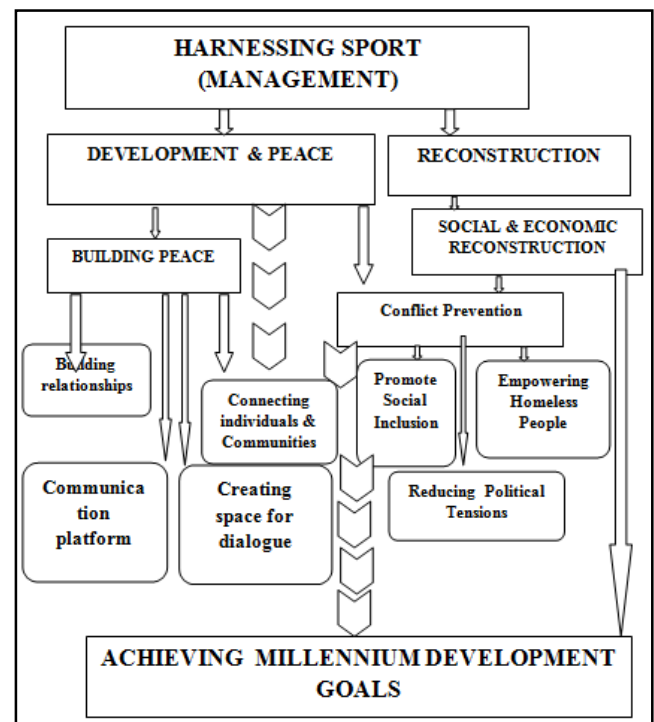


Fig. 1. Conceptual framework harnessing sport to development and peace in post-conflict situations

This figure clarify two key factors contributing to harnessing sports were dominated, according to this definition: development and peace and reconstruction. The first factor development and peace contain two components: Building peace which contain: Building relationships, Connecting individuals to communities, sport as a communications platform, Creating a space for dialogue. Second component conflict prevention contain: Using sport to promote social inclusion, Empowering homeless people and Reducing political tensions. Second key factor: reconstruction which refers to social and economic reconstruction. All these factors take us to achieving millennium development goals.

### Sport as a tool to building peace

The purpose of sport for peace initiatives is to harness the power of sport to support the four types of peace-building

activities. Sport alone cannot prevent conflict or build peace. However, it can contribute to broader, more comprehensive efforts in a range of important ways.

### **Building relationships**

Sport works primarily by bridging relationships across social, economic and cultural divides within society, and by building a sense of shared identity and fellowship among groups that might otherwise be inclined to treat each other with distrust, hostility or violence. One peace researcher views relationship-building as the central component of peace-building and highlights the importance of interventions that explicitly focus on strategic networking to build relationships (Lederach, 1997). Ideally, peace-building establishes a web of relationships that can sustain local damage without loss of the whole. This means that relationships are not all linked to, or dependent on, a single individual or small number of individuals. This includes horizontal connections at the community level across groups and institutions, as well as vertical links to influential leaders and decision-makers outside the community. NGOs are well positioned to facilitate the process of relationship-building by bringing people together and engaging them in dialogue and programs that cross diverse boundaries. When properly supported, sport programs can play a contributing role in this process, creating more opportunities for social contact. Establishing community sport organizations and the participation of community sport volunteers generates social ties and community infrastructure that help to build peace and stability (Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2005).

### **Connecting individuals to communities**

Community sport programs can provide shared experiences between people that “re-humanize” opposing groups in the eyes of their enemies. By sharing sport experiences, sport participants from conflicting groups increasingly grow to feel that they are alike, rather than different. This shared “ritual identity,” or sense of belonging to the same group on the basis of a shared ritual experience, helps to erase the dehumanizing effects of persistent negative characterizations of opposing groups. Sport can serve as a tool to advance demobilization and disarmament efforts and to support the often difficult reintegration of ex-combatants, particularly former child combatants, into their communities. Regular sport activities can also help to address war-related trauma and promote healing by providing safe spaces for activities that enable victims of war to regain a sense of security and normalcy. Within safe spaces, victims are able to build positive relationships and, in the case of those newly disabled, to rebuild a sense of confidence in their own abilities. Through its nearly universal reach and popularity, sport also offers an important means of reaching out to and engaging socially excluded groups. In these cases, sport programs are often the initial “hook” that opens the door to other opportunities to connect people to a wider range of services and supports that can assist them.

