THE CONCEPTION, DEVELOPMENT AND APPLICATION OF SPORT-FOR-DEVELOPMENT THEORY

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Overview

In this journey, universities and practitioners will have to create the conditions and real life examples of transforming existing ‘Sport ... cheer’(leading) institutions into ‘Change leading’ agencies where the ‘score’ is kept on scholarship and programs produced in service of improving human condition.

Alexis Lyras (2013)

In early 2000, the concept of sport-for-development and peace building was irrelevant and non-existent in traditional sport management teaching and scholarship. The existing social challenges we face in local communities across the globe makes it critically important to understand, advance and improve the functions of sport and olympism. The way we perceive, theorise and practise sport is relevant to each one of us, no matter our role or cultural context. Based on the axiom that ‘there is nothing more practical than a good theory’ (Lewin, 1952, p. 169), every stakeholder engaged in this movement has a responsibility to shift the existing paradigm by changing current frameworks and visions in order to improve the way we address humanitarian challenges. This rationale was the main drive and vision of my (Lyras) personal, professional and academic journey that led to (a) the conception of Sport-for-Development Theory (SFDT) (Lyras, 2007); (b) the implementation of human-centred global initiatives; and (c) integrated teaching, research and service endeavours.

While the first part of this chapter will use the word ‘I’ to indicate the first author, we will move from ‘I’ the individual into ‘we’ – the collective – to demonstrate how theory can be used for diversified collaborations, new programming, scientific testing, tenure, promotion, teaching, publications, student engagement and in service of humanitarian goals and objectives. The main purpose of this chapter is to share personal narratives in order to better understand how ideas related to Sport-for-Development Theory (Lyras, 2007) were conceived and how this framework has evolved and been put in practice over time. Hopefully, this personal expression will make the process of theory building and testing transparent and informative for other scholars.
Theory development process

Born and raised in Cyprus (referring to Lyras), a country that is still divided due to inter-ethnic conflict and military occupation, the way I think and understand is influenced by the complexities of war, division and separation. When I recall my memories of war in my home country, and while I travel in my mind over time, I am often upset from the realisation that cognitions are strongly influenced by theory, and that the interpretation of personal narratives are often biased by personal, institutional or cultural constraints. The duality and yin-yang oneness of our existence is often lost or trapped in the over-simplification of the way we theorize, interpret, describe and explain phenomena.

Growing up in an educational system and country that had recent wounds from war has helped me become sensitive in understanding the complexity of transforming hatred into reconciliation; feelings, cognitions and behaviours of a militaristic patriotic mindset into proactive peacebuilding and development interventions as a philosophy of life. I begin with sharing my personal journey and an overview of how SFDT was conceived, my drive and various incidences and experiences in life that pushed me to the existing theory and practice (Lyras 2001, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2007, 2009, 2012a, 2012b, 2014). While this chapter is not a biography, I believe that the geo-political and cultural context of my identities served as personal drives of a life journey, personal and academic. My attempt is to provide the foundations of this journey for further constructive criticism that can potentially challenge the way we think and handle SFDT and practice.

'I know one thing: that I know nothing' – Socrates

I have broken down my professional and personal journey into three chapters (so far). The first was the chapter on sport development, where I had the opportunity to work as a coach for youth and professional national basketball teams, and with national and international policy and coaching certification programmes. The second chapter was fully dedicated to sport for development, initiating and implementing integrated Applied Olympism teaching, research and service. The latest chapter is more integrated and in progress – trying to understand and merge both worlds, Sport-for-Development (SFD) and sport development. The first chapter was filled with sport-industry-related experience, the second one with work related to sport for peace and applied Olympism theory building and testing through the Doves Olympic Movement model, and the last one through Olympism4Humanity and integrated teaching, research and service. All three chapters intersect with one another. Looking back, I realise each chapter has its yin-yang aspects, and that every one of us can play a significant role in finding a balance between both aspects of sport and development.

