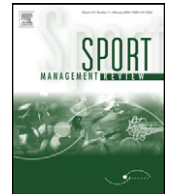




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Sustainable community development through sport and events: A conceptual framework for Sport-for-Development projects

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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 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 initiatives 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 understanding and measuring direct social impacts and sustainable social outcomes for (disparate) communities. The S4D Framework presents a holistic yet flexible management tool that can take account of cultural heterogeneity and program diversity, while shaping implementation, directing evaluation, and encouraging future planning of development initiatives. To conclude, this paper suggests different ways in which the S4D Framework can be empirically tested and validated through both qualitative and quantitative research.

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1. 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 5 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' 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 (Gehrmann, 1991; Heinrich, 2003).

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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 (Butler, 2002; Horne & Manzenreiter, 2002). UEFA might have thought along similar socio-political lines when awarding the 2012 European Football Championships to Poland and the Ukraine.

Overall, there is a large amount of anecdotal evidence suggesting that sport can combine disparate people, communities and nations. 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 (Chalip, 2006; Coalter, 2007; Kidd, 2008). This is not only true for large-scale or mega events, but also for smaller Sport-for-Development projects that are increasingly implemented as a community development strategy, particularly in the developing world and/or in culturally or ethnically divided societies. Here, different aid organisations, NGOs and grassroots initiatives have increasingly been staging sport and event programs to contribute to reconciliation and peace, and to pursue the Millennium Development Goals (<http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>).

For example, to improve the everyday needs and social life of disadvantaged communities, projects have been implemented to redress discrimination and encourage respect for 'others' (Brown, Brown, Jackson, Sellers, & Manuel, 2003; Meier & Saavedra, 2009); bridge social, cultural and ethnic divides (Gasser & Levinsen, 2004; Schulenkorf, 2010; Stidder & Haasner, 2007; Sugden, 2006); combat HIV/AIDS (Banda, Lindsey, Jeanes, & Kay, 2008; Webb, 2004); eliminate non-communicable diseases (Siefken, Schofield, & Schulenkorf, 2010); contribute to gender equality (Meier & Saavedra, 2009); and heal psychological wounds among traumatised victims of disasters, civil unrest or war (Gschwend & Selvaranjan, 2007; Kunz, 2009). While such initiatives are laudable, project organisers and community workers are often left without suitable strategic frameworks or models that help guide the difficult and complex planning, management and leveraging of development projects for wider social outcomes. Just as significantly, project monitoring, evaluation and future planning of Sport-for-Development activities have been encumbered by a lack of systematic data collection and empirical analysis. Too often the claims of virtue put by development programs are not sustained by convincing evidence. In an attempt to fill that gap, this paper presents the Sport-for-Development (S4D) Framework, which can guide and facilitate much needed practical research in (inter-)community development, and in doing so validate the theoretical constructs that underpin program deployment.

2. 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 among 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; 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 (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 among 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. Appadurai (1996) goes on to say that an imagined community can be simultaneously anchored in local places and transgresses localities, so that people may identify as part of the group even if they have never physically met, spoken or written to each other. Bauman (2001) highlights that the construction and development of communities and identities are indeed flexible and always amendable processes; however, he believes that the creation of inclusive communities and common identities depends on the activity, creativity and will of different social actors.

Similarly, philosopher Emmanuel Levinas argues that to achieve togetherness between diverse (groups of) people who are separated or divided – socially, culturally, politically, economically and/or geographically – they need to be brought together in consensual face-to-face contact and in social contexts where equitable interpersonal co-operation and group

cohesion are fostered (Burggraeve, 2008). In other words, to create and develop a community people in groups need to engage and participate in common practices, and be committed to making decisions in cooperation with each other (Anyanwu, 1988; Shaffer & Anundsen, 1993). Christenson, Fendley and Robinson (1989: 14) thus 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”.

Recognising these requirements, the United Nations (cited in Midgley, 1986: 24) highlight the importance of active participation in the community development process. They 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; 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 (Bauman, 2001; Botes & van Rensburg, 2000; Ross, 2000).

2.1. 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). 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 (Amir, 1969; Gasser & Levinsen, 2004; Schulenkorf, 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.

Finally, participation also promises disadvantaged and/or divided 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”.

