

Urban Youth and Sport for Development

UN-HABITAT

Summary of Study Report by Prisca Bruno Massao & Solveig Straume

INTRODUCTION

There has been growing interest by a variety of governmental organizations (GOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in projects and programs that use sport as a tool in development programs. These projects and programs are based on the premises that sport can positively influence the lives of individuals and groups, and that sport is a simple, low-cost, and effective way to influence a broad range of development objectives. This study aimed to explore sport for development (SFD) and the role of international youth football tournaments. A particular focus was the potential role of the UN-HABITAT in SFD. This is a summary of an extensive study report¹. This summary will first outline the area of SFD and the UN's involvement in it, outline the research objectives, and clarify key terms. Following this, the outcomes of both objectives are described, followed by a conclusion. This report will conclude with recommendations for the UN.

¹ Massao and Straume (2011)

The United Nations and Sport for Development

The United Nations (UN) has accelerated the field of Sport for Development. In 2001, a Special Adviser on Sport for Development and Peace was appointed and assisted by the UN Office of Sport for Development and Peace (UNOSDP). UN's support for SFD has continued since, most recently in the *Joint Statement by Heads of UN Entities for the Launch of the International Year of Youth 2010-2011*, in which sport is recognised as a priority area to enhance the well-being of young adults. Outside the UN, attention for SFD has also considerably intensified in recent years, much as a result of the International Year of Sports Education. A recent review of SFD projects showed that out of 255 selected projects, 93% were formed after the year 2000—28% of which in 2006 alone².

Sport for Development as a Research Field

The considerable expansion of sport for development initiatives has been accompanied by an equally considerable growth in related research literature.³ Yet there is a need for more research in the field as the existing literature concerning sport for development is mainly practitioner-led, largely descriptive, and unrelated to evaluation techniques employed by development agencies⁴. In the vacuum created by a lack of systematic and long-term studies, sports organisations, sport NGOs, and increasingly policy-makers often imply that SFD is an extremely effective and constructive tool to assist development⁵. Systematic studies of SFD interventions and their effectiveness are required in order to determine the true nature of its potential and the benefits it may have for the development of children and youth in the Global South.

A Two-Fold Research Purpose

The aim of this study was to assess how UN-HABITAT can contribute to SFD projects, especially SFD projects with and for urban youth. The specific objectives were: 1) To

² Levermore and Beacom (2009)

³ See for example: Coalter (2007); Kidd (2008); Maro (2008); Levermore and Beacom (2009)

⁴ Levermore (2008)

⁵ Levermore, (2008)

develop an Inventory—including mapping—of different SFD initiatives in urban areas in the Global South and to analyse their impact on urban youth development; and 2) To assess the potential of football tournaments for urban youth in the Global South.

Key Concepts

Development: the term development is used in this report to mean the creation of an environment in which individuals can strive to reach their full potential, lead productive, creative lives in accordance with their needs and interests, and to expand the choices they have that may lead to the lives they value⁶.

Youth: Following the UN's definition, the term youth in this report generally refers to persons between the ages of 15 and 24. Yet because SFD projects that target youth differ dramatically in their approaches, goals, and outcomes, this definition has been deviated from on a number of occasions.

Sport for Development (SFD): The SFD concept refers to the role sport can play in the development of society as a whole.

The Global South: This term applies to both geographical (the southern hemisphere) and socio-economical divides among nations.

THE SFD INVENTORY

The development of an Inventory of SFD initiatives in urban areas in the Global South was the first objective of this study. Special emphasis was given to opportunities for large international organizations like the UN-HABITAT to engage in and support SFD initiatives for youth in urban settings. This Inventory is not an exhaustive list of SFD projects undertaken in the Global South to date; it was limited in terms of time and finance. Additionally, project recruitment depended by and large on the Internet, which is limited, not always reliable, and not (easily) accessible in all areas in the Global South. There was a lack of information available regarding specific details such as project implementation, budgeting, and outcomes. Lastly, communication was in English, which excluded a number of projects. Included in the Inventory were 50 urban projects in the Global South that focused on youth.

⁶ UNDP (2010)

Main Findings

More than half of the projects were located in Africa, and a majority of these in East and Sub-Saharan Africa. An explanation for this may be the issue of language, but this finding corresponded with previous reviews.⁷ Two-thirds of the projects operated in urban areas with a population higher than 500,000 and one-third in areas where the population was less than 500,000. Most projects in the latter category were in densely populated areas such as slums. Most of the projects were run by NGOs from the Global South that were either supported by local organizations or donor organizations in the Global North. Most of the projects were so-called plus sport projects, which are run by development organizations and NGOs with a strong focus on building civil society structures and healthy communities. Plus sport projects are typically run by sports organizations rather than development organizations and have a clear agenda of developing sport structures in the communities where they operate. Of the 50 projects included in the Inventory, only four focused on sports other than football (respectively basketball, swimming, boxing and martial arts, and judo). Thirty-five projects were football projects, and the remaining 11 projects focused on football as well as other sports. There were indirect beneficiaries of these projects, most notably parents, who in many cases fell in the youth category themselves.