While I was in perceived heaven during my sport development chapter, the last pages were hiding experiences and situations that pushed me from the false consciousness of the bright side and the power of sport into the awareness of the darkest sides of the sport industry. After spending approximately two years on a personal journey, I started writing thoughts on principles and values that could potentially give me hope out of that darkness and disappointment. My thoughts were kept in a form of journal, and formed the personal GPS system that had human progress, anti-racism, peacebuilding and development as a final destination (Lyras, 2001). The final destination and my GPS entry was ‘Applied Olympism theory and praxis’ that can be integrated in academic teaching, research and service.

Looking back, I realise that the yin-yang context of life exists in every aspect of our social, personal and institutional settings and experiences. Inter-group dynamics, and intra-personal
and inter-personal thoughts and behaviours are often guided by positivism or negativity. I came to a conclusion that the default of human thinking and interaction, many times, leans to simplistic linear recollections of pre-existing memories and interpretations. Socratic Wisdom and positivism, with its ongoing and persistent enquiry-oriented mindset, can potentially serve as the anti-virus for the problematic default of the human function. This foundation can also help us understand that certain conditions (educational, organisational, cultural and institutional) can either promote or hinder positive thinking, growth and development. How does this thinking apply to SFD? I strongly believe we should start with the assumption that the purpose, conditions, intentions and context of the phenomena around us can define either positive or negative outcomes. Therefore, if we refer to a vague statement such as the ‘power of sport’, we have to start with the assumption that this power can lead to both good and bad. It is therefore essential to integrate theories and wisdom from various frameworks to first gain an intentional, interventionist, enquiry-oriented scientific mindset that will continually be open to identifying and controlling the conditions that lead to targeted objectives and assessing the actual impact over time and space.

In early 2000, influenced by the excitement surrounding the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens, the conceptual framework that I had developed as my ‘Olympism for Humanity’ exploration and academic journey served as the foundation for multiple proposals, projects and a long-term vision (e.g., Doves Olympic Movement, Sport-for-Development Global Initiative, Youth IDEALS, International Sport for Peace and Development Association, Olympism4Humanity Alliance, SFDT, graduate and undergraduate courses that integrate teaching, research and service). In 2002, I started my graduate work under Dr Andrew Yiannakis, who was very supportive in giving me freedom to take classes beyond the traditional sport management and sociology of sport courses. This freedom created the conditions for self and academic exploration to answer non-sport related questions and look for answers in disciplines and frameworks with a long history of related scholarship. Through this exploration, I was always trying to integrate theory with practice, by translating organisational theory, human development theory and contact theory into practical propositions and foundations of a longitudinal field experimental design. The rationale was that if I could create a model that utilised ancient Hellenic philosophical wisdom with the foundations of the Ancient Olympic Games as a vehicle for community building, this model could (a) serve as a foundation for field experimental projects; (b) be tested with real data; (c) be used in non-idealistic but adverse conditions such as conflict; (d) over time could be modified to ensure the delivery of positive outcomes in various settings and with different groups; and (e) potentially serve as a universal model for resolving targeted social challenges. The logic behind this model was if I could create some type of social medicine and a prescription that could work in adverse conditions, a more mild treatment could also serve as a treatment in less adverse conditions. Parallel to my integrated and applied coursework, I was submitting grant proposals to secure funding for operationalising this conceptual framework.

In the summer of 2005, I received my first grant to implement the Doves Olympic Movement project, the operational part of SFDT, a four-year long initiative and the first peacebuilding inter-group educational sport initiative on the island of Cyprus. The programme was the first step towards implementing replicable applied Olympic education initiatives on the island and around the globe. The initial objectives were to provide the new generation of Greek and Turkish Cypriot youth on the island with the essential resources to help them overcome long-held negative beliefs and practices. The purpose of the programme was to utilise Olympic ideals to encourage Greek and Turkish Cypriots to develop ‘a better understanding for each other’s needs; inter-ethnic tolerance and acceptance; friendships among members of both communities; and patterns of working together in the pursuit of common goals’
The formalisation and design of the initial concept of the Doves Olympic Movement project were made feasible with support from the Olympic Solidarity (International Olympic Committee). The implementation of the Doves Project’s activities was funded by UNDP-ACT and USAID, and the Cyprus Research Foundation supported the research arm of the project (theory building and theory testing).