2.2. 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. While not exclusively an issue for people from disadvantaged communities, these constraints are of great relevance 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 initiatives. 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.

Community 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; Siefken et al., 2010). 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 at any type of development project 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.

Finally, Bauman (2001, 2004) argues that a community has traditionally been a space of safety bounded by common ideas, languages, and traditions. However, often a community not only constructs comfortable 'sameness' but also fearful 'otherness' between people in ingroups and outgroups (see also Dovidio, Gaertner, & Validzic, 1998; Gaertner & Dovidio, 2005). In other words, while a community is able to unite a certain number of people, this may come at the expense of excluding others and contribute to dividing societies even further. Nevertheless, Bauman (2001, 2004) suggests that under conditions of 'liquid' modernity, people may try to challenge this status quo and indulge their lust for developing intergroup safety and security by dipping into combined social activities such as sport, event or leisure pursuits. However, he clarifies that such forms of engagement with 'others' are often producing merely superficial ad-hoc communities that are likely to disperse after their joint activities; they are described as 'communities without commitment' or 'thin communities' (Bauman, 2001).

Overall, many experts believe that disadvantaged communities – particularly those in developing countries – cannot improve their situation autonomously without the assistance of external support agencies. In an attempt to overcome the risk of communities being overwhelmed by development projects, and with the desire to develop committed and strong communities governments and policymakers have increasingly advocated external support from aid agencies, facilitators or 'change agents' in (inter-)community development projects.

3. 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. 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 act as anchormen or mediators between groups and are described by Schlenker (2010: 119) as "external parties who help (communities) establish contact, open negotiations and develop projects for cooperation and sustainable development".

The quest for consensus about development, diversity and mutuality is a challenge (but also an opportunity) in a range of normative environments, such as business, education and sport (Adair, Taylor, & Darcy, 2010; Kostogriz & Doecke, 2007; Lim, 2007; Sykes, 2006). Midgley (1986) suggests that within these environments change agents are a crucial factor in the planning and implementation phases of development projects, as they can facilitate contact and help creating a common and neutral platform for cooperation within and between groups. From a community development perspective, the assistance of a change agent is particularly helpful in intergroup settings where 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 among 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 external change agents within the strategic community development process is highlighted by Kramer and Specht (1975: 14), who explain that as mediators they help 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 (Kay, 2009; 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 (see e.g. Craig, 2007; Darnell, 2007; Guest, 2009). 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; Skinner et al., 2008).

To realise 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 the Model of Community Empowerment, presented in Fig. 1 below (see Schulenkorf, 2010: 126).

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 (Fig. 2).

4. 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

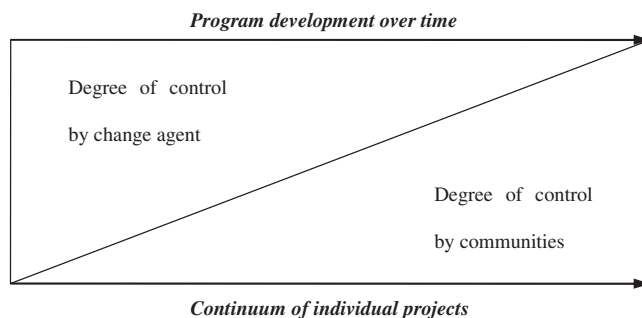


Fig. 1. Schulenkorf's (2010) Model of Community Empowerment.