### **Using sport as a communications platform**

The profile and influence of elite athletes and sporting events can shine a light on the structural causes of social exclusion and help to promote solutions. The global popularity of elite sport makes it an ideal and extremely powerful mass

communication platform that can be used to promote a culture of peace. Celebrity athletes, in particular, can be extremely influential as role models and spokespeople for peace and serve, at times, as intermediaries between hostile nations, creating openings for dialogue. While these moments generally occur spontaneously at the international level, the same effect can be generated at the local level through carefully designed programs that work in a sustained way to build bridges between antagonistic groups.

### **Creating a space for dialogue**

Elite sport has been used to open the door to peaceful dialogue and to defuse political tensions between nations. The famous “ping pong diplomacy” between the People’s Republic of China and the United States was launched in 1971 when an American national table tennis player missed his bus after a practice and was invited onto the Chinese team’s bus. One of the Chinese players offered a silkscreen portrait to his American counterpart in greeting. The American later presented the Chinese player with a T-shirt containing the peace symbol and the words “Let it be.” The media attention that followed this incident led to an invitation for an American government delegation to visit China. More recently, the term “cricket diplomacy” has been used to describe the improvement of relations between India and Pakistan resulting from an informal invitation from Prime Minister Singh to General Musharraf to watch an international cricket match between the two nations. Sport, at the elite or community level, is increasingly being used in a wide variety of ways to promote social inclusion, prevent conflict, and build peace in developed and developing countries. Whether the aim is to promote peace at the elite or community level, it is important to consider the limitations that may be involved (Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group (SDP IWG), 2008).

### **Sport as tool for conflict prevention**

#### **Using sport to promote social inclusion**

At the most fundamental level, well-designed sport activities that incorporate the best values of sport — self-discipline, respect for one’s opponent, fair play, teamwork, and adherence to mutually agreed upon rules — help individuals to build the values and communication skills necessary to prevent and resolve conflict in their own lives. In El Salvador, for example, where communities are struggling with a legacy of gang violence in the aftermath of a prolonged civil war, the Scotiabank Salud Escolar Integral program uses sport, play and physical activity to teach life skills — especially conflict prevention and non-violent conflict resolution — to primary and secondary school children, equipping them to make healthy choices later in their lives (Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group (SDP IWG), 2008). Sport can also be used to reduce tensions and prevent conflict on a broader, community-wide level. Violence has many causes — including lack of opportunity arising from social and economic exclusion. Excluded populations vary greatly, as does the extent of their exclusion. However, excluded populations often include indigenous peoples, members of minority ethno-cultural groups, asylum seekers and refugees, girls and women, persons with disabilities, homeless people, and out-of-school unemployed youth. All people living in extreme poverty suffer from exclusion.

Sport can play an important role in reducing social tensions and conflicts at the community and national level by addressing the sources of this exclusion and providing an alternative entry point into the social and economic life of communities. Many of the factors leading to exclusion, at the individual or the societal level, are mutually reinforcing, causing individuals and groups to experience multiple problems. This experience of multiple inter-related difficulties often results from, and contributes to, lack of human capital and social capital. Human capital is the skills, knowledge and personal attributes (e.g., confidence, self-esteem, education, employment skills, etc.) that individuals possess. Social capital is the social networks, connections and sense of belonging to wider society that enable individuals to access the people, resources and institutional help they need to tackle challenges and realize opportunities in their lives (Henley, 2005). While lack of human capital and social capital manifest in the lives of individuals, they are often the result of social and economic structures and dynamics that constrain the choices available to individuals and the actions they take. As such, factors leading to social exclusion (such as lack of human and social capital) need to be addressed at the societal, as well as individual level in order to achieve real change. Sport can be used at both of these levels to improve people's lives. Because of its near universal popularity, sport is a particularly effective tool for connecting with socially excluded groups who are often hard to reach.