'Non?' Existing sport for peacebuilding body of knowledge and Sugden’s pioneer fieldwork

In early 2000, while I was navigating in various sport-related bodies of knowledge to identify guidelines for successful sport for peace and development interventions, I found the body of knowledge to be non-existent and the concept of sport for peace just emerging. While a number of researchers have investigated the relationship between political and religious violence and sports in countries experiencing conflict, each study suggested that the structures, practices and dynamics of organised sports in places with a long history of conflict reflect the problems of division that exist in those countries (Saunders and Sugden, 1997; Sugden and Harvie, 1995). Sugden and Harvie (1995) examined how sports influence stability and conflict in Northern Ireland and concluded that sport can ‘be both fraternal and sectarian; to promote harmony and widen community division’ (p. 91). They also reported that the most influential inter-ethnic interaction in sport was observed in non-traditional, non-institutionalised sport settings, which were not managed by governing bodies or organisations (Sugden and Harvie, 1995).

Sugden (1991) conducted the first field experimental inter-ethnic sport for conflict resolution intervention in 1989 with the Belfast United Project. His pioneer work brought together sixteen young Irish football (soccer) players who participated in a twenty-three-day tour in the US that included football tournaments, outdoor activities, participation in an adventure summer camp, and staying in a mixed ethnic and religious residential setting. Sugden identified general characteristics that can contribute to positive impacts as a result of cross-cultural contact and emphasised the necessity for: (a) designing research-based and well-structured sport programmes; (b) employing sport activities that promote teamwork and mutual reliance; (c) incorporating social activities as part of sport programmes; (d) employing sport activities that challenge both mentally and physically to contribute to peak experiences; (e) implementing follow-up activities after the end of the sport initiative to sustain positive outcomes; and (f) providing detailed documentation at all stages of the programme.

Doves Olympic Movement project and Sport-for-Development Theory

These guidelines and general characteristics were among the first components that I considered as the initial pillars to be used towards the development of a theoretical basis for understanding sport interventions in cross-cultural settings. The initial framework of SFDT was built from the first-ever published programme components of a sport for peace intervention advanced by Sugden (1991) and enriched with non-sport theoretical frameworks derived from principles and propositions of inter-group contact theory (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1998; Pettigrew and Tropp, 2006) and human development (Maslow, 1970; Ryan and Deci, 2000). My first propositions were built on the assumptions that the foundation of successful sport and social change initiatives should cultivate human development frameworks and inter-group contact theory conditions before, during and after implementing the programmes.

Given the absence of a theoretical framework, I utilised grounded theory methodology to design and assess a number of Applied Olympism initiatives, known as the Doves Olympic...
Movement model (DOM), aimed at providing an interdisciplinary approach to better understand the conditions under which sport, education and cultural enrichment (Olympism) can promote personal and social change and development as a vehicle for peacebuilding and reconciliation. In other words, the DOM model’s programme components and theoretical foundations served as the conceptual framework for developing SFDT, which was a result of cumulative programme design and delivery, manuscripts, training manuals and reports grounded on theory (Lyras, 2001, 2003, 2004, 2005) that were then operationalised, tested and validated with evidence from the field (Lyras, 2007, 2009, 2012a, 2012b, 2014).

As a component of the DOM model, which played an integral role in developing SFDT, I implemented a five-year, longitudinal action research project (2005–10), also known as The Doves Project, which aimed to promote inter-group acceptance and collaboration between Greek and Turkish Cypriot youths (Lyras, 2003, 2007). The Doves Project served as a platform for theory building based on an interdisciplinary theoretical foundation drawn from organisational theory, humanistic psychology, inter-group contact theory, educational psychology and theory and methods of research (Lyras, 2007), which provided evidence and programme recommendations about the context and the conditions under which sport and Olympic education programmes can leverage positive social change. These theoretical frameworks were selected because they could provide a foundation that would help SFD researchers and practitioners best design programmes and policy; understand important principles and frameworks (how people learn, grow and develop); understand implications, foundations, limitations and the process of change (organisational change theory); and promote inter-group acceptance, collaboration and cohesiveness (inter-group contact theory). Theory and methods of research were considered the main foundation for programme assessment, promoting in this way evidence-based programming. In other words, due to the fact that none of the sport-for-development and peace initiatives had scientific assessment of their impact as an integrated part of their programme implementation, the application of novel methods of assessment was, and is, essential for the advancement of our understanding of the conditions under which sport-based interventions can serve as a platform for peacebuilding and development. I found no examples of such design efforts in the sport management literature or sport for peacebuilding and development practice. There was a need, therefore, for adopting a scientific impact assessment mindset as an integral part of a sport or Olympism in action intervention. Grounded theory methodology and mixed methods design served as the foundations for the assessment of the impact and programme component of The Doves Project to evaluate: (a) the effectiveness of the organisational, educational, sport and cultural components; (b) the impact of the programme on peacebuilding and development indicators across time and space; (c) with validated social-psychological scales; and (d) based on a robust, human-centred conceptual framework.