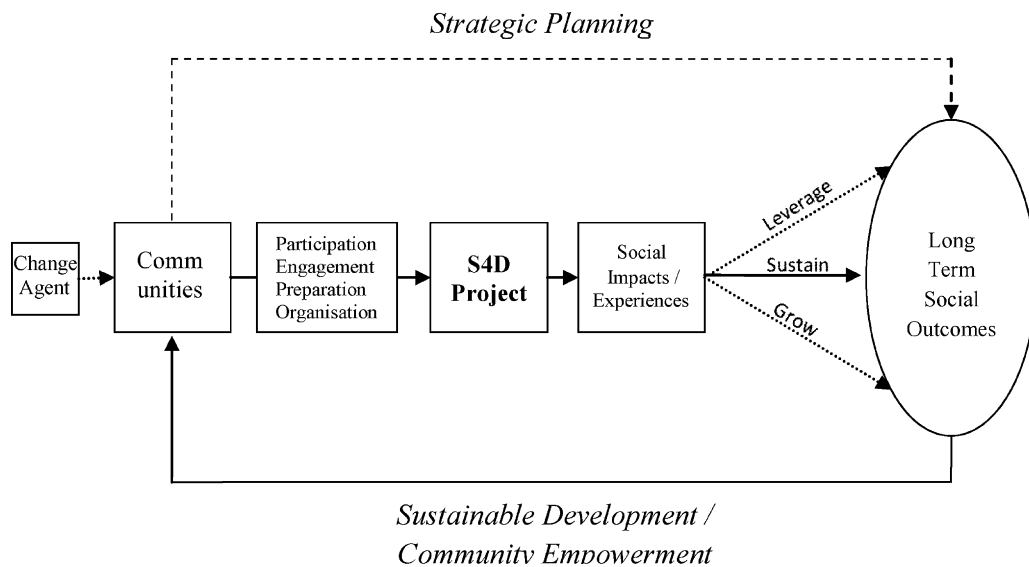


Fig. 2. S4D Framework.

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 et al., 2003). 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 (Misener & Mason, 2006; Schulenkorf, Thomson, & Schlenker, 2011).

However, in their critical reviews on sport-based community building activities Kidd (2008) and Coalter (2010) remind us that sport is not *a priori* good or bad. In fact, some researchers have shown that sport and event spaces can be sites of conflict and contestation between groups. For example, anti-social behaviour at sport and events may lead to a revival and ‘recycling’ of historical and prejudicial stereotypes (Dimeo & Kay, 2004), which are capable of worsening intergroup relations (Amirtash, 2005; Dimeo, 2001; Hay, 2001). According to Tomlinson (1994), the social identity of belonging to the same group is seldom more strongly felt than in competitive special events, which can result in a feeling of belonging or bonding with favourite ingroup members, but in extreme cases may also result in collective antagonisms and intergroup violence. Ethnic rivalries can be of particular relevance here, as shown in the examples presented by Armstrong and Bates (2001) on the behaviour of football supporters. The researchers analysed the impacts of an ethnic encounter in Calcutta in 1980 which resulted in a stampede that left 16 people dead at a sporting event. Therefore, to achieve positive outcomes Coalter (2007) and Sugden (2006) highlight that sport and event projects need to be strategically planned to be conducive of personal and group development. They argue 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. A focus on social rather than overly competitive sport encounters seems the most promising in designing an environment conducive to intergroup development.

Two examples from Sport-for-Development programs in South Africa 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 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 and evaluation of sport and event projects and their contribution to creating inclusive social change, enhancing local capacities and achieving overall community empowerment.

5. 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. It describes an *ex ante* approach towards understanding and guiding the strategic planning, investigation and evaluation of sport and event development projects by integrating and visualising the social processes generated through participatory sport activities. The S4D Framework should be understood as a loose frame towards sustainable community and/or inter-community empowerment.

The S4D Framework is divided into the three interrelated areas of sport event management, direct social impacts, and long-term social outcomes. First, sport event 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) and Stidder and Haasner (2007) – is the recipe for staging culturally appropriate and professionally managed sport and event projects. No model to date has embraced the notion that sustainable community development through sport must be deliberately work towards by dedicated local groups and supporting change agents, whose influence is in fact minimised over time (see Schulenkorf, 2010). Importantly, the management phase also includes a discussion on strategies to achieve desired long-term social outcomes. 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, growing 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 (Gasser & Levensen, 2004; Schulenkorf et al., 2011; Sugden, 2006). 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; Appadurai, 1996). On the other hand negative social impacts may, for example, result in a revival of historical and prejudicial stereotypes, which can undermine intergroup development efforts.

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 the creation and development of (inter-)community capacities and/or the establishment of social cohesion (Moscardo, 2007). For example, first contacts made at an event could be developed into trustful friendships or inter-community networks, which have the power to make a considerable change in intergroup relations. Importantly, within this process sport and event activities are merely a starting point, a vehicle or booster for further activities which need to be strategically implemented and leveraged to achieve wider social development outcomes (Misener & Mason, 2006; Sugden, 2006).