### **Empowering homeless people**

Although homelessness may not be immediately recognized as a peace-building issue, homeless people can face the same forms of social exclusion as asylum seekers and refugees. Issues of homelessness can also affect a nation's progress toward peace and prosperity and generate conflicts at the local level. Homeless people often face multiple challenges which, in combination, make it difficult for them to secure and keep safe and adequate housing. Without a fixed address, they are often unable to qualify for public services, to secure employment or attend school as a means to improve their condition. Many suffer from addictions and chronic low self-esteem. Efforts to help the homeless find secure housing and employment must therefore adopt a holistic approach that addresses these underlying issues. The need to address the structural causes of homelessness is equally important. Inadequate public investment in affordable housing, income security programs, and addiction treatment and rehabilitation are just a few of the possible causes for homelessness in a society. Addressing these and other structural factors greatly increases the chances that community programs to assist the homeless will be successful. The Homeless World Cup is the best known example of the use of sport to reintegrate homeless people into society. The event draws public attention to the structural causes of homelessness, and empowers homeless people themselves to become effective advocates for social change. A professionally run, high-profile annual event, the Homeless World Cup is an international football tournament attracting teams of homeless athletes from over 48 developing and developed countries. The purpose of the event is to engage and assist homeless people from around the world and to help reconnect them to society by changing their own and other people's perceptions of their capacities. Once a venue is chosen through a bidding process, the Cup is advertised, playing spaces are built in the streets, and stands are constructed for spectators. Games are played every day for a

week. Crowds are attracted by the fast, dynamic games, but also by the unusual and moving sight of homeless people proudly representing their countries. Over 100,000 spectators attended the 2006 Cape Town Homeless World Cup in South Africa (Levermore, 2009).

### **Reducing political tensions**

Many conflicts within countries are linked to partisan politics and the competition between rival parties. Electoral outcomes can have profound impacts on the opportunities and benefits available to specific groups in societies and tensions can therefore run high in the lead-up to elections. While Ghana is not a country that typically suffers from serious conflict, tensions have nonetheless arisen. In the past, the government has organized UN-sponsored Global Peace Games to bring rival factions together and to defuse tensions. As some tensions are expected in the lead-up to the 2008 national election, the government plans to build on this experience and organize Global Peace Games, refereed by celebrity athletes, to encourage friendly competition between political parties (United Nations Office on Sport for Development and Peace, 2012)

### **Harnessing Sport to Build Peace in Post-Conflict Situations**

Most sport for peace activities take place in a post-conflict setting. Their focus is on reconciliation between victims and perpetrators and formerly hostile communities; rehabilitation and reintegration of ex-combatants; and, to a more limited extent, reconstruction of the social, political, and economic infrastructure. The following sub-sections provide examples of the use of sport to achieve each of these aims. The goal of reconciliation is to establish the minimum level of trust necessary to foster cooperation and mutual reliance among former enemies. It is a long and difficult process which demands changes in attitudes (e.g., tolerance instead of revenge), in conduct (e.g., joint commemoration of the dead instead of separate partisan memorials), and in the institutional environment (e.g., integrating veterans from both sides of the conflict in the national army instead of keeping ex-combatants in quasi-private militias) there are three stages of reconciliation: a). replacing fear with non-violent co-existence, b). building confidence and trust c). moving toward empathy. Each of these stages is achieved through four main processes: healing of survivors, historical accounting through truth-telling, retributive or restorative justice, and separation of material and psychological damage inflicted on victims. These are inter-related and mutually reinforcing processes. Sport for peace initiatives are particularly effective in helping to build confidence and trust between opposing parties and advancing the healing process. Healing comprises strategies, processes and activities aimed at improving the psychological health of individuals or rehabilitating and reconstructing local and national communities. Building trust requires that each party — victim and offender — gains renewed confidence in himself or herself and in each other. Building trust also entails seeing the humanity in every individual.