The Doves Project was designed with the objective to advance SFD theory and practice by providing theoretical foundations and empirical evidence on how sport researchers and practitioners can promote evidence-based programme development with positive educational and social outcomes. Beyond the educational benefits, The Doves Project had a significant positive impact on ethnic and gender groups, and girls and boys benefited equally from the project (e.g., inter-group acceptance and collaboration, social perspective taking, active citizenship and change agent self-efficacy). Such findings have significant practical implications, since evidence and theory suggest that inter-group acceptance can be better facilitated by (a) creating an inclusive educational sport setting, and (b) following certain conditions and assumptions (Lyras, 2007).
The Sport-for-Development Theory (SFDT)

Based upon the above theoretical foundations and assumptions (inter-group contact and humanistic psychology), through SFDT (Lyras, 2007), I suggest that sport initiatives can facilitate personal development and social change by embracing Applied Olympism and non-traditional sport management practices through an interdisciplinary framework, blending sport with cultural enrichment (the mix of sport with cultural and educational activities). In particular, SFDT suggests that the blend of sport with cultural enrichment activities (e.g., arts, dance and music) and global citizenship education (e.g., global issues awareness, human rights and environmental issues) can provide a framework for personal development, cross-cultural acceptance and collaboration, and social change. These components can then be used to identify factors that facilitate, as well as forces that inhibit, positive change, as well as to set objectives to assess social, psychological and societal change across time and space. One of the most significant outcomes related to SFDT is an Olympism-in-action intervention template that was tested and refined over time and space through a mixed methods field experimental design. The ultimate goal was to provide guidelines for further testing in various populations, in different contexts and with various social challenges.

Once SFDT was established, I wanted to disseminate and further validate the universality of this theory. To this end, I was interested in initiating global ventures, further testing and evidence from the field, related scholarship, programme evaluation reports, workshops, academic courses, professional training and capacity building endeavours and collaborations with scholars, students and practitioners interested in programmes and initiatives with similar structure and objectives. My vision was to utilise SFDT to provide sound applied Olympism for humanity (O4H) theoretical foundations and practical recommendations that can be used in the real world to address current social challenges through related programme design, delivery and evaluation of preventive interventions, curriculum design, professional/vocational training, academic courses and student engagement initiatives. The following sections provide more information on how SFDT and the work developed through The Doves Project served as a platform for joint ventures with related scholarship, teaching, research and service.

First extension of SFDT in praxis: the Lyras and Welty Peachey (2011) milestone

The first key published co-authored article that utilised the application of SFDT for programme evaluation, beyond the Cypriot context, was the conceptual comparison of The Doves Project and the World Scholar Athlete-Games (WSAG) (Lyras and Welty Peachey, 2011). Both were Olympic Education programmes working at peacebuilding and cultural understanding through sport, at different levels (local and global respectively). This article was instrumental in demonstrating how the blueprint of the SFDT elements of effective programming (Lyras, 2007) can be used to evaluate organisational, cultural, educational, sport and impact assessment components of existing Olympic education-based programmes or events. This work was a result of a number of conversations, joint presentations and close friendship between Lyras and Welty Peachey that was based on shared vision and desire to advance applied scholarship and service. These conversations began while Welty Peachey was serving as a vice president of the WSAG, when we both observed the gaps and opportunities due to the absence of an evaluation mechanism in the WSAG’s already successful endeavours.