To grow 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). 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 (see e.g. O'Brien, 2007; O'Brien & Chalip, 2008).

As an example for successful event leverage, the 'Games for Peace' sport 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). Supported by the external change agent Asian-German Sports Exchange Programme (A.G.S.E.P.) and co-organised by local ethnic communities, different sport and event projects are staged 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 2 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 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 (see Chalip, 2006; O'Brien, 2007; O'Brien & Chalip, 2008). 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 is likely to be more aware of health issues, allowing them to engage in actions towards reducing preventable illnesses (for a more detailed analysis of AGSEP's work in Sri Lanka, see Schulenkorf, 2008, 2010).

Looking back at the S4D Framework, the long-term social outcomes are embedded in a cyclical process towards sustainable 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. In other words, socially and psychologically empowered participants may choose to contribute or 'give back' to their groups, and in doing so, promote the positive development of their communities.

The social development and leverage processes may result in what Granovetter (1973) describes as the establishment of 'strong ties' between people and groups. He argues that the strength of informal 'weak ties' between social actors is their capability to develop relationships into 'strong ties', which can sustain feelings of community togetherness and cohesion. Applied to a sport and event scenario, initial small-scale interactions and personal networks around inter-community activities (such as sport, event or leisure pursuits) may become translated into larger patterns if people feed their experiences back into their respective groups. For this to happen, continuous engagement is necessary; in other words, cyclical activities in which positive impacts and experiences outweigh the negatives, so that desired long-term social outcomes (e.g. social change, social cohesion and local capacity building) have a chance to prosper. Future research needs to investigate how social leveraging efforts can develop weak ties into strong ties and reach out to non-participatory community members. Furthermore, it will be interesting to see in how far communities and change agents can make individuals and groups from outside the sport circle feel part of a movement or an imagined community (see Anderson, 1983; Appadurai, 1996).

Finally, 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, Sport-for-Development initiatives may take on a similar form in diverse settings; however, they need to be designed to meet and reflect local demands, as they only take on meaning within local communities. For this reason, the S4D Framework highlights that active community participation and positive engagement are central to achieve sustainable 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, leveraged and evaluated 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.

6. Monitoring and evaluating cooperation, impacts and outcomes

This study highlights the need for constant monitoring and evaluation throughout sport and event management processes. It is the key to continuous improvement and, according to Allen, O'Toole, Harris, and McDonnell (2008), central to the realistic assessment and sustainable development of desired outcomes. To achieve improved social outcomes through Sport-for-Development projects, organising bodies such as local communities, external change agents, NGOs and government agencies need to monitor the social relationships and cooperation between communities during all stages of the management process. As a consequence of monitoring activities, they may for example decide to adjust programs, change team patterns, or facilitate social bonds between individuals and groups.

Strategic monitoring and evaluation should also be carried over to the post-project phase. Once a project or an event has come to an end, it is important to systematically evaluate its management mechanisms and assess social impacts and outcomes to be able to sustain and maximise event benefits. Furthermore, feedback collected from different event stakeholders can inform future planning and management activities (Coalter, 2007). Additionally, the evaluation of long-term outcomes is necessary to provide evidence of the longevity and profundity of projects. Indeed, if the goal of an initiative

is to advance social development within or between communities, then the sustainability of relationships, community partnerships and social networks beyond the sport project provide key areas for ongoing assessment.

While monitoring and evaluation of Sport-for-Development projects seems most important, there is a dearth of frameworks and models that allow communities and stakeholders to tailor assessment objectives to suit their specific goals, needs and circumstances. As mentioned before, development programs often have different backgrounds, contexts, purposes and foci, which suggests that the monitoring and evaluation of projects needs to be flexible enough to account for the specific needs of participating communities. The S4D Framework was designed to provide this flexibility. It can be adapted to diverse social contexts, take into account different project purposes, and respect varying socio-cultural, economic, demographic and geographic nuances of communities.