This acknowledgement is the basis for the mutual trust required to build a lasting culture of peace (International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, *Reconciliation after Violent Conflict*, 2003). Sport can help advance this process by virtue of its far-reaching appeal and its ability to create new, shared identities that transcend the lines

that divide societies. This dimension of sport has long been appreciated by nations and used to foster positive feelings of national identity, pride, and unity in the face of internal political and ethno-cultural divisions. In this respect, sport has been particularly important to emerging nations trying to forge a new identity internally and with the rest of the world. Sport has also been used for the same purpose by sub-national groups seeking independence, and “bottom-up” efforts have often proven more effective than “top-down” state-led initiatives at making use of sport’s power to create and strengthen group identities (Houlihan, 2000). In the context of peace-building, sport offers a means to create positive new shared identities among formerly opposing groups in order to build a solid foundation for a peaceful future. The successful use of sport as a ritual for this shared identity-building relies on cultural sensitivity and the use of symbols that are meaningful to those involved in the reconciliation process (Schrich, 2005). In some circumstances, the appropriate ritual activity will be team sports such as football, cricket, basketball, or baseball. In others, it may be individual sports such as long distance running, boxing or judo. In certain circumstances indigenous sports will be more suitable. In Cambodia, after years of civil war, the *Cambodian National Volleyball League (Disabled)* has contributed to the healing process by engaging formerly hostile factions. Matches between integrated teams of ex-Khmer Rouge soldiers and civilians recently attracted media attention. Participants interviewed before the match indicated that they were focusing on the opportunity that the match presented for positive interaction, not the past. The match has inspired many more positive interactions between these two groups off the playing field. In South Africa, apartheid has ended but its effects are still felt in a society that remains heavily divided by race and social class. Peace Players International — South Africa (PPI-SA). Established the *Bridging Divides Program* to break down race barriers, educate children. About health issues, and provide alternatives to crime in the KwaZulu-Natal province (<http://www.peaceplayersintl.org>). The program brings together children and youth from different backgrounds to play basketball and forge positive relationships that transcend race, culture and religion. Young adults benefit from a *Leadership Development Program* that empowers them to make positive change in their communities and the lives of children they work with. Since 2000, PPI-SA has taught basketball to over 25,000 children; involved 7,000 boys and girls in inter-community leagues, life skills clinics, court launches, tournaments and clubs; and trained and employed 2,000 young South African adults as coaches and mentors. An external evaluation of this program concluded that it contributed noticeably to breaking down racial stereotypes and divides (Botes, 2005). Building empathy is an essential stage in the reconciliation process. Empathy comes with the willingness of victims to listen to offenders’ reasons for causing them pain, and with offenders’ listening to and understanding the anger and bitterness of those they have hurt. Truth-telling is one way to make this possible, creating “objective opportunities for people to see the past in terms of shared suffering and collective responsibility. It also helps victims and offenders to recognize their shared humanity and the reality that they all have to move forward by getting along with each other. Sport can be used to build empathy and as an information platform to inform people of, and promote, truth telling processes. In 1996, the Youth Sports Association in Kigali established the *Espérance* community sports club to foster healing and reconstruction following the 1994 Rwandan genocide. *Espérance* uses football to develop young people’s

capacity to resolve conflict peacefully and as a forum for education on peace, health, and human rights issues. In addition to other activities, sport events are used to publicize the *Gacaca*, a community justice process instituted by the government in 2001 to reconstruct what happened during the genocide; speed up legal proceedings; and aid the process of reconciliation. *Espérance* uses its outreach activities to raise awareness of the system and its benefits to communities (Botes, 2005).