The ultimate goal of our collaboration, initiated with the 2011 work, was to test the applicability of SFDT in different contexts and to provide recommendations for more effective programming. This foundation, research methodology and rationale served as a platform for multiple inter-institutional collaborations that aimed to provide: (a) instrumentation and
long-term evaluation of sport for peace and development programmes; (b) evidence from the field; (b) related scholarship; (c) capacity building and service to SFD and Olympism in action organisations; and (d) integrated teaching, research and service. Based on the principles of SFDT, we formed partnerships and strategic planning agreements with the WSAG and Street Soccer USA (SSUSA). In other words, the Lyras and Welty Peachey (2011) publication was the first tangible example of how SFDT can be utilised in practice, and this framework and shared vision served as a platform for programme evaluation and comparison, launching collaborations with other scholars, practitioners and graduate and undergraduate students. Through our close collaboration utilising SFDT and its programme evaluation model we have published thirteen co-authored journal articles and book chapters and presented eighteen papers at academic conferences in collaboration with other noted scholars, received three grants, developed four impact assessment reports and provided training and oversight for twelve master’s and doctoral students applying SFDT in various contexts.

Further extensions and applications

Since SFDT’s development in the Cypriot context, and its application to the WSAG, we decided to utilise the existing theory for further application and testing in several different arenas. Our next application and testing of SFDT was with the SSUSA National Cup and SSUSA local teams. SSUSA is a non-profit organisation with a mission to use soccer to help individuals suffering from homelessness in the US make positive changes in their lives. In this instance, we were interested in ascertaining the applicability of SFDT in a setting focused on a social cause much different from facilitating cultural understanding at the local level in Cyprus. Our purpose was to investigate the short- and long-term impact of SSUSA and the SSUSA Cup on its homeless participants and to identify the event’s structures and processes that can facilitate positive outcomes (Welty Peachey, Lyras, Borland and Cohen, 2013).

This study with the SSUSA Cup revealed that participants generally experienced a positive impact through the event by building a sense of community, creating hope, cultivating an outward focus, fostering goal achievement and enhancing personal development (Welty Peachey et al., 2013). As a direct result of this study and application of SFDT, SSUSA Cup organisers revamped the competition structure to pay closer attention to matching teams of similar calibre in the round-robin phase of the tournament, and in subsequent iterations of the Cup, organisers de-emphasised winning, and focused much more on the educational and cultural aspects of the event surrounding the competition. Thus, this research directly informed practice and also was an important testing of the applicability of SFDT to inform research in a sport intervention context focused on marginalised and disenfranchised individuals.

Further, we wished to ascertain the applicability of SFDT in a larger, international sport intervention setting, and test the applicability of SFDT with the 2011 WSAG, a ten-day sport-for-development and peace event held in Hartford, Connecticut (US) designed to bring together young people from around the world to promote understanding, peace and social change. Our evaluation and long-term research plan was a continuation of our first joint publication (Lyras and Welty Peachey, 2011). Held every four or five years since 1993, the 2011 WSAG attracted 525 participants, ages 14–20, from forty countries. Participants had to be talented in academics and a sport or fine arts activity.

Our initial work situated within the WSAG examined the impact of the event on prejudice and change agent self-efficacy, and the structures and processes of the event that facilitated this impact (Welty Peachey, Cunningham, Lyras, Cohen and Bruening, 2015). Here, the results indicated that it was the inclusive, team-based sport environment that contributed to prejudice
reduction, while the educational platform was critical for increasing change agent self-efficacy, or the belief that one had the power and capacity to effect social change upon returning home from the event. This work was critical, as it was one of the first studies beyond The Doves Project connecting programme design components of SFDT with programme outcomes, a stream of research that has been called for by SFD scholars (Coalter, 2007, 2013; Lyras, 2007, 2012; Lyras and Welty Peachey, 2011; Schelenkorf and Edwards, 2012). In addition, this work is important because it extended SFDT into a new application, that of a large, international SFD event working at cultural understanding and peacebuilding between youth from different cultural contexts.