FOOTBALL TOURNAMENTS FOR URBAN YOUTH IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH

Assessment of the potential of football tournaments for urban youth in the Global South—the second objective of this study—focused on the social and/or economic transformation, sustainability, and contemporary challenges and limitations of such tournaments for youth development in the Global South. We applied a qualitative research method, which included interviews, observation, and document analyses to gather information. We employed the Social Impact Assessment⁸ (SIA) approach to assess the role of SFD programs in urban setting in the Global South. Three international tournaments were included: the Norway Cup (NC) in Norway, Gothia Cup (GC) in

⁷ Levermore and Beacom (2009)

⁸ SIA is applied as an approach to find out the estimation of all significant impacts of potential policies, programs, or projects on individuals, groups, organizations, neighbourhoods, communities, institutions, and other social units (Burnett, 2001).

Sweden, and the East Africa Cup (EAC) in Tanzania. In total, 36 people from 12 countries⁹ were interviewed.

Main Findings

All three tournaments included in this study were football tournaments, yet they were quite different in terms of their approaches to development issues in the Global South, making it difficult to compare them. There were six areas of development potentials for children and youth in the urban settings in the Global South following these tournaments: education and awareness, including health and sport education; advocacy and awareness; cultural understanding and exchange; empowerment, including the promotion of girls and children with disabilities; community development; and poverty alleviation.

Most of the teams from the Global South that participated in these tournaments were from NGOs. Other teams were supported by local GOs, mainly as part of their national education and sport development schemes. The remaining teams were from organizations relying on private initiatives of individuals. There was no clear distinction between these different types of organizations; rather there were overlapping features between GO and NGO organized teams as well as between private teams and NGOs.

Some organizations reported instability and conflict due to poor leadership, most notably poor management of finances and projects. Established local institutions were important partners in the tournaments. Main sources of financial support for these tournaments were developmental and humanitarian organizations in the Global North; private companies from the donor countries; and sport federations from the Global North. Despite the expansion of SFD projects in the Global South, there was very little commitment by the governments and local companies. Sustainability of SFD organizations was a challenge, and involved both economic capability and community involvement. Some organizations created a solid organizational foundation for independence. Local volunteerism is important for the future success of SFD projects¹⁰.

The three tournaments included in this study had different approaches to SFD. Based on the challenges and the needs of youth in the Global South we found the EAC

⁹ Egypt, Eritrea, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, South Africa, Burundi, Brazil, Norway, and Sweden.

¹⁰ See more in Munro (2010)

approach the best practice. The educational training programs in EAC were tailored to meet the needs of children and youth in the region. Through collaboration with different networks in the SFD field, EAC showed that sports and sport tournaments can indeed be important educational arenas for youth.

CONCLUSIONS

The SFD projects in this study were managed in a variety of ways in many different locations in the Global South. The majority of projects focused on issues concerning youth—such as health and employment—in these areas. Equality and environmental issues were given low priority. The SFD programs contributed to skills and knowledge development, which is necessary for children and youth to have control of their own lives and to function as responsible members of their communities. However, poor and unsafe sport infrastructure was an issue for many programs and activities. Although SFD networks do exist, there is a need for greater emphasis on professional networking, knowledge-based Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) strategies, and sharing best practices and technical knowledge both regarding infrastructure and the organization of sports activities in general.

Based on the findings of this study, large international children and youth tournaments provided arenas for education and awareness, advocacy, cultural understanding and exchange, empowerment, poverty alleviation, and community development. However, to find out whether these tournaments can contribute at a higher community level requires further systematic assessment and long-term intervention studies following particular SFD organizations and teams.

In summary, SFD projects and international children and youth football tournaments have the potential to positively impact the conditions of youth in urban settings in the Global South. More emphasis is needed in the following areas:

1. Ensuring sustainability by integrating the institutions and governments from the Global South;
2. Expanding cooperation and networking;
3. Encouraging more sports and target groups; and
4. Improving education and publicity about SFD.

More emphasis on these aspects may improve the positive impact of these tournaments. In the long run this may not only positively affect urban youth in the Global South, but may also educate and broaden the perspectives of youth globally. The bonds between SFD organizations and local governments need to be strengthened for SFD projects to be well-visited arenas for youth in urban settings.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO UN-HABITAT

UN-HABITAT can contribute to SFD as a means to reaching urban youth in the Global South. If the UN-HABITAT decides to emphasise the area of SFD, they should engage with SFD organizations in a manner that improves their effectiveness. Equality issues should be core concerns: improving gender balance, ensuring a pro-poor focus, and extending the reach of projects to marginalized and disadvantaged groups. Realizing the potential of SFD projects requires a carefully considered approach to project design, an appropriate approach to the targeted groups, a consultative process, and a focus on equity and sustainability.

We recommend six priority areas relating to the UN-HABITAT's involvement in SFD:

1. Promote SFD. UN-HABITAT can collaborate with other international organizations and established institutions in the Global South to highlight SFD activities that have shown to have a positive impact on urban youth.
2. Link SFD projects to large infrastructure investments and sports infrastructures in urban planning programs. Special emphasis should be given to gender-friendly, accessible, and safe sport facilities in urban settings. UN-HABITAT could benefit from collaborating with national and international sports federations.
3. Emphasise SFD through UN-HABITAT's Youth Fund and youth-led SFD organizations in urban areas in the Global South.
4. Collect, document, organize, and share success stories, especially regarding technical knowledge on sport infrastructures.
5. Support and seek partnership with the various tournament organizers, and advocate the 'Better Cities' concept related to environment protection and sport

infrastructures. Emphasis should be on tournaments in the Global South with a clear development agenda (like the EAC). UN-HABITAT could also explore the possibility of supporting other sports tournaments in the Global South.

6. Support research and evaluation projects that focus on the potential of SFD for youth in urban settings.

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