Sport can also play a role in promoting healing through remembrance. Remembrance is an essential process because it publicly acknowledges the pain of victims, invites offenders to take responsibility for their actions, and offers a means to understand, learn from the past, and build a lasting reconciliation (<http://www.alsabasketball.com>). To advance reconciliation, it is necessary to create opportunities for shared commemoration that is non-partisan and involves people from all sides of a conflict. The alternative (relying on separate memorials and remembrance rituals) risks allowing wounds from the conflict to fester, which may cause renewed conflict in the future. In Rwanda, the annual Great Lakes Region Invitational Basketball Tournament is hosted in memory of Gisembe Ntarugera Emmanuel, a well-known basketball player killed during the 1994 genocide (The issues of amnesties and culpability for atrocities are too complex to address in this report). The tournament attracts men’s and women’s teams from neighbouring Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo, and serves as a remembrance activity with community theatre performances, visits to genocide museums, and public speeches. The tournament brings together inter-ethnic teams, using competition in a friendly environment to reinforce the shared identity of former opposing groups. It engages all sides in commemorating the Rwandan genocide in an effort to ensure it is never repeated. Rehabilitation and reintegration of ex-combatants (Report, 2000). The disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants is a three-step, post-conflict process aimed at turning soldiers into civilians. The process is considered essential to peace-building. Sport for peace initiatives are used for demobilization and disarmament, but most frequently for reintegration. In periods of demobilization, sport is particularly useful when soldiers are in camps, especially for long periods, because it offers a healthy and entertaining way to pass the time during long periods of inactivity (OECD DAC, 1997). This helps to prevent fights and other disruptions from breaking out. With respect to disarmament, sport is used along with other incentives — such as car raffles and livestock — to induce former combatants to turn in their weapons in post-conflict zones. The famous Brazil-Haiti soccer match in Port au Prince in August 2004 — where prized tickets were exchanged for firearms as part of an effort to disarm rival factions in the country — is a prime example. The reintegration of ex-combatants once they are demobilized and disarmed is a particularly challenging process. This challenge is greatest when ex-combatants are known to have committed atrocities in host communities. Reintegration requires that ex-combatants relinquish their military identity as their primary identity and learn to build a new identity linked to qualities and accomplishments valued in civilian life. Sport for peace initiatives can be helpful in this process. By mixing ex-combatants and non-combatants on the same teams, sport-based initiatives can help to replace military affiliations with new team-based bonds and relationships. The identities and status that ex-combatants derived from their military rank and

pro prowess are replaced by community status gained through sport skills and accomplishments (UN, 2001). Sport also provides an important means for community members, once subjugated by armed combatants, to establish peer-to-peer relationships with ex-combatants based on equality instead of force. This is an important process for community members and ex-combatants alike. Where respect was formerly commanded at the point of a gun, it must now be earned on the playing field with everyone on an equal footing. The reintegration of former child combatants poses particular challenges because children and youth have often been severely traumatized by their experiences. It is also integral to reconciliation efforts because successful demobilization and reintegration can help to prevent continuing cycles of violence. Child soldier demobilization and reintegration during and after conflict is a complex and challenging process. The situation of girls in particular continues to require advocacy and new approaches. As disarmament and demobilization programs are implemented, it is difficult to identify and gain access to women and girls who may have been abducted and taken as “wives” or dependants of the combatants. These women, girls and their children, often referred to as “camp followers,” move from place to place with their abductors, perpetuating a cycle of dependence (*Ibid*).

## Sport as a bridge between opposing groups

### Previous experiences review

Sport can be used to create bridges and sustain positive relationships between individuals on opposing sides of a conflict through outreach to participants from these different communities. Research supports the power of sport to create “relational spaces” across wide and diverse populations (Keim, 2006). This can take place at the community or elite level. One expert stresses the importance of creating safe and accessible social spaces, such as youth football clubs. However, the success of such programs depends on the quality and nature of the contact. To successfully reduce inter-group prejudices, sport for peace initiatives must promote equal status, cooperation and common goals, and reward moments of cross-community intimacy (Sugden, 2006). For example, *Football4Peace* is a sport-based project for Jewish and Arab children in Northern Israel, which operates under a framework of neutrality, equity and inclusion, respect, trust, and responsibility. Under this framework, common goals and rewards are built into the game structure (<http://www.football4peace.org.uk>). The Cross Cultures Project Association (CCPA) is a humanitarian organization which develops and implements cross-cultural projects to promote reconciliation and integration through dialogue and collaboration. One of its projects, *Open Fun Football Schools*, brought together teachers, instructors, trainers and children from different ethnic and social backgrounds in Bosnia-Herzegovina to promote social unity and democratic behaviour through grassroots football. An independent donor evaluation concluded that *Open Fun Football Schools* has established, “in very sensitive areas, the first significant, post-war contacts between municipalities experiencing serious ethnic tension and antagonism (<http://www.ccpa.dk/Default.asp>). In 2006, CCPA trained seven Iraqi coaches in the principles and methods of its *Open Fun Football Schools*. These coaches have since organized five football schools, reaching a total of 1,000 boys of mixed ethnicity in Baghdad neighborhoods (Kvalsund, 2006). They have also trained 16 more coaches to build on

their initial effort. Because of the intensity of the conflict in Baghdad, the expectations for these projects are less ambitious than for other *Cross Cultures* projects and achievements are difficult to monitor. However, efforts are being made to provide a safe space for children to enjoy regular physical activity away from the pressures and fears of the conflict. By fostering relationships between children of different ethnicities and religious communities the projects are also helping to build bridges between these communities at the individual level.