Welty Peachey and colleagues also extended SFDT into the service-learning environment of a university sport management programme in the US (Bruening et al., 2015). The aim of this study was to gain an understanding of the design, structure and management of a sport-based service-learning project with a SFD mandate situated in the inner-city environment. This programme, City Sport, integrates SFD service opportunities for college students with class-based training, education and reflection. The important theoretical extension and application of SFDT in this study is that it was the first work to examine the design, structures and management of a sport-based service-learning project with a SFD mission. Importantly, it was shown that the tenets of SFDT were useful and applicable in this context.

Aside from our investigations utilising and extending SFDT, other scholars have begun to apply this theoretical lens in their conceptual and empirical work. Edwards (2015) recently published a conceptual piece on the role of sport in community capacity building, utilising SFDT as a grand theoretical framework (Henderson, Presley and Bialeschki, 2004) from which to build a smaller range theoretical framework of sport’s role in community capacity building. In another theoretical extension, Inoue, Funk and Jordan (2013) built upon SFDT to incorporate a logic model for evaluating the Back on My Feet programme, which helps those experiencing homelessness to develop self-sufficiency through running. In a logic model, a programme is deconstructed into inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and impact (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004). Findings of this study indicated that enhanced involvement in sport, in particular running, created important psychological benefits for individuals suffering from homelessness (Inoue et al., 2013).

In terms of other empirical applications, Marshall and Barry (2015) applied SFDT as the theoretical lens to examine the Kicking AIDS Out Network in Southern Africa to test SFDT’s applicability in this context. The Kicking AIDS Out Network strives to enhance life skills through sport, to foster youth development, to raise HIV/AIDS awareness and to promote behavioural change, emphasising a balance between sport and education to achieve positive change. The findings suggest that SFDT offers an appropriate framework to enhance project design and delivery that integrates the features of sport, education, life skills development, use of leaders as change agents and participation that are key to Kicking AIDS Out programmes and other community sport programmes promoting behaviour and social change.

Another investigation examined trends in 440 SFD programmes for girls and women aimed at promoting health, gender equity and social integration, using SFDT as the guiding framework (Hancock, Lyras and Ha, 2013). SFDT was also used as a framework to assist in evaluating the use of football (soccer) as a tool for promoting the development of marginalised groups of people in South Africa, most notably women and youth (Chiyapo, 2014). The results of this study demonstrated that sport has the potential to empower women and girls and to encourage personal growth, but it is the processes and experiences of playing the sport, not the actual sport, that contribute to positive impact. Finally, Ha and Lyras (2013) utilised SFDT to explain the construct of acculturation within the framework of the sport for development and peace movement and
how these programmes can be utilised as a vehicle for refugee youth in acculturating into a host country. Based on the acculturation literature and SFDT, the authors provided recommendations for practitioners who work with refugee youth in a new country.

As has been illustrated, SFDT has been theoretically extended and applied through both our own work and the scholarship of others since its initial development. There remain, however, many avenues for continued testing and refining of SFDT across multiple cultures and contexts.

SFDT has also informed our teaching at the undergraduate, graduate and professional training levels. For instance, Lyras designed and taught ten courses and has given multiple guest lectures (graduate, undergraduate and study abroad) at universities in Europe, the US, Africa, Asia and the Caribbean for the purpose of introducing undergraduate and graduate students to SFD and its underlying theoretical foundations. Lyras also developed the first Applied Olympism professional training called Olympism4Humanity (O4H) Praxis Program in Ancient Olympia, Greece, a joint venture between the International Olympic Academy, Georgetown University and the Olympism4Humanity (O4H) Alliance, a global consortium of prominent experts and agencies in conflict resolution, global health, international development, human rights, global citizenship, disability and Olympism Legacy. O4H’s current endeavours are being implemented under the patronage of the European Union Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth. O4H aims to create a world-leading interdisciplinary academic consortium to build human-centred bridges between disciplines, academic agencies, educational systems and practitioners. O4H as a global venture is considered the extension and the platform where SFDT serves as a validated framework for integrated and applied Olympic education teaching, research and service. All graduate, undergraduate and professional training initiated through O4H utilises SFDT as the main pillars of the skills and proficiencies needed in programming and scholarship. All courses have integrated and applied project-based structures where individuals design and implement projects back home that address local challenges. In addition, Welty Peachey has taught a graduate class with a SFD focus using SFDT as the foundation, and out of this class, students are using SFDT to construct a sport- and cultural arts-based intervention with a local Boys and Girls Club aimed at helping girls and boys in a disadvantaged neighbourhood reach their full potential.