For example, the management team of a project aimed at intergroup development between disparate communities in Israel (see [Stidder & Haasner, 2007](#); [Sugden, 2006](#)) can use the framework to assess relevant impacts such as new contacts made, level of intergroup engagement, inter-cultural learning, exchange etc. At the same time, long-term outcomes to be evaluated could include the establishment of lasting friendships, ongoing intergroup activity, and growth of the inter-community projects over a certain period of time. On the other hand, a project aimed at promoting healthy lifestyles in the Pacific Islands can use the framework to assess the impact of their initiative in terms of awareness building and initial community interest and participation (see [Siefken, MacNiven, Schofield, Bauman, & Waqanivalu, in press](#)). Long-term outcomes to be monitored and evaluated may thus include the change in health behaviour, physical activity, regular sport participation, fitness levels, body mass index and blood pressure measures (see [Siefken et al., 2010](#)).

Finally, once impacts and outcomes are evaluated, the newly gained knowledge can contribute to the planning and managing of future initiatives. Looking at the S4D Framework, sustainable monitoring and evaluation of development goals before, during and after events will contribute to a feedback cycle that seeks ongoing improvement.

7. Suggestions for further S4D 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 different ways in which research on the Sport-for-Development topic may be advanced, and how the S4D Framework can provide a meaningful basis from which other work might build.

First, long-term empirical studies in different development settings are needed to validate the concept of sport for social development, and to confirm the S4D Framework as a suitable guide for the strategic management and evaluation 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](#); [Schulenkorf et al., 2011](#); [Stidder & Haasner, 2007](#)), it is not clear how durable the newly established relationships are.

Most studies to date have been conducted over a limited timeframe and while they suggest that Sport-for-Development is 'working', the question remains if lasting change in intergroup relations can in fact be achieved. In other words, how can 'ad-hoc communities' be developed into strong and committed interest communities over the long term ([Bauman, 2001, 2004](#); [Stidder & Haasner, 2007](#); [Sugden, 2006](#))? This question seems of central importance, as continuous engagement, increasing responsibility and local event ownership are described as success factors for projects in disadvantaged communities. In fact, only long-term research will be able to determine whether projects actually develop, friendships endure and networks continue to flourish.

Second, there is the need for a critical mass of Sport-for-Development case studies that may lead to the identification of key performance indicators (KPIs) for subsequent quantitative analyses of S4D projects. In times where there is growing pressure on organisations to become more accountable for their social impacts and long-term contributions – and with increasing criticism about the inaccurate use of aid and development money – KPIs would allow for a more rigorous evaluation of impacts, outcomes, strengths and weaknesses of sport projects. At the moment, however, there are no S4D measurements and/or scales available that are sufficiently generic, widely relevant, yet fully adjustable to local needs. Furthermore, while most measures of economic impacts are based on an easily-understood financial measure, social impacts are more complex, difficult to quantify, typically diffuse and multi-layered ([Coalter, 2005](#); [Coalter & Taylor, 2010](#)). Often their value is highly contextual and thus derived from situations in a specific place and time, rather than being abstract and universal ([Kay, 2009](#); [Spaaij, 2009](#)). The question therefore remains: if and how is it possible to meaningfully assess social impacts and outcomes through a generic metric? To answer that question, more empirical case study research is needed to create a strong corpus of knowledge from which KPIs can be systematically extrapolated, so that measurement scales can be developed.

Once a critical mass of thematically analysed projects is analysed and scales are developed, the focus can and should be placed on assessing projects against their pre-determined goals and objectives. In other words, KPIs could be used to determine project success more accurately measuring not only the immediate impacts, but also the *actual outcomes* of Sport-for-Development work, e.g. newly created friendships or particular skills learnt. Finally, systematic and comparative research of different Sport-for-Development projects may also lead to the identification and assessment of project strengths

and weaknesses, which is likely to have transferable implications for the planning and management of future S4D initiatives around the world.

8. 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 disadvantaged and/or 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 help understand and 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 is based on salient theory and research from the areas of community participation, social development, and sport event management. Drawing on the reciprocal roles and responsibilities of change agents and communities, it demonstrates the importance of culturally informed change agents that act as mediators or anchormen particularly in the opening stages of development initiatives. Over time, their influence reduces and local communities need to increase their roles and responsibilities in managing and sustaining development projects. Overall, the S4D Framework presents a holistic yet flexible management tool that can take account of cultural heterogeneity and program diversity, while shaping implementation, directing evaluation, and encouraging future planning of development projects. It highlights the importance of looking beyond direct sport 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 studies, to determine its suitability in providing a basis from which Sport-for-Development initiatives can build.

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