Elite athletes, coaches and sporting events naturally attract media and public attention. High-profile athletes from conflict zones can bring international attention to raging conflicts and provide examples of working together across the divide, as part of their own sporting activities or through specially organized events. For example, leading international football club Real Madrid was brought to Israel by the Peres Centre for Peace to play a match against a mixed Israeli-Palestinian squad. The goal was to focus attention on local peace efforts and communicate a strong peace message. People remember the image from the 2000 Sydney Summer Olympic Games of North and South Korean athletes entering the Olympic Stadium under one flag for the first time in decades. The flag, held by one athlete from North Korea and one athlete from South Korea, represented all of Korea, with a white background and a blue map outlining the entire Korean peninsula (<http://www.ccpa.dk>). Sport is often used as an opener by international peace-keeping forces when they are stationed in a new conflict zone. Peace-keepers often coordinate sporting activities with the local population at the start of missions to reduce fear and mistrust, build goodwill, and open doors to communication. Similarly, peace-keepers have used organized sporting events to promote peace among the local population. In August 2004, when the Brazilian National soccer team travelled to Port au Prince to play a game against the Haitian National soccer team, Brazilian peace-keepers stationed on the island handed out tickets to the match in exchange for firearms. The effort to disarm local factions in the country garnered the attention of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, who applauded the act as one of the most important initiatives of the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, 2001–2010 (*Governments in Action*). Sport’s use as a bridge sometimes arises spontaneously, without organizational leadership or design (*Governments in Action*, 2002). The Brezovica ski resort in Kosovo has long been a place for ethnic Serbs and Albanians to interact and share their enjoyment of the outdoors, prompting a UN publication to state: “...Brezovica wins this year’s peace prize for an almost spontaneous growth of multi-ethnic recreation (Manuel, “A Season of Harmony”, 2002) Programs were later established to promote multi-ethnic relations, building on this natural foundation. Spontaneous gestures sometimes grow into larger sport for peace initiatives. For example, in the midst of the Gaza crisis in the summer of 2007, an 85-year-old Jewish surfer from Hawaii who introduced surfing to Israel in the 1950s, delivered 12 surfboards to the small, but committed, surfing community in Gaza. Three weeks earlier he had read a US newspaper article describing Gaza surfers working with poor equipment. One Voice, an Israeli/Palestinian conflict resolution organization, made contact with the Palestinian surfers and negotiated the transfer of the boards with the Israeli military authorities. This project attracted significant media coverage in the United

States and in the Middle East (Prescribing Surfboards for Peace), and led to the creation of *Surfers for Peace*, a joint Palestinian/Israeli initiative to mobilize the surfing community, including its elite athletes, to unite one million Palestinians and Israelis in support of a peace settlement in the region. The *Surfers for Peace* initiative is an example of how sport can be used to give a human face to those on opposing sides of a conflict leveraging the pre-existing, shared identity of the surfing community, one which (at least in the western world) has a broad symbolic association with peace (Prescribing Surfboards for Peace, 2008).

post-conflict reconciliation. Explicit reference to these uses of sport, however, will help to raise awareness of sport's potential and facilitate the integration of sport into broader government strategies.

**2. Include sport as a tool in government strategies, to address the challenges confronting excluded populations and to prevent conflicts arising from these challenges:** Both developed and developing countries can benefit from a more systematic use of sport to build human and social capital in communities and provide marginalized individuals with