**Future directions**

There are a number of theoretical and empirical extensions of SFDT that scholars may wish to pursue within and outside of the SFD and Olympic education arena. First, as suggested by numerous scholars (Coalter, 2007, 2013; Lyras, 2007, Lyras, 2012a; Lyras and Welty Peachey, 2011; Schlenkorf and Edwards, 2012), there is still a critical need for more research connecting SFD programme design features and components with specified outcomes. In this regard, more work is needed to investigate how and which components of SFDT are related to specific outcomes. Second, SFDT needs to be applied with longitudinal research, as most of the research on SFD interventions and impacts has been short-term in nature (Coalter, 2013; Darnell, 2012; Lyras, 2007, Lyras and Welty Peachey, 2011). The impacts of these interventions and events over time and space need to be further explored. Third, there is opportunity to test and apply SFDT not only within other SFD contexts not previously explored (e.g., interventions with prisoners, gangs, immigrants, refugees and different cultural contexts experiencing conflict), but also within more mainstream sport industry sectors, such as non-governmental organisations, non-profit sport, professional sport, intercollegiate athletics and within the Olympic movement. SFDT could also be helpful in negotiating the terrains of corporate social responsibility, fan identity and organisational commitment. We invite scholars to join us in these efforts.
Note

1 This chapter is a reflection on Lyras (2007) and Lyras and Welty Peachey (2011), and the related works.

References


Applying Sport-for-Development Theory

Adam Cohen

Lyras and Welty Peachey’s (2011) publication has certainly been influential in my academic career regarding my research, teaching and service. Prior to re-entering academia, I worked for a number of public policy initiatives and non-profit organisations. One of the most frustrating aspects of this industry, in my mind, was the lack of ability to properly assess or quantify the grandiose claims my respective workplaces would assert. When I decided to pursue a PhD degree in Sport Management and focus my research efforts in the field of sport-for-development, the work of these two authors really stood out to me. After speaking with them about their research and collaborations, I learned about the value that quality research could provide the practitioner world. While the idea of theory and theory development began as a foreign concept to me as a first-year PhD student, one thing I began to understand was the intersection of practice and academia.

In their 2011 article, the authors attempt to answer the call of many sport-for-development scholars who have stressed the need for greater monitor and evaluation efforts (Coalter, 2010; Schulenkorf and Sugden, 2011), along with increased rigor, both in method and theory. Specifically, the authors suggest five components that can serve as a model to analyse and evaluate a sport-for-development initiative: impact assessment, organisational, sport, educational and cultural enrichment. These components, in some capacity, have steered my work as a professor and a scholar.

At the time of this writing, every single one of my publications has involved the collaboration with a practitioner in the sport-for-development field, each of which had several factors in common: a passionate leadership, a mission to create change on and off the field of play, and a need for
expert analysis of their outcomes. Whether it was writing an executive summary or an impact report for Street Soccer USA (a homeless soccer initiative), evaluating the intersection of pop culture and sport with the International Quidditch Association, or interviewing participants of the World Scholar Athlete Games on their experience off the field and in the classroom, my work constantly seems to revolve around Lyras and Welty Peachey’s (2011) recommendations for monitoring and evaluating a sport-for-development programme.

This has carried over to my teaching and service. Practising what I (and this article) preach in a classroom setting, my latest project is to conduct an impact assessment of a service learning class I recently implemented. Specifically, I aim to gauge the impact my students have working with a local Special Olympics chapter, along with assessing the impact the initiative has on them. This evaluation aims to enhance the efforts of a sport-for-development initiative and in turn increase the effectiveness of a unique classroom setting.

Note

1 Adam Cohen is with the Department of Health, Exercise and Sports Sciences at Texas Tech University.

References