**Table 1. illustrate how can sports contribute in achieving millennium development goals**

Millennium Development Goals	Achieving Millennium Development Goals By Sport
1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants, volunteers and coaches acquire transferable life skills which increase their employability</li> <li>Vulnerable individuals are connected to community services and supports through sport-based outreach programs</li> <li>Sport programs and sport equipment production provide jobs and skills development</li> <li>Sport can help prevent diseases that impede people from working and impose health care costs on individuals and communities</li> <li>Sport can help reduce stigma and increase self-esteem, self-confidence and social skills, leading to increased employability</li> <li>School sport programs motivate children to enroll in and attend school and can help improve academic achievement</li> </ul>
2. Achieve universal primary education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sport-based community education programs provide alternative education opportunities for children who cannot attend school</li> <li>Sport can help erode stigma preventing children with disabilities from attending school</li> </ul>
3. Promote gender equality and empower women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sport helps improve female physical and mental health and offers opportunities for social interaction and friendship</li> <li>Sport participation leads to increased self-esteem, self-confidence, and enhanced sense of control over one's body</li> <li>Girls and women access leadership opportunities and experience</li> <li>Sport can cause positive shifts in gender norms that afford girls and women greater safety and control over their lives</li> <li>Women and girls with disabilities are empowered by sport-based opportunities to acquire health information, skills, social networks, and leadership experience</li> </ul>
4. Reduce child mortality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sport can be used to educate and deliver health information to young mothers, resulting in healthier children</li> <li>Increased physical fitness improves children's resistance to some diseases</li> <li>Sport can help reduce the rate of higher-risk adolescent pregnancies</li> <li>Sport-based vaccination and prevention campaigns help reduce child deaths and disability from measles, malaria and polio</li> <li>Inclusive sport programs help lower the likelihood of infanticide by promoting greater acceptance of children with disabilities</li> </ul>
5. Improve maternal health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sport for health programs offer girls and women greater access to reproductive health information and services</li> <li>Increased fitness levels help speed post-natal recovery</li> </ul>
6. Combat HIV and AIDS, malaria, and other diseases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sport programs can be used to reduce stigma and increase social and economic integration of people living with HIV and AIDS</li> <li>Sport programs are associated with lower rates of health risk behaviour that contributes to HIV infection</li> <li>Programs providing HIV prevention education and empowerment can further reduce HIV infection rates</li> <li>Sport can be used to increase measles, polio and other vaccination rates</li> <li>Involvement of celebrity athletes and use of mass sport events can increase reach and impact of malaria, tuberculosis and other education and prevention campaigns</li> </ul>
7. Ensure environmental Sustainable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sport-based public education campaigns can raise awareness of importance of environmental protection and sustainability</li> <li>Sport-based social mobilization initiatives can enhance participation in community action to improve local environment</li> <li>Sport for Development and Peace efforts catalyze global partnerships and increase networking among governments, donors, NGOs and sport organizations worldwide</li> </ul>
8. Develop a global Partnership for development	

### Achieving Millennium Development Goals by Sport

Many developing countries, however, are still unaware of the ways in which Sport for Development and Peace can be used to advance their development objectives. In these cases, advocacy is needed to position Sport for Development and Peace as a valuable cross-cutting tool for achieving the MDGs (CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, 2004) Table 1 illustrate how can sports contribute in achieving millennium development goals.

### Policy Recommendations

**1. Reference the use of sport to prevent conflict and build peace in national sport for development policies and in international development policies related to peace-building:** Different governments will see value in different applications of sport for peace purposes — for instance, reintegration of former combatants, support for excluded groups, conflict prevention among refugee populations, or

experiences to enhance their health, self-esteem, life skills, employability, and social integration. Systematic approaches require targeted, resourced and sustained programs that are integrated at the policy level into broader government strategies. Such approaches must also allow for integration at the community level with related initiatives and organizations working to address the specific issues confronting excluded groups in their communities.

**Program Recommendations:** Ensure an effective sport for peace program focus by first undertaking a context analysis that answers the following questions (CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, 2004):

**What is this conflict not about?:** Identify areas where competing groups agree, share common beliefs, and continue to interact so that programs can build on these commonalities. Avoid easy or popular assumptions about the nature of the conflict because those assumptions may be wrong (e.g.,



inaccurately characterizing competition for resources as a religious conflict).

### **What needs to be stopped?**

Every conflict includes actions, situations and dynamics that must be stopped or interrupted to de-escalate conflict and restore peace (e.g., recruitment of young people into militia, arms trade, exploitation of natural resources to support armed factions, misuse of the media for propaganda purposes, or funding from diaspora groups). Identify contributing factors and the groups who are likely to resist changes.

### **What are the regional and international dimensions of this conflict?**

Forces outside the immediate local context (village, province, nation) can affect the conflict and these influences should be addressed. The information gathered through this process can be used to identify a suitable program focus (including issues and participants), priorities, strategic points of intervention, and should help program organizers to match available skills and resources to the situation. It is important to avoid partial analyses based on pre-set theories of change and peace building models, or analyses conducted from a distance with limited local input. This will distort the focus of initiatives and impede their effectiveness.

### **Consider gender impacts and ensure girls and women are fully included in all peace initiatives because they are key stakeholders in the peace-building process**

Many programs encounter cultural and religious barriers that make it challenging to reach women and girls. However many programs have been able to gradually overcome these obstacles. The football club *Espérance* in Rwanda, for example, has established a *Football for Peace* program based on a Brazilian model, where only girls can score goals. *Espérance* reports that initial resistance toward girls and women participating in sports has been overcome, with female attendance (including mothers and grandmothers) at events increasing from almost none to over 50% of spectators on some occasions. The program builds the skills and self-esteem of girls, improves boys' perceptions of girls' capacities, and provides women with opportunities for social interaction outside the home and a chance to actively participate in community peace building dialogue and activities. *Espérance* engages women on multiple levels and contributes to their empowerment as essential stakeholders in the peace-building process.

### **Address conflict and peace-building at the socio-political level and the individual level**

Research has shown that peace programs that focus only on change at the individual level, without linking or translating this into action at the socio-political level, have no discernible effect on peace. Programs that build trust and relationships across conflict lines may have a transformative effect on individuals' attitudes, perceptions and trust, but broader peace impacts are much greater when these personal transformations are linked to socio-political action. The *Rebuilding the Community* component of the Peres Centre for Peace's *Twinned Peace Sports Schools* program in Israel is a good example of this. This integral aspect of a broader sports

program works to empower young Palestinians and Israelis, fosters their community awareness, and encourages activism for positive change.

### **Engage key people and larger target populations in sport for peace initiatives**

Approaches that concentrate on reaching large numbers of people but ignore key leaders and decision-makers and, conversely, approaches that target key leaders while ignoring the grassroots, have limited impact. Programs which address both groups through coordinated strategies are more effective. Social change processes in general are most effective when they link the "grassroots," or community level, to the "grassstops," or leadership and decision-making level. (Reflecting on Peace, 2004) A dynamic exchange between the two is a necessary part of the process. For example, the association of many sport for peace programs with elite athletes creates a unique opportunity to mix "key people" with "more people." Elite athletes not only attract a great deal of attention, but they also often have leverage with other key people in society. For example, key people have been incorporated into the Football 4 Peace program by bringing Arab and Jewish Israeli community leaders to the UK from Israel for training purposes. Similarly, Open Fun Football Schools in Bosnia-Herzegovina work with municipal leaders from opposing ethnic communities as a means of securing their commitment to administer and help fund joint children's football programs that reach thousands of children and their families (Briggs, 2001).

### **Conclusion**

Empowering communities to take responsibility for their own lives and futures is a key principle of long-term community reconstruction and development. Sustainability and long term goals must be incorporated in early planning. There is no sport system in the world that does not have social and/or economic value – the challenge is maximizing this value. Sport has the capacity to transform the lives of individuals.<sup>1</sup> It bolsters physical, psychological, emotional, and social well-being and development. At the same time sport plays a significant role in cultures and communities around the world. These factors alone justify investment in sports programming. But there is also a growing understanding that sports programs merit support because they are powerful vehicles for achieving broader goals, particularly in advancing development and peace agendas. The development community has typically marginalized sport, viewing it as a relatively low priority among a host of needs and goals. Recently, though, an international movement has taken root that recognizes that sport does not have to compete with other development priorities but can instead be a powerful means for addressing them. The United Nations, the Inter-American Development Bank, governments, the International Olympic and Paralympic Committees, non-governmental organizations, and corporate entities have banded together to think strategically about sport for development and peace. At the field level, dozens of programs have been harnessing the power of sport for physical education, humanitarian response, reconciliation and peace building, rehabilitation and integration of persons with disabilities, advocacy and social/policy change, awareness raising and education, and economic development. Much work must still be done to fully link the international movement to practitioners in the field and to bring the sport and



development sectors together. Carried out wisely, however, sports programming has the potential to play an important role in fostering development and peace.

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